"Hard-Hard-Solid! Life Histories of Samoans in Bloods Youth Gangs in New Zealand."

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Abstract

Although New Zealand is home to the largest Samoan population outside of Samoa, there have been few studies of Samoan youth in gangs in New Zealand. This study sought to establish *why* Samoan youth gangs have formed in New Zealand urban centres, and *why* some young Samoan males are attracted to these gangs. This study used Delinquency Theory to explore the reasons for Samoan youth gang formation, and Socialization Theory to explore both how the cultural and societal socialization of young Samoan males lead them to gangs as well as how socialization within gangs secures their commitment to high risk and potentially dangerous behaviour. Life histories were collected over an eighteen month period from 25 young Samoan males aged over sixteen years who were members of various Bloods gangs. Findings from studies of socialization experiences confirmed that various socio-cultural strains weaken controls and led people into gangs, where they are then 're-socialized' by their new gang peers. These life histories revealed gang members' reasons for both joining and for leaving gangs and the extent to which Samoan cultural values and practices shape gang values and practices.

This study also sought to establish whether these insights might suggest strategies which would make gangs less attractive and save young men from dangerous behaviour which impacted on their life chances in later life. A comprehensive overview of anti-gang strategies suggested that, in the light of these findings, some are likely to be more effective than others. It is recommended that a Pacific criminology should be developed to supplement existing theoretical perspectives on youth gangs and that a multi-faceted approach is required in order to address the Samoan youth gang phenomenon and to account for unique cultural factors of the local social context.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.0 Introduction

This chapter is divided into four sections. Section 1.1 introduces the field/context in order to establish the area of research in which this study belongs, to provide a context for the research problem, and outlines why the topic and field of study are important. Section 1.2 refers to work already done in the literature and research area so as to provide background to the topic and field of study as well as begin to define the research problem. Section 1.3 sets out the research question, outlines why the research is original and how it adds knowledge to the field of study. It argues that there is a gap where little research has been carried out relating to the (Samoan) youth gang field of study, it raises questions to which the answer is unknown, but addressed in the study, and builds on work already done by taking it further. The final section, 1.4, introduces the present research including the aims and how it is organized.

1.1 The field and context

Before World War Two (WWII), New Zealand was primarily an agricultural producer with a limited manufacturing sector. New Zealand pastoral agriculture was based on the destruction of native grassland and forest for conversion to a landscape of northern hemisphere plants and animals (Holland, O'Connor & Wearing 2002; O'Connor 1993; Roche 2002). New Zealand's role consisted largely of production of inexpensive primary production for the British market. The end of the Second World War, saw New Zealand enter into an era of industrial expansion as it sought to diversify its economy and reduce some vulnerabilities that the war had

highlighted (Easton, 1997; Hawke, 1985). The expansion was hampered by the shortage of domestic labour which had resulted in large part from heavy losses and casualties in the war. Like many western countries in the post Second World War era, New Zealand looked to semi and unskilled labour in Europe and the Pacific as workers were needed in the mass-production factories and service sectors.

My parents were part of a large influx of Pacific migration particularly from Samoa (formerly Western Samoa) to New Zealand during the 1950s and 1960s. New Zealand's Immigration policy at the time was closely aligned with its labour market conditions, which was to adopt short term immigration programmes to alleviate the problems of labour supply and labour demand mismatch (see Farmer, 1986). As Thorn (1946) reports on the role of the Dominion Population Committee, who was tasked with providing recommendations on Immigration policy direction:

> *"The Committee found no need for large scale immigration for agricultural purposes but recommended a carefully planned immigration policy to fill the labour shortages in secondary and tertiary industries that could not be filled in the short term by the local population"* (p.117).

So my parents were part of a plan to fill labour shortages in new factories because of local population shortages and inactivity. By the early 1960s, increasing numbers of Pacific people arrived in New Zealand to work in industrial production in Wellington and Auckland. For example, my dad's first and only job when he arrived in New Zealand was as a machine operator for thirty-five years for then Lily Pak Industries in Henderson, West Auckland. Pacific workers were employed as waged labour in semi-skilled and unskilled jobs. They had been drawn from what were largely rural mixed cash and subsistence economies (back in the Pacific Islands) into industrial production. Most were employed as production line workers in vehicle and domestic home appliance assembly industries in South Auckland and the Hutt Valley, while others were employed in the

service sectors such as transport operation and construction, hospital kitchens and laundries (Bedford & Gibson, 1986 Gibson, 1983; Spoonley, 1990).

While my parents came to New Zealand to work but, apart from the economic benefits, there were other reasons for moving. In their study of 1000 Samoans residing in New Zealand, Pitt and Macpherson (1974) outline three other key emigration motivations: education, obligation to family – both to join relatives in New Zealand but also to support family in Samoa; and the status associated with living overseas and earning money. Shankman (1993) adds that population growth, a western-based education system, and a general lack of opportunity for youth were further driving factors. So when my parents arrived in New Zealand they were driven more from collective rather than individualistic motives and their decision to leave Samoa for New Zealand was tied to complex social, cultural and political factors (see also Connell, 2003; Gough, 2006; Krishnan, Schoeffel & Warren, 1994; Macpherson, 1981 & 1984a; Salesa, 2003).

When they arrived in New Zealand in the late 1960s it was a period known as the Golden era, an era in which prosperity and equality prevailed. Successive governments at the time were able to sustain a welfare state where there was full employment, universal income support, free education, free healthcare and freely available state housing (Boston & St. John, 1999; Dalley & Tennant, 2004; Rankin, 1991; Richards, 1994; Tennant, 2007). Many Samoans arrived in a country which promised a decent standard of living for all, with relatively high wage levels and a low degree of income inequality, which was enabled by a well-organised labour movement and a progressive tax system which then redistributed incomes and provided benefits for those who were unable to take advantage of employment opportunities (see Davidson, 1989). Most Samoans, thus, at this time, were able to maintain, in relation to much of the rest of the world, a high standard of living, and one which was

significantly higher than the Samoa which they had left. For example, access to a universal family benefit, pensions, domestic purposes benefit, and financial support for those who wish to purchase new homes in the rapidly expanding urban areas where economic growth was occurring. The problem was governments had to borrow from abroad to fund the state and lifestyles to which New Zealanders, including my parents who were enticed away from their homelands to come to New Zealand, had grown accustomed.

I was born in Greelane Hospital, Auckland, during the 1970s and at a time when Pasifika[1] people were not welcomed anymore in New Zealand because they were being blamed for the downturn in New Zealand's economy by mainly politicians and media (De Bres & Campbell, 1976; Gill, 1976 & 1977; Spoonley & Hirsh, 1990). The rise of spending on the welfare state and the decline in the economy during the late 1970s was attributed to immigration and in particular Pacific people. Where they were once enticed and sought after by employers looking for reliable, hard-working and compliant labour to do jobs that many New Zealanders did not want, suddenly they were scapegoated and unwanted. Pacific people were even blamed for occupying existing jobs that could be taken by other New Zealanders. As Macpherson and Macpherson (2000) report in their findings from talking with children of Samoan migrants in New Zealand about Samoan identity:

> *"When my parents' generation came in the 1950s they were welcome because the economy was booming and factories needed labour. Then in the 1970s the recession came and they were blamed for taking New Zealander's jobs. Then when the restructuring of the economy took place and produced high levels of unemployment, they were blamed for being dependent on social welfare"* (p. 78).

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[1] During the 1950s and 1960s when large numbers of migrants from the South Pacific Oceanic region known as Polynesia they were labelled as Pacific Islanders. However, during the 1970s and 1980s, these Pacific Islanders had children who had grown up and disliked being called a Pacific Islander so in recognition of NZ-born Pacific Islanders the term Pasifika emerged to represent Island-born and NZ-born peoples.

Although at the time I was oblivious to what was happening around me, Pasifika people were being targeted by NZ Police and the Immigration Department in a campaign instigated by changes to the immigration policy which saw Pasifika people[2] being rounded up for residing unlawfully in this country and deported to Polynesia (Anae, 2012; Krishnan, Schoeffel & Warren, 1994; Spoonley & Hirsh, 1990; Teaiwa & Mallon, 2005). I found out later that one of my uncles almost got deported after his family home was raided at dawn by NZ Police and Immigration Officers and he was arrested for failing to produce evidence that he was born in NZ. Hours before he was to be transported to the airport for deportation my aunty turned up at the Police station with his birth certificate after finding it. There were many other similar cases of wrongful arrests and illegal deportations (see Macdonald, 1986; McMananay, 1982). I was six years old when these Dawn Raids ceased because of changes to immigration policy due to public pressure and growing claims of racism.

By the time I was well into my teenage and young adult years I noticed and experienced lots of social and political changes. I was becoming political and started paying attention to protests like the 1977 Bastion Point occupation (Harris, 2004; Morrison, 1999) and the 1981 Springbok[3] Rugby Tour (Newnham, 1993; Richards, 1996). The former event highlighted the indigenous people's (Ngāti Whātua) struggle to reclaim land at Orakei from the Crown, which they eventually won and which highlighted for me the importance of addressing inequality and marginalisation. The latter situation taught me that oppression is also a worldwide phenomenon even in South Africa where at the time its governance of its people was based on apartheid or the systematic segregation and discrimination on the grounds of race and I could not help but feel I could relate to this sometimes being a New Zealand-born Samoan growing up in New Zealand.

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[2] Which did not include Tokelauans, Cook Islanders and Niueans who are New Zealand citizens.

[3] The South African international rugby union team

The movie 'Colours' (Hopper, 1988) introduced me to the world of youth gangs and in particular the Bloods and Crips gangs of South Central Los Angeles. I remembered being fascinated with the bravado and machoism that these young people expressed, their brazen attacks on rival gang members and the way they worshipped the colour red to the point of dying for it. I was also curious about how young people turned out the way they did and how the Blood gang movement originated and grew into the kind of force it was portrayed on the screen. I remember it was followed a host of gang movies like 'Boyz in the Hood' (Singleton, 1991), 'Juice' (Dickerson, 1992); and 'Menace to Society' (Hughes, 1993), and spawned many copy-cat Auckland street gangs replicating the American gang life style especially between Samoan (red) and other gangs (blue) like the Tongan Crip gang and K-SWISS (Kill Samoans when I see Samoans).

The babies of the first wave Samoan migrants were young adults by the time the 1990s rolled around. They were raised under the welfare state, then as children they were oblivious to others being deported and discriminated, later as teenagers they were exposed to dual identity challenges: learning about their Samoan culture and New Zealand life, protest movements, movies about gangs, and as young adults living through New Zealand transitioning from welfare statism to neo-liberalism[4] (Boston, Dalziel & St. John, 1999; Cheyne, O'Brien & Belgrave, 2008; Green, 1996; Humpage, 2011; Kelsey, 1993 & 1997). There are two experiences I recall that represent the contrast between the welfare and neo-liberal era: when I was university student, and when I gained employment after I graduated.

I studied at university over two periods: 1987-1990 and 1993-1997. In the former period my tertiary studies were heavily subsidised under a scheme called Study Right, which paid my fees and provided a student allowance

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[4] An approach to economics and social studies in which control of economic factors is shifted from the public sector to the private sector. Drawing upon principles of neoclassical economics, neoliberalism suggests that governments reduce deficit spending, limit subsidies, reform tax law to broaden the tax base, remove fixed exchange rates, open up markets to trade by limiting protectionism, privatize state-run businesses, allow private property and back deregulation.

for my personal costs including course material and which was financially less stressful. However, during the latter period I had to take out a Student Loan to pay for my fees and course materials, which were by then subject to a 10% tax on goods and services. This was a far cry from free education, free healthcare and income support top-up to which I was accustomed. Under the new ideology, it was no longer up to central government to intervene in people's lives to provide assistance at former levels; it was up to the people to help themselves and to pay for the services which they used and form which they benefitted. The increased emphasis on social responsibility of individuals illustrates the transition from welfarism to neoliberalism.

I was employed as a public servant for what was called New Zealand Income Support Service (ISS). I was actually living through and applying a new direction in New Zealand's social services as a result of a shift in political thinking. For example, ISS merged with the New Zealand Employment Service to form a new organization called Work and Income New Zealand and as part of a neo-liberal agenda that devolved central government involvement in social service provision to the community and demanded more efficiency and accountability (see Dacre, 1999). I recall being re-trained in interviewing applicants for income support like the Unemployment Benefit, which was now called Community Wage, using a new form that had new questions asking for more evidence or proof of need and whether other sources of support has been considered before applying. As O'Brien (2008) highlights, it implied that applicants had to do something like provide proof such as they had contacted job vacancies or inquired into study options before they received income support – in other words, reciprocity, a new way of administering income support under neo-liberalism.

> *"This change reflects an important shift in the basis of social security, with the inclusion of both reciprocal obligations and sanctions and with the 'organised activity' requirement placed on beneficiaries"* (p. 185).

Hence when it came to interviewing young people applying for the Independent Youth Benefit, I had to scrutinise further claims of family breakdown and homelessness by insisting on evidence, and encouraged applicants to seek out alternative options rather than seeking income support from the government. It was all part of a move toward income, asset and work-testing applicants; on making sure the degree of need was justified and on discouraging dependency on income support.

For over ten years I was a social worker mainly in the statutory youth justice field and case managed many Samoan youth who were gang members. As a Samoan, sometimes I would reflect on how I was brought up, which was predominantly fa'asamoa (the Samoan way of life: thinking and acting like a Samoan) like being instinctual and thinking from the heart and about behaving in a way where words like respect are part of everyday life when acting, speaking, and writing; where one lowers himself/herself to elevate the other. Etiquette and adherence to protocols such as respecting people and being respected in return enhances one's own and his/her family's mana (power, authority, status). The fa'asamoa or the Samoan way of life was a strong component of my development as a person. Inextricably entwined within this cultural framework is spirituality, the teachings of Christian religion and the prohibitions on immoral practices and vices like mistreating people and behaving inappropriately. I know fa'asamoa did not teach me and other Samoan children and teenagers that committing crime, selling or consuming drugs, prostituting one-self or others, or even acting violently against other people is okay. Fa'asamoa is a system of behavioural and attitudinal compliances with recognised social patterns and standards. So I was curious as to why many Samoan young people whom I came across while I was a residential social worker, a youth justice social worker, and youth worker were involved in gangs? I thought that if the Samoan youth whom I met as a social worker had experienced the same upbringing as I had, then fa'asamoa would, in

my opinion, have been a protective factor which could have prevented them from getting into the trouble and ending up in residential care or the youth justice system.

Informal discussions with Samoan personal acquaintances who were themselves ex-gang members and recovering methamphetamine addicts, uncovered a number of shocking incidents and a myriad of social issues including family breakdown, poor schooling backgrounds, lack of faith in traditional support networks like church, and living in poverty-stricken neighbourhoods signalled to me that the cultural question could not alone explain Samoan young people's participation in youth gangs. Two cases serve to illustrate the sorts of stories I was told: firstly, a Samoan teenage mother, a girlfriend of a Samoan youth gang member, holding her baby with one hand to breastfeed it while holding a pipe to smoke methamphetamine in the other, and of a 10 year old Samoan smoking and selling methamphetamine, emulating his parents' lifestyle and believing that one day he will be a president of an adult gang like his father. These two cases not only highlight the importance of socio-cultural issues in understanding Samoan young people's involvement with youth gangs but also made me seriously concerned about the juncture between fa'asamoa and Samoan young people. I do not recall during my adolescence any situations where drugs were given equal importance to childcare, nor do I think there were occasions where I was told that ten year olds were selling drugs. If I was aware then both situations would be considered rare among Samoan communities during the 1980s and yet thirty years later the stories I described previous are more common occurrences. It is shocking that they are about Samoan people. What has happened to the Samoan community in New Zealand especially the younger population groups? How it possible is that Samoan young people who would once have been involved in family, sport, and church are now involved in these kinds of activities? What socio-cultural factors are contributing to Samoan young people's drift into youth gangs?

1.2 Previous research/ What is currently understood?

I turned to the literature to find answers and the results were mixed. I searched for cultural, economic and social factors that could explain the involvement of Samoan young people in youth gangs. Generally I found readings that were mainly based on the argument that challenging acculturation experiences accounted for migrant ethnic communities were one of the reasons why some of their younger population became gang members. I found classical materials such as ethnography on an Italian youth gang by Whyte (1943), some research studies on Asian communities by Beach (1932) and Mexicans by Bogardus (1926), and a study on Chicago White gangs by Thrasher (1927). In terms of contemporary and recent offerings there is Sommer, Fagan, and Baskin' (1993) and Schneider's (1999) works on Puerto Rican youth gangs in New York and Vigil's (2002) study on Mexican youth. Apart from American literature there were other examples in the international scene such as Strocka's (2005) conference paper on the impact of social identity on Huamanga youth gangs in Peru and Ngai, Cheung and Ngai's (2007) research on the psychological and social influences on Chinese youth gang members, as well as Lai, Graham, Caldwell, Smith, Bradley, Vergnani, Matthews, and Wegner's (2013) study on delinquency in South Africa. White (2009) canvasses the indigenous Aborigine communities and explores the ways in which indigenous young people experience gang activity as stemming from family membership and family obligations much like Samoan communities in New Zealand.

In terms of literature specifically focused on Samoan young people, fa'asamoa, social issues and youth gangs I found mainly contemporary works from Australia like Kahn and Fua's (1995) article which presents a range of explanations to do with adjustment problems, a report by White, Perrone, Guerra, and Lampugnani published in 1999 which profiles

Australia's Pacific Island youth gangs at the time, and contemporary works originating from scholars at University of Hawaii and George Mason University. For example, out of the University of Hawaii, Mayeda, Okamoto, and Mark's (2005) detail the difficulties for Hawaiian and Samoan families living in Hawaii in adapting their traditional ways of living with the onset of modernization and change. From George Mason University in Virginia are publications from Samoan Meripa Godinet and Tongan Halaevalu Vakalahi scholars (the first time I have come across a Pacific Island author in this field) in 2008 and 2009 respectively whose works identify family, fa'asamoa, neighbourhood, and peer influences as some of the reasons why Samoan-American youths join gangs (see Godinet & Vakalahi, 2008; Vakalahi & Godinet, 2008).

These readings were significant in terms of beginning to understand the situation for Samoan communities residing outside of Samoa and the involvement of their young people in gangs. They also identified factors that were not necessarily covered by classical and contemporary Western literature, such as, the role of fa'asamoa, aiga (family), lotu (church) and aganu'u (Samoan rituals, ceremonies, and practices) in producing Samoan youth gangs. Thus there is a clear gap in the literature regarding the importance of cultural factors, particularly when such information is essential in explaining Samoan youth participation in gangs and for building necessary social work strategies and skills to minimize and eliminate the attraction of youth gang culture. Apart from the Ministry of Social Development's (2008) examination of youth gangs in South Auckland, Nahkid's (2009) article about Samoan young people's involvement in gangs while maintaining their relationships at home and with family, and Nahkid, Tanielu & Collin's (2009) report for the Families Commission, New Zealand's literature base is still limited in its contribution of a Pacific criminological perspective[5] (or Pacific criminology)

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[5] Criminology is a sub-field of sociology and the study of crimes, criminals, crime victims, theories explaining illegal and/or deviant behaviour, the social reactions to crime, the effectiveness of anti-crime policies and the prevention of criminal behaviour, both on the individual and social levels. Pacific criminology refers to studies from the South Pacific Ocean region highlighting key ethnic minority

despite hosting the world's largest Pacific and Samoan population in Auckland and Wellington.

1.3 The research problem/ question

Not a lot is known about the role that fa'asamoa, or Samoan culture, whether it is or not part of the attraction of Samoan people to gang culture. I think fa'asamoa does play a role: just what that is and to what extent in a New Zealand context is not well understood. Equally important are the social factors like the aiga or family, the aoga or education, the lotu or church, and the nu'u or neighbourhood that Samoan young people grow up in, which are mostly poverty-stricken, contradictory, and challenging. This raises the question of how each of these social factors contributes toward the involvement of Samoan young people in gangs. I do not think it is explained purely by cultural factors but includes social factors, similar to those explored in a social work assessment. In other words it is wholistic and takes into account an approach around understanding the "whole" person. The interplay of these social factors also means that social work intervention must take a multi-faceted approach where cultural, family, school, church, and community projects and programs are required to minimize or eliminate the attraction of youth gang culture on Samoan young people.

To address these questions, a study is required that explores with a group of participants (current youth gang members) to see what it was like for them as Samoan young people growing up in New Zealand. I have raised (perhaps for the first time for delinquency theorists and gang researchers) the term Pacific criminology and whether the study should look at identifying what this alternative concept looks like and justifying its

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perspectives such as the link between being a Samoan (through the concept of fa'asamoa – thinking and acting like a Samoan that shapes their cultural and social identities) and delinquency and youth gangs.

appropriateness as an alternative and supplemental theoretical explanation for (Samoan) youth delinquency and gangs.

There is a lot published on Samoan socio-cultural development including research material on beliefs, customs, practices and behaviours within Samoan society (for example: Agee, McIntosh, Culbertson & Makasiale, 2012; Autagavaia, 2001; Culbertson, Agee & Makasiale, 2007; Fairbairn-Dunlop & Makisi, 2003; Faleolo, 2003 & 2009; Macpherson, 1984b; Macpherson & Macpherson, 1990; Mulitalo-Lauta, 2000; Pulotu-Endemann, 2009; to name a few). However, very little is known about the ways that the dynamics of Samoan young people's socio-cultural development could explain their decisions about involvement in youth gangs. What is known though is that identity status plays an important role in influencing the way Samoan young people develop (Tupuola, 2004a). For example, some young Samoan people have no clear idea of who they are or what they want to do; they tend to keep to themselves, not experimenting or trying new things. They often feel lonely and scared of the world, like a boat on the ocean without a compass floating around going nowhere and with no one on the boat seeming to mind. On the other hand, some Samoan young people strongly believe in certain ideas such as culture and religion although they may never have questioned these beliefs or examined them from a critical thinking point of view. They might choose a career simply because it is what their family expected of them even though they never thought about whether they would really enjoy the job. They are more like passengers on a boat sailing quickly in a certain direction, and on which no one on the boat has really decided whether they actually want to go there.

Thus in Tiatia's (1998) study, for example, one of the leading causes in suicide ideation and completion is identity crises, where Samoan young people in New Zealand found life very difficult to handle given the learning of two cultures (Samoan and New Zealand way of life) and the pressures

placed on them from overwhelming parental expectations and lack of confidence in religion (see also Tiatia, 2007). It can cause Samoan young people to also speak out against traditional Samoan taboos like being open about sex, sexuality and femininity, causing a clash of traditional values held by their parents and the western culture they know and increasingly regards as normative. It is nicely depicted in thirteen year old Alofa's coming of age story in Samoan author Sia Figiel's (1996) novel, *Where we once belonged*, as she navigates the mores and restrictions of her village and comes to terms with her own womanhood and search for identity. Tupuola (2004b) also shares a similar story from a personal point of view of growing up as a young Samoan woman in New Zealand.

Nonetheless there has been no research conducted in New Zealand that is in-depth and that follows Samoan youth gang members over a period of time. There has been no research exploring the relationships between youth gangs and fa'asamoa and between the social institutions (family, school, church and the neighbourhood they grow up in) and the formation or participation in Samoan youth gangs in New Zealand. There has also been no research done on what strategies might be required to eliminate or minimize the attractiveness of youth gangs on Samoan young people. The answer to this question could assist with the development of effective and responsive social work and social policy initiatives. New Zealand could be a world leader in the area of management of Pacific youth gangs and indeed set the benchmark for addressing issues derived from ethnic minority youth gangs living amongst its communities and create a blueprint for international interests.

1.4 The current study

The present research reports on a study that is driven by two main research questions:

(i)   Do socialization and delinquency theories adequately explain Samoan young people's involvement in youth gangs? If so, how? If not, why not?

(ii) Is it possible to minimize or eliminate the attraction of youth gangs on Samoan young people? If so, how? If not, why not?

To answer the research questions four aims were identified for this study. Firstly, to explore and to try to understand the beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behaviour and interactions, which lead to youth gang participation and membership. Secondly, to investigate how youth gang participation affects their family life, cultural development, education, religious affiliation, and the communities in which gang members live. Thirdly, to explore the experience of youth gang membership and outline any unique characteristics and features of this experience. Lastly, to develop strategies, models, initiatives, and concepts for usage in social services and policy development. Thus a life history/ life story approach is employed to address both the aims and research questions introduced in this chapter.

The result is a thesis that contains eight chapters. Chapter 1, the current chapter, frames the issues. Chapter 2 focuses on theory and canvasses selections of classical and contemporary Socialization and Delinquency Theories with a view to explaining Samoan youth gang phenomena. It adopts a structural-functionalist perspective to describe socialization experiences and a developmental life course approach to account for Samoan delinquency and gang involvement. It is society that influences Samoan young people's socialization development particularly their family, school, church and the neighbourhood community they live in. The values, standards, beliefs, and norms are internalized by Samoan young people and subsequently they use these things to form their own outlook after modelling and replicating after significant people in their lives (parents, teachers, church minister, and neighbourhood friends). With regards to

delinquency theory, the causes are multiple or an integrated life course delinquency theory made up of personal and social strains, poor self-control and social control, and learning antisocial behaviour from negative influences like their peers. Over their life course; from childhood to adolescence and beyond the level of delinquency intensifies.

Chapter 3 focuses on research methods and describes the planning, implementation, analysis and ethical awareness stages of the study.   It is anchored in an inductive reasoning process and places emphasis on the participants as the experts and adopts a different approach to Western positivistic notions because it was working with a hard to reach population. For example, the term 'gang' is not defined by the researcher anywhere in this thesis because this would arise from discussions with participants. So the chapter begins with a brief literature review to find out what kinds of research designs could be adopted. The result was a qualitative methodology called life history/ life story because it meant less interference by the researcher and an emphasis on the participant's responses during the interviewing process. In total, the researcher spent eighteen months collecting life histories from twenty-five Bloods youth gang members in South Auckland taking time to get to know each interviewee before recording their four to five hour interviews over two sessions. Over one hundred hours of audio recordings were transcribed before undergoing a full analysis with the assistance of QSR NVivo 10 software   (see   http://www.qsrinternational.com/products_nvivo.aspx.). The findings are reported in subsequent chapters but the ethical issues discussed include an obligation to advise police on relevant intelligence versus maintaining the quality and accuracy of the information disclosed to me in the life story and whether research safety is an ethical issue or not as in this case the researcher is an experienced practitioner, trained to identify and respond to situations where safety may be compromised.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 highlight significant findings. Chapter 4 presents the key themes in relation to participant's family socialization experiences, which are family bonding, memorable highlights and low points, and the effects of the presence of gang life on the family. Chapter 5 shows the main themes to do with the participant's cultural and societal (school, church, and neighbourhood community) socialization realities based on the previous chapter's arrangement: bonding, memorable highlights and low points, except for the effects of the presence of gang life. Chapters 4 and 5 explore how the participants balancing of gang life and family/cultural/societal life, exposes the participant's decision of choosing the gang over their family, school, and church.

Chapter 6 focuses on gang socialization and looks at ways in which the gang influences the way participants think and act the way they do and where they learn how to be a gang member. Participants learn how to fight and commit crime, they also learn more about their Samoan identity. It is a very interesting chapter because not all gangs practice crime (property, violence, ethnic, and immoral) and, for the first time, traces of Samoan identity and learning are being provided in gangs so this chapter provides details of gang life not found elsewhere in the literature especially in-depth information (section 6.1 "changes in behaviour" and section 6.2 "learning to be a gang member"). As a result, this chapter challenges stereotypes and negative views about gangs with two sections called "turning points" or desistance (section 6.3) and "positive contributions" (section 6.4).

Chapter 7 is the discussion and covers three main points. Firstly, it cross references and triangulates the findings with the literature and the researcher's interpretation and then outlines consistencies, inconsistencies and implications for social policy and social work. There is evidence of strong correlations between the socialization and delinquency

theory literature and the findings but not the cultural factor (the role of fa'asamoa), the literature is limited and thus an argument for a Pacific criminology is put forward to fill this gap in the theoretical literature. Some of the reasons for young people joining and leaving gangs such strain, control and learning, were related to the classical theories. These theories provided both principles and ideas that are foundational to contemporary delinquency. However they are unable to account for Samoan-specific or Pacific-specific (Polynesia, New Zealand, and Australia) conditions and contexts and one is forced to compare to other cross-cultural studies. The problem is that universalism or the claim that variations and uniqueness can be part of something bigger not something that is distinct is actually the very reason why it is important for the Pacific voice to emerge and prevail amongst criminology and delinquency theory. In terms of social policy and social work there are a range of strategies and programs worth considering so that policies and practices are effective and responsive like reintroducing cadet recruitment in secondary schools, apprenticeships, proactive community social responsibility, and pro-social peer group learning.

Chapter 8 is the conclusion which summarizes what was learned and what remains to be learned. From signalling directions for the future to briefly looking at the shortcomings of what was done and evaluates the benefits, advantages and significance of the research. It closes by making recommendations to social work and social policy interests and emphasises the value of cultural factors in the understanding the Samoan youth gang phenomenon.

Chapter 2 Theoretical framework

2.0 Chapter introduction

Theories are statements of how and why particular facts about the social world are related. There are two main areas of theory that the study has adopted as its theoretical framework: socialization and delinquency. These two theories provide an understanding and insight into the world of Samoan young people and the issues surrounding their association and involvement in gangs. By tracing their socialization experiences one acquires a snapshot of the Samoan context within which these Samoan young people are brought up. Background knowledge about how gangs are formed and the impact this alternative lifestyle bears is another important area the study seeks to address. This chapter begins with a problem statement, then unpacks various theories which could be used to explain this problem, and then demonstrates how each of these theories might throw light on the issue being explored.

The chapter begins with a chronological summary of classical and foundational theories because, as an emerging researcher in this field, it was important for me to learn the traditional sociological and criminological perspectives that explain youth gang phenomenon. I have been fascinated with youth development and youth gangs since watching movies on it, reading about it, listening to the music they listen to especially rap and making beats like a turntablist, since break dancing and b-boying it, and since working with them while I was a youth justice social worker. I needed a strong foundation in the classical and pioneering theories of delinquency to understand their contributions to and relevance in contemporary explanations.

This is not to say that contemporary explanations of youth gang formation and activity should be ignored and irrelevant. We live in a global world where we are more connected than ever before to neighbouring provinces, regions, and countries through the internet, technology, and gadgets that narrowing the causes of youth gang phenomenon to the local context (the environment, social history, and local culture) is not enough. Youth gang activity, culture and its attraction to Samoan young people is a lot more widespread and far reaching particularly in social media websites like Bebo and Facebook so Samoan youth gangs are more global.

Hagedorn (2007 & 2008) has been able to transcend traditional theories in criminology by using more robust framework and departs from previous approaches to gang research that focus on local contexts by offering a fresh approach to understanding the presence of gangs in a global context such as the conditions of poverty, enduring inequality, racial and ethnic oppression, the retreating role of central government and its role in providing adequate employment, services and security, and the significant medium of hip hop, rap and gangsta culture. All these things have led to people's distrust in government and it is within these contexts that youths like Samoans become attracted to gangs and the identity they provide.

Another contemporary explanation of the youth gang phenomenon is transnationalization; the process which gangs transcends political borders and boundaries and establishes further gang outposts. White (2011) looks at common and convergent elements among gangs from many national contexts alongside an analytical discussion of principal points of difference and divergence. He then presents a more detailed discussion of key themes that highlight the similarities and differences in gang formations around the world. White's (2011) book chapter got me thinking about the transfer of youth gang culture in New Zealand to Samoa in terms of whether it occurs, and I assume it does, how it is transnationalized, will it still be a New Zealand-based version or will it be a modified version that

incorporates elements of the Samoan local culture, and what would be the common denominators and differentials? Overall, given that the study's theoretical framework is foundationally underpinned by classical theories that are perhaps outdated and not relevant, they are not utilised as the only true causal explanations of youth gang formation, but relative to the discussion about youth gang phenomenon as well as the contemporary theories of delinquency (see Hallsworth & Young; White, 2013).

Five theoretical sections explore the development of the chosen theories from their classical origins through to contemporary or modern offerings. These are followed by a discussion of cross-cultural research in an attempt to show ways the theories (section 2.2 Strain theory, 2.3 Control theory, and 2.4 Learning theory) might explain deviance among juvenile members of migrant ethnic minorities and their relevance to Samoan communities. Integrated theory (section 2.5) is the theory that underpins this study because it combines and integrates the previous theories and provides a more productive way of understanding and addressing the issue of Samoan young people and their involvement in gangs. It is also argued that integrated theory needs to consider developmental life course theory or the dynamic contexts, since early childhood experiences differ markedly in adolescence. The chapter summary (section 2.6) highlights three important lessons: the need for a Pacific criminology; the importance of cultural capital; and how the ideas derived from this chapter have informed the method outlined in the next chapter.

2.1 Socialization Theory

Socialization is an integral part of the process which every human being, regardless of gender, culture or geographical location, goes through from childhood through adulthood. The process involves the individual acquiring a self-identity that is learned (values, norms, social behavioural

patterns and social skills) from other people (family members, friends, and professionals) which allows them to integrate and become a functioning member of their society.

It is my view that the socialization process could explain the choice some Samoan young people make in joining a youth gang and in which they go through another socializing experience. While there may be other theories explaining why Samoan young people join gangs, as a Samoan, I believe that the socialization experience for young Samoan people is unique and could contain a great deal of unexplored value. While the literature abounds with youth gang studies, this study, which focuses on socialization, adds value because it offers both an understanding of and solutions to some gaps in the theoretical literature. In addition, the theory of socialization exposes possible triggers influencing Samoan young people's association with youth gangs and ways of preventing this phenomenon from regenerating.

2.1.1 Symbolic Interactionism and Structural Functionalism (Classic Socialization Theory)

Sociologist George Herbert Mead (1934 & 1938), believed that people develop self-images through interactions with other people and so the self occupies a central place in Mead's theory. He claimed that the basic mechanism for the development of the self is reflexivity - the ability to put ourselves into the place of others and act as they act. This means the self is a process, not a structure, of internalized norms and values which culminates into *The Social Act* (see Gillespie, 2005). Action is constructed by the self, based on how one interacts with another, and not constructed by responding directly to observations. The meaning of these actions is created in the interactions we have with other people in sharing our interpretations of symbols. For example, language is itself a symbolic form that is used to anchor meanings to the symbols. Meanings, then, are

modified through an interpretative process whereby we first internally create meaning, then check it externally and with other people. People develop their self-image or self-concepts through interaction with others and are subsequently influenced by culture and social processes, such as norms. Social structures are worked out through the social interactions with others (in other words the social act).

Mead purported people paint their self-portrait by taking the role of the other - imagining how they look to another person, which symbolic interactionists (Blumer, 1965; Sandstrom, Martin & Fine, 2003; Serpe, 1987; Stryker, 1980; Ulmer, 2011) refer to as the "looking-glass self" approach to demonstrate how the self is socially constructed. Developing a "looking-glass" self helps individuals to perceive and judge the impressions we make on others we interact with because we are rewarded in various psychosocial ways for conforming to others' expectations of what we should be. In texts, the usual narrative is that Mead laid the philosophical foundation, while Blumer (1969) built on this by developing it into a more systematic sociological approach which he called, Symbolic Interactionism in 1937 (see Blumer, 1936 & 1937), and which emphasized the importance of social interaction, significant symbols, their meanings, and the process of taking on the view of the other. Cohen (1965 & 1966) suggested that Blumer's (1936 & 1937) version of Symbolic Interaction was more individualistic, less connected to biological dimensions, and less concerned with larger social processes than Mead's. For example, Blumer explains Mead's conception of objects (an object is anything that can be indicated or referred to) in terms of three types: physical objects, such as trees and chairs; social objects, such as a student, a mother, a friend; and abstract objects, such as moral principles and ideas of justice or compassion (see also Blumer & Morrione, 2004).

The interactionists focus on the subjective aspects of social life, rather than on objective, and macro-structural aspects of social systems, means

their theoretical perspective is based on their image of humans, rather than on their image of society. The interactionist theorist sees humans as active, creative participants who construct their social world, not as passive, conforming objects of socialization. The interactionists also contend that society consists of organized and patterned interactions among individuals. Thus, research by an interactionist focuses on easily observable face-to-face interactions rather than on macro-level structural relationships involving social institutions. Furthermore, the focus on interaction and on the meaning of events to the participants in those events (the definition of the situation) shifts the attention of interactionists away from stable norms and values toward more changeable, continually readjusting social processes. Whereas for functionalists, socialization creates stability in the social system, for interactionists negotiation among members of society creates temporary, socially constructed relations which remain in constant flux, despite relative stability in the basic framework governing those relations. Notwithstanding another difference which is that micro level analyses tend to be less concerned with questions of power of actors.

Structural Functionalism stresses how socialization contributes to a stable society and perpetuates society by making needs of individuals appear to match the needs of society. As a structural theory, Functionalism sees structure or the organisation of society as more important than the individual (unlike Symbolic Interactionism). Individuals are born into society and become the product of all the social influences around them as they are socialised by various institutions such as the family, education, and religion. Functionalism sees society as a system; and these institutions as a set of interconnected parts which together form a whole. There is a relationship between all these parts and agents of socialization (family, school, and church) and together they all contribute to the production of social beings committed to the maintenance of society as a whole.

Functionalism can be traced from Auguste Comte's *A General View of Positivism* published in 1865 through Emile Durkheim's texts *Suicide: A Study in Sociology* (1897/1951) and *The Division of Labor in Society* (1893/1964), to the modern social theorist Talcott Parsons (1951 & 1971), the sociologist responsible for further developing functionalism in the 1950s and the 1960s. Talcott Parsons saw socialization as the process through which, individuals developed and internalised societal norms and values. Parsons theorised that there were three stages of socialization: Primary, Secondary and Tertiary (Parsons, 1964a, 1964b & 1966). After one has gone through these stages of development, an individual may undergo a re-socialization process, at different stages through life, for example; when they retire, become unemployed or institutionalised. Parsons noted that each stage of socialization allowed an individual to internalize social norms and values required for the new roles they were required to play.

The first level of socialization comes at the primary level where a child is developing personality characteristics, beliefs and values based on their upbringing. A child will adopt attitudes and beliefs based on their family and their parents or guardians. Primary socialization usually occurs in the family home and is mediated by parents' expectations of the ways they want their child to develop. The secondary socialization level occurs when an individual is learning about what is acceptable and what is not acceptable particularly the new influences which are introduced as other people become significant during this stage and the parents' influences are mediated by other individuals. It usually occurs on a small group level to teenagers and young adults. This level of socialization enables one to become more aware of what the larger society expects of them. The tertiary level of socialization occurs when an individual has integrated into the world and able to interact with its institutions based on learning from primary and secondary socialization experiences and also sustains relationships within which a relatively large group of people live through

on-going processing and internalization of new ideas and values of socialization.

Overall, functional theories have become less popular since the twentieth century: many theorists consider functionalism outdated because it focuses too much on the causes of actions or influences after they occur, rather than before (McClelland, 1994, 2004 & 2006). Even Parsons' structural functionalist perspective is considered irrelevant today by many. It is not realistic to focus solely on the role of norms and values as seen in the process of socialization as an indicator of an individual's pursuit of self-interests, and think that the social system's interests as a whole will be served as well.

2.1.2 Cultural socialization (Contemporary socialization theory)

The concept of cultural socialization is one of many contemporary perspectives on socialization theory (Ballantine & Roberts, 2011; Harro, 2000; Saracho & Spodek, 2007). Cultural socialization is the transmission from parents to children of information regarding cultural identity (who I am), cultural knowledge (why I am different) and cultural practices (how I act) (Hughes & Chen, 1999; Hughes, Bachman, Ruble & Fuligni, 2006; Phinney & Chavira, 1995; Umaña-Taylor & Fine, 2004). Parents communicate or transmit cultural values, beliefs, customs, and behaviours to the child and the extent to which the child internalizes these messages, adopts the cultural norms and expectations, and acquires the skills to become a competent and functional member of the group to which parents belong (Arnett, 1995; Maccoby, 1992; Marshall, 1995; Rogoff, 2003). The process is dependent on interaction with society members (symbolic interaction) and based on learning through observation, copying and modelling processes (social learning). Parents socialize their children consistent with their cultural beliefs, behaviours, and socioeconomic situation (Zayas & Solari, 1994). Where the culture which the parents seek

to instil is not the dominant culture, children experience enculturation into more than one culture, the dominant mainstream culture and the culture of their ethnic group (LaFrombois, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993) and in the process, become bicultural.

The transfer of the culture called fa'asamoa from Samoan parents to their children in New Zealand is a good example of cultural socialization in which the 'culture' which parents seek to transmit to their children differs from that of the dominant cultural group. Cluny Macpherson (1999) found in his study of the development of Samoan identity in New Zealand compared to that in Samoa.

> *"The shared history, experiences and aspirations came together in a worldview, or aganu'u fa'asamoa, which linked individuals to aiga (family) and village and defined and explained social organisation and relationships in a common language, produced the basis of a sense of cultural identity as 'Samoans'"* (p. 53).

It seems the version that was accepted and perceived in New Zealand as the 'real' Samoan identity was the one that was brought from Samoa despite a growing New Zealand-born Samoan population. Migrants passed on to their New Zealand-born children a Samoan-born version of aganu'u and fa'asamoa but this gradually started to compete with a New Zealand-born version, sometimes referred to as the fa'aniusila, that was different as the New Zealand-born Samoan population became dominant and began to stake their claim to the 'real' Samoan identity (see Anae, 1997, 2001 & 2003).

The fa'asamoa variation that was transferred as part of the cultural socialization of Samoan people is one of the key themes of this study into Samoan delinquency and gangs. Another interpretation defines fa'asamoa as about the Samoan way of life: it explains why Samoans think and act the way they do through etiquette and code (Faleolo, 2009 & 2011; Mulitalo-

Lauta, 2000). Meleisea (1988) describes fa'asamoa as a "socio-economic and political framework (p. 21)" based on the social structure of the aiga (family), the nu'u (village/polity) under the authority of the matai (chief), pulenu'u (village leader) and fono ole nu'u (village council). Others scholars such as Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese elaborate on the psychological and emotive significance of fa'asamoa, and contend that fa'asamoa is for many Samoans their identity as it embodies a set of guidelines that dictate how, as Samoans, they should conduct their life (Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese, cited in Field, 1984). Lawson (1996) argues fa'asamoa is a concept linked closely with the ideals of culture and identity that not only defines a certain political entity, but also allows specified persons to claim set privileges within an established group. Thus, in this context, fa'asamoa is embodied and embedded in Samoan folklore, legends, phrases and proverbs, and in Samoan mythology, which provides a framework for social behaviour and conduct in Samoan society.

In New Zealand, the early teaching of fa'asamoa in Samoan young people is the most significant self-identity development in the first five years of their lives. However not everyone is taught the same thing as people choose to emphasise different elements of culture for different reasons. Exposure to fa'asamoa makes the young person 'Samoan' and defines and distinguishes him or her from cultural 'others'. This difference may not be apparent initially because all of those around a child may share these values. Incidentally, not all Samoan parents represent and instil the same 'Samoan' values or an identical version of 'Samoanness'. For example, Macpherson (1984b) found that not all Samoans were taught the same thing because Samoan parents presented Samoan culture in different ways to their children.

However, when a person enters formal education the differences soon become more apparent. The Western concept of individualism stresses independence, self-reliance and resists external interference upon one's

choices, whether by society, or any other group or institution (Dumont, 1986; Emerson, 1847; Lukes, 1973; Renaut, 1999). It is the opposite of fa'asamoa, because Samoan people are communal; they approach things collectively and collaboratively, they are interdependent and accountable to a group. By contrast, individualism is about personal autonomy and accountability to one self, not to a group. These contrasting influences and orientations are part of the cultural socialization experience for many Samoan young people and can result in various identity formation outcomes (see Godinet & Vakalahi, 2008; Vakalahi & Godinet, 2008).

According to Mayeda et al., (2005; 2006a; 2006b) the dualism felt by Samoan young people, who are simultaneously exposed to fa'asamoa and western culture, stems from being a contemporary Samoan youth living with traditional, immigrant Samoan parents, in a foreign land. On one hand, the cultural gap between contemporary Samoan youth and traditional immigrant Samoan parents is widening. At the same time, the gulf between Samoan youth living in Hawai'i and adapting to a predominantly American way of life present in schools and employment is also diverging because of contrasting values between Samoan and American culture. Samoan immigrant parents and the cultural identities brought with them from the Samoan Islands have clashed with their teenage children's cultural identity which increasingly embodies and reflects dominant American influences (individualism, lifestyle, and materialism).

Over the past twenty years or more, research on Samoans in New Zealand has reported numerous issues stemming from the impact of tensions between two different cultures: fa'asamoa's collectivism and western's individualism. Furthermore, there are a variety of orientations to Samoan language and culture and practice *within* the Samoan migrant community which is reflected in parent's socialization practices. For example, Tiatia's (1998) work on the stresses which result from living between the two

cultures and the resultant alienation of Samoan youth. Anae's (2001, 2003, & 2007) research on 'identity journeys' focuses on the duality between New Zealand-born Samoan and Samoan-born Samoan worlds, and the process in which people form identities which accommodate the tensions of this duality is another significant offering. Fairbairn-Dunlop and Makisi (2003) and Taule'ale'ausumai's (2001) exploration of ethnic and personal identity formation processes of contemporary Samoan youth show identity to be a sociocultural political construction. Research by Tupuola (2001, & 2004) and Macpherson (1996, & 1999) addresses Pacific identities within global and diasporic contexts and outlines the ways in which Samoan youth in New Zealand seem to be appropriating and localising global cultures to create their own self-identifications.

These works focus on various aspects of cultural socialization and general socialization. In particular, the situation of Samoan youth in a bicultural society and the ways which they cope with the competing claims, arguments, and issues related to acculturation. Whilst these works do not focus directly on youth gangs, they identify subsets of Samoan youth who do not join gangs, which is important because it is part of the same issue. These authors also ask why the stress which results from life in a bicultural society manifests itself in different ways in different Samoan people. Why do some Samoan youth react in different ways to the stresses of living in a bicultural society? Some researchers (Moore, 1985; Vigil & Yun, 1996) have argued that foreign-born immigrant parents are more likely to experience difficulty in assimilating to American culture, while their children, born or raised in America tend to be more acculturated to the Western culture and to have some difficulty accommodating to their immigrant parents' culture. Some of these children struggle to fit-in also, just like their immigrant parents, and then react in various ways to the resultant stresses.

2.1.3 Section summary

Socialization theory is relevant to this study for many reasons. Socialization embodies two parallel processes: reflexivity, where children watch others, like their parents, and copy the behaviours they observe, and internalization from their interaction with their parent(s) in which the impressions of others with whom they interact are filtered and incorporated into their development. Both processes highlight the importance of the role that parents and other socially significant people play in the self-development process. I would tend to accept structural functionalism because this approach sees social structure and organization as more important than the individual internalization process stressed by symbolic interactionism. Samoan individuals are born into Samoan society and are socialized by various institutions such as family, school, and church into becoming Samoan; a member of Samoan society, not an independent individual. My ability to speak Samoan, which defines me, is only possible through on-going contact with my parents and other significant people, who reacted to my pronunciation and understanding and corrected me.

Within the cultural socialization process, Samoans incorporate cultural values, beliefs and attitudes that differ from other cultures and probably practice these not only as part of the way they behave but in a way that distinguishes them from other cultures. In my opinion, the importance of social interaction, and specifically, the process of taking on the view of the other is an essential theme for this study because Samoan self-development is predominantly based on this kind of experience. Cultural values such as respecting other people and lowering oneself to elevate the other through language and actions are critical as both social skills and protective factors. As I see it, most Samoan young people are brought up to believe and practice cultural protocols because these are part of being a Samoan and define how they should think and act. But if this is the case,

why are there not more uniform outcomes? This issue raises again the question of the nature and consequences of variability within Samoan socialization processes.

Are my 'Samoan' socialization experiences the same as those of other Samoans? Do the experiences of New Zealand-born Samoans and Samoan-born Samoans differ and if so how and why? Could the difference explain why some Samoan young people end up in gangs while others do not? Would their socialization experiences in the family home, school, and church be a telling factor? How does transnationalism impact on this situation? How do the challenges for Samoan-born youth growing up in New Zealand and having to understand and fit-in to the New Zealand way of life differ from those of New Zealand-born Samoans having to learn both a Samoan cultural identity and language and to adapt to New Zealand culture and its way of life? Could either or both of these socialization experiences explain why Samoan young people drift into gangs? Could the difference in the extent of their assimilation create a gap that could become a source of conflict between parents and youth which subsequently leads to the alienation of youth? These experiences provide a fertile ground from which frustration, strain, and alienation from society undermine attachment to the family. Could it be that Samoan youth who engage in gang activities might be assumed to be immigrants who experience the greatest level of stress and alienation? Could it be that those who are not in gangs are born and raised in New Zealand, and have become bicultural people who are able to understand and operate in two cultures without the stresses which face those who are raised abroad and first encounter the strain as young adults. All of these issues point to the importance of understanding the role of socialization, and the significance of variant forms of socialization, in the different reactions of Samoan youth to apparently similar social circumstances.

2.2 Strain Theory

Strain theory states that interpersonal and social issues put pressure on human beings, to which they react in different ways to cope or to eliminate it. As outlined above, Samoan young people's socialization experiences could produce various types of strain to which they may react in various ways. Some of these reactions will be anti-social and reflect their alienation from society. Some resort to substance misuse and abuse to alleviate emotions such as anger, grief, depression, and trauma. Some get involved in theft and robbery for material gain and to escape the living in poverty. Some who provoke physical fights are motivated by the need to prove their masculinity and or to win status and enhance respect.

Strain, particularly a reaction to the anxiety and stresses they experience in the socialization process, might explain Samoan young people's participation in gang life. I believe that strain is perhaps felt more by Samoan young people because of the many challenges acting on their socialization experience that is possibly different to other young people. For instance, learning how to speak two languages (English and Samoan) and cultural obligations such as help raise funds or contribute large monetary donations on behalf of the family to give to the church. While the literature on youth gangs and its relationship with strain and delinquency is strong, I think there is a gap when it comes to learning about juvenile ethnic minority experiences and this potentially makes this study very important. All things considered strain theory may illuminate some of the forces which produce Samoan young people's affiliation and involvement with gangs and lessons for strategies for addressing these.

2.2.1 Classical and Contemporary Explanations

The origins of Strain Theory can be traced to Merton's (1938) "*Social Structure and Anomie*" article where he sets out a conceptual framework for explaining crime rates in America at the time. Essentially, Merton's work contained two key ideas that accounted for high crime rates: culture and social structure. The cultural factor determines for most people what is important and how to achieve it legitimately. It includes culturally defined goals like making money, owning your own home, getting a university degree, and working in a job that is recognized as very important like a lawyer, a general practitioner, an engineer or a chief executive. To achieve these culturally defined goals one requires the means (the social structure factor) for reaching these goals such as access to formal education and occupational opportunities which are considered legitimate approaches to the accumulation of wealth and fulfilling the American dream.

Merton, argued that a disjunction between culturally ascribed goals (economic success) and the availability of legitimate means to attain such goals (social structural limits) in turn puts pressure on the cultural norms that guide what means should be used to achieve the culturally prescribed goals. This cultural-structural disjunction was earlier described by one of the founders of sociology, Emile Durkheim (1897/1951), as anomie – a state of normlessness or lack of social regulation in modern society as one condition that promotes higher rates of suicide. Merton (1957) applied this to Durkheim's notion, anomie, in his analysis of crime rather than suicide, and argued that when people find it difficult to achieve prosperity and when government support is lacking they become frustrated or they experience strain (see also Featherstone & Deflem, 2003). For instance, a young person may recognize that the best way to achieve the 'American Dream' is through higher education, but if college attendance is not

available, then access to an institutionalized means is blocked. This person, faced with a disjunction between goals and access to institutionalized means, experiences strain, and strain increases the likelihood of a deviant adaptation.

Albert Cohen (1955) followed Merton's ideas and also found that limited structural sources did cause strain and lead to deviant adaptations. Where Cohen and Merton diverged was that Cohen believed that it was the inability to gain status and acceptance in conventional society that produces the strain, rather than the inability to gain material success. Status in conventional society is achieved by meeting society's standards of dress, behaviour, scholastic abilities, and so on. The most pervasive of these standards, according to Cohen, are those of the middle class such as attention to grades, studying, and active participation in school activities in order for students to gain status and approval. According to Cohen, the delinquent subculture is a collective response to this frustration, and the nature of its delinquent activities results from a "reaction formation." The criteria for acceptability found in this subculture can be met by lower class boys, who gain status in delinquent gangs by adhering to "malicious" and "negativistic" values in opposition to conventional standards. If non-aggression is acceptable in the middle class, then a reputation for aggressive toughness is the way to gain status in the delinquent subculture. If polite classroom behaviour and making good grades will gain greater standing in the eyes of the teachers, then classroom disruption and disdain for academic achievement will gain greater standing in the delinquent subculture.

Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin (1960) proposed a theory of gang delinquency that combined and integrated Merton's emphasis on the utilitarian nature of crime and Cohen's contention that some gang delinquency is motivated by the pursuit of status and by a reaction against middle-class values. Where Cloward and Ohlin differ from Merton and

Cohen is that they argue that these youths tended to be the less serious delinquents, so the more serious delinquents, according to Cloward and Ohlin, are simply looking for money, not status. In particular, serious delinquents are oriented toward conspicuous consumption – "fast cars, fancy clothes, and swell dames" (p. 96) – goals that are phrased solely in economic terms and have no relationship to middle-class values. These youths experience the greatest conflict with middle-class values, since they are looked down upon both for what they do not want (that is, the middle-classy style of life) and for what they do want (that is, "crass materialism" or an open and unashamed interest in money and the things that money can buy - see Rosenfield, 1989, p. 460). Yet if it is assumed that there are no legitimate opportunities for these working class youths to improve their economic position, and if illegitimate opportunities are presented, as described by Cloward and Ohlin, then these youths tend to form "criminal" gangs, in which the emphasis is on the production of income.

In Messner and Rosenfeld's (1994) publication *Crime and the American Dream*, Merton's anomie/ strain theory was extended and partially reformulated. Although Messner and Rosenfeld agreed with Merton's view of American culture, they found his analysis of social structure incomplete. What was missing from the anomie tradition, according to Messner and Rosenfeld, was an understanding of how the American Dream promotes and sustains an institutional structure in which one institution, the economy, assumes dominance over all others (institutional anomie theory). This apparent "imbalance" in the institutional structure limits the ability of other social institutions, such as the family, education, religion, and the political system, to insulate members of society from the criminogenic pressures of the American Dream or to impose controls over their behaviour. In particular, Messner and Rosenfeld (1994) drawing heavily on Marxist theory, argued that the cultural penchant for pecuniary rewards is all-encompassing and that the major social institutions (that is, the polity, religion, education, and the family) lose their ability to regulate

passions and behaviour. Instead of promoting other social goals, these institutions primarily support the quest for material success: that is, the American Dream. For instance, schools have become subservient to the economy. Good jobs usually require high school or university degrees; so many students stay in school because they want a good job in the future, not because they want an education. As teachers respond to this demand from students, the entire educational enterprise tends to become driven by the job market.

Agnew's (1985 & 1992) General Strain Theory (GST) shifts the focus to interpersonal issues rather than social aspects and posits that strain leads to negative emotions, which may lead to a number of outcomes, including delinquency. Strain is a result of a variety of negative emotions rather than just negative relations that are the result of striving for unattainable, but culturally mandated, goals. The specific strains discussed in this theory are an assortment of events and situations placed into three general categories. First, the failure to achieve positively valued goals where for youth this includes: money or status, good grades, being popular, having the latest technological gadgets, and getting a good job but their ability to achieve these are blocked by unfair disadvantages or other barriers. Second, the removal of positively valued stimuli, which means for youth, it is about how they react to stressful life events such as being dumped by a girlfriend, death or serious illness of a family member or friend, moving, and divorce or separation of parents (see Eitle, Gunkel, & van Gundy, 2004). Generally, young people become frustrated as they feel they have little control over their situation and experience emotional overload that is channelled into some type of negative outcome like delinquency, drug use, or emotional withdrawal. The third and last category of strain, is the presence of negative stimuli in the relationships and socialization experiences for young people, which includes aversive situations or environments for example, physically abusive parents, overly critical teachers, poor role modelling from church members as well as negative

life events such as family breakdown, being bullied at school, church ostracism, and criminal victimization can cause young people to seek relief from outlets like gangs.

2.2.2 Strain theory, delinquency and cross cultural research

Cross cultural research testing the applicability of Strain Theory for explaining delinquency is apparent. Moon, Blurton, and McCluskey (2008) studied the effects family conflict, parental punishment, teacher punishment, financial strain, examination-related strain, being bullied, and criminal victimization had on 777 Korean middle school students. The researcher's findings provide some support for GST's prediction that some recent strains and perceived injustice have significant effects on delinquency. The results also show that a teacher's physical and emotional punishment and victimization are positively related to general delinquency. However, chronic parental punishment and chronic bullying are negatively related to general delinquency, and thus inconsistent with Agnew's prediction. Bao, Haas, and Pi (2004) tested a sample of 615 Chinese school students on whether negative emotions such as anger, resentment, anxiety, and depression were linked to delinquency and found a strong correlation. The results show that anger mediates the effect of interpersonal strain on violence, resentment mediates the effect of interpersonal strain on nonviolent delinquency, and anxiety and depression have a mediating effect on the relationships between interpersonal strain and minor offences. Maxwell (2001) examined two types of family strain: witnessing interpersonal violence and direct parent-to-child violence among 961 Filipino school students, and found a link to the development of antisocial behaviour and delinquency. Apart from examining strain within the family other studies have explored strain within the school context in terms of how experiences within school lead to the onset of strain (see Lee & Cohen, 2008).

While early self-report surveys of delinquency did not reveal a significant relationship between ethnicity and crime (Elliott & Voss, 1974; Williams & Gold, 1972), more recent self-report studies demonstrate that African-American and Hispanic youths are disproportionately prone to engage in serious violence (Piquero & Brame, 2008; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006; Tatem-Kelley, Huizinga, Thornberry, & Loeber, 1997). Other economic strains such as unsteady employment and poor working conditions are known to be linked to crime as many feel compelled to be involved in income generating crime like robbery to survive (see Cernkovich, Giordano, & Rudolph, 2000; Tittle & Meier, 1990). Another source of strain is acculturation, the process of adopting the cultural traits or social patterns of another group especially a dominant one that results in the restructuring or blending of cultures (the culture of the individual living with the dominant culture of his/ her host country). Some researchers (Chanequa, 2001; Moore, 1985; Vigil, 1988a, 1988b & 2002; Vigil & Yun, 1996) have argued that foreign-born immigrant parents are more likely to experience difficulty in assimilating to American culture, than their children, who are born or raised in America and tend to be more acculturated to the Western culture. This difference in the extent of their assimilation often creates a gap that becomes a source of conflict between parents and youth and which subsequently leads to the alienation of youth to street socialization (when peers or young people became principal agents of socialization they in turn socialize homeless young people to the way of life on the street). These experiences may provide a fertile ground from which frustration and strain, arise from alienation from parents and society and undermine attachment to the family.

Research in Samoa, Hawaii, Australia and New Zealand, has also found generally a link between strain (economic, acculturation, family, and discrimination) and delinquency (Cunneen & White, 2011; Macpherson & Macpherson, 1990; Mayeda et al., 2005; Nakhid, 2009; White, 2008a & 2009; White, Perrone, Guerra & Lampugnani, 1999). Research in Samoa

suggests that suicide is a more likely reaction to strain than criminality, and that reactions to strain in the village are manifested in different ways from strain in urban areas such as Apia because the opportunity structures are quite different (Macpherson & Macpherson, 1990). In an earlier study of Samoan young people in Hawaii, another reaction to strain, that still exists today, involves proving themselves and asserting their masculinity in physical confrontations (Joe & Chesney-Lind, 1995; Mayeda, Pasko, & Chesney-Lind, 2006b). In Australia, White's (1999 & 2008a) study found Samoan young people identified strain from the challenges of acculturation and discrimination as precursor to gangs and delinquency. In another study in 2009, White discovered further strain emanating from prejudices which were manifested in relations between indigenous and immigrant communities. Finally, Nakhid's (2009) study of Samoan youth in New Zealand and their involvement in gangs reiterated an important point about cross-cultural research and strain, that is, there are range of sources of strain (multiple marginalities), not just one, and these impact in different ways on those who experience them; gang membership is only one of a number of possible outcomes of strain.

2.2.3 Section summary

Strain theory appears to hold considerable relevance for this study. The ideas borne out of classical strain theories are applicable to the Samoan young people's context, especially the cultural-structural disjunction (Durkheim, 1897/1951; Merton, 1938) concept. Samoan parents want for their teenage children the same things as most parents want for their children: getting a good education and then working in a good job. The Samoan family attempts to build opportunities and pathways for their teenage children to be able to achieve these goals successfully. Strain for some Samoan young people, for example, has to meet their parent's expectations, of attaining a good education, which their parents paid for and invested in, gaining a high school or university qualification, and then

securing a good job and help the family out. It is not as easy as it sounds because there are obstacles, challenges, and stresses that compound the strain, making it more intense and difficult to manage. These include meeting parents' and cultural expectations, and obligations to their family. Confronted with the competing requirements of family, education and work, Samoan young people may buckle under the strain of trying to meet their parents' and cultural expectations and find their way to a gang as way to relieve the pressure. In addition to these is the pressure from the experience of getting an education and not being able to or being too shy to ask for assistance so they can complete their study and gain a qualification. The status of being an educated Samoan young person could be too much and as Cohen (1955) argues could lead to the formation of delinquent subcultures and reject these status standards set by the middle class for gang status instead.

There are other strains apart from parental and cultural expectations such as demanding formal education standards, and the pressure of successfully completing goals in order to enhance both personal and family status and prestige. Some Samoan families in New Zealand practice Samoan-specific rituals and ceremonies as part of their cultural identity and obligations to each other. Contributing significant amounts of cash to church activities, village activities, and family activities such as funerals or weddings, can exacerbate economic strains that arise from meeting basic household costs and other living costs. This is an example of what Messner and Rosenfeld's (1994) contemporary strain theory point out that when institutions like the family household focus on materialism it is largely driven by an economic focus because money means families are able to buy groceries, pay their bills and even afford luxury items. However, for Samoan families the reality is very different, any money they have is passed on to things like funerals and weddings on behalf of the family and so there is usually very little money, as a result of these occasional cultural obligations, for groceries and bill payments and no money for luxury items.

Consequently the strain for Samoan young people is perhaps more intense than for other young people who do not face the additional strain of meeting cultural obligations.

The material covered in this section has provided some insights into how strain theory may explain how and why some Samoans become involved in youth gangs at certain points in their lives. Nevertheless, there is a need to investigate the nature of linkages between young Samoans' socialization experiences, strain, and patterns of youth gang involvement. Some of the questions that occur to me include the following: Is there a difference between a cultural and non-cultural strain and what would a cultural strain be? How much do we know about the role of cultural strains and how these may be (or not) be linked to Samoan young people being involved in gangs? Are cultural strains more significant than economic, social and personal strains? How much is actually known about Samoan young people and the strains they experience in their socialization in the New Zealand context?

2.3 Control Theory

There are two central aspects of control theory: first, is social bonding, where weak relationships between teenage children and their parents is linked to delinquency (Hirschi, 1969), whereas, the second aspect is self-control, which is about the lack of self-control in individuals as in loss of temper and other interpersonal issues is said to be linked to delinquency (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). One interesting aspect of control theory is that while strain theory provides explanations for why people offend, control theory offers explanations for why people do not offend. Samoan young people's socialization occurs in institutions like family, school, and church in which they are exposed to rules, etiquette, protocols, and belief systems which are important in exposing them to the necessity and

benefits of accepting control. They are taught early in life how and, more importantly, why they must obey rules, refrain from anti-social behaviour and respect all people (fa'asamoa). This raises the question of why young Samoans apparently react differently to this area of socialization: some accept and actively internalise these forms of control while others apparently neither accept nor internalise these.

Control theory might explain young Samoans' involvement with gangs as a consequence of the absence or weakness of control during their socialization. I recall the constant reminders and lessons my Samoan parents drummed into me from a very young age, through youth, and even now in adulthood. I believe that having a positive family and cultural socialization was the key to preventing me from getting involved in gangs. The evidence may or may not confirm this linkage but I am confident it will show a connection between the importance of control and youth gangs. Hence this study could discover and amplify a cultural perspective of control theory and potentially build a perspective that embodies voices not often heard in gang literature – those of Samoan young people. Moreover, control theory is another possible explanation of what prevents Samoan young people from drifting into gangs and a source of insights which might be turned into strategies, programs, and policies for minimising the attraction of gangs.

2.3.1 Control theory - classical to contemporary explanations

Thomas Hobbes, a seventeenth-century philosopher, declared that humans are by nature uncooperative and rather unpleasant and so left to their own devices, and not restrained somehow, are more likely to fight for survival and take what they can get without thinking about the consequences of their actions on other people. So why are most people law-abiding and cooperative? Hobbes (1962/1651) suggested that a social order is needed to tame natural human impulses so that society can exist

and flourish. Without the boundaries that a social order establishes, humans will battle constantly; with the strong dominating the weak. A point picked up by one of the founders of sociology, Emile Durkheim (2006/1897), who made a similar argument about the requirement of families, schools, churches and governments to regulate human behaviour and control the tendency of humans to desire more and more material goods.

Thus, a group of explanations of delinquency became known as social control theories and articulated in the first several decades of the twentieth century. These explained, for example, the emergence of urban gangs (Thrasher, 1927), the role of the family in controlling young people's behaviour (Nye, 1958), and the effects of external factors (such as poverty) and internal factors (like self-esteem, ego control) that influence delinquency (Matza, 1964; Reiss, 1951; Scott & Piliavin, 1965; Sykes & Matza, 1957). Social Control Theory (SCT) as a distinct criminological perspective is generally traced to the 1951 paper by Albert Reiss. In classifying the restraints on delinquency, Reiss makes an important distinction between personal controls and social controls. The former refer to individuals' own capacity to impose self-restraint on their actions through the internalization of social norms and rules that govern legally appropriate behaviour. The latter type of restraint – social controls – represents all other constraints on behaviours that are externally imposed by social groups, institutions, and communities.

Gresham Sykes and David Matza in 1957 argued that social control theory is more sociological and shifted the main emphasis from personal controls as emphasized by Reiss to external social controls present in social environments. Sykes and Matza stress that neutralizations prepare people to carry out the law-violating action and free them to act without feeling guilty. This is a significant finding because it means that individuals generally are able to restrain themselves from temptation and

delinquency, however, there are occasions when delinquent behaviour occur which are excused. Matza (1964) described this phenomenon as "drifting" and argued that most people who commit delinquent acts are law-abiding most of the time. People go through periodic evasion of conventional morality that allows the youth to drift in and out of delinquency. In 1965 Scott Briar and Irvin Piliavin followed Matza's (1964) ideas and pointed out that social control (family, school, church, and the neighbourhood) on behaviour is a dynamic process, which will vary over time as children mature and experience age-related shifts in social expectations and opportunities. Although Briar and Piliavin do not expand or develop this idea, it suggests a valuable expansion of SCT beyond youth delinquency to adult criminality; the subsequent extension of SCT into a Life-Span framework, a perspective developed most fully by Sampson and Laub (1993) in their age-graded theory of informal social control (see section 2.5.2).

Contemporarily, the theorist who is most closely identified with control theory is Travis Hirschi. In his path-breaking book, *Causes of Delinquency*, Hirschi (1969) argued that there was no need to identify the factors that motivate youths to commit delinquent acts. Rather, we should ask: Why do youths conform to the laws? What is it that impedes them from following their natural instincts such as surviving at all costs like fighting and stealing? SCT should therefore be concerned with identifying the factors that lead to social conformity and prevent delinquency. Hirschi (1969) explained that the reason why people are delinquent, deviant and criminal is because their ability to socially conform has been weakened or severed. Their bonds to institutions like family, school, church and government, which provide the means to control, are not strong. Hirschi recognized that attachment to parents and quality parental supervision are important for controlling delinquency and maintaining conformity. But this attachment could also be toward other people including peers with delinquent tendencies. The stronger the attachment to those friends, the

less likely he or she will tend to be delinquent. As part of Social Bond Theory, if commitment is weakened because of family breakdown then young people could seek out the gang and invest in this institution instead by becoming actively involved in delinquency and criminal activities to prove it. In turn this new form of commitment and involvement could introduce young people to alternative beliefs like deviant beliefs and hold these true and solidifying their bond to the gang.

In 1990, Michael Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi presented a theory that claimed to explain all types of crime and delinquency called Self-Control Theory. It was a single concept, in contrast to the multiple social controls (attachments, involvements, commitments, and beliefs) in Hirschi's 1969 theory. In addition, self-control was said to be internal to the individual, whereas Hirschi's 1969 theory focused on social controls largely residing in the external social environment. Another difference saw Self-Control Theory focusing attention on events in early childhood, long before crime and delinquency manifested. In contrast, Hirschi's Social Control Theory focused on events and processes that transpire at the same time as the delinquency. In Self-Control Theory, therefore, "social controls" are relevant to explaining criminal behaviour only to the extent that they influence self-control, which is instilled in individuals by around age eight and remains relatively constant after that. Thus for Gottfredson and Hirschi, the key differentiating factor is whether a child can exercise "self-control." Many wayward youths do not suddenly become seriously delinquent, however, in their teen years; instead, they begin to manifest conduct problems in childhood – problems that evolve into delinquency (see Moffitt, 1993; Patterson et al., 1989). This introduces another key idea of Self-Control Theory, the continuity-stability paradigm, which suggests that the roots of crime lie not in youth but in the first years of life. It would follow, of course, that criminologists should search for the causes of crime in childhood and not, as had previously been the case, in the

experiences of juveniles in the teenage years (for further detail see section 2.5.2).

2.3.2 Control theory, delinquency and cross cultural research

Within US literature, research regarding ethnicity, social bonding (control theory) and delinquency is gaining attention (Higgings & Ricketts, 2005; Jang, 2002; Junger & Marshall, 1997; Weber, Miracle, & Skehan, 1995). Cross-cultural research suggests that Control Theory, such as social bond variables, may be of limited power in the explanation of delinquency, particularly female delinquency, in societies which are characterized by high levels of informal control, such as Japan (Tanioka & Glaser, 1991) and India (Hartjen & Kethineni, 1993). Of course, delinquency in these countries *may* be explained by a lack of strong bonds to important institutional figures, such as parents, teachers, and so on. It would seem from these analyses, however, that such controls are so strong within the culture, particularly among females, that relatively little variance in delinquency is to be explained by weakened social bonds. Other cross-cultural research includes White's (2008a) work with Australian-based ethnic minority groups such as Samoan communities and youth violence; Vigil's (1988a, 1988b & 1993) study of Mexican barrios in America in terms of street life, identity, group processes and acculturation challenges, and Mayeda and others (2005, 2006a & 2006b) examination of Samoan youth in Hawaii and the link between delinquency and factors such as role strain, interpersonal violence, and gender issues (masculinity, machoism, bravado behaviour). By and large studies that examine the utility of Control Theory across ethnic groups, especially Samoans, are sparse and disparities between research findings preclude arriving at a definitive position on the applicability of Control Theory across various ethnic groups.

Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) dedicate an entire chapter to critiquing cross-cultural criminology, rejecting the idea that variations in crime across

national or group boundaries could be explained by variations in cultural or structural forces. I found this argument hard to accept given the insurmountable evidence of cross-cultural research conducted around the world. For example, in the United Kingdom (Wood & Alleyne, 2010), in Hong Kong (Cheung & Cheung, 2008), in Korea (Hwang & Akers, 2003), in Russia (Finckenauer, 1988), international comparisons like between Chinese and American youth (Webb, Ren, Zhao, He, & Marshall, 2011), between Maltese, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States youth (Smith & Crichlow, 2013) and Surinamese, Moroccan, Turkish, and Dutch living in the Netherlands (Junger & Marshall, 1997), and ethnic minorities (Phillip & Bowling, 2003; Vazsonyi & Crosswhite, 2004). Instead, Gottfredson and Hirschi explicitly argue that:

> "...*cultural variability is not important in the causation of crime, that we should look for constancy rather than variability in the definition and causes of crime, and that a single theory of crime can encompass the reality of cross-cultural differences in crime rates*" (p. 174–5).

As such, the theory is 'culture free' and in the truest sense, a *general* explanation of crime and deviance, as self-control can explain crime (analogous) behaviour in any national or cultural setting. The following section provides a review of empirical assessments of this cultural invariance claim.

In terms of support for a general theory of crime in the cross-cultural research literature, only four articles have failed to report results that find self-control to be a statistically significant predictor of deviant behaviour (Cheung & Cheung, 2008; Hwang & Akers, 2003; Meneses & Akers, 2010; Wang et al., 2002). Upon closer examination, these investigations have the following common properties: (1) three were studies carried out in Asia with juvenile populations (Cheung & Cheung, 2008; Hwang & Akers, 2003; Wang, Qiao, Hong, & Zhang, 2002); and (2) all four tested self-control in models that competed with other criminological theories – for

example, social learning, social bond, labelling, differential association, and strain.

The Smith & Crichlow's (2013) study provides a modest contribution to a growing body of literature that examines the applicability of self-control across different national and cultural settings. Results of this investigation provide support for Gottfredson and Hirschi's claim that self-control is a cultural universal explanation of crime. Their findings provide, to some degree, cross-cultural validation of the theory in that self-control is significantly associated with *every* type of deviant behaviour, across national settings, which were modelled and tested.

2.3.3 Section summary

What keeps people from fighting to survive and from harming others and themselves is a social order or social control (Hobbes, 1962/1651). This is particularly true for the Samoan context as the family, religious, and cultural institutions are entrusted with this responsibility. While it is up to the Samoan individual who is socialized within these contexts to adhere or not, there is very considerable pressure to conform. This includes social pressure and physical discipline which are exerted primarily by the family on its members, for whom, in the eyes of Samoan society, it is responsible. Most of the time young Samoans are respectful and conform to rules that govern their behaviour and accept these as necessary. When Samoan young people become delinquent it is often because these institutions have failed to keep their urges to be deviant under control. I agree with Hirschi (1969) that one of the reasons for this is because the bonds that Samoan young people have with their family members, teachers, bible class leaders and other significant people in their lives have weakened. Some of the reasons for the weakness in relationships range from the loss of a close family member, to a breakdown of a relationship of trust

between teacher and student, through to poor role modelling on the part of the bible class leader or church minister.

Another interesting aspect of Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) self-control theory is the argument that young people become delinquent because of weak personal controls or lack the capacity to impose self-restraint. I would agree that misconduct and behaviour problems start very early in the socialization of Samoan young people, because I do not believe that these young people suddenly became delinquent, but they began to manifest conduct problems from their childhood onward. It may start with neutralizations (Sykes & Matza, 1957) or justifying minor misconduct behaviour with excuses like stealing something and stating that he was forced to do it. Over time a child's behaviour could be drifting in and out of delinquency (Matza, 1964) and gradually become worse as the child matures into a young person and through to young adulthood to adulthood and so on (Briar & Piliavin, 1965). So even though parents, teachers, bible class leaders and others were imposing means to control non-conforming behaviour from the outside, the Samoan young person can experience weakened self-control because of not being able to internalize and accept the advice passed on to him. Nonetheless, Samoan society depends on the externalisation of self-control. If it is to be effective it will depend on the people administering it retaining the respect of those on whom they administer it. Where those who exert discipline are not respected or trusted, those on whom they exert discipline will resent it and reject their moral right to discipline them. Once these people lose their authority, all they have left is physical power which may simply create further resentment.

There are, however, further questions to ask in relation to control theory and whether it can fully explain why Samoan young people become involved in gangs. What kinds of controls do Samoan-born young people experience in Samoa and how might these differ from those experienced

by New Zealand-born Samoan youth? In my view, fa'asamoa is a cultural institution that imparts controls like adherence to strict protocols that govern ethical behaviour, so I would include this perspective as a feature of social control theory. That said, can it be a delinquency theory and explain why some Samoan young people join gangs and others do not? Or is there another explanation? I see fa'asamoa as a protective factor and should prevent Samoan young people from drifting into gangs, would I be right or wrong? Is it possible that the rigid social control which is imposed on young Samoans, by various Samoan institutions mentioned above, may be the very fact that alienates them from fa'asamoa? Significantly, this study will set out to establish if, and how, Samoan forms of social control are implicated in young Samoans' decisions to form or join youth gangs in New Zealand. It may be that an understanding of the role of social control may provide insights into causal explanations and strategies that could prevent Samoan young people from affiliating with gangs.

2.4 Learning Theory

Social learning theory attempts to explain the role of socialization on the development of the self. It can explain both the acquisition of both conforming and deviant behaviour by the same mechanisms. Learning criminal or deviant behaviour is the same as learning to engage in conforming behaviour: it is done through association with or exposure to others. According to social learning theory, people engage in crime because of their association with others who engage in crime. The criminal behaviour is reinforced as they learn attitudes that are favourable to crime from associates who introduce them to criminal activities and to skills which reduce the likelihood of apprehension. Association with delinquent friends is the best predictor of delinquent behaviour other than prior delinquency.

To my way of thinking, whereas, strain and control theories identify factors which pushes young Samoans toward gang involvement, learning theory may explain why they then adopt anti-social values and forms of conduct through their association with gangs in which these are normalised and positively reinforced. The factors that create stress weaken conformity and lead young people to seek out alternative opportunities to relieve their strains by joining a gang. Once within the gang, they go through a re-socialization experience in which gang associates teach young Samoans new values, knowledge, and skills required to become a full member of the gang. As a Samoan youth justice social worker, many youth offenders shared with me how the gang made them feel accepted and what skills the gang taught them like self-defence and how to survive on the streets. Could this new layer in a Samoan young person's development be responsible for their involvement in youth gangs? Can it be proven that it is the gang itself and not the Samoan young person that is largely responsible for the transformation taking place within the Samoan person psycho-social and cultural development toward non conformity? The theoretical literature is tested to establish whether there is a gang socialization process that takes place for new members and which constitutes a form of re-socialization since it involves the learning of elements of a new 'culture'. The answers to these questions may also signal the kinds of solutions required to minimize the attractiveness of gang culture.

2.4.1 Learning theory: Classical to contemporary explanations

Sutherland's 1947 publication, *Principles of Criminology*, drew heavily on Mead's Symbolic Interactionism concept (Mead, 1934 & 1938) and developed an early learning theory called Differential Association. Mead argued that people construct relatively permanent "definitions" of their situation out of the meanings they derive from particular experiences and then they generalize the meanings they have derived from particular

situations and form a relatively set way of looking at things. It is because of these different "definitions" that different people in similar situations may act in different ways. For example, two brothers may grow up in identical terrible situations, but one becomes a criminal while the other becomes a priest. Other key ideas from Mead such as *The Social Act*, "taking the role of the other", and "looking-glass self" (see section 2.1.1) , which in 1937 Blumer developed into Symbolic Interaction Theory (Blumer, 1936 & 1937), highlighted the importance of meanings "derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction one has with one's fellows" (Blumer, 1969, p. 2). Sutherland, therefore, explored the process by which definitions are learned through social interaction and argued that the meaning of criminal acts, whether murder or shoplifting, marijuana smoking or income tax evasion, prostitution or embezzlement, arises primarily from the meanings given to these acts by other people with whom the individual associates in intimate personal groups.

This is the core concept of Sutherland's Differential Association Theory, which culminated in propositions that explained how criminal and delinquent behaviours are learned (see Sutherland, 1942 & 1947). In a nutshell, there are three major overriding assumptions of Sutherland's theory: firstly, that all behaviour is learned (that is, not genetically programmed), and hence, delinquent acts are learned behaviour. Secondly, that the learning of delinquent behaviour primarily occurs in small informal groups settings. Lastly, that the learning of delinquent behaviour develops from collective experiences as well as from specific situational, current events. Through such interaction, we learn techniques of committing crime and "definitions" (motives, drives, rationalizations, attitudes) favourable and unfavourable toward violation of the law. As Sutherland, Cressey and Luckenbill (1992) states:

> *"A person becomes delinquent because of an excess of definitions favourable to violation of law over definitions unfavourable to violation of law"* (p. 89).

Individuals are most likely to engage in crime if they are exposed to definitions favourable to law violation early in life, on a relatively frequent basis, over a long period of time, and from sources they like and respect.

Burgess and Akers (1966) in their Differential Association-Reinforcement Theory of criminal behaviour, they produced a full reformulation that retained the principles of Sutherland's Differential Association concept, combining them with, and restating them in terms of, B.F. Skinner's (1953) learning principles of *operant conditioning*. Operant conditioning assumed that people learn to change their behaviours in response to events that occur in the surrounding environment. One of the key ways this occurs is when a stimulus-response (S-R) pattern is rewarded – that is – people can be conditioned to respond in a specific way to a certain stimulus if their reactions are reinforced. For instance, in childrearing practices children are taught that saying "please" will gain them a treat more efficiently than grabbing it off the shelf and they are usually taught that sharing is more likely to meet with approval from parents than keeping all the toys. Thus, reinforcements such as parental approval or a tasty treat are persuasive and link certain behaviours to certain outcomes or punishments, which could reduce the likelihood of an inappropriate response, like when an unpleasant experience (for example, spanking) follows some behaviour. As a result they listed seven propositions (see Burgess & Akers, 1966, p. 137-144 for the full list).

Akers (1985) later modified these propositions by substituting the word, "deviance", for "criminal" so as to contend that the theory applies to a variety of deviant behaviours and renamed differential association-reinforcement theory to Social Learning Theory (SLT) to focus on its status as a learning theory and to highlight the fact that differential association may be seen as simply one component of his theory. As a result, SLT became a general theory of crime and criminality to explain a diverse array

of criminal behaviours. It is not competitive with differential association theory, but instead, it is a broader theory that retains all of the differential association processes in Sutherland's theory (albeit clarified and somewhat modified) and integrates it with differential reinforcement and other principles of behavioural acquisition, continuation, and cessation. Thus SLT explains criminal and delinquent behaviour more thoroughly than does the original Differential Association theory and Differential Association-Reinforcement Theory (see Akers, Krohn, Lanza-Kaduce, & Radosevich, 1979; Warr & Stafford, 1991).

Social learning theory, therefore, offers an explanation of crime and deviance that embraces variables that operate both to motivate and control criminal behaviour as well as both to promote and undermine conformity. The probability of criminal or conforming behaviour occurring is a function of the *balance of these influences* on behaviour operating in one's learning history, at a given time, or in a given situation. For example direct association and interaction with others who engage in certain kinds of behaviour, as well as the indirect association and identification with more distant reference groups. They not only expose one to definitions, but they also present one with models to imitate for criminal or conforming behaviour, such as family and friends, neighbours, church members, school teachers, physicians, the law and authority figures, and other individuals and groups in the community, have varying degrees of effect on the individual's propensity to commit criminal and delinquent behaviour. These may even be what Warr (2002) refers to as "virtual peer groups" formed through the internet, land and cell phones, movies, television, and other media (see also Skinner & Fream, 1997).

Overall Akers' (1998) social learning theory (SLT) is a general theory that seeks to explain all kinds of delinquency and sought to link social structural influences – such as community characteristics – and social learning in a single model. He argued that the individual's social context provides a

learning environment in which associations and reinforcements occur. Cultural traditions and norms that are prevalent in the social environment affect learning and dictate with whom youths interact. A prevalence of conforming peers and reinforcers in one's local environment is likely to lead to a preponderance of definitions that favour conforming behaviour and minimize the risk of delinquent behaviour (Akers, 1998; Jensen & Akers, 2003). However, certain social contexts may enhance learning conditions conducive to delinquency. Economically and socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods, for example, tend to have a greater concentration of delinquent peers, thus increasing the chances that youths will have more friends who are delinquent (Gibson, Poles, & Akers, 2011).

2.4.2 Learning theory, delinquency and cross cultural research

The literature reports on a variety of variables and establishes links between delinquency and Social Learning Theory (SLT). Matsueda and Heimer's (1987) study highlights the importance of positive learning experiences which occur in an intact family home and notes that broken family homes may hamper the formation of attachments to parents and may affect the transmission of anti-delinquent teachings from parent to child. This was the case for African American young people as their learned ratio of pro-social behaviour decreased more dramatically compared to African-American youth who both came from broken family homes. Preston (2006) analysed marijuana use by young people to cope with strain and drew on strain, control and learning theories for understanding. This was the only article I found (so far) that included a sample of eighty Pacific Islanders but they were lumped in with the Native American group and it was not clear how many Pacific Island (and which Pacific Islands were represented) males exactly were found more likely to be chronic marijuana users than females although all referred to being introduced to marijuana by their friends. Hassett-Walker (2010) found that middle-class African Americans who had delinquent friends increased

their likelihood of being arrested but a lesser likelihood among poor African Americans, suggesting different processes at work like middle class African Americans living closely with poor African Americans and variable parental/ family socialization experiences.

Some of the literature explores social learning theory on its own against a single form of deviance. For example Skinner and Fream (1997) use SLT because it provides an ideal context in which to understand computer crime. They found that association with friends and family members, who possess the ability to bypass a security system or program a virus on web pages, and creating computer bulletin boards where information is exchanged like passwords, are all ways in which secondary school students can learn to commit crime on computers. Hochstetler, Copes, and DeLisi (2002) looked at differential association in group and solo offending and found that it depended on their friends' attitudes and behaviours. Bengtsson's (2012) paper analyses the 'gangster' subculture of Danish boys placed in a secure residential home for youth offenders and traces how they learned to be gang member. They learned a different language, hand gestures, codes and other unique cultural experiences known only to the gang and represent a good example of gang socialization processes.

In other literature researchers are inclined to couple SLT with another general theory of delinquency and test against multiple variables (such as age, location, gender, ethnicity) and issues (like substance abuse and family breakdown) (see Church, Wharton, & Taylor, 2009; Neff & Waite, 2007). Another noticeable pattern in the literature is that the most common way in which SLT is cross-culturally tested is by comparing the concept of differential association in selected ethnic communities to see if one ethnic community is more prone to delinquency than another ethnic community. Although there is very little cross-cultural research based on SLT and delinquency that has originated from elsewhere apart from the US, UK and Europe contexts, people are likely to join gangs within their

ethnic groups and would learn within these (to adapt, to be accepted, to get a status, to be like them) irrespective of geographical location.

2.4.3 Section summary

Within the socialization experience the learning process is perhaps the most important feature as it involves the transfer of information from someone usually held in high regard (an expert) to the receiver who internalizes this information and continues to develop. Social Learning Theory (SLT) is applicable because Samoan young people learn to behave from their experiences with parents, siblings, and peers. The people who are part of Samoan young people's lives play a very important role, particularly in their early years, because their influence is what they model themselves on and this is crucial because they can turn out to be either law abiding citizens or law violators. Sutherland (1942 & 1947) pointed out that variation in the socialization experience of learning (like with varieties of people – peers, adults, professionals - or Differential Association) for Samoan young people should be consistent and appropriate. It should motivate and control deviant behaviour and not promote and undermine conformity. The former should also be reinforced frequently otherwise Samoan young people could drift and be attracted to gangs. As Burgess and Akers (1966) highlight, if (Samoan) young people are conditioned to believe that coercion and aggression are appropriate forms of conduct they will most likely act this way, but if they are conditioned otherwise then they display pro-social behaviour instead.

Learning theories provide much useful information for explaining delinquent behaviour, and perhaps more importantly, for preventing it. Their emphasis on the types and sources of learning has increased our knowledge of why some adolescents violate the law. All delinquency is learned through small group settings and developed from collective experiences. So when a young Samoan is attracted to a gang he will be

taught various things and gradually become fully immersed into its culture. Subsequently it may make him want to sever his connection with the gang and to leave it. Learning theories, then, also provide valuable guidance for designing prevention and intervention programs. Teaching Samoan children and young people how to manage their emotions and what constitutes acceptable behaviour, may be difficult in many situations, but is feasible given what we know about how they learn. Moreover, understanding how Samoan children learn is essential for developmental theories of delinquency, such as those that discuss the processes that lead some Samoan children to go from aggression to impulsivity to delinquent behaviour during their youth and criminal behaviour during adulthood. Lastly, provision of education programs for parents and other significant people who are part of the learning context for Samoans is also essential in order to address their association with gangs. In all, learning theories are one of many causal explanatory perspectives for youth gang phenomena and could underpin most of the strategies for minimising the attractiveness of youth gangs for Samoans living in New Zealand.

2.5 Integrated Theory

An integrated theoretical approach endeavours to explain delinquency by combining different ideas and models to form a single overall criminological perspective. It is an alternative strategy for theory development and testing that addresses some of the limitations of stand-alone delinquency theories and increases the levels of explanatory power. The process attempts to bridge ideological differences that exist among various older delinquency theories because it recognizes that delinquency and youth gangs is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon with multiple causes. Moreover, delinquency and youth gang phenomenon is dynamic and always in flux because as one gang fades away (desistance) another gang emerges. This degeneration-regeneration process is

represented by another type of integrated theoretical perspective known as Developmental Life Course theories. So combining delinquency theories is important but by ensuring that this framework adapts and responds to youth development changes and other socialization experiences is even more vital.

In my opinion, integrated theory is necessary because no single theoretical explanation can explain Samoan young people's attraction to and involvement with gangs. As a Samoan youth justice social worker I have seen a range of factors impacting on Samoan young people's development including strain, control, and learning challenges. I believe that a wholistic theoretical framework is required to profile and cover the multiple issues that are a part of Samoan young people's socialization experiences and from this understanding build appropriate intervention and responsive anti-gang strategies. I acknowledge the worth of classical and contemporary theories as prominent and stand-alone models of delinquency perspectives, but when they are combined they become even more effective and perhaps more culturally appropriate.

2.5.1 Integrated Theory: Classical explanation

Many delinquency theorists take a key characteristic or condition – such as social control – and build their main arguments around it, in order to answer a common question like "What is the cause of delinquency?" It is as if there is only one factor that is important; however, individual and social processes that lead to delinquency are complex and involve many stages. Therefore, many experts have considered combinations of factors that result in delinquent behaviour. Yet it is important to remember that simply throwing a bunch of concepts together does not result in a delinquency theory. Rather, an adequate theory describes the mechanisms that link specific factors to delinquency (Elster, 2007).

By integrating a variety of ecological, sociological, psychological, biological, and cultural factors into a coherent structure, such theories overcome the shortcomings of classic theories that may be criticized on the grounds of reductionism. That is, many classic theories of crime argue that a single variable is predominantly important as an explanatory cause of crime. A problem with such an approach is that not all persons exposed to that variable (for example, poverty) commit crime. Integrated theories recognize that multiple social and individual factors interact to result in the eventual behaviour of individuals, and that we must consider the constellation of factors in an individual's life in order to understand his or her behaviour.

In 1979, Elliot, Ageton, and Canter offered one of the first versions of an integrated theory that explicitly combined strain, control, and social learning perspectives to explain delinquency and drug use. Then in 1985, Elliot, Huizinga, and Ageton (hereafter Elliot and his colleagues) provided a more complete version of that integrated theory and a clearer description of the process that involved three main steps. First, they integrated strain theory with social control theory; then they, integrated the combined strain-control theory with social learning theory. In their view, strain theory argues that delinquency is a response to actual or anticipated failure to achieve socially induced needs or goals (status, wealth, power, and social acceptance), while social control theory contends that the strength of an individual's bonds to conventional society is inversely related to the probability that the individual will engage in delinquent behaviour. In addition, in social bonding theory, the content and direction of socialization are always conventional; deviance results only from weaknesses or failures of socialization. In social learning theory, the direction in which the individual is socialized may be conforming or deviant. Delinquency is learned in the same way that conforming behaviour is learned, and socialization may be more or less successful or unsuccessful in either direction. Sources of weak social control include

inadequate socialization in the family and social disorganization in the community or society. Elliot and his colleagues integrated strain and control theories by arguing that the probability of delinquency should be highest when an individual experiences both more strain and less control.

After integrating strain and control theories, in the second step, Elliot and his colleagues incorporated a social learning theoretical principle that delinquency is affected by the balance between the rewards and punishments that are associated with both conforming and deviant patterns of socialization. Young people receive rewards and punishments for their behaviour primarily from families, schools, and peers. Families and schools almost always reinforce conventional or law-abiding behaviours. In contrast, peer groups are much more likely to reinforce deviant behaviour, although this influence varies quite a bit among different youths. Elliot and his colleagues therefore argued that the amount of exposure to delinquent attitudes and behaviours within the peer group is the primary factor that affects the probability of delinquent behaviour.

So it was at this point, Elliot and his colleagues found it necessary to modify control theory to take into account the type of group with which the individual bonds. Control theory holds that the content of socialization always favours conformity, and therefore only the strength of socialization is necessary to explain crime and delinquency (that is, weak socialization leads to deviance). In addition, control theory holds that there are not strong bonds within deviant groups, since deviance itself is purely self-interested behaviour. Thus, deviant groups (for example, juvenile gangs) are sets of people who are purely self-interested, and the group stays together only to the extent that it furthers the self-interests of each group member. In contrast, social learning theory holds that the content of socialization can favour either deviance or conformity, and that individuals can form strong bonds to deviant social groups. Elliot and his colleagues

integrated these two theories by hypothesizing that deviant behaviour is most likely when there are strong bonds to deviant groups and weak bonds to conventional groups and is least likely when there are strong bonds to conventional groups and weak bonds to deviant groups.

The third and final step in integrating strain, control, and social learning theories is to propose a single line of causation that includes variables from all three theories. Strain, inadequate socialization, and social disorganization are all said to lead to weak conventional bonding. These failures then lead to strong delinquent bonding, which, in turn, leads to delinquent behaviour. Strain can also directly affect strong delinquent bonding, as at least some strain theories contend, but Elliot and his colleagues argued that most of the effect of strain operates through the weak conventional bonding. In addition, weak conventional bonding can directly affect delinquent behaviour, as control theories contend, but Elliot and his colleagues argued that most of its effect operates through strong delinquent bonding.

What is interesting is that unlike Akers who argued that Strain and Control theories also feature elements of Learning Theory overlapping throughout the two theories, Elliot and his colleagues established an integrated model with the social control perspective, rather than with the social learning perspective, as the dominant theory. They reasoned that the control perspective is more general and can explain deviance across levels of explanation and that it is more sociological (learning theory is more behavioural) in that it places great importance on the role of institutional structures in controlling deviant behaviour.

2.5.2 Developmental Theory - Contemporary explanation

Most classic criminological theories are essentially *static theories,* assuming that contexts have stable and enduring effects on the people

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caught in them and they do not explicitly consider how strain theory (Agnew, 1992; Cloward & Ohlin, 1960), differential association theory (Sutherland & Cressey, 1974) and social control or bonding theory (Hirschi, 1969) change over time as young people mature physically, socially, emotionally, and psychologically. For example, we cannot expect a 12-year old boy to react to family turmoil the same way as an 18-year old young man. Developmental changes determine how many factors affect delinquent behaviours. The life course consists of a number of stages running from early childhood to old age and theories should also consider conditions and behaviours that exist at these various stages. Developmental theorists consider, for example, how changes that occur in the transition from youth to young adulthood affect the likelihood of movement from delinquent to criminal. Moreover, since most individuals end their delinquent or criminal behaviour at some point in their lives, developmental theorists study the reasons for *desistance* in the various transitions that occur as people enter or move through adulthood. Hence a developmental perspective is *dynamic* and is interested in studying whether an individual's behaviour remains stable or changes over time.

The goal of Developmental and Life-Course (herewith DLC) perspective is to understand better the stability and changes in criminal and deviant behaviour through time and at different life stages. It is associated with three main issues: the development of offending and antisocial behaviour, risk and protective factors at different ages, and the effects of life events on the course of development. Among the many scholars developing "life-course" and "developmental" criminology are David P. Farrington (Farrington, 2005 & 2006), John Laub and Robert Sampson (Laub & Sampson, 1993 & 2003; Laub, Sampson, & Sweeten, 2006; Sampson & Laub, 1993, 1997 & 2005), Rolf Loeber (Loeber & LeBlanc, 1990; Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1996 & 1998), and Terrie E. Moffitt (Moffitt, 1993 & 2006). In 1986, the National Research Council published a two-volume work entitled *"Criminal Careers and Career Criminals."* Although the

distinction was unclear at first, the ideas of "career criminals" and "criminal careers" are very different. A *career criminal* is thought to be a chronic offender who commits frequent crimes over a long period. In contrast, the term *criminal career* does not imply anything about the frequency or seriousness of the offending. It simply suggests that involvement in criminal activity begins at some point in a person's life, continues for a certain length of time, and then ends. Many people have short and trivial "criminal careers" – they commit one or two minor offenses and then stop.

The distinction sparked a debate over the interpretation of the relationship between age and crime. It has long been known that crime rates rise rapidly through the youth years, peak in the late teens or early twenties, and steadily decline from then on. The traditional view has been that the decline in this curve after about age twenty is due primarily to changes in frequency – that is, the number of offences remains the same, but each offender commits fewer offenses. In contrast, career criminal researchers suggest that the decline is caused by a change in participation – that is, the number of offenders declines, but each remaining offender still engages in a high rate of offending. If these researchers are correct, then those offenders who continue to commit crimes at high levels after their early twenties are *career criminals* who need to be incapacitated. On the other hand, if all offenders gradually commit fewer crimes, then none of them is a *career criminal* in the sense of being a more frequent and chronic offender than the others.

Farrington's theory of delinquent development derived from research conducted as part of a Cambridge study of delinquent development, which followed the offending careers of 411 London boys born in 1953 (Farrington, 2003 & 2005; Lahey & Waldman, 2005). This study used self-report and interview data, as well as psychological testing, and collected information from the subjects eight times over a 24-year period, beginning

when subjects were eight years old. This study found the existence of chronic offenders, the *continuity* of offending, and the presence of *early onset* leading to persistent deviance (see also Lily, Cullen & Ball, 2012, p. 393-416; Thornberry & Krohn, 2005 for further discussion about continuity and/or change concepts). Moffitt's (1993 & 2006) study identified two kinds of offenders: adolescent-limited offenders (AL) and life-course persistent offenders (LCP) (see Cicchetti & Cohen, 2006; Savage, 2009; Skardhamar, 2009 for alternative discussions). Adolescent-limited offenders restrict their criminality largely to the teenage years, whereas life-course persistent offenders are, likely to demonstrate antisocial behaviour in childhood and to persist in criminality into adulthood. Thus, this gap between biological and social maturity is a source of dissatisfaction and motivation for delinquency.

Adulthood, however, brings desistance from crime. As the maturity gap closes, adult conventional roles become available (for example, jobs, marriage), and the consequences from misconduct escalate, there is a corresponding decrease in the appeal of, and reinforcements for, delinquency. In their first book, *Crime in the Making*, Robert Sampson and John Laub (1993) they hypothesized that a complex set of factors combine to entrench a child on an antisocial pathway such as difficult temperament, early conduct problems, disadvantaged and unstable social contexts that a child is born. Sampson and Laub apply Hirschi's social bond theory to their life-course perspective (see also Laub, Sampson, & Sweeten, 2006; Vito, Maahs, & Holmes, 2007) and argued informal social control that leads to desistance from crime or when offenders acquire quality social bonds – such as a "good" marriage or a "good" job they discontinue law violations, whereas others continue offending. Those who do not experience these changes or have disruptive family or employment experiences are more likely to persist in offending. The stability of causative factors in the social environment at one age produces stability of behaviour; changes in those same factors produce changes in behaviour

through the life course primarily through their effects on informal social control. Hence age-specific rates for offenses increase rapidly during adolescence, peak in the late teenage and early adult years, and then decline thereafter.

2.5.3 Section summary

In my view, the recruitment and involvement of Samoan young people in gangs is a complicated process and a single theoretical explanation would exclude many potentially important stages and factors. A more complete picture of ethnic minority gangs can be most productively explored using diverse forms of information within a multivariate design. For this study, Samoan young people's socialization experiences within the family, school, church and the neighbourhood community because each of these institutions will influence their development and decisions. Tracking their socialization experiences could also reveal other influential dimensions not reported in the literature like the role that Samoan cultural identity or fa'asamoa can play in explaining Samoan young people's participation in youth gangs. However, as Elster (2007) points out, the use of integrated theory is not about just putting together concepts like poor family, school and church socialization experiences together and then deducing involvement in gangs. More importantly, it is about finding the links that connect specific factors in these various contexts that lead Samoan young people to delinquency and gangs.

Samoan young people's relationships with their parents, school teachers, church people and neighbours do change, these rarely stay the same and change is almost inevitable. From their early childhood memories through to youth and later young adulthood the socialization experience in each of these institutional contexts is always changing and this is a very important consideration for this study. It is important to understand different parts of the socialization experience for Samoan young people and then link

them to explain things like why they join a gang. But it is also equally vital that these same parts are thought of as active stages of the Samoan young person's life span as well. Socialization is a dynamic and constantly changing experience so any theory purporting to account for affiliations to youth gangs must be fluid and versatile and incorporate things like physical, social, emotional, and psychological maturation and subsequent changes in a Samoan young person's life. One integrated theory, the developmental life course approach, forms this study's theoretical foundation.

Given the importance of integrated theory to the study there are also areas that need to be addressed as well. I am interested in determining whether there is specific pattern or order that Samoan young people experience in the lead up to gang life. For example, Elliot et al., (1979 & 1985) integrated theory began with combining strain and control theories by arguing that when individuals experience an excessive amount of strain their control or the things that control them weakens. Then Elliot and his colleagues applied social learning principles like reinforcement and conditioning behaviour for good or bad behaviour. From there Elliot and his colleagues were able to merge all three theories into one by referring to the socialization experience as the common denominator. Would the study find a similar pattern or would it be different if it adopted a similar approach? Would it involve all three theories or just the combination of two theories? Would the study reveal a new theory and how would it fit-in with the integrated theory approach and existing classical and contemporary delinquency theories? What anti-gang strategies can be developed based on the integrated theory framework?

In terms of developmental life course theory, what about the changes to the cultural development of the Samoan young person? How much of a factor is culture for the development of Samoan young people and gangs? What would be the reasons that Samoan young people would leave the

gang? What changes have Samoan young people experienced in their socialization journey since childhood and were any of these turning points or critical events in the lead up to being involved in gangs? Moffitt (1993 & 2006) distinguishes delinquents as either adolescent-limited offenders (deviancy generally stops before adulthood) or life-course persistent offenders (deviancy continues onto adulthood and may be beyond). How relevant would this finding be for the study? How relevant would background structural factors be for the study? Overall the study is satisfied and relieved to locate and adopt integrated theory as its theoretical framework but given the unique features of this study (Samoan youth gangs) it is about making integrated theory fit the study's objectives particularly the research design rather than the other way around.

2.6 Chapter summary

In closing there are three important lessons for consideration from the theoretical framework outlined above and in moving forward to the next chapter. Firstly, the international literature on both socialization and delinquency theories is very comprehensive and strong. While most of what is referenced in this chapter is sourced from America, there is also material from the United Kingdom, various parts in Europe and Asia. There was a lot of research available on ethnic minorities in the US, UK, Europe and Asia but these tended to be cross-sectional, quantitative studies, and dependent on public records. There were longitudinal studies but a lot fewer and very few focused on the Pacific and cross cultural research. Only a few studies were from the Pacific region and this was surprising because without a *Pacific criminology* the study was forced to adopt theoretical perspectives that perhaps did not fit the Pacific context. But the dearth of information on Pacific ethnic minorities and patterns of delinquency makes this study both original and potentially valuable.

Secondly, the two main theories, Socialization and Delinquency, constitute the theoretical entry points for this study toward understanding youth phenomena. It is worth noting that while there is a huge body of theory and evidence, much of it has been generated in a particular societal context: Anglo-American youth in the US which gives it a particular focus and emphasis. It has been necessary to follow up discussion of these research findings with some commentary on the differences between the societal contexts in which the findings have been generated and the context of this study, and on their relevance for this study. This chapter has covered general theories of deviance/ delinquency and each was followed with a comment on how they had been applied cross-culturally (except for section 2.5), and some commentary based on my experiences as both a Samoan and a social worker with young Samoans. The purpose of this approach was to incorporate *cultural capital* into theories being explored and to acknowledge members of ethnic minorities whose definitions of situations may differ from those of members of the dominant culture. Furthermore, the ways US juveniles, brought up in a meritocratic society with a highly developed human rights discourse and an emphasis on personal freedom, come to see options and come to understand the personal and social consequences of their non-conformity and deviance, may be very different from the ways in which Samoan youth brought up in a gerontocracy in which they are made highly aware of the persons, and more particularly the social, consequences of non-conformity and deviance.

Finally, the majority of the research literature discussed above highlighted key features of the delinquency theories covered in this chapter and the various methods on which they had drawn when applied. The vast majority of classic single-themed delinquency theories were generally shaped by research surveys and cross-sectional in design; that is they did not follow young people over time but rather studied them by taking a "slice" or "cross section" of their lives at one time and place. Although

cross-sectional studies are time and cost effective, what is more important, particularly for this study, is tracing what is happening in an individual's life over several years during which they are making key choices. Studying the goings on in someone's life from childhood through to youth and into young adulthood is challenging. But a cross-sectional method limits the collected information to generalities and lacks depth and richness. Thus, this study will not employ a cross-sectional approach but a life history/ life story method which allows participants to reconstruct key periods of their lives and to reflect on the events which led to certain key choices without being constrained by researcher imposed frameworks or models.

Chapter 3 Method

3.0 Introduction

A cross-sectional design entails the collection of data on more than one case (usually quite a lot more than one) and at a single point in time in order to collect a body of quantitative or quantifiable information in connection with two or more variables (usually many more than two), which are then examined to detect patterns of association. There are two main advantages: first, the nature of cross-sectional studies offers a quick and easy way for the researcher to quickly amass data where the assessment of outcomes and risk factors for the entire population is done with little trouble and a near-perfect snapshot of the whole. Second, the ease of gathering the needed information translates to cost-effectiveness as many government agencies have the information already in hand, saving the researcher the trouble of gathering it, what would have been a time-consuming and expensive activity (see Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1987; Green, 1990; Menard & Elliot, 1990). On the other hand, however, there are also two problems with cross-sectional research designs. Firstly, it does not provide a good basis for establishing causality like when it argues that two distinct variables are measured at the same point in time is related somehow, but it cannot positively determine if one caused the other (Davies, 1994; Murray & Erickson, 1987). The second problem is it cannot distinguish factors, for example, factors associated with youth gangs from factors associated with Samoan youth gangs (Weis, 1986). So while it is cost effective, responsive and efficient it is also shallow in its explanations and vague in its determination of causes and effects, making it unsuitable for this study's choice of method.

The longitudinal research design is the opposite of a cross-sectional design. It is an observational study which involves repeated observations over long periods of time, sometimes even decades (Blumstein, Cohen, & Farrington, 2006; Deschenes, 1990; Thornberry & Porther, 2001). It is also a correlation research study that involves observations of the same items over long periods of time like developmental trends across the life span or tracking people using multiple variables such as ethnicity and investigates cultural differences across generations. A large number of variables is often examined because the researchers are unsure what information may prove to be important or required later in the research; although the researcher still has to decide what variables to study and the examination of so many limits the extent to which they impose their own theories on the research. Unlike cross-sectional studies, which look at different people, longitudinal studies look at the same person(s) for a long period of time, this could mean that they are less likely to be the result of cultural differences throughout generations, and because of this, it means that people can track the changes easily if there are any made. So longitudinal research designs that utilise various methods like Life History/ Life Story allows researchers to look at changes over time, studying development and social issues such as youth gang involvement, and thus becomes the choice of method for this study.

Having established this study's research method; a qualitative approach called Life History/ Life Story, the main research questions for the study have an instrument for which information can be derived to test, measure, confirm and substantiate whether socialization and delinquency theories are adequate or not, and whether it is possible to minimize or eliminate or not the attraction of youth gangs on Samoan young people:

(i) *Do socialization and delinquency theories adequately explain Samoan young people's involvement in youth gangs? If so, how? If not, why not?*

Is it possible to minimize or eliminate the attraction of youth gangs on Samoan young people? If so, how? If not, why not?

Thus this chapter provides a detailed description of the study's method and how its processes enable the researcher to answer the aforementioned research questions. It is made up of three main sections. Section 3.1 explores the Life History/ Life Story method's historical origins as well as its strengths and limitations. Section 3.2 is the research strategy or research design and presents the research processes as in the participant recruitment and selection procedures, the information-collection and management approach, the analytical framework and its processes, and theoretical interpretations. Section 3.3 discusses the ethical issues in the preparation and duration stages of the study and presents two cases to do with managing criminal disclosure and the risk of harm to the researcher. Finally, section 3.4 is the chapter summary that canvasses the ideological, practical and critical strengths of the Life history/ Life story method to highlight why it is regarded as the study's preferred methodology.

3.1 The Life History/ Life Story Method

"A life story is the story a person chooses to tell about the life he or she has lived, told as completely and honestly as possible, what is remembered of it and what the teller wants others to know of it, usually as a result of a guided interview by another" (Atkinson, 1998, p. 8).

According to Atkinson (1998) there are four defining characteristics of the term Life History/ Life Story. Firstly, a life story is a narrative about the subjective essence of one person's entire life. A life lived, experienced, and told. A life lived is what actually has happened. A life experienced consists of the images, feelings, opinions, ideas, actions and meaning known to the person whose life it is. A life told, then, is a narrative or

several narratives influenced by the cultural conventions of telling, by the audience, and by the social context (see Bruner, 1984; Moen, 2009). The second and third defining feature appears in the last line of the Atkinson's quote, "...a result of a guided interview by another", which suggests that there is a method for eliciting and presenting the subjective essence of one person's life ("guided interview"), and the role that the researcher ("interview by another") plays in the relationship is significant in terms of collecting, analysing and interpreting the storyteller's perspective. The fourth and final defining feature is the outcome, a successful exploration of life-as-a-whole, an in-depth study of individual lives, and from a sociological viewpoint, instrumental in locating patterns in life stories which point to the ways in which socialization shape an individual's life chances in a particular society. So a life history method is about the retelling of a person's life through an interview where the interviewer is tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that it is representative, accurate, and meaningful.

That said, the next sub-section, begins with an overview of Life History/ Life Story historical beginnings as based on two classical works that grew in prominence and both responsible for it becoming a distinguished research method. Later the sub-section explores the strengths and limitations of the method, where at one stage the method's popularity diminished around the 1930s and 1940s and then surged back into favour from the 1960s onwards.

3.1.1 Historical Origins

The historical origin of the life story technique was as a subset of the life history method. The early status of the life history was achieved by W.I. Thomas and F. Znaniecki's 1918 massive study, *The Polish Peasant* in Europe and America and Clifford R. Shaw's 1930 multiple delinquent life stories *The Jack Roller* (Harrison, 2009; Plummer, 2001 & 2009; Roberts,

2002). Thomas and Znaniecki's publication was originally published in five volumes (1918-1920) or 2,250 pages of research that featured personal documents including the 300 pages of Wladek's life and was regarded as a key theoretical and methodological achievement at the time. The publication of the life story of Wladek, a Polish immigrant, describes his early life and movement from a village community to his life and fortunes in America. An important feature was the wide range of materials the authors had collected and analysed including over 700 letters between immigrants in America and families in Poland, accounts from Polish newspaper archives, records, from social work, court and Polish-American organisations (Bulmer, 1983; Plummer, 1983; Roberts, 2002).

Clifford R. Shaw utilized the stories of youths alongside a range of other material in his studies of delinquency. For example, *The Jack Roller* (1930) is regarded as a classic early sociological example of the life history method, which draws on a huge amount of detail regarding the collection of Stanley's life such as his negative family socialization experiences that causes him to become a delinquent (see Gelsthorpe, 2007). His father remarried and he gained new half-sisters and brothers but it is from this point in Stanley's life that he shares with Shaw, when his stepmother feeds her own children first and his father turns into a violent man who drank alcohol excessively and abused his family, where he started to spend more time out in the streets, running away often, being arrested and placed numerous times in detention homes, and arrests for stealing and truanting. The collection of Stanley's life included numerous life story interviews; written accounts by Stanley, and a range of official records (police, social work) were all consulted and used to compare with the events described. As a result Stanley's story has become one of the most famous lives in sociology and was later updated when he was elderly (Snodgras, 1982).

Furthermore, most accounts of *The Jack Roller* view the life story as illustrating and explaining the theories around crime (Plummer, 2001; Roberts, 2002). Indeed, Clifford R. Shaw can in part be seen as assembling the story so that it speaks to such theoretical insights as learning crime (differential association theory), the impact of the city (social disorganization theory), and the power of stigma and stereotype (labelling theory). The book became a landmark criminology study, reprinted in 1966 and again in 1999. Hence, these two major publications achieved an almost canonical status and signalled a seminal shaping moment in the development of the sociology of life stories. Both *The Polish Peasant* and *The Jack Roller* were the first major empirical studies completed within the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago (Bulmer, 1983) (see section 2.1.2). The use of life stories as a research source has a long history within sociology and is most often associated with the work of William I. Thomas, Robert Park and their colleagues at the University of Chicago during the early years of the twentieth century, which was informed by a commitment to uncover and interpret the meanings attached to interaction, and so understand the ordinary lives of individuals and the variety of cultural groups of Chicago city (see Angell, 1945; Bulmer, 1984; Denzin, 1970).

However, during the late 1930s and 1940s the life history method also came under attack (an issue we will revisit in section 3.1.3) especially by proponents of the cross-sectional methods. As Becker (2009) noted, sociologists became more concerned with the development of abstract theory and correspondingly less interested in full and detailed accounts of specific organizations and communities. Sociologists began to separate the fields. Other methods prospered as attention to criteria of reliability, validity, sampling and representativeness seemed to find the more time-consuming, subjective life history wanting (Denzin, 1989). These were positivist methods which became popular as sociology sought to claim a place in the sciences. Nevertheless, the use of biography did not die

within sociology and from the 1960s the life history method began to revive.

3.1.2 Strengths

There were at least three reasons for the resurgence of the life story method, which are also strengths and why I decided to use this approach for this study. First, the method especially its life story interviewing process is said to be a therapeutic experience where talking is a form of stress release but can also be detrimental in terms of reminding the storyteller of his mistakes. Second, the life story method yields rich amounts of data making for plentiful opportunities to identify potential ideas and build on these but the researchers need to ensure that it is the ideas of the storyteller that is important not the researcher. Third, the life story method is similar to a Pacific approach called 'talanoa', which makes it a culturally appropriate and relevant method for this study but not for others especially those who are not familiar with Pacific methodology.

The first reason is an important unintended consequence and an unanticipated reaction of the life story interview; its therapeutic effect (Atkinson, 1998; Plummer, 2001). Although this is a research thesis, not an intervention per se, so mention of 'therapeutic' experience when talking about interviewing techniques may not be appropriate terminology. The distinction is in fact between 'narrative therapy' (which is an intervention method) and 'appreciative inquiry' (which is a research approach). As a former youth justice social worker, I believe that for many young people, the sharing of their life stories is something that they really want to do because all that most young people usually need is someone to listen to them and to show an interest in what they have to say, what they have experienced, and what they think is the best solution. The ability of the social worker to get youth offenders to be honest, for example, relies on

being a good and active listener, sensitivity and open mindedness as well as being able to establish trust and respect.

The encouragement of youth offenders to tell the truth and be open and honest with oneself and others when discussing stressful situations and emotional problems is what Blanton (1996) calls radical honesty, wherein telling the truth sets the person free. This is what the narrative approach used by therapists, counsellors, or other professional helpers, is about, a guided means for assisting their clients to get to the details of their lives that may provide insight for understanding long-term patterns, issues, struggles, or dilemmas they are dealing with.

For White and Epston (1990) "storytelling" or "restorying" or both is a very important process as one's life provides opportunities to create new and possibly liberating narratives. However this does not mean that everyone will experience the life story interview in the same way. Some may look back on certain parts of their lives with regret; for others, it could even be a painful process, and for some will fabricate and exaggerate elements of their story (this will be discussed further in section 3.1.3). But even these kinds of reactions to the interview could have positive outcomes for the storyteller, but not necessarily for the research. Nevertheless, if the research literature leans toward the life story method having a positive dual-effect (quality information gathering and healing deep-rooted hurts by disclosure) and less negative effect then for the study it is an essential accommodation because youth gang members will also benefit greatly from the experience.

An appreciative inquiry is methodology that builds on people's strengths and empowers and motivates them to discover, imagine and locate the energy for change and improve their lives (Cooperrider, 1987; Easley, 1999; Easley, Yaeger & Sorensen, 2002). It requires the researcher to strip away the publicized concept of the gang; the images seen in movies, the

descriptions in newspapers, and all the other veneer to see gang members for what they are, simply young people and to discover what is to be appreciated about gangs. To look beyond the "hardness" that they attempt to project and help them find their inner beauty and to look within their hearts and move beyond negativity. Appreciative Inquiry also makes more sense in terms of the emphasis on culturally relevant methods, such as those that tap into existing oral traditions. To know that somebody is interested in one's life and willing to record it in great detail is uplifting to the storyteller because he or she feels valued and important. Telling a life story can often help the person clarify or understand something that might not have been understood as much as possible before the telling. Hence it can be likened to a psychotherapy approach known as the "talking cure" (see Heatton, 2010; Vaughan, 1997), where what is done in therapy is telling our story to someone who is trained to help us understand, interpret, and learn from our story better than we are able to so on our own. Accordingly the sharing of one's story is a way of purging, or releasing, certain strains and validating personal experience; it is in fact central to the recovery process. So even though the term "therapeutic" may or may not be the appropriate label because this is a research thesis and not an intervention per se, the fact remains that any form of interviewing where participants are viewed as the expert, where their voice is heard and where they themselves say that they feel better after talking and sharing their story are important strengths of life history/ life story methodology.

The second reason for the resurgence of the method and also another strength is how the life history/ life story approach allows researchers to develop new ideas about stories or lives from the participants and not necessarily led by the literature (this is revisited in section 3.2.4). As Coffey & Atkinson (1996) argues a particular life, or a group of life stories, could lead researchers to generalizing or maybe even building a theory of how people see their own lives, or what is important to people, or what a

life story means in terms of social contexts. If a life story provides a new idea about how things connect especially those things that are not common such as fa'asamoa then this new knowledge becomes a very powerful piece of information. In other words a particular life story provides a new idea about how things connect in our own life; how our own life experience is similar to another person; or how people may be better understood. The interviewee's version of how and why things are connected through their story can be generalized and thus to explanatory principles such as causes and effects (see Dey, 1993). This will be a very important step for the study particularly during the preliminary (transcription and thematic mapping processses) and the full analysis stages (coding and triangulation) when interpretation and settling on key themes to write about begin to take shape that are largely based on the interviewee's story and the literature as a secondary backup resource.

There are numerous ideas, and many interpretive traditions, to help inform the new theorizing about life story narratives. Denzin (1989) suggests that ideas can be generated by interpreting key turning points or moments of crises in people's lives; high points and low points may be of greatest interest (see also section 3.2.2). Or as Becker (2009) observes, *The Jack Roller* enables researchers to improve their conceptualization and theorization at the most profound level: by putting ourselves in Stanley's shoes, where researchers can feel and become aware of the deep biases about such people that ordinarily permeate our thinking and shape the kind of problems researchers investigate. By truly entering into Stanley's life, researchers can begin to see what they need to consider when designing research because his life story allows researchers to ask questions about delinquency from the point of view of the delinquent. So for this study, not only are life stories particularly useful for generating new ideas (or themes), these ideas originate from the storyteller, the researchers are telling the storyteller's story according to the storyteller not the researcher.

The third and final reason for the method's resurgence and also another key strength is the subjective narrative of the life story to help the researcher understand a life from the interviewee's point of view (Josselson, 1996; Josselson & Lieblich, 1993 & 1995; Lieblich & Josselson, 1994 & 1997). It keeps the presentation of the method in the words of the storyteller and the finished product (the findings chapters 4, 5, and 6) is entirely a first-person-narrative; with the researcher removed as much as possible from the text. This is very appealing to this study because given the comprehensive outline of socialization and delinquency theories canvassed in chapter two, most of this information was informed by cross-sectional studies that were objective and monocultural, but this method provides an opportunity for bicultural and multicultural perspectives to be discovered, and potentially increase and enhance the experiences of lesser-known narratives and life stories such as Samoan people in Bloods youth gangs in New Zealand (hard to reach population groups) and thus assist all researchers from all walks of life to understand what and how things like how fa'asamoa plays a role or not in the youth gang phenomenon as told by the voices of those who are the experts.

This makes the life story method itself not only capable of generating a primary document created by collaboration between the researcher and the interviewee or the storyteller but also a culturally appropriate and relevant research method for researching Pacific-specific issues. Samoan people are an oral society where talanoa or talking and talanoaga or discussion is a fundamental aspect of its culture because its language, traditions, practices, and ideologies have survived generation after generation through oral transfer from the parent to the child (cultural socialization). It is better to research Pacific things by speaking to Pacific people rather than sending them an email survey to complete. It is better to go to where they live and allow them to host you and have a face-to-face conversation rather than conducting a telephone questionnaire. It is

culturally appropriate to spend time getting to know Pacific people before a formal research method is applied as this a respectful, sincere, and culturally sensitive especially when the research project comes to the end and the researcher is no longer interested in the Pacific participants. All these things are part of the talanoa methodology. In my Master's thesis called *Talanoa ile I'a: Talk to the Fish – Talking to Pacific young people in West Auckland about health* (Faleolo, 2003), I used the talanoa method through focus groups because I knew that the best way to find out about what are the important youth health issues for Pacific young people is to ask them directly. By having a conversation with them which is the key to engaging Pacific young people (talanoaga or discussion), the study can potentially yield quality and rich information that proves valuable for addressing Pacific youth health related issues, informing policy, and creative social work interventions. Hence, for these reasons the talanoa method, in my opinion, is similar to the life history/ life story method, and instead of using focus groups, a one-to-one interviewing method is preferred, where collaboration is more intimate and more importantly, where there is more time for the interviewees to take his time, chose what he wants to share, and not be worried whether what he is sharing is right or wrong. This study is greatly strengthened by the advantages that the life story method offers as it will provide further understanding to other researchers about the value of Pacific methodology as well as how it is applied, analysed, evaluated and presented (see also Faleolo, 2009).

3.1.3 Limitations

The irony, however, is that the strengths of the life history method outlined above (not all of them), are also its weaknesses. On the other side of the coin there are two limitations. First, the method's therapeutic effect not only has an upside but also a downside as the retelling of memories is not only an outlet for stress release but also becomes a further traumatic experience. Second, the method creates an exciting

opportunity to yield rich information, in-depth experiences, and detailed accounts of causes and effects; however, it also means it is susceptible to bias and questions about its representativeness, reliability and validity.

The first limitation for the method is a challenge to the claim that its approach is therapeutic. As Harrison (2009) comments about the research contexts for life stories, the often deeply personal nature of the information that is revealed in their narrative themselves raises issues of potential trauma and counters claims that such interviews are often therapeutic. This is a fair warning and would mean the interviewer must be attentive to any signs of discomfort either in the question being asked or in the behaviour leading up to and after the answer is given. Unlocking a past hurt and then reliving it could be a painful experience for the storytellers and equally damaging to the quality of the information being collected and to the relationship between the storyteller and the researcher. The researcher could be accused of playing with another person's life because the privileged access he is afforded to be the receiver of the interviewee's story and could easily exploit their story to suit the researcher's agenda over theirs. As a former social worker with over a decade worth of experience in working with youth offenders there are countless interview situations where anticipating and responding effectively are some of the ways to address situations where the retelling of stories becomes an uncomfortable experience.

The second limitation is related to its strength in being able to draw out lots of information to develop new ideas and sensitize a researcher to key issues. There is a lot of responsibility loaded on the researcher to represent the storyteller's story accurately otherwise it is susceptible to criticism. For example it could be challenged by scientific evaluation standards of representativeness (is what said really representative of the population of interest), reliability (if the research strategy for this study was repeated would the findings be the same?), and validity (can the

interpretation of the data by the researcher be trusted?) (see Burgess, 1923; Hammersley, 1990; section 3.2.3).   For example, Blumer is simultaneously full of praise for Thomas and Znaniecki's study, *The Polish Peasant*, which gained distinction for presenting the subjective factors of social life and for introducing the life history technique (Blumer, 1979), while being mildly critical about their ability to match basic scientific requirements. The negative evaluation is very clear see below:

> *"The letters and the life histories were not drawn from an established representative sample; there was no way of telling whether the letters included all of the important subjective experiences of their writers bearing on their given actions; we do not know if the separate accounts given in the documents were honest and truthful…"* (Blumer, 1979, p. xxix)

In other words, Blumer is suggesting that in order for Thomas and Znaniecki's landmark study, *The Polish Peasant*, to have any scientific credence, its usage of human documents needs to be representative, its research design reliable and its interpretations validated. Reliability is primarily concerned with technique and consistency – with ensuring that if the study was conducted by someone else, similar findings would be obtained. Validity is primarily concerned with making sure that the technique is actually studying what it is supposed to do. While this study is not using human documents but human subjects it is still vulnerable to the same criticism that Thomas and Znaniecki's study, *The Polish Peasant*, received and concerns around bias. After all, this study is led by a Samoan researching a Samoan topic with Samoan participants using a Samoan methodology and later reports on Samoan-related findings and recommendations. In social science research generally, three domains of bias are traditionally recognized; those arising from the participant being interviewed, those arising from the conduct of the researcher and those arising from the participant-researcher interaction.

In the first domain, the interviewee may lie, cheat, present a false front or try to impress the interviewer in some way. The second domain is concerned with the interviewer, who might hold prejudices and assumptions which influences the design and delivery of the questions, for example, a 'non-directive' interviewer might be accused of harbouring the desire to encourage the interviewee to tell the more outrageous and problematic things in his or her life, thereby encouraging a distortion of the more sensational episodes (see Webb, Campbell, Schwartz & Sechrest, 1966). In the last domain bias may creep in through the very interactional encounter itself and sometimes the interview may be seen as an elaborate dramaturgical presentation or performance (Denzin, 1978, p. 123-33; Goffman, 1959). There is difficulty in assessing how much of the personal life of the interviewer should be considered given that during the interview dynamics, such as how much to reveal about himself in 'sharing stories', in building trust, establishing 'credibility' or establishing 'solidarity' (see Atkinson, 1998; Roberts, 2002; Sparkes, 1994). So the opportunity for bias to become a prevailing influence in life story method is apparent and while its strength lies in its ability to elicit an abundance of information and catalyses theory-building processes such as new ideas about how things connect, similar life experiences with other people, and the first steps toward generalizing from one life story; the very nature of this process can also be problematic because of its susceptibility to bias.

Regardless, there are more strengths than limitations, and life story method's particularly its emphasis on lesser researcher intervention and every opportunity for the storyteller to control and lead the discussion is very appealing and appropriate for this study. The issues of potential bias can be addressed by ensuring that there are checkpoints in the research strategy to eliminate bias such as having the life story method, the research design, the interview schedule, to be scrutinised by credible organization like the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC). And by checkpoints, MUHEC is one of them, another are the

participants (especially post transcript stage), and the advisory group overseeing this study to its completion. Thus the life story method carries more strengths than limitations as it enables the storyteller to take his time, to choose (to a certain extent) what he wants to say, to see the interviewer as a friend to confide in, and to view the interview as an outlet to express things he is unable to say in other contexts (family, school, church). Despite the likelihood of creating further traumatic experiences rather than therapeutic effects and bias this study is still committed to adopting the life story method as its preferred methodology, what is left is to choose important components and build an effect research strategy to source potential participants, to elicit quality information, to process this information with a robust analytical framework so as to identify key themes and answers to research questions, and then to make conclusions and recommendations afterwards. This study's methodology includes a qualitative life story method and the following research strategy in the next section.

3.2 Research Strategy

This section outlines the study's research design and illustrates the tool that generated evidence and answers to the research questions set out in section 3.0. The research design reflects the priority being given to a range of dimensions of the research process such as expressing and understanding behaviour and the meaning of that behaviour in its specific social context as well as having a temporal (that is, over time) appreciation of social phenomena and their interconnections. That said, there are four sub-sections: section 3.2.1 describes the process leading up to the recruitment and selection of twenty-five gang members as volunteer participants; section 3.2.2 reports on the information-collection and management processes; section 3.3.2 discusses the analytical approach based on thematic mapping, pattern matching and triangulation; and

section 3.2.4 establishes the study's theory and research relationship as based on an inductive approach rather than a deductive one.

3.2.1 Participant recruitment and selection

This sub-section traces the shift in sampling strategy: from purposive to snowballing as a result of the initial group of recruited participants from a New Zealand police youth programme promoted and attracted their friends and fellow gang members to be interviewed.

Recruitment is the dialogue which takes place between a researcher and a potential participant prior to the initiation of the consent process. It begins with the identification, targeting and enlistment of volunteer participants for a research study. It involves providing information to the potential participants and generating their interest in the proposed study (Decker & van Winkle, 1996; Densley, 2012; Hagedorn, 1996; Moore, 1991). Twenty-five male participants was being sought who were either full or mixed Samoan ethnicity, aged sixteen years and over, grew up in the South Auckland area either all or most of their lives, and currently in a youth gang at the time of the interview. The size of the study or how many life stories were to be collected (twenty-five) was assumed to be sufficient to represent the youth gang population. As Roberts (2002) observes in the classical life stories such as the life of Stanley in *The Jack Roller* (Shaw, 1930 & 1966) and Wladek in *The Polish Peasant* (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918 & 1958), both generated huge volumes of information centred on a single individual who were both perceived as representative and typical of others like them at the time. So the number of participants to be recruited was not important for this study but to gain a willingness to be involved and consent from potential volunteers.

The initial sampling strategy was purposive where selection was based on the knowledge of a population and the purpose of this study (Bryman,

2012; Morse, 2006; Patton, 2002; Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Purposive sampling operates on the principle that we can get the best information through focusing on a relatively small number of instances deliberately selected on the basis of their known attributes (that is, not through random selection). It works on the basis that the researcher already knows something about the specific people or events and deliberately selects particular ones because they are seen as instances that are likely to produce the most valuable data. This was the motivation that led to the recruitment of three volunteers drawn from a New Zealand police youth programme for youth offenders and gang members. A formal application to the *New Zealand Police Research and Evaluation Steering Committee* (RESC) was made, who scrutinized and adjudicated over the intentions and the potential ethical dilemmas of this study, and found no issue and authorised this study to gain access to their clients (see Appendix A and section 3.3.1). Police youth worker, Mr Alaelua Malesala Malesala was very instrumental in his support of this study's selection needs and the three participants it gained was due to his relationship he had with the volunteers and his endorsement of the study's intention and confidence in the researcher.

The three volunteers shifted the study's sampling strategy from purposive to snowballing, – also known as chain referral sampling – which is a non-probability sampling technique that is appropriate to use in research when the members of a population are difficult to locate (Biemacki & Waldorf, 1981; Dawson & Gifford, 2003; Liamputtong, 2009; Lichtenstein & Nansel, 2000). In this strategy, participants or informants with who contact has already been made use their social networks to refer the researcher to other people who could potentially participate in or contribute to the study. It often used to find and recruit "hidden populations," that is, groups not easily accessible to researchers through other sampling strategies. Snowball sampling is hardly likely to lead to a representative sample, but there are times when it may be the best or only method available. For instance, if you are studying the homeless, you are not likely

to find a list of all the homeless people in your city. However, if you identify one or two homeless individuals that are willing to participate in your study, it is likely that they know other homeless individuals in their area and can help you locate them.

As a result a total twenty-five volunteer participants were recruited for interviewing. Sample sizes, which may or may not be fixed prior to information-collection, depend on the resources and time available, as well as the study's objectives. The size and number of potential interviewees was not important but for this study it was apparent after twenty interviews that theoretical saturation had set it in (the point in information-collection when new information no longer bring additional insights to the research questions) and interviewing stopped at twenty-five. However both purposive and snowball sampling strategies were instrumental in the recruitment and selection of the twenty-five volunteer interviewees, and where it was most successful was when data information review and analysis was done in conjunction with information-collection.

3.2.2 Information-collection and management

This sub-section describes the life story interview process including the designing of the interview schedule, the style of interviewing the researcher employed, and the management of the collected information.

Information-collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes (Smith, 1994; Atkinson, 2002; Gramling & Carr, 2004). The information-collection component of research is common to all fields of study including physical and social sciences, humanities, business, and others. While methods vary by discipline, the emphasis on ensuring

accurate and honest collection remains the same. So all the life story interviews began with coverage of the *Information Sheet* (see Appendix B) and included the following discussion points: clarifying the purpose of the study, compensation for their contribution, what their information will be used for and how it will be kept confidential, letting the researcher know if they felt uncomfortable about any question, that their identity and other identifiable features will be anonymous (street names, school names, church name, course identity, and others), when to withdraw from the interview or study, what would happen after the interview, and the researcher's obligation to the police as part of the RESC approval that was mentioned previously.

Afterwards, I read out aloud the information outlined in the *Consent Form* (see Appendix C): consent to the interview being sound recorded, the return of recordings, to have information placed in an official archive, and participation under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet. Lastly, I also read out aloud information outlined in the *Transcript Release Authority Form* (see Appendix D): that the participants have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript on the interviews conducted with me, that the edited transcript and extracts may be used in reports and publications, and confirmation that no identifying will be included in the thesis and any other publications or presentations. All twenty-five volunteer participants understood what was explained to them and signed each form to signal their consent.

The design of the life story interview schedule was based on Plummer (2001) and Patton's (2002) recommendations in order to satisfactorily fulfil the purpose and objectives of this study (see section 1.3). Both author's suggestions were also appropriate in order to explore the range of socialization experiences such as family, school, church and the neighbourhood and the origins and impact of delinquency in terms of strain, control, and learning theories as outlined in the previous chapter

and thus the need for a wide range of question types. Lastly, both the author's suggestions will also enable this study's two research questions to be answered successfully.

According to Patton he suggested framing questions based on six types: experience ("In a gang fight, what would I see?"), opinion ("What do you think about gangs?"), feelings ("How did you feel about being locked up?"), knowledge ("What do you know about methamphetamine?"), sensory ("When you went to see the counsellor what did he say to you?"), and background or demographic information (Age, ethnicity, area they grew up in, and others). Whereas Plummer proposed five types: Substantive questions (or "*What*" questions to establish what I needed to know); Social Science questions (or "*Why*" questions to produce the knowledge I needed to know); Technical questions (or "*How*" questions to describe the evolution of what I found out); Ethical and Political questions to contextualise what I found out including the political justification for the study and the ethical implications involved in it; and lastly, Personal questions, which concerns the dual impact of the research on the researcher's life and the researched person's life.

The result was an integration of Patton and Plummer's suggestions to develop this study's Life History Interview Schedule (see Appendix E). The only change was the inclusion of culturally-related questions. The Life History interview schedule was divided into three exercises: exercise one – Tracing the individual's socialization; exercise two – Measuring the individual's socialization; and exercise three – Future/Summary. Under each exercise there were various sub-sections based on tracing different aspects of the participant's socialization development. For example, in exercise one there were five areas for inquiry: cultural identity development; personality and behavioural development; social development (family structure and functioning); societal socialization (school, religion, and neighbourhood); and lastly, gang socialization

(explores the learning to be gang member theme). The second exercise measures the participant's socialization using indicators such as choosing between two variables in terms of more and less importance such as question 6.0 – Which is important to you, your Samoan identity or gang identity? While the last exercise asks participations to reflect and ponder about their future, the future of their relationships, their other responsibilities like fatherhood, and come up with how they would advise someone against wanting to join a gang (see question 9.01) and what strategies or solutions do they recommend in order to minimize or eliminate the attractiveness of gangs. This is an important area of this study because it got participants to think about desisting, to think about where they would be in five or ten years, and for those participants who were fathers, for example, – what if their son arrived home from school wearing gang colours, what would they do?

An open-ended interview style was employed with the researcher playing a passive role (listening and being attentive) only entering into the dialogue to ask further questions or keep the interviewees on track. The researcher's interview style did not change much only on a few occasions such as if it looked like the participant did not understand the question I would paraphrase and re-ask the question. Sometimes I re-asked a question using what I learned from listening to the participants talk I would replace certain words in the question with words that the participants were very familiar (essentially their language). For example, instead of asking, "Did you do any crime?", instead I asked, "Did you do any slanging (sell drugs), one-outs (fights with rival gang members), horse it (very intoxicated), or on the fryz (consume methamphetamine before going to gang fight)." This strategy proved very helpful in terms of getting the participant to understand exactly what the question meant. Not only were questions modified to suit, I also read the body language, mannerisms and reactions and responded accordingly. For instance, if an interviewee appeared tired or restless, or emotional and anxious, I would

stop the interview, even though it was not a planned break, to allow interviewees time out, have a cigarette or think about something else. When the interview resumed the gang members seemed more relaxed and enthusiastic in providing further details about their life history.

In total over a hundred hours of digital audio recordings was collected from two interview sessions staged on two separate days running for four to five hours each time. After eighteen months of intensive field work information-collection the researcher stopped at twenty-five interviewees because no new information and knowledge was apparent. With the information-collection plan in place, the next aspect I considered was how to manage the size so it became necessary to plan processes to begin synthesizing, analysing, and eventually reduce its volume to manageable proportions that could be transformed into key chapters of a thesis ready for write up. Thus the researcher needed to develop files which would make key themes, topics, and subjects rapidly available for analysis and archiving (see Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Plummer, 2001).

3.2.3 Analysis

This sub-section discusses the analytical framework for this study based on a preliminary analysis and followed by a full analysis. The preliminary analysis occurred during the interview process as after seven interviews some commonalities in their answers also revealed patterns, trends, and circumstances leading toward possible themes. It was also apparent during the transcribing stage which commenced not long after the interview. Thus the full analysis started after all interviews were transcribed and checked by the participants and included the generation of themes through coding, identifying descriptive information, taking into account control measures such as consistency, and the use of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software throughout. As Rubin and Rubin (2005) describes below:

"Data analysis is the process of moving from raw interviews to evidence-based interpretations that are the foundations of published reports. Analysis entails classifying, comparing, weighing and combining material (obtained during data collection) to extract the meaning and implications, to reveal patterns, or to stitch together description of events into a coherent narrative" (p.201).

The movement from 'raw materials to evidence-based interpretations' began with the commencement of the transcribing stage. Self-transcription involves close observation of data through repeated careful listening (and/or watching), and an important first step in data analysis (Atkinson, 1998). This familiarity with data and attention to what is actually there rather than what is expected can facilitate realizations or ideas which emerge during analysis. There are many benefits to self-transcribing the collected information: it allows more thorough examination of what people say, it permits repeated examination of the interviewees' answers, it opens up the data to public scrutiny by other researchers, who can evaluate the analysis that is carried out by the original researchers of the data (a secondary analysis), it enables the translation of a non-western language like Samoan into a universal language like English – which was then subsequently double-checked by a member of the advisory group, and thus help counter accusations that an analysis might have been influenced by a researcher's values or biases (see Davidson, 2009; Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2006; Poland, 2002).

The researcher transcribed all the twenty-five interviews word-for-word and noted what the digital audio recording could not pick up such as body language, gestures and background noises. After transcribing five interviews the researcher made some changes in order to speed up and make the process more efficient. The changes included: not typing up the questions that was asked as the researcher/interviewer followed the interview schedule closely, not typing all of the researcher's responses to

the interviewees answers, and a range of edits, as suggested by Finnegan (1992) to words the researcher considered as unimportant like "um" or "hard" (nearly all of the participants used this word, "hard", instead of "yes" especially at the end of a sentence – for example, "I was the man – hard, and they were scared of me – hard. I looked at him on the ground – hard and he was knocked out – hard). Moreover when it came to the participant's pronunciation and dialect, sometimes I used the standard spelling for words spoken, rather than transcribing words by how they may sound. For instance, "also" instead of "orso", or "them" instead of "dem", otherwise for words like "cos", "wanna", "gonna" the researcher left as is (because, want to, going to), and only change if it was necessary to ensure the text made sense. For situations where background noise such as road workers working nearby or the grounds person is mowing the lawn the researcher made a note saying "inaudible."

Once transcripts became available the researcher contacted the interviewee to view and edit his transcript before it was further analysed. Returning the life story to the interviewee is an act of profound respect as it protected the honour of the storyteller, enhanced the reliability and validity aspects of this study's research design (Liebow, 1993; Myerhoff, 1992; Plummer, 2001), and ensured that the participant-led aspects of the study were adhered to as stipulated by the principles of life history/ life story method as well as maintaining transparency throughout. This was part of the reason why the method was selected for this study; the other part is because it is culturally appropriate. Once the interviewee finished reviewing their transcript the researcher picked it up and spoke with the interviewee who provided a summary of his feedback. This signalled the end of the transcription stage of this study and allowed the researcher to upload each transcript to computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software called QSR NVivo 10 (see Meadows & Dodendorf, 1999; Tesch, 1989). The transcribing process, therefore, is a preliminary stage before a full analysis of the collected information occurs. From listening and typing

each interview the researcher starts to notice common patterns in the collected information such as key themes, which are either confirmed or not by the interviewees after viewing their transcripts.

A full thematic analysis commenced through a triangulation process. Triangulation is used in bringing together different sources of information to converge or conform to one interpretation. With the convergence of information from different sources (documents, interviews and observations), settings and participants, the researcher can make a powerful argument that the interpretation is more credible (Bryman 2012; Patton, 2002). For this study it was a data-source triangulation process: going through all the transcripts and the participant's feedback (if any), the theoretical literature, and the researcher's knowledge, experience of working with youth offenders, and his interpretations of the data (see Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007; Marshall & Enzmann, 2012; Sarnecki, 2001). Hence the thematic analysis included the following stages: coding, identifying descriptive information, taking into account control measures such as consistency, and the use of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software throughout.

The notion of 'coding' has been applied to qualitative work in a variety of ways (see Bernard, 1995; Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Miller, 2000, p. 150-3; Roberts, 2002). Generally, it refers to how the data are arranged, categorized by 'codes' which summarize or order the collected data. It is an on-going process as the data are acquired and scrutinized, and can guide the gathering of future information as well as the initial steps in formulating concepts and theory. The close examination of the collected data provides new insights and ideas, new ways of organizing parts of the data, forming types and raising new research questions.

The researcher worked with paper-based transcriptions and transferring the changes to the electronic versions uploaded on QSR NVivo 10 software

such as coding and preparing the data for consolidation, organization and interpretation (Becker, 1998; Bryman, 2008; Ryan & Bernard, 2003). There were four distinct steps. Firstly, reading each paper-based transcript as a whole and making notes at the end: what was it about, major themes, unusual issues, events, and grouping cases into types or categories. Secondly, reading the paper-based transcript again: marking the text using different coloured highlighters, symbols, circles and underlining; making marginal notes including memorandums – to remind the researcher of links in the transcription; labels for the codes (this is what this passage is about); and the highlighting of key words (things that the researcher wanted to come back to later or something that would spark off ideas). Thirdly, the researcher began coding the paper-based transcript: systematically marking the text to indicate what chunks of the text were about (themes and index them) as well as eliminating any repetition and similar codes by combining or merging them.

It was the third step where the researcher worked closely in conjunction with QSR NVivo 10, where changes (coding and so forth) reflected in the paper-based transcript versions were transferred to the computer-based QSR NVivo 10 transcript version (herein transcript electronic version). Working with the paper-based version became difficult as the number of themes increased including sub themes and further sub themes adding to layers of complexity and tunnel vision. There was a need to sort and filter themes, to differentiate between lesser and major themes, and to identify a parent theme where child themes can run off. It was apparent that a common thread was necessary, a theme that linked all the other sub themes and to make the transition from analysis to writing smoother and understanding what the researcher needs to report on. The activity, where paper-based transcript versions became transcript electronic versions, led to the creation of a database of nodes or themes that numbered over a hundred so the researcher began merging similar nodes or themes together in order to bring the number down to a manageable

level. It was impossible to report on over a hundred nodes or themes in the thesis and thus mergers and elimination processes was required. For example, there were information/ participant's quotes that was classified or thematically labelled as 'Desistance' and 'Reason for leaving the gang'. The researcher combined these two nodes or themes and eliminated any quotes that were similar or repetitive. Some nodes or themes such as 'Girlfriend' only had two references (or quotes) in it, and in another a node called 'Other relationships' it had eight references (or quotes) hence these two nodes were merged and any repetition eliminated. The term "references" refers to asking QSR NVivo 10 to search for certain themes in its keyword search facility and it responded by presenting parts or phrases in the transcript where that word appears; the full quote from the participant, where it is found and the whole page of the document overall. For instance when the searching for the word 'fa'asamoa' it would appear in the family, church, cultural, and gang socialization themes so one way to eliminate repetition was to go through the quotes that the computer software had located and presented and either combine them or delete them especially if the number of references was very low. Hence this manipulation of the data was very important because it made the analysis process very manageable and readied the data for other analytical stages to the study.

In the fourth and final step the researcher related any general theoretical ideas from the nodes to the text and the researcher's interpretation. This area of the thematic analysis suggests ways in which the transcript can be analysed. For example, Charmaz (2003) points to two approaches: one involves identifying descriptive information (what was going on and what the participant is saying) and the other looking for analytical information (how does structure and context support, maintain, impede or change what the participants say) as a starting point. Lofland, Snow, Anderson and Lofland's (2006) guide proposes a strategy that takes into account the importance of the participant's social setting. For example, identify the

meanings in their responses or what concepts they use to understand their world and what meaning or significance they have for them.

Because the data is very subjective; mostly about the participants' opinions, feelings, knowledge and suggestions, it may be difficult to prove its quality and authenticity unless there are signs of consistency between the theoretical literature, what the participants said, and the researcher's interpretation (Atkinson, 1998; Cohler, 1988; Gergen & Gergen, 1984; Gottschalk, 1945; Jackson, 1987; McCracken, 1988; Plummer, 2001; Roberts, 2002; see also sections 7.1 and 7.2). However, the researcher, while reading the transcripts, did notice similarities and connections between the theoretical literature and what the participants and the researcher's interpretations and concluded that the life stories that were collected were genuine. Within and between each life story transcript, there was internal consistency between what one participant and another participant. In terms of the research and theoretical literature there was consistency (external consistency). In situations where the data were inconsistent these would be either signposted as new information (not mentioned by another participant or by the literature) or excluded as redundant because it could be absorbed into another theme or it was not a significant finding in terms of relevancy, appropriateness, and usefulness. So when the participant's responses connect events and experiences it ensures meaning – giving life a certain sequence and directionality – and hence it makes sense to the participant and to the researcher reading it. Which highlights the important relationship between theory and research either in how theory inform research or research informs theory; it is the latter that this study is seeking to achieve in its research strategy.

3.2.4 Theoretical interpretations

This section explores the relationship between theory and research and what it means for this study's research design. The relationship is

contentious because there are important questions to be considered in order to decide on how the literature and the findings is to be interpreted and why the study argues that its findings informed its theoretical literature and not the other way round. However, the relationship is also interdependent where one cannot do without the other; if one is weakened the other is too. So the following questions are very important for this study: Is this study interested in theory-testing or theory-building? The study is interested in both theoretical transactions; testing the adequacy of socialization and delinquency theories for explaining Samoan young people's participation in gangs according to the findings in the first instance, then followed by the literature. But the study is also interested in theory-building because I found that within the theoretical literature there were 'gaps' with the lack of cultural/ Pacific aspects or perspectives in the delinquency theories especially so the findings will be able (I am anticipating it will) to fill this gap and stake a claim for Pacific criminology as a prominent grand theory alongside the western offerings. So theory-building is a very important relationship between theory and research at least for this study.

Which is important the primary sources (the findings from the information collected) or the secondary sources (the theoretical literature outlined in the previous chapter)? For this study the primary sources are the most important because it was also clear in the literature review that there was a need for evidence, hard facts, and strategies to add value to the existing literature particularly delinquency theories. The findings will be unique, original and thought-provoking. It will confirm existing socialization and delinquency theories as consistent but it will also highlight inconsistencies, discrepancies and shortfalls as well. The findings will also inform and complete the literature review because leading up to the data collection a preliminary literature review had been undertaken to gauge an overall sense of the causes of youth gang phenomenon. After the findings was processed and finalized a further literature review was conducted to

follow up what the participants had shared in their life stories and to check the existing literature whether there was a perspective that represented most, some or a few of the points of views provided by the participants. Briefly, theory-building relies on research and research relies on theory, a dialectic transaction whereby theory determines what data are to be collected and research findings provide challenges to accepted theories (Fawcett & Downs, 1986).

Theory is used to generate hypotheses and research tests out these hypotheses. Results from research can then be used to refine theory. This study is not only using the research design that has been fully outlined previously in this chapter to test the theories that supposedly explain the phenomenon of youth gangs (see chapter two), but its research design is also to generate theory to supplement existing theories and give rise to non-western constructs. In particular, the establishment of a Pacific criminological perspective based on *culturally*-defined factors such as cultural strains, culturally-related lack of control in social institutions such as aiga (family), aoga (school), lotu (church), and nu'u (neighbourhood) as well as a lack of personal self-control, and a lack of cultural learning and the value in cultural knowledge, the sum of all these cultural factors equally provides an explanation for Samoan involvement in youth gangs not just western criminological perspectives. The findings are Samoan perspectives on a Samoan issue that is becoming detrimental to Samoan society. Take away the away the *cultural* labels and it becomes a non-Samoan or western perspective.

Deductive theory represents the most common view of the nature of the relationship between theory and social research (Burfiend & Bartusch, 2011). Generally the deductive approach is usually associated with quantitative research, it appears very linear – one step follows the other in a clear, logical sequence. The researcher, on the basis of what is known about in a particular field and of theoretical considerations in relation to

that field, deduces a hypothesis (or hypotheses) that must then be subjected to empirical scrutiny. This means that the researcher needs to specify how data can be collected in relation to the concepts that make up the hypothesis, which drives the process of gathering data. However, there are many instances where this is not the case: a researcher's view of the theory or literature may have changed as a result of the analysis of the collected data; new theoretical ideas or findings may be published by others before the researcher has generated his or her findings; or, the relevance of a set of data for a theory may become apparent after the data *have* been collected.

Inductive theory works in the opposite direction, the researcher infers the implications of his or her findings for the theory that prompted the whole exercise (Burfiend & Bartusch, 2011). The findings are fed back into the stock of theory and the research findings associated with a certain domain of enquiry. An inductive process develops a theory out of interview data deriving from the findings. This is characteristic of grounded theory especially the analysis of data to generate theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) so an inductive strategy of linking data and theory is typically associated with a qualitative research approach. For example, the concept of a Pacific criminology (or culturally defined causes of Samoan participation in youth gangs) when used as an integrated part of an extended conceptual framework for the comprehension of all forms of youth gang activity, can thus play an important part in discriminating between differing types of social phenomena. Basically, it is the findings that is fed back into theoretical explanations and underpins the theoretical development this study holds. This study in terms of the choice of its method, the choice of research study, is not dictated by its theoretical framework being the integration of socialization and delinquency theories. It is informed by what the participants said, what the theoretical literature should be and even determines the choice of qualitative method and its research strategy.

In sum, the research strategy is the engine behind the research processes that constitute the research design. It attracts potential participants through word-of-mouth and reputation. It employs a wholistic interview schedule and collects a wide range of information in order to get the whole picture not a snapshot. While it focuses on looking for themes for understanding causes and related issues it is also scoping for solutions and strategies to address these. And it also has dual focus or two missions: the first is to expose a particular worldview as credible and necessary in order to understand ethnic minority youth gang research, and the second mission, to demonstrate how alternative world views can also explain a phenomenon that is largely spoken for from a monocultural perspective. There will always be debates in research and theory based on superiority versus inferiority, majority versus minority, and the only way versus the other way paradigms; the key, though, is to get the right balance. There are even debates on ethical issues such as bias/ researcher bias versus non bias/ non researcher bias that was raised earlier in this section, where the way to deal with this was to establish checkpoints. However in the next section, the ethical issues that are discussed may not have an easy fix.

3.3 Ethical Issues

There are number of ethical issues that must be addressed in most research projects involving human subjects such as: voluntary participation, informed consent, privacy of personal information, and the potential harms and benefits of the research (Berg, 2004). Criminological researchers must negotiate through these concerns, as well as a number of other issues that are heightened or more specific to the nature of the research. Hence this section looks at specific ethical issues of field-based criminological research. The ethical issues that are outlined include: how to deal with criminal disclosure and potential harm to the researcher.

The first ethical dilemma is responding to situations relating to criminal disclosure. In other words, what would the researcher do if a gang member discloses information that could be deemed to be harmful to himself, another person, or the community? It is an interesting question because if the strategy is to inform the interviewee that information of this nature will be passed on to law enforcement authorities it could prevent the interview from happening or potentially affect the quality of the information being collected. It could even unravel months of work toward building relationships with the interviewee and the interviewer's status among the gang world questioned and the study's hopes to recruit further participants lessened. It is a hard to reach population group. Yet according to Totten (2001) this is exactly what a researcher/ interviewer should do as the author states he relied on policy and procedures to assist with the legal and ethical issues he came across in his research experiences. He would inform participants of his obligation to report any such threat such as death threats and/ or acts of a life-threatening nature to the authorities even though he knew his actions would affect his study's ability to hold on to its potential interviewees.

As Fogel (2007) calls it, "the consequences of knowing", is a real ethical dilemma and one that forces researchers to think about trade-offs and sacrifices because knowing that a participant has disclosed something of a criminal nature and then not doing anything about it would not only be ethically immoral but damage the integrity of the researcher and put the institution he represents in disrepute. When a researcher is faced with a situation whether or not to interfere and whether to pass on or not the criminal disclosure, at the heart of the matter is the research has been trusted by the storyteller with privileged information. So to ensure that participants provide honest answers, participants must be given the privilege of confidentiality; this is essential for valid and reliable research

to achieve its aims and objectives (see also Fitzgerald & Hamilton, 1996; Israel, 2004; Palys & Lowman, 2002 & 2006).

So in relation to this study, the researcher is obligated to inform its participants before the interview commences of what the criminal disclosure clause in the *Information Sheet* really means; that any information conveyed during the life story account that involves a criminal disclosure and is deemed to be harmful to himself, the researcher, and the wider community will be passed on to the New Zealand Police. However, if this information is about an event that has not occurred and set to occur in the future it will be passed on, but historical information – already dealt with by authorities will not be passed on. Another strategy, if the researcher upon listening to the participant's life story senses that the participant is about to incriminate himself or has forgotten about the criminal disclosure clause the researcher will stop the recording or ask the participant to change the subject so the criminal disclosure clause is avoided.

The second ethical dilemma is the potential for harm to the researcher. This study has been approved to undertake research on human subjects after being comprehensively scrutinised by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC) (see Appendix F). In their document entitled *Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations Involving Human Participants*, one of its principles is about the risk of harm to researchers, is a reminder to researchers about the importance of being safe while being out in the field collecting information and other research activities. Strategies for ensuring that researchers are safe include notifying supervisors of daily movements and whereabouts, undertaking interviews in neutral and public places, avoid publication of home addresses and telephone numbers in *Information Sheets*, and arrange appointments and meetings during the day. These strategies were adhered to but the researcher also wondered about the reality

surrounding the dynamics and the context of the field, and the researcher's ability to keep himself safe so there is no need for such a principle, where this fits-in in the scheme of things (Itlas, 2006; Roberts & Indemaur, 2003; Wolfgang, 1981).

There are three examples to demonstrate a gap between what is stipulated in the MUHEC document (which is an assumption based on what the research field is like and the ethical issues derived from it) and what the researcher experienced and the realities. Firstly, the researcher is a very experienced former youth justice social worker, youth worker, and community worker and so he is very familiar with how to handle youth gang members and keeping himself safe at the same time. Secondly, the researcher is a Samoan male, fluent in Samoan speaking and Samoan cultural practices, and so very able to relate with Samoan young people's interests, socio-cultural backgrounds, their families and gang lifestyle. Thirdly, the researcher did not utilize a key informant and had to organize interview appointments, pick up the interviewees (most had no vehicles), and spend time before the interview building a relationship. So most of the participants knew my cellphone number and other personal details (marital status, my children, where I lived, what church I went to, what school I used to go to, how many in my family, what it was like when my family raised me, and so on) otherwise it would have been very difficult to get to the heart of their life story accounts. Nonetheless, on this occasion the researcher was fortunate to escape any risk of harm but depending on the topic being investigated there is always an element of danger.

However, there are two reasons why it is important to adhere to ethical principles in research. First, ethical principles promote the aims of research, such as knowledge, truth, and avoidance of error. For example, prohibitions against fabricating, falsifying, or misrepresenting research data promote the truth and avoid error. Second, since research often involves a great deal of cooperation and coordination among many

different people in different disciplines and institutions, ethical standards promote the values that are essential to collaborative work, such as trust, accountability, mutual respect, and fairness. For example, many ethical principles in research, such as guidelines for authorship, copyright and patenting policies, data sharing policies, and confidentiality rules in peer review, are designed to protect intellectual property interests while encouraging collaboration. Therefore, ethical principles are there to protect the research from any potential risk of harm and consequently the study's methodology. The criminal disclosure clause in the *Information Sheet* is based on the same principle; in this case it is the participant, the community and the researcher who is protected. The same for the researcher who is undertaking data collection and securing the data for analysis and reporting, the methodology, the method, and its research processes should maintain and ensure this happens in order to generate quality data.

3.4 Chapter summary

In closing the decision to choose life story method as the study's preferred option to answer the research questions is the right one. From choosing a qualitative methodology to its research strategy every stage, process, and outcome has demonstrated the suitability of life story method. There are three ways which justifies the choice of a life story method: ideologically, practically, and critically.

First, ideologically the life story method is preferred because its objectives correspond with this study's purpose, which is to establish the parameters, the conditions, and rules of the research plan for answering the research questions. As a preferred of choice of method, the life story approach is suitable for this study because it aims to measure the developmental trends across life spans or track people using multiple variables such as

ethnicity and cross reference these variables against cross cultural comparisons and culturally prescribed descriptors. Potentially it is capable of developing new ideas of a particular life or a group of life stories and build theories of how people see their own lives, or what is important to people, or what a life story means in terms of social contexts. It also holds in high regard the storyteller as the expert and the researcher secondary. This means the life story method brings to the fore lesser known knowledge about worldviews and how this explains youth gang phenomenon.   A bicultural and multicultural perspective such as fa'asamoa potentially increase and enhance the experiences of lesser-known narratives and life stories such as Samoan people in Bloods youth gangs in New Zealand.

Second, the life story method turns its ideas into practice through the use of important tools and practices and sets about to achieve its aims and outcomes. From a practical point of view, there are many tools and actions within the research strategy that are very essential to this study. The snowball strategy is a vital component for this study because recruiting potential participants for this study can become an arduous task or dependency on a key informant(s) or an organization(s) can be problematic.   Hence the snowballing strategy is appropriate to use in research when the members of a population are difficult to access. Elsewhere, the integration of Plummer's (2001) suggested component for building an appropriate examination based on five question types: substantive, social science, technical, ethical and political questions with Patton's (2002) proposed arrangement of questions underpinned by six topics: experience, opinion, feeling, knowledge, sensory, and background or demographic information is the key to eliciting a full life story because of its wide ranging and far reaching ability. Life stories will be rich in detail as a result. The analytical framework is also a strong practical component of the life story's research strategy like the process of looking for consistency or inconsistency between the theoretical literature and what

the participants said enables the derivation of themes and subsequent discussion and presentation. All the practical elements aforementioned represent the machinery or the mechanics in the life story method and illustrate how ideologies are operationalized in order to achieve successful outcomes.

Thirdly, from a critical point of view the life story method is adaptable, flexible and able to change over time. In other words by using a cultural lens (Samoan view) to critically review the life story method we can establish where the method is culturally appropriate. This is a Samoan study led by a Samoan researcher exploring a Samoan topic and later providing feedback from a Samoan perspective. For example in the self-transcribing phase there were the translation of Samoan words, the interview schedule that is based on Plummer (2001) & Patton (2002) was missing culturally-related questions and context, and the return of transcripts to the participants for checking is not only standard research process it is also is an act of profound respect as it preserves the honour of the storyteller, and enhances the researcher's status. Even the act of utilising a life story interview approach is culturally appropriate because it equates to Pacific/ Samoan research methodology called 'Talanoa' or talking (or Talanoaga or Discussion) (see Faleolo, 2003). It was not researcher-led but predominantly the participant doing the talking and it was not strictly dictated by the questions but provided the freedom for participants to choose what they wanted to say, in any order and degree of importance.

We now turn to view the results of the life story method, which has been the central subject in this chapter, and find out whether the research strategy successfully achieved finding answers to the research questions.

Chapter 4: Family Socialization

4.0 Introduction

Family socialization is very important in understanding Samoan young people's participation in youth gangs because it is within this domain where many explanations might be found. The theoretical literature points to many ways in which the family socialization experience is linked to delinquency. It is a fundamental process of acquiring a self-identity that is learned (values, norms, social behavioural patterns, and social skills) from other people like family members, older siblings, and extended family members (Cohen 1955 & 1966; Gillespie, 2005; Mead 1934 & 1938; Stryker, 1980; Ulmer, 2011). It is also a key institution that functions alongside other social institutions such as schools and churches and stresses how socialization contributes to a stable society from families producing enthusiastic contributors (Ballantine & Roberts, 2011; Comte, 1865; Durkheim 1897/1951 & 1893/1964; Harro, 2000; Parsons, 1951 & 1971; Saracho & Spodek, 2007). Where the link to delinquency lies is when family socialization processes contain stressful experiences as strain theorists argue (Agnew, 1992; Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; Merton, 1938; Messner & Rosenfield, 1994) that subsequently leads to weak controls as in social bonding (Hirschi, 1969) and lack of self-control (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). Consequently, when the family fails to socialize its teenage children they will seek surrogate families like gangs and model their development and learning through association with its members (Sutherland, 1947).

Twenty-five gang members/ participants were interviewed and asked questions about their family socialization experiences. During the course of their interview a profile emerged about their backgrounds that provided

the context to their responses and the findings outlined in this chapter. In terms of their ages the youngest was sixteen and the oldest was twenty-three. There were three 16 year olds, three 17 year olds, six 18 year olds, nine 19 year olds, one 20 year old, one 21 year old, one 22 year old, and one 23 year old. So the majority of the participants (15 out of 25) were aged 18 or 19 years old; transitioning from adolescence through to adulthood, others were still in the adolescence stage (6 out of 25) or were already adults (4 out of 25).

Participants grew up in family homes that varied in composition and size. Just under half (12 out of 25) grew up in families with both biological parents, others with their biological mother only (7 out of 25), or with one biological parent and one step-parent (5 out of 25), while one participant was raised by extended family members. Regarding the participant's position in the family (only child, the youngest, in the middle, or the oldest sibling) the size of the household varied. Nine were the youngest, seven were the middle sibling, five were the oldest, and three were the only child. Another interesting characteristic was that three participants were adopted; two of the seven middle siblings and one of the nine youngest siblings. So in regard to the birth order within family of origin, it was notable that there were more participants who were the youngest child than those who were either the oldest or in the middle.

The participant's current relationship and family status ranged from the majority (11 out of 25) who were single, to those who were in a relationship without children (9 out of 25). Amongst the others, 3 were in a relationship and had children and 1 was expecting a baby, and 1 was a new father but chose to live separate from the birth mother. Of those who were already fathers (4 out of 25): the 23 year old had four children with the eldest aged 12 years old and attending Intermediate school; whereas the 21 year old and the two 19 year olds all had a child each. With respect to those who were in a relationship either with or without

children or expecting a child (13 out of 25), eight lived with their girlfriends, while the others either lived with the participant's parents or their girlfriend's parents.

The content of this chapter is concerned with the participant's account of their family socialization experiences. Although not covered in this chapter but equally important, discussions about the participants' relationships with peers (church members, school class members, neighbourhood friends) appears in subsequent chapters 5 & 6, so relationships with siblings and other family members (family peers) are presented in this chapter. The quotes used from the participants in this chapter and those that follow will at times contain the use of profanity in order to preserve the emotional meaning of what participants shared and so the participant's voices are prevalent. The terms 'most', 'some', and 'few' are used in this and following chapters to indicate the level of responses to the questions posed by the interviewer. Where these terms appear 'most' means between 16-25 responses, 'some' denotes between 8-15 responses, and 'few' refers to less than seven responses. This chapter is also the first of three findings chapters concerned with socialization experiences (family – chapter 4, cultural and societal – chapter 5, and gang – chapter 6) and comprises of four sections. The first section, 4.1, outlines the varying bonds and relationships the participants formed with family members. Section 4.2 presents the critical events such as the highlights and low points of growing up in their families with some originating from the kinds of relationships they described previously. Section 4.3 shows not only how the effects of gang life impacted upon the participants and their families but also the diminishing role of family socialization. Finally, section 4.4 summarises this chapter by demonstrating how what is found in this study represents family socialization experiences that are linked to youth gangs and delinquency theories as well as cultural and societal socialization.

4.1 Family bonding

At the heart of family socialization experiences are family relationships and the bonds that are formed as a result. Family relationships that are forged within the family, particularly, the patterns of family functioning, interactions, intimacy, and composition, highlight the importance of individuality and connectedness. Connectedness is reflected by mutuality (seen in an individual's sensitivity to and respect for the views of others) and permeability (openness and responsiveness to the views of others) and thus it is these kinds of patterns that give rise to explanations that link to youth gangs and delinquency.

The participants were asked to "tell me what it was like growing up in your family?" and drew on childhood and adolescent memories to provide a sense of who they were closer to and who did they trust more in their family and why. Their indication of those they were the closest to and trusted more revealed the level of family bonding and connectedness participants had with their families. They shared they were either close to their parents or parent (section 4.1.1) or an older sibling (section 4.1.2). As I listened to their explanations I began to see and understand what their socialization experience in the family home was like and compared it with my own experiences as a Samoan.

4.1.1 Parents

The findings indicate that gang members were not close to and trusting of both parents but one particular parent in their family. Their childhood bonding was formed with one parent and continued through to adolescence and adulthood. This is true for most of the participants but not for a few who shifted their trust to another parent or to a sibling (see 4.1.2) during their life course and development.

By far the family member that most gang members were closest to was their mother, although it was expressed in various ways. For example, it is interesting to note how several gang members behaved one way in front of their gang peers and another way toward their mothers when they were at home. These gang members, like Rasik, were well behaved at home because they did not want their mothers to see their gang persona; instead they wanted their mothers to see them as one of the sons in the family; loving, caring, humble and respectful. Generally such behaviour may be perceived as deceptive but the fact is, it is sign of respect and a Samoan cultural value.

> *"I'm close to my mom not really my dad....I just like how she lectures me and stuff. Even though I'm in a gang, when I'm at home I show respect yeah like the Samoan way yeah. Cos when I'm at home I just show respect not swear around them, but when I'm on the streets then I do the stuff that's for the streets."* (Rasik)

Most participants trusted their mothers and depended on their support immensely, even if their mothers informed the police of their whereabouts when they were evading police. In general most participants continued to value their mothers over their fathers and any other family member. For example, Gypsy is closer to his mother because she has always been there for him even when he has broken the law she is non-judgemental and continues to do things for him even if it means she gets into trouble as well.

> *"Fuck, my mom's been there to all my court cases that's the only face that I've always seen...like she knows that I was like gaoi (a thief) and that, fuck, she doesn't like it, she even like ring the leoleo (the police) you know... then always came and visit me every weekend with my cigarettes, snuck it in..."* (Gypsy)

Most of the gang members were not close to their fathers (biological father or step-father) because of a lack of attention, poor treatment

(including of other family members), and at times unapproachable. Several gang members wanted to have a relationship with their father that it was like they had a best friend where they can share anything openly with their father and hang out.

Some gang members were not close to their fathers because they showed more affection to other siblings and when they do engage with their teenage children it was only when they wanted something. This was the case for Aomas who reacted by disrespecting his father through swearing and answering at him back and being difficult.

> *"Cos he always getting money from my older brother, even when I was working he never asked me for money, and then somehow once my brother got locked up that's when everything changed, that's when he started being a dickhead...I just be straight up with him and just swear at him."* (Aomas)

However a few gang members did say that they were close to their birth-fathers or step-fathers. For those who were close to their fathers there was a range of reasons such as how they handled stress and how they were flexible and understanding. According to B-Red he was close to his father because he liked the way he was laid-back, easy-going, and quiet mannered especially when he was stressed. He remembers his father's advice that it is best to avoid trouble by steering away from it and to keep his personal problems to himself. For B-Red seeing his father live up to his advice appealed to him and he admired his father for setting a good example.

> *"...I'm closer to my dad...he's kick back...he's not a loud person, he's quiet. He's another person who keeps his problems to himself. That's probably where I've got it. Ever since I knew my dad he's quiet."* (B-Red)

Another gang member, B-Ware, said he was close to his father because his father allowed him to drink alcohol and use marijuana at home. He said

his father felt it was a waste of time to keep young people away from alcohol and drugs because they can access it anytime and from anyone. This strategy also kept B-Ware safe at home and kept him out of trouble. So for B-Ware his father did not put any restrictions or limits on him, his father trusted him and this was reciprocated by B-Ware out of respect.

> *"My old man…we're real tight aye (very close), like he's the one that allow me to drink to smoke, yeah, cos my old man doesn't smoke but he's a dak (marijuana) smoker…"* (B-Ware)

4.1.2 Older siblings

Some gang members like Dust commented that they were not close to either of their parents but to one of their older siblings. For example, Dust admired his older sister for the way she controlled and ran the household in the absence of his parents who were both working. She was the one who he listened to and respected because in return he received a lot of attention from his older sister particularly in his schoolwork and when she played with him. He behaved himself in front of his sister but not so much for his parents but when his older sister moved out to start her own family he lost the influence that kept him out of trouble.

> *"Probably my sister…she's got a good job at the moment, got her own family, she's doing good yeah I go visit her and she's got her own pad, she still…keeps the family together...she was like the one that was controlling us getting us to get up early in the morning just to do some feaus (duties) yeah that was her, I respected her and faalogo (listened). I was all good at the time."* (Dust)

Although Rasik was closer to his mother he was also close to his older brother as well. When I asked him why, he pointed to things that can only be best described as negative influences like introducing him to alcohol, drugs, how to fight, how to get girlfriends, and how to live the gang life. He was aware that his older brothers were teaching him wrong things but it was difficult for him to separate-out the negative things because it was

his brother, a family member, not a stranger or a friend. So he did not care if he was learning the wrong things from his older brothers, as far as he was concerned he received more love and understanding from them rather than his parents. As Rasik puts it,

> *"...I'm close to my brother that's inside (in jail) cos he's pretty much the person that got me into gangs...we used to have a lot of his boys over to my house, drink, rep their colours and I just looked at him I just wanna be just like you when I'm older..."* (Rasik)

The difference between those who were closer to older sisters from those who were closer to their older brothers seems to be related to the participant's position in the family and family composition. Just over half of the participants (13[6] out of 25) are either the youngest or in the middle of their sibling rank. In other words a total of 8 have older sisters and 5 have older brothers but the older sister was whom the participants (the youngest or in the middle) was closest to more than their older brothers. Even if the brothers were older than the sisters, the sisters would still be ranked as the one that participants were closest to and trusted more. So some participants like Dust and Agitate were closer to their older sisters, while others like B-Real and Radle were closer to their older brothers because their older sisters were perceived to be surrogate mothers while older brothers were seen to be best friends.

In Agitate's case, the reason why he said he was close to his older sister was because she always had time for him, she listened to his problems and gave advice, she was reliable and dependable, and she always kept him connected to the family particularly when he would be away from home for long periods spending it with his gang.

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[6] The other 12 participants are made up of the following: 5 participants are the oldest sibling and have one younger brother; 4 participants are the only child; and 3 participants are adopted. Being the oldest sibling meant that one of the parents was whom they bonded with, the same with participants who were the only child or adopted in the family except for one adopted participant who looked up to his older step-brother.

> *"Nah, my sister,…I always talk to my sister about everything, even when I got locked up the first time always ring her, always rely on her to like come give me a ride, to keep in touch with what was going on in the family and she's always the one that's telling me to stop."* (Agitate)

For B-Real, he listened in to his brothers talking about their crimes and remembers how they boasted about their adventures, how they planned and carried out their crimes and got away with it, and how they talked about the gang they were members of and how much this group meant to them. All these things that B-Real remembered was locked away in his psyche at a very early age and carried through to his childhood and adolescent life.

> *"…my brothers were into that gang stuff too, I was like four years old…they always talk about bloods… I can see the tagging at the back of my house… I was shoplifting and that aye, cos I used to hear my brothers and that talk about it… stuck in my head and that, must be gang stuff so I'm gonna go do that too…got my first taste of bud (marijuana) when I was twelve, I saw the houses that my brothers go to, I'll go with my friends over there too, scored a foil (marijuana wrapped up in tin foil, which is one way of buying it), got the money from chip-ins everyone five dollars each, we couldn't roll (marijuana into a cigarette) we were always on the can (marijuana was smoked through a soft drink can)."* (B-Real)

In Radle's case, his oldest brother is still a gang member while, at the same time, raising a family, which is something that he looks up to. For Radle, since all of his brothers were involved in gangs he chose this pathway because he saw his role was to continue his brothers legacy who founded the Samoan gang called "B62" (Blood 1962 – the year Samoa gained independence from foreign rule).

> *"My older brother is B62, still today but family man at the same time like he knows his limits but he still always 62. He'll never leave it and my second oldest he was in a gang…he's like a normal person now and my third oldest he was a RA (Red Army)…once he got married he's changed too…"* (Radle)

Overall there is a clear picture emerging about the strengths and weaknesses of family relationships where functioning, intimacy, and the composition varied. The participant's sensitivity to and respect for the views of their parents (more so their mother over their father) is apparent. Yet this mutual connectedness is not only toward one of their parents as other participants were being open and responsive to the view of older siblings rather than their parents. Where youth gangs and delinquency possibly takes over is at the point when the degree of connectedness in family relationship wanes and the participants search elsewhere for substitutes.

Nonetheless their parents and older siblings commanded a lot of admiration and respect from the participants which they expressed in a four comparable ways. Firstly, participants and their relationships with their mothers behaved one way at home and behaved another way outside of the home, compared with, participants and their relationships with their fathers who behaved the same way at home and outside of the home in front of their peers/ gang. Secondly, participants and their mistakes were both supported by their parents. Their mothers visited them while incarcerated and provided things whilst contained to ensure their stay was comfortable. Their fathers tolerated their son's consumption of drugs and alcohol and visits from girls to ensure they were safe at home and not looking outside of the home for these vices.

Thirdly, participants shifted in and out of their relationships with their parents and turned to their older siblings for support and guidance. They turned to their older sister because she was perceived as a mother-figure who seemed to have time for them and kept them connected to the family. Or they would turn to their older brother because he was perceived as a best friend where you would learn about life and its temptations. Lastly, a cultural factor seems to behind why participants

continued to show respect toward their mothers and admiration toward their older siblings which is common in Samoan families. A form of respect that is a lot deeper in its meaning for the participants in that most acted in a way where they elevated the family member and lowered themselves at the same time. The role that the Samoan culture plays in the participant's family socialization experiences is crucial not only in family relationships but also underpins other experiences such as the highlights and low points of growing up in their family homes.

4.2 Critical events

A critical event is a significant episode either in the past or present and set in a particular time and place. It constitutes specific moments in life histories that stands out for some reason and include key people, actions, thoughts, and feelings. I asked gang members to recall two specific life events as part of their family socialization and detail what happened, who was involved, what they did, what they were thinking and feeling in the event. I also asked each gang member to convey what impact this key event has had in their life story and what the events say about who they are or were as a person.

The two specific life events of interest are the high and low points in their life story (section 3.1 and 3.2). Gang members were asked to start from their childhood, as far back as they could go, and choose a relatively clear memory and describe it in detail. The memory need not seem especially significant on the day of the interview but rather what makes it significant is that is the first or one of the first memories they had, which they had carried throughout their socialization experiences. So starting with their childhood memories, gang members were also asked about events from their adolescent and adult years that stood out as being especially important.

4.2.1 High points

A high point is an event or moment in their life history in which they experienced extremely positive emotions, such as excitement, great happiness, an uplifting or even deeper inner peace. It would be a memory that stood out as one of the best, highest, and most wonderful scenes or moments in their life history. Not all twenty-five participants could recall a high point in their life, probably only some of the participants. So when I asked gang members for a childhood, adolescence and young adult high point memory the most popular themes were the following: spending time with the family; a sporting achievement, and becoming or being a father. The low points are covered in the next section.

Spending time with the family was the most frequently mentioned childhood high point memory that gang members cited when I asked them this question.   Things like family activities, family outings, family get-togethers for special events and celebrations, and family meetings were sounded out by many gang members at the time of the interview, of which all who mentioned it said they had missed it greatly.   Family activities meant a lot to Radle because spending time with his parents made him feel accepted and having parents being genuinely interested in what he was doing made him feel good about himself.

> *"Yeah always that's the good memories aye like always take us museum, te papa, everywhere, they used to always come on our school trips, they were at my games, league and all that soccer…my step dad used to buy the oranges for the team…"* (Radle)

Agitate remembered how happy he was to see and be part of a family get-together for Christmas where the presents were not important but seeing everyone, everyone who helped set up the dinner table, some were in the kitchen cooking, others had gone to the shops to buy more supplies, and

when everyone was together he remembers how everyone was enjoying each other's company. It was during these times he felt the love in the atmosphere which he missed, probably because it does not happen as often anymore, but more importantly, it made him feel close to his family.

> *"Christmas 07...everyone was together just happy having fun all putting in to help out then all feeling good afterwards, this meant a lot to me cos hardly have it anymore...you can feel the love."* (Agitate)

The same can be said when the family celebrate a family member's birthday like Rasik's mom. What impressed Rasik was how he and other family members planned it together and how his mother was surprised when she found out her kids wanted to honour her birthday. To Rasik this was one of the greatest highlights in his life history.

> *"Ah my mom's birthday, I was fifteen...I just remember my mom being happy as that day cos we're all there and the reason why she was happy is cos we planned it... she started crying cos it was my brother that was saying a lauga (speech or sermon) to her and then she had her turn to say something she said that she never thought her kids will do this for her I reckon that's the happiest teenage memory in my life."* (Rasik)

The most popular response with regards to a positive adolescent high point memory was gaining a sporting achievement. For example, Young D was ecstatic when he made the high school's first XV rugby team; even though he was a junior, he was proud and knew that his family would recognize his accomplishment especially when his family attended his rugby games and watched him play.

> *"I made the first-fifteen when I was fourth form and my first year was alright like cos they were bigger than me. I felt happy that my parents were proud of me."* (Young D)

Dust remembers when his rugby team won the rugby tournament and how it made him feel good to be part of team and share in its success. It made him feel accepted and popular.

> *"Yeah I think it's that time when we took out on my rugby season aye, yeah that was probably like a mean year, nah we just had like you know some good players, um yeah we were like pretty much undefeated the whole year."* (Dust)

For B-Sup it was winning a swimming award and being first out of the whole school and out of all the schools he competed against. Not only did B-Sup's achievement mean it was the first time a Samoan had won the national school swimming competition, it was also because he was an only child and for once he did not feel like he was alone.

> *"Swimming, I was like fourteen-fifteen, when I was still at school, I sassed (beat them convincingly) them. Made me feel like "mean" (super proud) cos I was like the only Samoan, and I won something. I got ah you know those ribbons, get a red one means your kaea (shitty or useless), the yellow one like you achieved merit but I got the light blue one, the top one."* (B-Sup)

The most recurring young adult highlight memory, for some of the gang members, was fatherhood. For instance, B-On cried tears of joy when he attended the birth of his first child.

> *"...probably having my son yeah, far I wanted to cry but I held it back cos um the midwife was around...I didn't want them to see it aye but then my missus goes I'm sure they're used to dads crying…I don't know I'm a teenager you know my first time experience stuff like that..."* (B-On)

Gypsy was also very happy when he witnessed the birth of his daughter even though the method he and his partner chose to celebrate and ease his partner's pain was unorthodox.

> *"I've had a couple of those days aye, seeing my daughter come out birth you know I don't know that's one of the happiest days, fuck going there and fuck my tiene's (girlfriend) like roll me a joint (a marijuana cigarette) like I rolled one for her cos fuck it got worser, she said the pain, she said it's like someone just coming underneath with the knife and slicing you."* (Gypsy)

Other notable highpoints mentioned were like Rasik's brother being released from prison and B-Red spending the night at cousin's house. Rasik selected the time when his older brother was released from prison as the happiest moment in his life. His older brother had been his role model, best friend and protector. He had missed him dearly when he was incarcerated so when he was released Rasik was very excited.

> *"Probably when my brother first came back out from prison... when he was still inside he used to ring when I was young and I used to cry when I hear him on the phone when I hear his voice I always miss him...we went home and he came out of the house I just I just walked up to him and started hugging him yeah I was happy as to see him."* (Rasik)

Several gang members celebrated the release of their older brothers from prison, which would have been a great highlight, as well as spending the night at their friends or family member's house, which many gang members like B-Red indicated was a highlight in their life.

> *"...mainly going to church, Sunday school, sleeping over my aunties house with my other two twin cousins, boy cousins, we always used to play PS2 until the morning...going to school, I was a good boy then, never did anything wrong... whenever I was at my aunties house I got anything I wanted cos they were rich, anything I wanted to eat, they'll go buy it, I felt happy I just wanted to live there."* (B-Red)

Although there were many highlights for the gang members in this study there were also low points. What is interesting about the low points that the gang members shared was there seem to be more low points than highlights during their family socialization experiences.

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4.2.2 Low points

Low points are the opposite of a highlight and are specific experiences in which extremely negative emotions are felt such as despair, disillusionment, guilt, anger, and sadness. Even though this memory is unpleasant, it was an episode that has stood out as one of the worst, lowest and least wonderful moment in their life history. When I asked gang members this question there was three main themes emerging out of their responses: negative experiences to do with discipline and punishment (family control), family breakdown due to family violence and absent fathers, and dealing with grief.

All the gang members identified, described and evaluated instances where they were subjected to extraordinary forms of discipline and punishment. Most gang members in this study were disciplined through the use of physical of force and punished immediately rather than talking through what they had done wrong. They were beaten with various objects, for example, a table was used to beat B-Red one day by his mother that knocked him out unconscious to the ground.

> *"...the worse hiding I got from my mom, there was a table like this (referring to the table at the venue where he was interviewed) but it was triangle... she used it as a weapon, she grabbed my head and just went smack. I got knocked out. I just fell back..."* (B-Red)

A lampshade and light was used on Negro by his father and it broke on him but I could not help but notice that as Negro was sharing this memory he made a joke about his beatings that this explained why his family lounge was short of lampshades.

> *"…the lamps, the light yeah he used to crack it on me aye…but now, it's been three years now that my dad hasn't laid a hand on me, he'll probably just um talk to me but he won't do it anymore."* (Negro)

Other gang members were beaten with objects by one parent and then when that parent was tired the other parent stepped in and continued with the beating. In Radle's case, he shared one day his mother used the telescopic aluminium arm of the vacuum on him until her hands got sore. Then his step-father took over, slapped him at first with an open hand across his face and then used a closed-fist punch to his head. Radle explains that the reason why his step-father changed from slapping to punching Radle was because he saw that Radle was not affected by his slaps so his step-father decided that Radle required more pain and excessive force that eventually knocked him out unconscious. Radle also commented that sometimes he would run away but when his step-dad caught up with him his beatings were worse.

> *"When I get a hiding, my dad knocked me out heaps of times, sometimes my mom will deal to me but she uses weapons like the vacuum. You know when my mom's hands get sore then my step dad he just walks up 'how many times have I told you?' po's (slap) me first then poki's (punch) me. He doesn't care if I run away cos he'll catch me, so I just stand there cos if you run it's worse."* (Radle)

For B-Kew, his step-father was the only one who disciplined and punished him because his birth-mother could not do it anymore. He said his mother gave up because he was not crying anymore and she needed to pass it on to his step-father to sort him out. His step-father used his fists on B-Kew like a boxing punching bag. It is interesting what B-Kew says that he preferred getting beatings from objects rather than closed fists and what happens after his beating.

> *"...my step dad... he found out that I smoke and then he told me if you wanna smoke come here and I came to the table and he gave me a hiding with the*

table chairs, he broke it on me, I was like twelve. But those are not sore I'd rather he hit me with things than with his hands cos when he gives you a hiding with things it breaks and your hidings finished but when you get a hiding with hands it doesn't break and he just keeps going and going…" (B-Kew)

Syn shared an experience where he endured a prolonged physical beating that could have led to his uncle being arrested for assault and Syn being hospitalised. When I listened to Syn's account his patience was immense because he said his uncle punched him to the ground and he got back up and his uncle punched back to the ground and Syn got back up again. He said it went on like this for some time and he said he wanted to punch his uncle back but he could not because it was culturally disrespectful. Instead Syn got angrier and angrier, and it was this emotion that fuelled his defiance and resistance to stay down on the ground. By standing up against his beating Syn's beating got worse and after a long time he decided to run away to avoid doing something he would regret later on.

"...fuck a mean hiding aye, I ended up wanting to take him on eh. He was like straight punches, kicks, with the wood…you know I ended up getting you know all I could see was stars aye cos he got up and he dropped me like he just went boom then I got on the ground and I got up "what aye fuck!" like crying, and then boom, got up boom, got up "what aye fuck!" boom, got up boom, got up far I did that for ages aye and then he started kicking my head..." (Syn)

However, and perhaps strangely, a few gang members actually commented that their beatings actually helped them behave even though the beatings got worse when they got older. For example, B-Kew mentioned, he never stood up to his step-father when he was getting thrashed because he felt it helped him stay out of trouble.

"I remember I used to come home stoned and my mom opens the door and asks me what are you doing and I just come fall down, finish, and stand up, I think that's why her boyfriend gave me hidings aye cos I put my mom through too many stuff aye, and you can see my mom's getting like sad yeah and…the only

way I used to learn if he gives me a hiding fuck. I'll be good for like ages like a whole month I'll be good..." (B-Kew)

For B-On it not only helped him behave but the beatings also made his father feel guilty to the point of refraining from physical punishment which was brought on from restarting his church attendance.

"Yeah he changed and doesn't give us a hiding no more ever since he started going back to church..." (B-On)

While B-Ware thinks his father stopped giving him beatings because he did not like what he did to him and what he was becoming; a bully.

"Then he just talked to me like, my old man you know he stopped aye he saw like I think he saw the way he was giving us a hiding back then was like too serious so my old man just gives us lectures..." (B-Ware)

Despite the reduction in physical punishment for some of the gang members, for others it continued to be the only way that parents resorted to in order to control and stop them from being wayward and delinquent. The previous stories detail horrific experiences of abuse and inappropriate approaches to disciplining the gang members in this study. And yet it was not only violence that their parents inflicted on these gang members that they felt.

The second low point, family breakdown, was when the relationships between the parents (adults) was strained because of constant arguing and thus they failed to reconcile and restore their love for one another as well as keeping the family intact. Moreover when gang members mentioned was growing up without their "real" birth father and how it emotionally affected them.

The witnessing of family violence in the home caused some to react

violently and others preferring to withdraw and isolate themselves. The most prevailing memory of witnessing family violence was seeing their mothers being beaten up by their fathers, which started very early in their childhood. For example, Gypsy remembers that he wanted to stop his father from beating his mother but he was too scared and only a child at the time.

> *"I remember this one time we're just having a shower aye. Then all I heard was a "aaahhhhh!!!" a scream fucken I just came running out of the shower and I see the stool over my mom's neck, flipped upside down so it was the part you sit on, then my older brother just came in and stopped but he had to like get right into my dad's face even my brother got a hiding he was probably only like what sixteen or something like that, hard."* (Gypsy)

Agitate remembers when he was three years old and the day his birth-father got arrested for attempting to kill is birth-mother. Although he did not know at the time what being arrested meant and why his father had his hands tied-up and led away, he still carried throughout his childhood through to adolescence strong images of family violence.

> *"When my dad got locked up, my real one, he was violent towards my family…when I was small I remember now like some of the stuff that happened the night he got arrested. I just saw his face against the brick those brick houses and I looked up there was a helicopter over our house and ambulance and my mom was in the ambulance and then like I saw scars on her thing but she survived so yeah. He tried to kill her. Then just remember just the lights and everybody like my family coming crying. I was like three or four."* (Agitate)

Gypsy and Agitate may have been too young to stop their fathers at the time from assaulting their mothers but there were stories where some gang members did stop their fathers especially when they were older. Like Weezy, he ended up using a machete on his step-father and caused several wounds in an attempt to stop him from beating up his mother when he was just entering adolescence.

> *"I think I was seven going to eight and I came from school like he was beating up my mom and I walked up to him and the dude punched me on the nose... first time I saw my step dad like that... I went straight to the umu kuka (kitchen) and grabbed the sapelu (machete) and I went straight to him and I asked him to leave my mom alone but he wouldn't na tanu loa ko kipi (that's when I cut) and I got him on the arm and mau lelei ia le sapelu ile mea lea o le lima (the machete cut his arm) but I was aiming for his head but he blocked it that's why it hit his arm...my mom took me to um my dad in Apia after that."* (Weezy)

Weezy's memory was from when he was living in Samoa and among the other participants there were other similar stories told about their mothers being beaten in Samoa and even after their family migrated to and settled in New Zealand. For the participants their memories of family violence were ongoing and lasting. Mynar's comments below provide a good example of this lasting effect.

> *"My dad beat up my mom in Sa (slang: shorthand for Samoa) and over here (in NZ) primary school time and Intermediate. Never got arrested, my mom never called the leoleos (police), sometimes you'll see my mom gap it like go outside the house she'll just go outside and walk somewhere then just come back. One time I saw my mom bleeding from a ipu gi (tea cup), dad just cracked on my mom's face and then she was bleeding in the mouth."* (Mynar)

While the previous accounts explain why the families that the gang members in this study grew up in broke down, what is also interesting is the aftermath of witnessing family violence which usually led to their families being separated from one another. As a consequence some of the gang members grew up without their "real" fathers or birth-fathers because they got arrested, while for other gang members their birth fathers left as soon as they were born or after a couple years they did not want to continue their relationship with their birth-mother. Even when their mothers started a new relationship and they lived with step-fathers, few struggled to accept them as father-figures or their step siblings or both. There was also the situation of having to adjust to the many men

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their single mothers brought to the family home, just when they were beginning to accept a step-father then another step-father was introduced. The upshot of all these dynamics is the realisation that their mothers and themselves acknowledged the importance of having a male role model around and their contribution to the family. B-Sup summarises this when he said:

> *"Ah I reckon the only reason why like some other Samoans are like this is cos if you grow up with no father then you wouldn't have anybody to tell you like what's right or like smack you or actually tell you to like um chose the right path like have a father to like actually call you "son" – I reckon I would've been a better person."* (B-Sup)

So having a father-son relationship is essential not only for moral guidance and role modelling on how to be a better person but also related to the Samoan cultural value of aiga (family) where in Samoan society, a Samoan is moulded by their Samoan family upbringing and so if a family is missing a key person the implications can be detrimental. The other vital aspect that B-Sup's comments also highlight is intimacy where not having a father call you "son" can be a very emotional experience especially during Father's Day celebrations or seeing your friend's father being at rugby game and their father is not.

The variation in family structure and composition was another key feature of growing up. Few gang members in this study grew up in single-parent families and others with step parents and step siblings or from only-child family environments.

For B-Sup as soon as he was born his father left his mother and she raised him on her own. While she had other relationships she did not choose to have any more children which meant B-Sup was an only child but this decision left him lonely and craving for sibling company and a father-figure

to go to talk about guy-stuff cos he found it difficult to talk to his mother about it.

> *"Growing up with no father…my mom had to be both, she had to father figure like for dad-son-father talk, I had to go to my mom you know boys don't like talk…"* (B-Sup).

Berserk's mother and father separated when he was very young and his mother never had any other children. She re-married and he gained two step-brothers and one step-sister that was the youngest. Beserk never had problems with his step-father or his step-sister but with his step-brothers who bullied him and even his mother. It was a low point memory because it was not easy to try and fit-in with another family and he forced himself just to please his mother because she was happy to find another man and a father for him as well as siblings to keep him company otherwise he would be an only child.

> *"Nah when I was five he left and yeah my mom met my step dad and he had a kid yeah while we were growing up too much fights like family fights…step brother he's older than me…he used to beat up my mom cos too much on drugs, weed, too much of that…so I hit him on the head with a laupapa (piece of wood) then he'll chase after me…I just hooked him and he dropped…when I was thirteen then I stabbed them in the eye, the second oldest…he tried to act hard."* (Beserk)

In a nutshell, the critical events that occurred in the lives of the participants were both positive and negative; the difference though, lies in the fact that there were more negative memories than positive ones, which gives rise to serious implications about their family socialization experiences and subsequent involvement in delinquency and gangs. On the one hand their childhood, adolescence and adulthood contained happy memorable moments such as spending time with the family, gaining achievements in sport, and fatherhood. It seems that to receive a lot of attention from their parents, celebrating special events with their

extended family, noticing one of their parents watching them at sport fixtures they were engaged in, and having support at a time when they did not really know how to raise a child were all very meaningful and significant flashbacks. It was the time when they were really close to their parents and family, when they felt a lot of love, a sense of belonging, and probably rare moments where contrary remembrances were subdued.

On the other hand following alongside these positive memories were the negative reflections throughout their life course from childhood memories, through to adolescence, and then their young adult years. In other words, nearly all happy retrospections was paralleled and neutralized by adverse moments in their life. The childhood memory of spending time with their parents was superseded by recollections of witnessing family violence. The adolescent recall of celebrating with the family the winning of a rugby tournament or a national swimming award dissipated in the wake of regular and excessive use of physical discipline and punishment. The young adulthood experience of becoming a father was continually tested by doubts and insecurities due to being a product of family breakdown and the collapse of their family structure. They did not know how to be a father because their own father had not been around for them. All their negative experiences would have been deep-rooted traumatic experiences that they carried with them through to young adulthood and affected the way they thought about things and behaved in response such as grief.

The third and final low point memory was grief. Grief is a strong, sometimes overwhelming emotion for people, regardless of whether their sadness stems from the loss of a loved one or from a terminal diagnosis they or someone they leave have received. Few gang members indicated that one of the lowest points in their lives was the passing of a loved one. They were still affected at the time of the interview and even blamed themselves for not being able to do something to prevent their loved one from dying. Occasionally they found themselves feeling numb and

removed from daily life, unable to carry on with regular tasks while saddled with their sense of loss. This is a natural reaction to loss, normal and often deeply painful and expressed through grieving or mourning the loss of a loved one. Other gang members made a promise with a loved one before they died and at the time of the interview and were still honouring the promise in order to remember the impact they played in their lives when they were alive. Thus the traumatic experience of grieving over the loss of a parent, extended family member, or a sibling was still a raw experience for affected participants as they recollected deep-rooted and hurtful emotions they carried around even at the time of the interview.

For example, BM at the time of the interview shared how he mourned the loss of his step mother and how he blamed himself for not listening to her when she asked him to get help. When he was telling his story I could not help but think that he was too young to realise that his step mother needed help, however, for BM it is a memory he has never forgotten.

> *"When my mom passed away, she had a stroke I was eleven...this one time when I didn't listen in the morning cos I was sleeping with my mom and dad in the garage and there was something wrong with her she told me to go get my sister to massage her head but I went and watched tv instead and forgot about it. and I went to get my bag in the garage and my mom was sleeping I tried to wake her up cos she was sleeping in the toilet and I just started crying and then I ran into the house and told my sister and they came and then rang the ambulance she was still alive and I think three weeks later she just passed away."* (BM)

Thirteen years after the death of Syn's mother he still remembers her and what was responsible for her death. He doesn't blame himself, but he does say that he is still affected by it today because if she was still alive it may have prevented him from being wayward and unruly.

"Can't really remember much aye, the only thing I remember is when ah like just when my mom passed away, I was five, cos she was sick aye...she had cancer...I reckon it still affects me now though cos I know if my mom was still alive I wouldn't be like this, would've been a better life for me cos the life that I'm living right now is not a life aye...." (Syn)

Other gang members mentioned grieving over the loss of an extended family member, their grandmother, because this person was the one that raised them when they were infants and children. To honour their memory and to acknowledge the care they provided these gang members did things in order to remember them. For Aomas the passing of his grandmother was so significant that he gave up smoking marijuana that same day.

"Ah not twelve...it was during thirteen or fourteen my grandma passed away... me and my brothers went shop and we came back and everyone was standing outside...they said she passed away and I, that's when everything just stopped, that's when I stopped smoking weed..." (Aomas)

Young D watched his grandfather pass away slowly but one of the last wishes his grandfather wished for was for Young D to continue playing rugby and not stop. Young D honoured his grandfather's wish but last year he abandoned his rugby and joined a Samoan gang. He cried during the interview when he disclosed this and afterwards began to think about leaving his gang and return to playing rugby.

"Think primary school days, long time, and my grandpa he was dying then the hospital couldn't do anything about it, just bring him home and wait and on his last day our whole family was there and um my grandma asked him what did he want to see before he goes and he said ah to see me play rugby again...that's why I wanna play rugby aye." (Young D)

Negro's story is a tragic one and he was the only one who mentioned grieving over the passing of his siblings. Two of his four brothers died one died in Samoa from meningococcal meningitis disease when he was a baby

and another baby brother died in New Zealand from cot death. He blames himself for the death of his brother who died in New Zealand. He is angry at himself for not being able to save his him, when he had the chance but he was too tired and fell asleep. Interestingly enough he suggests that if both of his brothers were alive today, it could have prevented him from getting involved with the gang because his brothers would be his gang instead.

> *"I would've had like, like this would've been my gang like my brothers, this is like I will probably live another life cos that there's a lot of things determine like to make me go into gangs and stuff, cos if they're around I'll be like concentrating on them aye like-like I'll be talking to them more. We would've figured out something, we would've had some better than what I'm we got now if he was still around, cos if – and then my mom told me to look after him they were going to do a feau (jobs) and I was like I haven't had sleep cos my brother that died here was he died from cot death aye."* (Negro)

In general, trauma constitutes a violation of the participant's (victim) sense of safety and belief in the world as a safe place. This can have the effect of re-orienting the participant from a complacent to a defensive posture and the post-traumatic survival mode orientation can become self-perpetuating through a dynamic of mutually reinforcing symptoms and responses. Although trauma effects can manifest in many ways, when combined with the other risk factors noted above, trauma may be integral to the development and persistence of delinquent behaviour and gang participation.

One of the ways that trauma effects can manifest is in the critical events that participants experience because these bring about either exciting or disappointing memories and are then carried through from childhood to adolescence untouched and not addressed until later in life. Another way is in the failure to bond with parents and the family which is onset of poor relationship skills, mistrust and a lack of respect toward authority figures. Another way is what has been covered previously, the loss of a loved one

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albeit a parent, an extended family member or a sibling intensifies feelings of self-blame and loneliness. It sets the scene quite nicely for those contemplating a way out of their family to seek out alternatives and find a way to overcome the lack of family functioning, the collapse of the family structure, and deep-rooted traumatic episodes like grief because participants felt more comfortable, safe, and respected in a gang rather than their own family.

4.3 Choosing the family or the gang: The effects of gang life on the family

While the literature review in chapter two did not cover the impact on families from having one or more of their teenage children involved in gangs it did highlight the importance of establishing quality social bonds and critical family functioning in the family home (e.g. being interested in the participant's friends, school work, extracurricular activities, putting aside time for the participants, providing rewards for good behaviour, rules and so on) in order to deter them from anti-social behaviour (drug related behaviour, aggressiveness, dishonesty, intimidation, and waywardness). Most of the participants said that it was their family that pushed them into gangs. They explained that the lack of attention and intimacy provided by their parents and other family members contributed to them being drawn into gang life for a sense of belonging, support and connection. In some ways growing up in a situation where connectedness was to an individual family member rather than the whole family, where memories were more negative rather than positive family experiences, if participants saw violence as a way to resolve problems then they could have built up their immunity to violence and perhaps even copy the behaviour and apply it on anyone. By being gang members there were far happier memories such as a sense of belonging, being listened to and loved, and had access to all kinds of vices, not provided by their families. Choosing the gang over the family was a constant choice the gang

members in this study had to make and for some it was a difficult decision for others it was easy. So the main questions I asked gang members was whether it was their "family" that led them to joining a gang and what were the effects of gang life on their family.

The effects of gang life on the gang members and then on the family they grew up in was widespread and far-reaching. The first and most persistent effect was the difficulty of leaving the gang after joining (e.g. Negro). Another effect reported by participants was the danger their gang membership brought to their family (e.g. Agitate). The third side effect was when the family was actually directly confronted by rival gangs (e.g. Dust). The fourth effect was the emotional impact that gang involvement brought upon their families (e.g. B-Red and Rasik). The final effect was the changes that occurred to the participant's attitude and interpersonal development because of gang involvement which subsequently affected their families through abuse (e.g. Negro).

With regards to the first effect, Negro found it hard to ignore the attractiveness of gang life despite his parent's warnings and pleadings and once he made a decision to join a gang it was hard to get out because he had made a commitment to be loyal to his gang rather than his family. The gang was his new family now.

> *"Cos I was too much in da hood aye like...fucken it just, it just took my soul away from me aye. Like being with the boys it was just I got into deep with the gangs stuff, going gang banging like I was slanging (see drugs) for them..."* (Negro)

In relation to the second effect, Agitate points out that he regrets choosing his gang over his family because he realises if he leaves his family could become an easy target for rival gangs planning revenge directed at him. So he decides to remain with the gang, even though he regrets it, so his family can be protected by his gang.

"Just disappointing aye, choosing just the colour (the gang) over your family and your culture. But I worry if you're gonna get jumped like people from the past that you've gave a hiding like…I've had guys say… gonna come burn your house down I know where you live….I know where you live, I know your family. Just worries you like when you come home and you just look at your family and they got nothing to do with it and they're just being all happy but really they don't know what you're getting up to." (Agitate)

The third effect was highlighted when Dust's family home was attacked by rival gang member using firearms. Dust and his gang carried out a raid on a rival gang's house and a few nights later his family home was shot up while his parents were at home. Bullets narrowly missed his parents while they were in the lounge as windows were smashed and walls damaged. The incident was not only reported in the national news but witnessed by other boys like Mynar (he's in the same gang as Dust), who heard Dust's mother screams and saw Dust's father running around inside the house.

"…they saw my brother (Quest) walking and they just pulled up and pointed the gun at him then he jumped the fence and gapped it and yeah they were shooting and then they shot at the house, they shot the windows then gap… my mom and them were scared and I was just buzzing out aye." (Dust)

The fourth effect was illustrated by gang members like B-Red who often thought about the effect his gang activities would have on his family, usually after getting arrested and waiting to be picked up from the police station. B-Red knew his family would be disappointed and ashamed because they had high expectations for them to be successful in their lives; instead, his parents faced the task of saving face.

"Yeah the leoleo's (police) caught me and I just felt bad…I was like bro this is so embarrassing, it's shameful on your family when, even when the extended family found out I was arrested and locked up they were sad cos they knew, they go ma'i mau le tino le lakapi (what a waste of a good body he had for

rugby) or boxer... like everything I did for the boys... and when during I was locked up my sister told me mum cried every night." (B-Red)

Rasik also thought about the humiliation he brought upon his family and the fuss his actions created for his parents. On top of this, he knew that his transgressions would extend beyond the family home to church, which would bring further ridicule upon his family.

"Ah for example I'll get kicked out of school or I used to ring them from the police to come and pick me up like...at one in the morning...they came yeah these are the hard times, both my parents would come, their faces disappointed, I'm disappointed too just um probably feel ashamed about the thing that I done ah cos everyone else like people for example from my church gonna find out about it and they gonna go straight to my mom and yeah talk about my family." (Rasik)

The final effect or emotional impact on families meant that not only did many gang members embarrass their families but their attitudes at home changed as well. Gang members said their families became concerned at the way they behaved at home and knew it was because of the friends they were associating with. For example, Negro said his dad picked up on it and said that he was becoming mischievous and disrespectful and that it was noticeable every time he came home after associating with the gang.

"Nah it was probably like yeah twelve years old when I went to school and yeah we formed that gang but every like midnight I just sneak out of the house go drink with the boys. My dad yeah he recognised a change in me aye and he like he didn't know where I got this whole new attitude from and that and he used to start giving me hidings..." (Negro)

Overall the effects of gang life on the participants and their families centred on the participant's choice in putting the gang first over their family which would have been a decision based on negative family socialization experiences so most of the participants said that it was their family that pushed them to joining a gang. Despite the attractiveness of

gang culture (friendships, socializing, supporting, surrogate family, and access to vices) had on the participants they still thought about their families and growing up alongside their parents and siblings. Still it was difficult to leave the gang once they joined. Rival gang members knew who they were and eventually they would find out where their family lived and who their family members were. Continuing to stay in the gang, they believed meant protection for their family and embarrassment to the family's Samoan status and integrity. Being a gang member also brought personality and attitudinal changes to their character where Samoan cultural values like respect, honesty and obedience was redirected away from applying it to their family toward the gang they joined instead.

Families get caught up in the world of gangs because of their children's involvement and this was not what the gang members in this study intended, they wanted to keep their gang life separate from their family and home life. And yet a few of their fathers were former gang members while their older siblings were still active so few participants followed their family member's footsteps. So an unintended reverse effect is that families are one of the reasons that their teenage children join a gang. The effects of gang life for the family and vice versa are complex and contain many dynamic factors contributing to what the participants shared about their family socialization experiences and how some of these influenced their decision to join a gang.

4.4 Chapter summary

In closing, there are strong indications in the participants' experiences of family socialization that could explain their choice of being a gang member. According to the participants it was in their relationships with other family members, in the critical events they experienced, and in the various ways they became exposed to gang culture. If participants grew

up in family homes where there were high levels of intimacy and regular occurrences of attention and interaction then there should be equally high levels of connectedness, trust, and sense of belonging. It seems this was apparent when the participants were children; somehow the closeness they initially had to their family began to diminish in importance and relevance.

There were positive signs of connectedness early in their childhood where family got together to celebrate a special event or one of their parents spending time with them like watching them play sport. There may be something to Samoan males being tracked into particularly physical, collision sports, such as rugby (perhaps not so much in swimming) that reify the same types of stereotypes tied to gang membership. For instance, the racialized stereotypes that Samoan males are physically big, explosive, tough and so forth, but not intellectually sharp in the classroom is not only a highly gendered social phenomenon but could also push Samoan males into both rugby and delinquency.

Nevertheless these early positive memories of connectedness and closeness were scant and for those participants who mentioned them it was obvious they were very important to them. It was not until participants are asked to share a highlight and a low point during their life course where there are more negative than positive memories does one get a sense that this aspect of family socialization probably had more of an impact on participants choosing to join a gang. Especially events such as witnessing family violence during childhood, receiving excessive use of force in physical discipline and punishment during adolescence, watching their family breakdown and break up, and grief are all very intense traumatic experiences. For some of the participants account of fathers being abusive to their mothers it reflects levels of patriarchy that have impacted them not only in the form of learning to solve problems through violent means, but also seeing violence as a particularly masculine

behaviour and a gendered story to this thesis. More and more negative memories were being absorbed that eventually positive memories withered away and new ones were overshadowed. If this happened then participants would seek happiness and gratification elsewhere like a gang.

By the time the participants were teenagers the decision to join a gang could have been made easier if family socialization experiences were mostly negative. It is an important transition because as a child they would have done more listening and observing but as a young person they began to test and apply what they had remembered listening to and observing. Some would remember how problems were solved through violence and others through alcohol and substance abuse. Some would behave one way at home and another way outside of home. They began to lead double lives, act out various personas, and maintain a balancing act both in the family home and in the gang. The bonds they had built with a trusted parent or older sibling may have subsided and been substituted because family was no longer held as important but shared with gang members. The negative memories that dominated their childhood may have lost its impetus as new positive memories flow-in from their gang participation. So the decision to join a gang could be justified but then there are problems with this situation as well such as family homes being targeted by rival gang members and attitudinal changes like being disrespectful, dishonest and deceitful.

The findings seem to corroborate many of the theoretical literature's explanation of the link between family socialization and youth gang and delinquency. Delinquency theories purport that strain (personal, financial, social, cultural), control (self-control and social control), and learning (replicating and modelling) factors, when these are integrated and studied over the life course, explain why young people join gangs. There were many instances where participants experienced extreme cases of strain, particularly personal and emotional stress from excessive physical

discipline and punishment, from witnessing family violence, and the loss of a loved one. When there is too much stress in the family home the socialization experience is affected. One of the family home's responsibility is to ensure its family members are controlled through, for example, house rules. Over time these house rules could succumb to overwhelming stress and the control that the family home has over its member's wanes. For example, when parents tell their teenage children not to join gangs and then later their family home is shot at by bullets that narrowly miss them can cause a lot of stress and affect the control that the family exacts. Or if the parents are away for long periods working their teenage children are neglected, house rules are disobeyed, and they end up spending time with the neighbourhood's kids who introduce and teach them to alcohol and drugs; how to consume and sell it. A few of the participant's older brothers did this, while other participants learned how to be a gang member because their father or older brother or both were former or current gang members.

Finally, if Samoan young people are to be prevented from joining gangs then initiatives, programs and strategies need to target the family institution and improve its family functioning and family structure. It should be an early intervention and prevention plan that target parents and educates them on how to relate better to their teenagers and also target young people on Samoan cultural dimensions such as absolute deference to parents. An interesting feature of the findings is that despite the participants choosing the gang over their family, most were still living at home and a few of them helped cook meals, clean up, and run errands. Even though they were gang members they were also sons. Another interesting feature is while most of the participants shared horrific stories about the kinds of physical discipline and punishment they received from their parents only a few participants wanted to report it while the others took it as a part of growing up. There are more accounts of this unique phenomenon in the next chapter but the participants should not be the

only focus of intervention albeit social policy and/or social work. Without an ethnic minority perspective that contains aspects such as an awareness of cultural socialization processes, cultural strains (e.g. rejection of Samoan culture), lack of control by cultural institutions such as the aiga (family) and fa'asamoa, and lack of acknowledgement in passing on to the next generation the significance of learning cultural values such as respect and humility; understanding why Samoan young people join gangs will not be fully realised. Family socialization is one of the keys to understanding Samoan young people's participation in youth gangs and delinquency; the others are cultural and societal socialization in the next chapter and gang socialization in chapter six.

Chapter 5 Cultural and Societal Socialization

5.0 Introduction

Socio-cultural socialization is another important factor in understanding Samoan young people's involvement in youth gangs because it is not only in the family home where explanations might be found but also in their cultural backgrounds as well as social institutions outside of the home. In other words the development of their Samoan cultural identity is one form of socialization, whereas their experiences in schools, church, and the neighbourhood community where they lived are other essential socializations that could all provide possible reasons. Generally, cultural socialization is the transfer of linguistic and knowledge (cultural practices) particular to their identity that distinguishes them from another ethnic group (Ballantine & Roberts, 2011; Harro, 2000; Saracho & Spodek, 2007). This cultural knowledge is then internalized by the learner and moulds him/her into thinking and acting the way their culture does (Hughes & Chen, 1999; Hughes, Bachman, Ruble & Fuligni, 2006; Phinney & Chavira, 1995; Umaña-Taylor & Fine, 2004).   Societal socialization is similar particularly in the process of learning where instead of internalizing cultural values the learner internalizes social norms (this is how things are done e.g. travelling in a residential street is 50km/h only) and social control (school regulations, church obligations, and safe community living) (Fox, Lidz & Bershady, 2005; Parsons, 1964a, 1964b, 1966).

Amongst the twenty-five gang members interviewed the majority (18) were born in New Zealand and the rest (7) in Samoa including one in America Samoa. For those born in Samoa and America Samoa half of them migrated to New Zealand when they were still children while the other half migrated just as they were entering adolescence. Not all participants were

full Samoan (3): one was Samoan-German, one was Samoan-Chinese-Tongan-Niuean, and another one was Samoan-Tongan so the rest of the participants were full Samoans (22). The majority (22 out of 25) could understand the Samoan language when spoken to them but just under half (12 out of 25) could speak the Samoan language fluently. One of the participants held a tulafale/orator matai/chiefly title.

In terms of their social profile all the participants grew up in low-ranking socio-economic decile[7] areas. Nearly all (21) of the participants grew up in Otara, Clendon, and Mangere, while the rest (4) lived in Manukau and Manurewa. Nearly a third of the participants moved out of where they grew up in: five moved from one South Auckland suburb to another and two moved from their South Auckland suburbs to a central Auckland suburb. Nearly three-quarters of the participants (18) attended public schools while the others (7) were enrolled in private/church schools (Catholic). Only two of the participants achieved any educational qualifications (National Certificate of Educational Achievement 1 Year 11 Level 6) and the bulk of them (19) were expelled. Four were attending a course (ironically they were training to be security guards) but this was imposed on them by court/the New Zealand Youth Justice system. At the time of the interview 21 participants were unemployed and receiving income support benefit payments from the government, of which two were serving a home detention court imposed sentence for crime, while 3 had part time jobs and 1 a full time job.

This chapter is the second instalment of findings and concerns the participants' cultural and societal socialization experiences. There are two main sections: 5.1 Cultural Socialization (the development of Samoan identity as a socialization experience) and 5.2 Societal Socialization (schooling, church, and neighbourhood socialization experiences). Both

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[7] A widely used measure of socio-economic status in New Zealand education, primarily used to target funding and support to more needy schools. After each Census of Population and Dwellings the data that is used to calculate a decile rating is based on household income, occupation, household overcrowding, educational qualifications and income support.

sections and its subsections are elaborated further below. The final section (5.3) is the chapter summary which consolidates the main themes drawn from the previous sections and relates it to whether there are any explanatory values in them that account for Samoan young people's participation in youth gangs.

5.1 Cultural Socialization

At the heart of cultural socialization is the concept of fa'asamoa and the learning involved that is internalized and ultimately shapes the Samoan identity persona. Fa'asamoa determines how a Samoan person should think and act, which is always with respect, humility and compassion. It involves being instinctual and making decisions from the heart or what the Samoan person senses or feels. It also involves adherence to protocols such as by showing absolute deference so their mana and his/ her family's mana are enhanced, which is very important in the Samoan culture. Lastly, it involves recognising its social institutions as in the aiga (family), authority (matai/ chief), lotu (religion/ church), and the nu'u (the village) in terms of how they provide social control. Thus fa'asamoa is a way of life and could be perceived as a protective factor that keeps Samoan young people from being wayward.

The participants were asked "What it was like growing up and learning your Samoan culture?" and to draw upon childhood and adolescent memories, in order to ascertain the level of their fa'asamoa (section 5.1.1). A follow up question was asked of those who were born in Samoa to gain an understanding of what their growing up experiences was like (section 5.1.2). This included two participants who were sent to Samoa as a punishment. I asked the same group what it was like settling in NZ and also the NZ born participants the same question to see what their socialization experiences was like as well as trace their fa'asamoa

development (5.1.3). For sections 5.1.2 and 5.1.3 I was interested in finding out whether acculturation and dualism (learning two cultural identities: the Samoan and the NZ cultures) was connected to youth gang involvement. I was building toward the final question "was it fa'asamoa or being Samoan the reason why you joined the gang?" (section 5.1.4) to see if the Samoan culture had something to do with Samoan young people being involved in youth gangs. The responses to this question were mostly "no" but the few who said "yes" gave some surprising examples.

5.1.1 Fa'asamoa

Most of the participants had no idea of what fa'asamoa was nor had heard of it. For those few participants who did defined it as how Weezy stated below.

> *"Um, hmm, fa'asamoa is just the way you do stuff aye like the way you talk, the way you stand, um, you know the vā (the space) between you and your parents and you and your sister, the faifeau (church minister) and all that, the way you walk."* (Weezy)

Most of the participants did not know anything about fa'asamoa because they were not taught it nor encouraged to learn it. Their parent(s) did not speak Samoan to them nor did they teach the participants the language or what their Samoan culture was about. In Dust's case, his first introduction to fa'asamoa was through a police youth program where he realised what his Samoan identity meant to him and to others and even though he understand the Samoan language he did not or could not speak it.

> *"...my mom and dad didn't teach me. Mal and them was teaching us about fa'asinomaga (Samoan identity). At home mom and dad always speak to us in Samoan that's why I understand but I don't speak back. Some of the boys girlfriends are Maoris so they would just um speak Samoan about them aye they always do those ones speak Samoan so that everyone else around them won't know what they're talking about."* (Dust)

Some of the participants did know something about fa'asamoa and how to speak the language but this was when they were children so when they grew older and became teenagers and young adults later on they had lost their ability to speak and the value they placed on their Samoan identity. It was not important to them anymore.

> "I know how to speak a little Samoan, I knew how to speak Samoan when I was little but when I got older just too much ka'a (mucking around). I miss speaking Samoan, sometimes I feel a little bit left out, I don't know anything about aganu'u (Samoa culture) or fa'asamoa but I know what fa'aaloalo (respect) is, I know alofa (love), vā feiloaloai (fostering relationships), when I was kid I did my tauloto (scriptural recitations) in Samoan, I read the Bible in Samoan, but now I don't do any of that…" (BM)

Those few participants who knew something about fa'asamoa and spoke the Samoan language through their adolescent years and into their young adult stage, were able to do this was because someone in their family took the time to teach them and practice with them. J-Red provides a good example of how he learned his Samoan language development, etiquette and mannerisms.

> "Grandparents…they will teach us the fa'asamoa way, like always respect your sisters and your parents...like um say le upu tulou (the words "excuse me") um...when I was a child...yeah there was a lot of stuff...If I was to hear them say a sentence I only know a few words then yeah ah I know straight away like ah I'll match up the words and I'll know from my memory like my I'll try match see what they're trying to say yeah. If I need help I'll ask mom or grandparents." (J-Red)

Negro's parents taught him how to speak and understand Samoan words through the use of prayer where he had to commit to memory and recite the following week. This is a common method of instruction as is attending Samoan ceremonies and watching the processes unfolded within them enabling DL to learn about certain aspects of fa'asamoa.

"... it was my parents mostly the Samoan stuff that I know... they were forcing it on me aye like "o mai loa amata aoga mea, avatu le tatalo ia e ao e fai le aso lea la sau" (come here let's start our schooling, take this prayer and learn it so you can do it next week)... Most of the stuff I know about Samoa like I pick up by myself seeing it at the funerals, it's um like all the fa'alavelave's (problems or issues) and stuff." (Negro)

5.1.2 Life in Samoa

The few participants who were born in Samoa (7) including American Samoa, the majority of them (5 – excluding those sent to Samoa from New Zealand) had terrible memories of growing up in Samoa. Despite being strong in Samoan speaking and in fa'asamoa as with all the other children growing up in Samoa, this was overshadowed by bullying which was a commonplace negative behaviour in village life. For example, Weezy, describes his encounter with some of the older kids from the same village, how they bullied him when he was very young; a memory that still affects him at the time I interviewed him (he was teary-eyed).

"...people from _____ used to bully me around, they used to gogoa (tie) me to the niu (coconut tree) ... e te iloa le mea e sale ai le popo (you know that thing that is used to scrape the inside of a coconut) yeah? Those ones they just peki peki (throwing it) with, and like they aim it to the top of my head, they just laughing those teenager, you know just playing around but to me it's serious, keke i a le moa ia (shaking). I was crying hard out, I was like five or six…" (Weezy)

The bullying not only occurred in the village, but also in school, where older students intimidated Weezy for his lunch money.

"It was hard life man cos the tamaiti matua (older kids) you have to give them your lunch money and if you give your two dollars and go get something that's worth two dollars they say ah bring the change back…" (Weezy)

Aomas wasn't born and raised in Samoa like Weezy, he was sent to Samoa as a teenager for misbehaving in New Zealand, but he recalls his first experience in a Samoan high school where he was being bullied by staff, mentally and physically.

> "…my first day at school, I was just sitting down and then the teacher found out that I was new and he just goes, "Ga gofo gofo iga lou kefe, a le fai mai se tala." (You just sit there you fuck and you don't say a word) Then he started buzzing when they said I was a NZer, "ah sorry bro" but I started swearing at him, then got a slap and then the principal came gave me a slap, I said "a fuck off" and then that's when I went home..." (Aomas)

B-Nigga, like Aomas, was also sent to Samoa for getting into trouble too many times but one of the experiences he remembers was about the Samoan secondary school curriculum, how it was behind New Zealand, it was very easy ("skulled it back") and it amazed B-Nigga that the standard was poor.

> "I was like bro youse fellas you need an upgrade. Youse can't be living with this stuff bro. This is like yeah form 2 dude cos like year 13 work over there is like form 2 over here, fuck bro, when I went there I did everything. I skulled it back…" (B-Nigga)

So only a small minority (or 2 out of 7) of those born and socialized in Samoa during their childhood commented that growing up in Samoa for them was full of happy memories. For example, Negro recalls how his childhood memories was full of playing for long hours and how he enjoyed going and participating in church activities.

> "...I used to think that Samoa was the only country on earth and there was nothing else outside of it...I was like happy as, like I was just go play on the road till midnight in Samoa…Church service... I used to be good as in church…I used to be like do all the tatalos (prayers)…tauloto (scriptural recitations) and then there was one time where I did the lauga (sermon) for the lotu tamaiti (White Sunday)." (Negro)

So when the five participants who were bullied found out they were migrating to New Zealand nearly all of them were excited. For the two participants who had a positive Samoan life socialization experience both were sad because Samoa had been a big part of their life. As Syn explains, he did not want to relocate to New Zealand but he was forced.

> *"Nah not really I was happy as at the Islands I didn't wanna come here. They forced me to come here like without me knowing that I was coming here I didn't know I was coming here aye until the day I was you know I was gonna come…"*
> *(Syn)*

5.1.3 Settling in NZ

When the small group of participants born in Samoa arrived in New Zealand their excitement was short-lived and turned into shock, fear and feeling out of place. This was Weezy's overall impression of New Zealand when he first arrived, which also representative of even those participants is born in NZ (B-On).

> *"…a whole different world like a whole different country, new places and the stuff I haven't seen before and...people here is a different, learn about different cultures, scared but excited, massive buildings, heaps of cars, not knowing how to fit in, feel different."* (Weezy)

One of the things about New Zealand life that made the Samoan-born and NZ-born participants feel different was the English language. They had just left Samoa where the English language is a second language to a country where the English language is the official language in NZ would have impacted on their ability to settle in and fit in to their new surroundings. See Jay's comment below:

> *"K------ that was only like a couple of months or something and then I told my mum I didn't wanna go school cos I don't know how to speak English, I feel*

shame when I go to school and heaps of kids talking to me but I'm not talking, I said to my mom I don't wanna go to school. After a month I didn't go back to K----- and then we moved to South Auckland." (Jay)

The other thing about New Zealand life that made the Samoan-born and NZ-born participants feel different was the level of discrimination and prejudices they confronted at schools. They were called names and even introduced to youth gangs. For example, B-On started fighting when he was at primary school because he was being called a "fob[8]" and Negro had been in New Zealand for at least six weeks when he noticed gangs at the age of nine.

"When I started from R—W--- Primary it was all fighting aye like yeah cos when I was at R--- W--- Primary they used to call me fob and stuff and I used to hate that word aye cos I was trying to learn and they used to call me fob, but I used to beat them up." (B-On)

"...when we came here to NZ I was nine years old, it was a whole new life for me aye it was different...coming here and getting exposed early to here in NZ all I was like the first thing I recognised was gangs." (Negro)

5.2 Choosing the culture or the gang: The practice of Fa'asamoa in gangs

Given that most did not know anything about fa'asamoa and could not speak the Samoan language, it is not surprising then that responses to the question "was it fa'asamoa or the Samoan culture the reason why you joined the gang?" Were mainly "no". Even the small group of Samoan-born participants who knew about fa'asamoa and able to speak the Samoan language responded by saying that the cultural identity was not the main reason why they got involved in gangs. And yet there were various accounts from the participants of examples where they exercised

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[8] F.O.B stands for "Fresh off boat" and used to describe immigrants that have arrived from a foreign nation and have not yet assimilated into the host nation's culture, language and way of life.

fa'asamoa practices and spoke in the Samoan language in the gang they formed or joined. These included passing on knowledge to other gang members, about fa'asamoa, how to speak the Samoan language, the practice of prayer before meals, fundraising for crises or special events, and participating in a member's family celebrations.

Most of the participants learned about fa'asamoa and how to speak the Samoan language from other gang members. They learned about fa'asamoa when they came into contact with their member's parents. As Rasik comments below:

> "…when I go to one of the boys house, I always show respect to the family I just act good in front of the family yeah just, I maybe gangster and stuff but I still got I still know my Samoan, my Samoan heritage and like the way we respect and stuff." (Rasik)

Some of the participants mentioned they always spoke to each other in the Samoan language when they were together and those who did not know how to speak Samoan quickly picked up the language. This not only strengthened their cultural identity development but brought the gang members closer to each other. See Aomas's comment below:

> "Yeah we always talk in, nah, when we tell jokes, speak Samoan and…pretty much speak Samoan all the time you know. Yeah like you know when you're talking about like say if some other people are there and they are not your race can just talk. You feel more, more like home, more like family." (Aomas)

Church and religion is very much part of fa'asamoa and some of the participants shared that within their gang they would always pray before having their meals and for other members and their families. As B-Red shares below:

> "In the gang, when the mea 'ai (food) comes and when Cap B is around yeah he does his lotu (prayer). He's like "sole, youse guys wanna eat?" we're like, "aye?"

do your lotu…(B-Red)

Few of the participants recalled another practice that is a key aspect of fa'asamoa which was fundraising for special events or family crises for which they would ask their members for donations so the gang could offer a contribution/gift to the even or crisis. As B-On remarks below:

> "Ah fa'asamoa like if we had birthday like for example like one of my sister's twenty-first, all the boys came around there was like twenty-five of us at my house. We all put in money all the boys came with twenty bucks to give it to my sister…" (B-On)

Not only would B-On and his gang members raise money or "chip-in" for gifts to their family members but also buy bonus tickets, to support one of their member's family fundraising projects.

> "…yeah and bonus tickets as well for families we buy just to support the family yeah we save up and chip in. We put all our money in an envelope and just say from the PBS boys and then we give to like one of our usos (brothers) and the uso will give it to his mom…the mom sees us around she's like "ah ia malo" like she'll like be friendly to us cos like we supported their family yeah." (B-On)

B-Red added that another way the gang practiced fa'asamoa and supported one of the member's family members was when he and other gang members performed a siva Samoa (Samoan dance). It touched the mother's heart and it a rare moment where the gang and the family, who did not like the gang because their son was involved in them, were close to each other.

> "Ah like we went to one of the boys' dad's birthday. So we all siva Samoa around him…the family they all like that's good like the mom she goes "I like to thank my son's friends, these guys made this night even better, youse guys just showed us that we can you know, youse guys maybe bad, look bad, dress bad, but youse guys got a heart for Samoans." (B-Red)

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So fa'asamoa may not have featured as a cultural socialization experience for most of the participants during their childhood, for some they were exposed and taught about fa'asamoa after joining a gang during their adolescence. The effects of gang life on the cultural identity development of the participants is quite profound and exposes another side of gang culture particular Samoan youth gangs. When it came to choosing the gang over their Samoan culture participants were asked "was being a Samoan a reason why you joined the gang?" Over half (15 out of 25) of the participants said "yes", 6 said did not know, and 4 said "no". For those who said "yes" it was because the gang was a Samoan gang and they were proud of being Samoan as it gave them a sense of belonging. See LOP's response:

> *"Being a Samoan ah yeah some of it is like to represent who I am and that's how proud I was of having to represent it and pride."* (LOP)

Whereas for those who said "no" it was because they were following their friends as SW remarks:

> *"Nah it was my own decision…mmm and some of it just all school mates, just mainly fuck school boys yeah"* (SW)

Overall it seems that cultural socialization was not a strong experience for most of the participants especially in their family home and having it passed on by their parents. Most participants did not know anything about fa'asamoa and how to speak the Samoan language (gagana) in their childhood and beyond except for some participants but this latter group over time lost their ability to do so. The few participants who still held on to their knowledge of fa'asamoa and how to speak the gagana from childhood to adolescence credited their parents for encouraging and teaching them, which was usually through reciting scriptural passages from the Bible, observing Samoan practices depending on the occasions, for example, the ifoga (reconciliation) ritual for forgiving transgressions and

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the ava ritual for welcoming guests. Life in Samoa was predominantly about learning and practicing fa'asamoa and the gagana but it was also filled by negative memories such as being bullied in the villages and even those who were sent to Samoa for a punishment.

However, those who were sent to Samoa for a punishment returned to New Zealand with a stronger understanding of fa'asamoa and an enhanced ability to speak the gagana. For those born in Samoa and migrated to NZ to settle struggled to adapt to the NZ way of life particularly with the English language and discrimination. Even NZ-born Samoan people experienced similar issues especially dualism; learning fa'asamoa and gagana (Samoan cultural identity) and the New Zealand way of life. Living in NZ made fa'asamoa and gagana difficult to keep up and pass on but the interesting aspect about this finding is that one way cultural socialization was transferred was through gang members teaching and passing it down to its members. So some members joined the gang because it was a Samoan gang (not a Tongan or a Māori gang) and was attracted to not only its activities but also its promotion of fa'asamoa and gagana. Not all Samoan gangs (and there were two main ones covered in this study: Red Army and Pearl Baker Stylez – see Chapter 6) promoted cultural practices. Others joined for other reasons like it were a gang originating in school and not ethnicity, it was a gang that was not contradictory like church, and it was a gang that represented the neighbourhood.

5.3 Societal Socialization

This section is important because it represents influences outside of the family home that are part in parcel to the socialization experience. How one learns the norms and beliefs of society through its social institutions such as schools, churches, and neighbourhood are very important socialization experiences. Thus there are three sub-sections that report on

the various societal socialization experiences that the participants experienced such as schooling (5.2.1), church (5.2.2), and the neighbourhood (5.2.3). Participants were asked to share as part of their life stories positive and negative accounts as well as whether what they experienced influenced their decision to join a gang. Participants were also asked for reasons to their decision to join a gang over the school, church, the neighbourhood, and social services.

5.3.1 School

In modern societies, education is the most important agent of socialization after the family. Schools are the first impersonal and collective environment that children encounter. Whereas schools' official function is the transmission of knowledge, they also promote certain values – honesty, competition, respect and individualism – and norms, such as not cheating on tests or being punctual or not arguing with teachers. Children also learn to deal with authority figures other than their parents and with peers. Also, for the first time, schools introduce students to impersonal assessment of their abilities through grades and official records that will follow the students throughout their educational career.

Experiences of New Zealand schooling for the participants were a positive and negative encounter. By far the most positive school socialization experience according to the participants was the friendships they made with other students, especially the Samoan students. The most negative school socialization experience was being bullied while for some it was the poor relationships they had with school staff. Eventually, the negative experiences started to outweigh the positive experiences to the point where choosing school or choosing the gang became an easy decision; choose the gang. This section reports on what the participants shared about their schooling socialization experience not what the teachers say or about the schooling systems and processes.

The most positive school socialization experience for the participants was making friends. For Negro his school friends were his "second family" and school was like the central hub where they all got together to catch up with one another.

> *"I think school is the main reason cos that's where I meet all the boys it was like the headquarters for all the boys to meet at cos we went to the same school…a second family for me apart from like you know."* (Negro)

Other participants were drawn to school friendships based on being the same ethnicity. For instance, Young D and his friends turned school into territories based on ethnicity and this gave them an identity and a reason for their existence.

> *"That's how I started cos you know at …. there's different areas: Samoan area, Maori and like the Samoan area that's only for Samoans and they do like their learning there, they got different blocks, that's how I started aye, start like, like if they comes to our area step them out like have scraps and shit...we were the only Blood area, we're the only red area all everyone else is a Crab (slang name for 'Crip' gang)."* (Young D)

These friendships were positive influences as it could have been the first time participants were listened to, where they were understood, where they came across peers their own age perhaps going through the same socialization episodes that they were at home and elsewhere, and where they received a lot of attention and intimacy. On the other hand, the same friendships were also negative influences as participants got involved in truancy, deceiving family members, fighting in school, and any other things their friendships entailed. As Weezy and Syn describes below:

> *"Nah I was doing pretty good there in school like kept getting certificates … like in Music…I think it was year eleven, I came first in Music…my English was*

*alright, when it came to class I'll get down with the work, but during the lunch
break I'd be banging the Red (acting like a gang member) with boys."* (Syn)

*"...I was starting to miss school, go with the boys and stuff...my aunty thinks
I'm at school but really I'm walking around D-----...I was one of those fia
[wannabe] hard now like you know won the first fight...kicking it more with the
boys than at home."* (Weezy)

Nonetheless, primarily there were two negative school socialization
experiences that participants recalled: being bullied and poor relationships
with their teachers. Most participants shared many stories of being bullied
where they encountered both verbal and physical bullying.   This
victimization became one of the main reasons why they became bullies
too. It brought together other students who endured the same treatment
and over time eventually formed into a youth gang in order to protect
each other. As B-Red, B-Real and Weezy remarks:

*"The way how I joined the gang was started … at __ __ ____ college. I was form
one. I got bullied a lot...form two, went through the same thing. They used to
mock my mum and stuff. She used to come and pick me up...mock me cos they
all used to catch bus and shit and my mom never let me catch bus. I got sick of
it...we had another ride before the van; we had like this old school ride…this guy
mocked it... I got angry…poki'd (punched) him."* (B-Red)

*"I was bullied at primary school...They just call me names...it was always black
nigga...and I did nothing...like I'll be sad inside but I'll never do anything about
it...not until I was like about nine that I started to fight back...The first was a
guy from the same street, but he was pretty big aye, it was Tongan guy too, he
just bullying me him and his sisters I just turned around and paka'd (slapped)
him..."* (B-Real)

*"...then I went to _____ Middle School, then I stop, it was strange, ah it was
just strange for me cos if you try to learn and speak everyone looking at you
and stuff. But remember, I was soft as back then, I was in the, even the
Samoans were like that, they were the ones that were laughing at me too."*
(Weezy)

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Some of the participants had difficulties with school staff. For example, Aomas describes a classroom incident which involved an altercation between him and his teacher. Apparently it was over a misunderstanding, and although the teacher's account is missing because simply it was not part of the scope of this study it would have been interesting to find out. According to Aomas's story, however, he was assaulted by the teacher and from that point onward he lost interest in school.

> "...sometimes the teacher aye, that's when I got kicked out from _____, cos I was telling one of the other teachers that there was a guy smoking in the toilets and he just told me "piss off". Then I just told him, "f you", and he came and grabbed me. Then I started punching his face. And he just tried to grab me, and then I just turned around elbow, punch, and he just grabbed me from the back, and then somehow got out of there and I just walked off, went to _____. Dodgy fucken teachers, need a hiding." (Aomas)

Another participant, B-Kew, remembers how his teacher treated him when he misbehaved in class by placing him outside of the classroom while in full view of his class and he had to do his work on his own and separate from his class.

> "...I remember my desk was outside the carpark...they're all inside the classroom but I'm sitting outside with my work then the teacher comes and checks on me cos the teacher's sees how I get if people are around me then I will not work..." (B-Kew)

Another participant, Agitate, threw a table at his teacher after his teacher threw a chair at him because his teacher did not like Agitate telling him to "shut up".

> "I told him to shut up and he was chasing me around the classroom, he picked up the chair and chucked it at me cos he was an old Maori guy...I just picked up the table and chucked it at him..." (Agitate)

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The weight of the negative school socialization experiences began to take its toll on the participants where it became very difficult to concentrate, complete and maintain school studies. Even the friendships they established which was a positive school socialization experience became a negative situation because they were missing classes, not doing their homework, struggling to concentrate in class and not listening to their teachers. Their friendships turned into a youth gang and so participants were faced with two choices: getting through school to access further opportunities or doing what the gang wants and gain rewards to opportunities. Unfortunately the balancing act failed as eventually the gang became more important and school became less and less important, which tipped the balance as the attractiveness of gang life became too strong and started to pull participants away from school.

A few participants tried to keep up with their school work and with their involvement in the gang but it was short-lived, especially when their schools asked them to leave or they were suspended from school. As B-Red and B-on recalls:

> *"Nah school wasn't, like I was thinking of the gang more than school. I would still do the work but I wagged (intentionally avoid attending class) a lot and go get stoned (substance intoxication) go back to school eyes red as get sent home. I got asked to leave. I dunno know, I had another misa (argument), I had another fusu (fight) at school in fourth form."* (B-Red)

> *"Yeah, that was my last chance I was all good until the….came with their guns into school and we had no lunch and no morning tea cos the…came on with their weapons looking for like looking for me and the boys. Yeah I got kicked out cos they were saying that I'm putting school into danger I was like "ah" then I got kicked out."* (B-On)

While other participants did manage to prepare for the National Certificate in Educational Achievement (NCEA – NZ's premiere secondary school qualification) of which Weezy succeeded in the standard equivalent to

form six (Year 12), level 2. It was interesting that Weezy did not wear the school uniform (the jersey) because it was blue, the colour of the rival gang that he and his gang disliked. See B-On and Weezy's comments below:

> *"Ah like when we go to school all we do is just gang banging we just yeah like we just walk carry my red rag every day me and the boys and when we wag were doing the same thing like everywhere we go we just take our colours with us. At school I used to like focus on getting my NCEA but it's just these fights like just gets in my way with like learning and stuff to pass like NCEA and stuff."* (B-On)

> *"...wasn't really into my maths and social studies, like I had a big school bag but only one book inside...and full of clothes cos the uniform was blue so I wasn't wearing the jumper so I always had to wear a different uniform and I always getting trouble from the teacher, I never wore school jumper. I last til form six, I got NCEA Level one, I passed level one and level two, English, maths, social studies, Samoa and PE, like was still like a gang members..."* (Weezy)

Generally the participant's school socialization experience was substantially adverse as friendships with other school students formed into gangs, when being bullied meant becoming the bully, and the struggles schools faced with sustaining the participant's interest in educational qualifications all amounted to involvement in youth gangs and delinquency. Given the school socialization experience, the domain is church and religious socialization encounters to ascertain what were the positive and negative impacts on the participant's development and whether any of these or both explained the relationship of church and youth gangs (if any).

5.3.2 Church

Apart from the family home and school, the church is the other major socialization agent that can be a significant influence on people's lives

(church believers and non-church believers). Within the church and religious socialization experience a child learns that there is someone to protect him or her. A child comes to know that he or she must not to do something wrong or bad because there is God who is looking over all of his or her deeds. In fact a child learns that he has to live within some boundaries where adherence will build a good and positive character of his or her personality. Failure to acknowledge and obey the church's teachings would result in misfortune, poor character, and alienation.

Participants were asked to recall from their childhood through to their current developmental lifespan negative and positive memories of their religious socialization experiences. Not all the participants attended church when they were children, as some grew up in families where it was not encouraged. For those who did attend church when they were children, this stopped when they were older. So the findings that are reported in this section are based on some of the participant's responses where it was relatively clear that they understood the church's teachings, but whether they applied these varied.

Most of the participants had a negative religious socialization experience. Among them there were those who doubted the church's teachings and questioned its core beliefs which were based on having faith in God especially through the hard times. These participants wondered about the likelihood of being rescued when it was difficult to trust and believe that God will come through for the participant. Note B-Red's lament below:

> *"If God loved me why is it, if God wanted to help me why is it so hard for me to live around here, why is it so hard for me to walk to the shop without someone up in my face, you know..."* (B-Red)

Others like Jay began to lose interest in church because he was confused over the difference between the two church denominations he attended because he did not know which one was the genuine one. Jay spent the

first ten years of his life in Samoa attending The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS), but when he arrived in New Zealand he found himself going to another church called The Assembly of God (AOG). He was forced to change from LDS's form of worship which was a reverent approach (quiet, no clapping, no band) to an evangelical worship style (noisy, lots of clapping and band playing in the background).

> *"We went to my aunty's lotu (church) AOG, we followed them (laugh) the drums, yeah different you know cos I haven't been like I said before I was born in Mormon church, guitar, stand up, people there like my uncle's daughter come up to me hello cuz yeah but I don't really know how to speak English aye I say malo (hello) and that's it I don't talk I wait for them to say something."* (Jay)

Mynar similarly pointed out some of the differences that confused him for example, the ritual of sacrament where congregation members consume bread and wine to commemorate The Last Supper that Jesus had with his disciples before he was betrayed, arrested and crucified. The LDS church does not commemorate the Last Supper whereas the AOG church does. Another difference was how prayers were ended, the LDS churches do not use the term "amen", whereas AOG churches uses the term regularly. See his responses below:

> *"…there was like two sets of church that like two religions … my aunty and her kids were going to the Mormon church, and my mom was AOG, so didn't know really which church to go to and that (laugh) they talk about it different things like every time we do a lotu (act of worship) like fuck just say amene (amen) but aunty will say aua le fai le mea na! (Don't do that!) Cos you're not allowed say tatalo tapuai (prayer worship) in a Mormon."* (Mynar)

> *"Just stick to one religion, just really confusing aye, used to go AOG (Assembly of God church) and then go to Mormon (Church of Jesus Christ and latter days saints), its really different the religions, and how they do stuff how the service is, like in…AOG, they do the wine and the bread but Mamona (Mormon) they got water and um bread, real bread. Used to miss church a lot aye, now I'm not*

going church often that much so not that much God in my life at the moment."
(Mynar)

Some of the participants mentioned that their negative religious socialization experience was based on him and his family's relationships with other church members. For example Rasik recalls when he planned to undertake a missionary quest his parents were very proud because it was a highly regarded church activity and it raised his family's mana amongst the church.

"...I was telling my mom that I was gonna go on a mission you know I'm Mormon, when it came to the year I was supposed to go, I didn't go, yeah I just felt disappointed, sad, cos I wanted to be the first one out of my family to...I just felt stink you know I got her hopes up...I feel ashamed to go back to church too cos you know my mom used to go around telling everyone in church that I'm gonna go on a mission and now, now that everyone knows that kid over there he was saying he was going on a mission look at him now." (Rasik)

B-On was blamed by the parents of other children at church because they thought B-On was influencing and recruiting their children into gang life. B-On strongly denied this and commented that if their children came up to him wanting to be part of what he was involved in then it was not his fault.

"Some people from church they usually judge me they think I get their kids into gang banging but it's their kid's choice, its them I don't go to them they come to me, like that's what they don't know about aye like that's why I tell...my boys from church like don't hang around with me like I even tell them...don't come to my house cos like their parents come and complain to my parents..." (B-On)

A few of the participants mentioned they still remembered and enjoyed church because of its teaching through bible stories and the fellowships where they worshipped with other church members and got involved in church activities. B-Red and Jay still remembers the story of how Jesus died and the sacrifice he made.

"…my ones about…when Jesus died for all the sinners…it's sad what He went through, just so He can like save His people and that kinda related to me and my boys I'll do anything for them just to make sure they're be alright." (B-Red)

"I like listening to the stories from the bible…cos it make you feel good that time…when Jesus died for us…He's on the cross, it's sad, He went through all that for us…I enjoyed it when we have games we got a special day for the little kids to have games. I liked Fireside (an evening ssa." (Jay)

J-Red and Syn enjoyed the fellowship time when everyone got together and shared harmoniously like Sunday school, White Sunday (which is an annual event where the children and youth run Sunday worship) and the prizes.

"I remember as a child feeling happy…everyone's like we're all friends. Sunday school man was the best time…we do colouring, drawings, games, yeah ah White Sunday ah man. I say that would be the best time ah and prize giving…when they do the exam results that's when we'll be shame because we'll get less and others will get heaps of points." (J-Red)

"Yeah when I was in the Islands my family are Catholics but when I came to NZ and all my family here they all go to AOG cos my aunty, that's the only reason why I liked going to church aye cos I was playing in the band, I was also playing in the school band, used to do like Pasifika beats." (Syn)

Despite there being more negative religious socialization experiences than positive ones for the participants, when it came to answering my question about whether the church was more important than the gang or vice versa participant responses were not so clear cut. The participants' responses balanced both activities, namely: being a gang member and being a church member.

For example, J-Red went to church to make his parents happy but the rest of the week he spent drinking with his gang, then going to church and "say you're sorry" so he can start the new week with a clean slate.

> *"...drink...go church praise God say you're sorry for what happened in that night or stuff like that...at church everyone knows we associate with gangs, to us we think that they're afraid of us now, yeah I don't want that feeling. The reason why I go to church is to make the family think that I'm still I'm not gonna ditch the church that'll make them think that I'm still good boy."* (J-Red)

Mynar uses an analogy to describe his approach to church and the gang. From Monday to Saturday he was involved in a lot of things that he describes as satanic or bad things (drinking alcohol, consuming drugs, committing crime, fighting other rival gangs), however, on Sunday he was like an angel when he went to church.

> *"I was involved with the church at the same I was with the boys just um you know Monday to Saturday just satani (satan) aye, Sundays agelu (angel) fuck, just ah like when I went to Mormon it was always with the boys, we all go just with Renzo, one of the boys, just go church and then once you get to church huh ga'o le boys a le mea (just the boys then) "what you do last night", "sole, fuck, got wasted as", ma ku a (got really) distracted ah."* (Mynar)

Other participants described how their gang was formed in church they all worshipped in and even conducted activities that went against what their church would be teaching them to avoid. See Negro and Young D's comments below:

> *"Nah that started like um at my church, B-On and some of the big homies, they started it aye...like it started like at church cos we go to the same church."* (Young D)

> *"Yeah hard and even at church I had some mates that was in gangs too so it was like when we go to church we always outside smoking, smoking up weed yeah...nah not on the church ground...we'll go all the way to the park."* (Negro)

Perhaps what is significant in the participant's responses is not about choosing one over the other; church over the gang but the fact that

participants continued to practice what they had learned from church even if they were a gang member. The participants were not children anymore and church may not be a regular fixture in their lives, but to maintain practices related to the church socialization experience even though they could have been arrested for a gang-related crime shows that church was an important part of their lives. A point highlighted by Radle below and mentioned earlier in the cultural socialization section (5.1.4).

> *"I still tatalo (pray) to Him now, even though I'm a gangsta, ula (smoke) marijuana you know tatalo a, I always set aside some time for Him…when I was in court I would pray…it takes time for Him to answer your prayer aye."* (Radle)

Principally the participant's church socialization experience was predominantly contravening as participants were confused and doubtful over the church's teachings, where they perceived relationships with other church members as judgemental, and where their involvement in gangs meant they respected the sanctity of church on Sundays only because from Monday to Saturday they behaved differently. While these findings are important, the next domain, the neighbourhood and community, is a socialization experience that looks at understanding how where participants lived and settled in could be a possible explanatory factor for their involvement in youth gangs.

5.3.3 The Neighbourhood Community

A neighbourhood is a geographically localized community within a larger city, town, or suburb. Neighbourhoods are often social communities with considerable face-to-face interaction among members. Neighbourhoods are typically generated by social interaction among people living near one another. In this sense, they are local social units larger than households, but not directly under the control of local or central government. There are social mechanisms within neighbourhoods that impact on the socialization of its inhabitants such as neighbourhood disadvantage, poor

socio-economic backgrounds, low quality infrastructure (housing, roading, lighting, facilities), and peer groups (like gangs) are very profound. For example, young people growing up in neighbourhoods where alternative means of obtaining an income rather than the orthodox way of gaining employment could generate a culture where employment is devalued. In addition, as young people grow up their connection to the family is not as strong compared to when they were children because they have shifted their attention to peers from the neighbourhood, which could be potentially dangerous. So by tracing neighbourhood and community socialization experiences could provide very important information for understanding situations like the emergence of youth gangs.

Participants were asked to share about any positive and negative memories they had during their childhood through to adolescence and beyond of their neighbourhood and community socialization experiences. Where the participants grew up has had an effect on whom they have become and why they did the things that they did. They grew up in their neighbourhood alongside adult gangs and their children, drug houses and violent neighbours, vandalised and deteriorating facilities. They imagined their neighbourhood had boundary lines and set about protecting it because this represented their identity, power and status to other rival gangs in nearby neighbourhoods.

Most participants remember growing up with gangs living in their street and watching gang activities unfold. For example B-Real experienced first-hand gang activity when he was only a child who surprised him and interrupted his playing on the road they lived in.

> *"…one minute you're just playing after school and then all of sudden there's a whole gang blocking up your whole street in the street…they came to look for someone it was ah Tongan and Samoan gang, cos my brothers knew them they were coming to look for a Samoan guy…"* (B-Real)

Mynar also remembers when he was a child living in the same street with an adult gang called "Black Power", even though he did not know what the black fist insignia in front of blue paint background was about.

> *"Yeah this was when I was in primary school, I always used to play with the little kids that's when we didn't know what gangs was but we lived in a like a Black Power neighbourhood their fale (house) next to the shops it's got their gang sign on it…they even painted it blue but I didn't really know what it was…"* (Mynar)

Beserk recalls growing up in the same street alongside members of the Crip gang, his gang's most hated rival so he spent every chance he got in another South Auckland suburb to avoid them.

> *"Stayed in Mangere, my street was full of crabs (slang name for the Crip gang), I was pretty young, I knew they were ba'as (Samoan word for crab) cos of their colours, cos I stay in Otara and there's heaps of gangs in Otara. I used to go to my aunty's house over there, yeah kick it there cos my aunty was a teacher at school."* (Beserk)

Some of the participants recalled how criminal activity operated out of the street they grew up in. For instance Beserk gained access to marijuana simply because the house he stayed in was next door to a house that was selling it so he would have access to it easily.

> *"…I used to stay around Mangere the tinie (slang for marijuana that is wrapped up in tin foil) house was right next to our house sometimes we go get hooked up aye, they say come over for a blaze (smoke marijuana), go over get stoned, used to be the little one there then I grow bigger than my cousin, B-Kew, cos B-Kew is older than me, yeah I used to be small…"* (Beserk)

A few participants mentioned that their gang was formed out of the street they lived to protect themselves and to control the surrounding area. For example, Negro states that his Clendon RA gang dominated the Clendon/Manurewa area and held the area for a number of years.

> *"...we first came out in Clendon we started Clendon RA cos there were heaps of other gangs too...and we managed to like chase them all out and we ran it aye...we had the hood."* (Negro)

Negro went on to say that being in a gang that attracted fear and respect to the point where rival gangs rarely came to the areas they controlled was an incredible feeling. He felt invincible and very proud, he also felt popular and important, which is what he means by the term 'ghetto'. When some people hears or sees the term 'ghetto' there is an almost automatic derogatory and negative perception that people think of but according to Negro he is referring to the term 'ghetto' in the opposite way.

> *"Ah when I was in the hood...it felt ghetto as like I love the feeling being ghetto and that Like everyone looks at us like when we walk the hood everyone's just looking at us mumbling their words I know that they're talking to each other about us saying probably hating but we didn't care as long as they're talking about us that's all good."* (Negro)

Briefly, the participants' neighbourhood and community socialization experience was largely detrimental as they lived in the same street as adult gangs and drug houses, and thus socialized and played with their children. The lived in poverty stricken conditions, low decile areas with high unemployment, substandard government owned housing, run-down facilities and unkept recreation parks, and populated mainly by single-parent families living off income support and local charities. It was common in their neighbourhood to live next to an adult gang and play on the street with their sons, or live near a drug dealing house, or watch gang violence unfold in a nearby park, or form a youth gangs to protect them at school and the neighbourhood they lived in.

On the whole the participants' societal socialization experience was a positive encounter when they were children but it begins to unravel as negative circumstances began to overshadow the positive aspects once

they reached adolescence and beyond. Participants signalled in their childhood memories how much they liked schooling, church, and the neighbourhood where they were raised. But later they began to dislike school, church and the neighbourhood they lived in during their adolescent and young adult lives. The participants were victimized by other students and teachers that included taunts, threats, and physical confrontations. They were also victimized by other church members and lacked faith in the church's teachings and bible stories. While their neighbourhood experiences did not have a direct effect on them like their schooling and church encounters their socialization was influenced by the presence of adult gangs and drug houses in the same street they lived in. Thus the shifts in their human development lifespan paralleled the shifts in their socialization experiences in schools, church and the neighbourhood.

5.4 Chapter Summary

In closing, the findings about the participants' socio-cultural socialization experiences reveal a close link to Samoan young people's reasons for joining a gang. The findings seem to suggest that the participants' societal socialization background is a lot more telling compared to their cultural socialization circumstances. This could be related to the level of exposure to gang culture and being drawn in to its attractions, which is more apparent in schooling, church and the neighbourhood contexts rather than the cultural socialization experience. It could also be associated to the role their peers played in their socialization which is prevalent throughout all the socio-cultural domains and signals a strong shift in who the significant people were in the participant's lives. Their friends were gang members and their gang practiced Samoan rituals which for many was the first time they had been really exposed to elements of fa'asamoa. Their friends were also students, church members, and neighbours where each were connected to gang culture in some capacity and heavily influenced the

participants toward gang involvement. Their friends, therefore, are the link to gang culture and gang involvement for the participants and also the reason why participants struggled to find the right balance to cope with their responsibilities and commitments in school, church, and the neighbourhood (to the community e.g. ensuring that it was safe to walk around the neighbourhood) versus the gang.

In relation to the variation in exposure to gang culture, most of the participants experienced relatively low forms of cultural socialization in the family home (where I expected it to be quite high) and yet it was high when they joined a Samoan gang (a gang who had mainly Samoan members). It is unusual to find fa'asamoa practiced in gangs but perhaps not so much in Samoan youth gangs. It is also unusual to come across a finding where a gang was founded in a church but the church socialization experience for participants finds them drawn to other church members who were also gang members. It seems the reason why the church's influence was found to be lacking was due to its adult congregation members judging the participant's and his family and the high expectations that the church set for its congregation. The main point is that the gang presence was found in churches and also in schools. Actually it was perhaps a lot higher in schools as participants came across a group of peers who were victims of bullying and together they formed a gang to protect themselves. In fact the findings reveal that schools and neighbourhoods are the main sites where youth gangs are formed not only for protection but also for delinquency and crime because all the participants grew up in rough neighbourhoods where adult gangs and drug houses were common. So the evidence points to societal socialization experiences provide more explanations about Samoan young people's involvement in gangs compared to their cultural socialization encounters.

By the time the participants were teenagers the decision to join a gang could have been made because of a mostly negative family socialization

experience as well as a relatively bad socio-cultural socialization experience too. The theme, transition, is an important one because when they were children the most important person to them would have been a parent or an older sibling but now they are an adolescent it seems that the most important person in their lives are their friends. They would have still carried through childhood memories like how to sort out problems by referring to violence or alcohol and substance use. The difference is that when they were children they were only imagining these things but now as teenagers and young adults they were actually indulging and applying it. They were perhaps not interested or understood fully what their Samoan identity entailed when they were children but now as teenagers and young adults they were using it as one of the reasons to join a gang.

When they were children attending primary school, Sunday school, and riding their bikes around the street with the neighbour's kids they would have been oblivious to gang culture, and yet, now that they have grown up they understand more clearly what gang culture is in secondary schools, in youth groups, and in the tags spray painted on their neighbourhood's shops and alleyways. They began to lead double lives, act out various personas, and maintain a balancing act both in the family home, in school, in church, in the neighbourhood and in the gang. The bonds they had built with a trusted parent or older sibling may have subsided and substituted with friends/ peers/ gang members. The negative memories that dominated their childhood may have lost its impetus as new positive memories flow-in from their gang participation. So the transition from childhood to teenage hood and beyond for the participants parallels changes in their lives that see the lessening of family influence and the growth of peer influence.

The theoretical literature and research that explain how and why youth gangs are formed is consistent with the societal socialization findings but not the cultural socialization information (see section 7.2 for a fuller

discussion). Socialization and Delinquency theory are very relevant in explaining the emergence of Samoan youth gangs. In terms of socialization theory, the participant's accounts of their experiences in school, church and the neighbourhood and the internalization of the social norms from these social institutions is apparent in the findings. With regards to Delinquency theory which argue that certain conditions such as strain (personal, financial, social, cultural), lack of control (self-control and social institution control), and learning (replicating and modelling) from the wrong people, when integrated and looked at from a life course perspective, causes people to commit crime. The participant's recollection of school, church, and neighbourhood socialization experiences that were predominantly negative contains various examples of strain, control, and learning issues that led participant to joining a gang. The implications for social work practice and social policy development are clear as a case for a multifaceted problem solving approach should be advocated. What is lacking from the literature and research on Socialization and Delinquency theories are information relating to cultural socialization and Samoan youth gang participation. There may well be many examples of ethnic minority group's socialization experiences that could relate to the Pacific/Samoan context but I would argue that these would be more generalizations rather than particular to a Pacific criminological perspective.

Finally, if Samoan young people are to be prevented from joining gangs then initiatives, programs and strategies need to target the school, the church, and the neighbourhood. For schools, a review of its anti-bullying programs may be necessary, not only implemented in primary schools but also in secondary schools, and to be provided through all the learning years. Churches are an underutilised resource where many could host clinical and cultural interventions, community meetings, and discussion forums. While neighbourhoods require an upgrade to quality housing, facilities, and other infrastructure in order to restore pride back into its

inhabitants. The original aspects of this chapter include gang members practising fa'asamoa in their gangs – even one gang member being a Samoan chief, gangs being formed in Samoan churches, and gangs being formed in neighbourhoods that are predominantly lived in by Samoan people.

There should also be solutions based on using the Samoan culture to discourage participation in youth gangs like reorient and re-socialize Samoan youth gang members back into the fa'asamoa by teaching them. A Pacific criminology is an ethnic minority perspective that contains aspects such as an awareness of cultural socialization processes, cultural strains (e.g. rejection of Samoan culture), control by cultural institutions such as the aiga (family), and the importance of passing on to the next generation the significance of learning cultural values such as respect and humility. Without this an understanding why Samoan young people join gangs will not be fully realised. What do Samoan young people do in gangs; do they go through strains within the gang, is the gang a controlling institution, and what do they learn in the gang that keeps gang members interested. These and other questions are answered in chapter six, gang socialization.

Chapter 6 Gang Socialization

6.0 Introduction

Gang socialization is another important factor in understanding Samoan young people's involvement in youth gangs because it is not only in the family home, their cultural backgrounds, and society, but also within the gang itself where answers are also found. We know already that Samoan young people have tended to be recruited from their family, their local school, church and neighbourhood. We also know that Samoan young people are drawn to gangs because of the negative socialization experiences they have had in their family home, or in the school, church or neighbourhood. Gangs present themselves in communities and neighbourhoods as one of many reference group choices at a time in the life when a child's peers have the most influence. Once a new member decides to join a gang a process of socialization unfolds where they participate in the gang's activities until such time they gain acceptance and status. The gang socialization process is likened to a process of on-the-job training and once gang attributes are internalized by a new member, the result is an ongoing development of a personal and social identity consistent with the gang.

All twenty-five gang members/ participants who were interviewed and asked questions about their gang socialization experiences were from Bloods[9] gangs. The majority of the participants (22 out of 25) represented two main Bloods gangs: Red Army (RA) (15 out of 25) and Pearl Baker Stylz (PBS) (7 out of 25), while the rest were from three (3 out of 25) other

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[9] The Bloods gang was formed initially to compete against the influence of the Crips in Los Angeles. The origin of the Bloods and their rivalry with the Crips dates to the 1970s, where the Pirus street gang, originally a set, or faction, of the Crips, broke off during an internal gang war, and allied with other smaller gangs to found the gang that would eventually become known as the Bloods. The Crips are one of the largest and most violent associations of street gangs in the United States. The gang is known for its gang members' use of the colour blue in their clothing. In NZ only Samoan are bloods and all other ethnic groups are Crips such as Tongans. Youth gang conflict in NZ usually involves Samoan bloods and Tongan/Māori Crip youth gangs.

Bloods gangs (All Bloods Together – ABT from Manurewa and Down with Red – DWR from Otara). The participants from the RA gang represented various suburbs in South Auckland: Mangere RA (8), Clendon RA (7), while the other seven participants from the PBS gang were from Otara. The RA gangs were either started by close friends who had met in secondary schools, or in the neighbourhood they grew up in (the same for DWR), or by siblings in the family (the same for ABT). The PBS was started by friends who first met at church and then they moved in together in Otara. There was no initiation for all the gangs studied in this research, membership was at first restricted to Samoans only but later on relaxed and if you lived in the area you were accepted/ recruited too. There was no single reason for Samoan young people joining a youth gang but some include for protection, because a family member was involved, for revenge, and because gangs provided a lot of support and attention. None of the gangs carried guns but they had access to them if necessary, they used hammers, screw drivers, baseball bats and anything else they could get their hands on for weapons. Finally, the PBS gang was a fist-fighting gang only, they never committed any other crimes like robbery, carjacking, home invasion, selling drugs and others; this kind of activity was performed by the RA gangs.

This chapter is the third and final instalment of findings related to the participants' gang socialization experiences. Five sections constitute this chapter starting with sections 6.1 (changes in behaviour) and 6.2 (learning to be a gang member) covering the main gang socialization experiences for the participants. Section 6.3 (reasons for leaving/turning points) follows on from the previous sections in terms of the pressures of gang socialization experiences leading up to desistance. Section 6.4 (positive contributions) completes the insight into the world of gang socialization by purporting that gang culture and participation is not entirely a negative phenomenon. The last section (6.5) is a chapter summary and draws together the main themes of this chapter and relates it to how they could

be useful in understanding Samoan young people's involvement in youth gangs as well as lessons for developing ways to minimize or eliminate youth gang involvement.

6.1 Changes in behaviour

This section reports the participants' responses when they were asked the following questions: "what kind of person were you before you joined a gang?"; "did you notice any changes to your personality/ behaviour after joining a gang? If so, give examples, if not, why not?" It explores the changes in behaviour before, during, and after their gang involvements which were mostly to do with anger, some around confidence and few about physical changes and interaction with family members. It also exposes in detail some of the activities (gang fights and crimes) that the gang members participated in and the consequences that followed to show the varying levels of the emotional and physical changes that participants experienced while being socialized in the gang. The most prevailing pattern of personality/ behavioural changes tended to be that participants experienced low levels of emotional and physical changes before joining the gang and then moderate to high levels when they joined and then a return to low levels once they left the gang.

Most of the participants noticed their temperamental and anger levels heightened once they joined the gang. It was a new discovery for them because they found out more about themselves and how it fuelled their intention to behave in ways where it would have eclipsed their anger levels had they not joined the gang. Yet they knew how important it was to act on their anger because it would have disguised the fear they were feeling and not want to lose face within the gang. Their anger levels were also exacerbated by substance abuse, popularity, gaining a fearsome reputation, and power. It is concerning that they enjoyed the violence,

being out of control, and thinking that being angry was normal. As Negro, B-Real, and Siaki states, they noticed a dramatic increase in their emotional response like getting angry really easy and how they were changing attitudinally, physically and socially.

> *"…yeah like you said ah fucking discovered a new attitude, my attitude changed yeah my whole frame of mind changed aye I was like fight at first when I first got into it, it was all about fighting and the drugs came along, and the money, everything just contributed to me about the lifestyle I was in" (Negro)*

For B-Real not only did he notice he had changed after joining a gang where he was a more angrier person, he also highlighted the social changes he experienced through becoming popular with his peers and respected at school. He had gained a status.

> *"Yeah, ah…from quiet to an angry person…I turned into a bully so at school I just smashed anyone who mocked me like this little lalotonga (rarotonga) dude ah he's prospecting for KCs now…I smacked him up too during morning tea…I started liking it…everyone started to like respect me, everyone wanted to be my friend after that like I'd say I went from having no friends to almost being friends with the whole school" (laughing) (B-Real)*

Siaki also talks about how he had changed as a person after joining a gang but what strikes me is the change that occurred in his rationalization or decision making processes where before he joined a gang he would inform people in authority if he or someone else was in trouble.

> *"Like I get usually angry now, like I get violent sometimes like not like before I used to be good aye like just like when something happens I'll just walk away like if my boys got in trouble I'll go tell the teacher but now like um if something happens to the boys I never go tell I'll stand next to them and I'll fight with them, have their back yeah I never run away from them…"* (Siaki)

I wonder then if Negro, B-Real, and Siaki were not in a gang would their anger, and other emotional and attitudinal changes as described above, be

a point of difference or not, as I assume that before joining a gang it would be not the same and probably a lot less intense.

Some of the participants' behaviour changed in terms of their confidence levels, where after joining the gang they seem to be more self-assured and held a strong inner belief in their ability compared to if they had not joined. There are plenty of examples in section 6.2, where after joining the gang they became a lot more bold and forthright. But Negro's comment below neatly summarises what the others experience of confidence meant overall; standing up for yourself and against anyone threatening you.

> *"Some of it was good cos like I can't stand up to anyone if I wanted to that's what being in a gang made me like giving me the confidence to stand up to anyone, giving me confidence in myself aye…yeah my confidence came out of was being in a gang" (Negro)*

The final changes are the physical changes that affected few of the participants after joining the gang. Further information about the physical changes that the participants went through is outlined in section 6.2 but it includes events like fist fighting with rival game members and the injuries incurred afterwards. However participants such as Radle, and others like him who consume methamphetamine and marijuana regularly, he noticed his body and face changing because of drugs and subsequent change to his personality, outlook, and treatment of people.

> *"…I've noticed now how I've lost a lot of weight from drugs and now I believe what they really warn me about drugs…not even a year just a couple of months your weight gone down from weed, plus changes like to your face…but if you do weed and all that like my mom always say 'that's why you're starting to lie'…but that's when you just don't care…" (Radle)*

In all the changes to the participants' behaviour there were both emotional and physiological consequences. Anger played a significant role

in altering the participants' behaviour through rising intense levels of aggression and violence especially during physical fights with rival gangs, which perhaps was not apparent before they joined the gang. Ironically it increased their confidence levels, participants became highly self-assured and internalized self-belief and self-worth particularly if the gang acknowledged and praised their fighting abilities and loyalty. On the other hand, the expression of anger and confidence could also be behavioural responses to disguise what they really felt, fear and perplexity, because if they showed these emotional and behavioural reactions the gang could perceive it as a sign of weakness and reject or force them out. They probably believed the gang required its members to be able to defend themselves and the gang's integrity so they had to demonstrate fearlessness and hardness. If this was indeed the case then for the participants it would mean looking for ways to suppress their fear like drugs. It was important that new gang members saw that they had a hard edge to their persona including high levels of self-confidence and aggression especially in physical fights with rival gang members.

It is clear that popularity and self-esteem came with gang membership, behaviour and violence. Self-esteem is how we value ourselves; it is how we perceive our value to the world and how valuable we think we are to others. Positive self-esteem provided participants with the strength and flexibility to take charge of their lives and to grow from their mistakes without the fear of rejection. For example, an awareness of personal strengths, an ability to make mistakes and learn from them, an ability to accept mistakes from other gang members, an ability to solve problems, a good sense of personal limitations and the ability to say no. To a certain extent gang culture counteracted negative self-esteem, a debilitating condition that keeps individuals from realizing their full potential like feeling unworthy, incapable, unloved and incompetent. On the contrary, participants coming into the gang with negative self-esteem, perhaps from other socialization experiences (family home, school, church,

neighbourhood and cultural identity) rapidly subsided (further positive contributions of gangs are covered in section 6.4). It was all part of being a gang member and to gaining reputation and status, which is very important in the world of gangs and all part of learning how to be a gang member.

6.2 Learning to be a gang member

This section focuses on the learning that participants gained from being a gang member. The findings show that participants became transformed and transitioned from being boys to young men within the gang. As participants provided accounts of their gang socialization experiences I noted parts of their life stories where before and after joining the gang their learning enhanced so I probed further. I asked questions when participants were describing their gang activities (which was mainly about physical fighting and committing crimes) such as "how did you learn to steal a car?" and "what skills did you learn?" I would assume that none of them would have known how to fight, how to use their hands and weapons to inflict pain on another human being nor would any of them have known how to commit a crime like sell drugs, rob shops, steal or hijack a car and do it on a regular basis for a number of years before getting caught. So this section is not about exploring the activities that the participants and the gangs they were involved in, but how they developed from newly recruited gang members to experienced and mature gang members. They would have entered the gang with poorly developed skills and perhaps after spending time in the gang the same skills became fully developed.

There were two kinds of learning approaches that participants drew on from their gang socialization experiences. They would either teach themselves from watching and finding out more about what they were

watching and then practice it (copying and imitating). Or other participants would be taught by their peers/ gang members (significant others) and then apply it frequently (reinforcement) until they were able to apply what they were taught confidently and effectively (conditioned). Negro's comment represents those participants who were self-taught, whereas Mynar's represents those participants who were taught by their fellow gang members.

> *"…I taught myself aye, like I was just picking it up like on the way…I had that first joint and it was like I felt welcomed aye…I was just like you I wanted to research and like I wanted to know what it is about aye and when…I just got to, like kinda too deep and too attracted to it straight got carried away."* (Negro)

> *"I learned a lot from the boys, drinking, smoking, drugs, sex, slanging (selling drugs), and crime like get shown how to or you see it being done, then ah yeah so you just go out and do it."* (Mynar)

All the gangs that were represented by the participants were involved in physical fighting either through the use of hands and/ or weaponry. This is where most of the participants learned a lot from their gang socialization experience. There were those who may have been able to fight and perhaps were really good fighters before joining the gang, and then excelled and grew into feared fighters after joining the gang. They did not require too much teaching. However there were others who did not even know how to fight and so were taught by fellow gang members and over time they transformed into confident and brave fighters. These gang members were taught how to use their hands effectively, how to look for vulnerable spots to inflict punches, how to avoid being hit, and how to control the physical fight to secure a win and how to defend, block out and keep themselves from getting hurt. Fighting was like a rite of passage, it tested their physical and mental strength and it gained you respect from the gang, which is very important – to be accepted and wanted. Fighting also proved their loyalty and dedication to the gang, what you would do

for the gang, and how much the gang meant to the member. As B-Nigga recalls his first physical fight with a rival gang member he highlights a very common gang socialization learning experience (not to be scared and get back up if you have been struck to the ground):

> *"...my heart was just hard out pounding, adrenalin was running hard...didn't wanna yeah disappoint my boys in front of them...if you like get knocked out and you can get back up that's the main thing...If you lose a fight but if you get back up and you standing on your two feet and keep going for more that's what makes them proud of you and you'll start to learn and generate more knowledge from fighting and build up your rep taking out the top dogs the tough ones if you win the fight that's even better boys will be happy."* (B-Nigga)

Despite B-Nigga's positive assessment of his first fist-fighting experience with another rival gang member there were two side-effects of physical fighting that participants probably would not have had to experience if they did not join a gang. Firstly, the weapons that sometimes became part of the physical fights and second, the injuries that some of them suffered.

With regards to the first side-effect, participants stated that they did not use weapons but preferred fist-fighting and that they would only use weapons as a last resort or the rival gang they were fighting brought weapons. A range of weapons were used including knives, baseball bats, machetes, screw drivers, hammers, and guns. This would be new knowledge that inexperienced recently recruited gang members would not have had but after joining were shown by fellow gang members how to handle weapons. They were taught how to use a weapon (the main components and how they work, if it was a gun – the safety, how to load it, and fire it) how to conceal it, how to get rid of it in case of police presence, and how to inflict maximum damage. Armed with this knowledge participants would carry weapons if they needed to like screwdrivers, machetes, knuckle-busters, and guns and over time would become very proficient users.

The exposure to weapons varied from using them for retribution (see Negro's comment), or survival due to being threatened (see Dust and Weezy's remarks), or on the receiving end as in being injured by one (see B-Sup's response).

*"...they were just fasi'ing [beating up] my little brother...he got jumped, the next day I went back and I took a hammer to school aye and then I waited for those two to come around and I hammered the dude in the ankle..." (*Negro)

"...they came around with a gun, WRG, this Māori crew they thought they runned (controlled) all of rewa (short for Manurewa) they were the ones that were beefing (putting down other gangs) with us just cos we're in Clendon (neighbouring Manurewa suburb)...they saw my brother walking and they just pulled up and pointed the gun at him then he jumped the fence and gapped (ran away) it and yeah they were shooting and then they shot at the house, they shot the windows then gapped." (Dust)

"Hmm sixteen, that's when um I started like weapons like the first I ever used weapons was a ma'a (stone), I knew if I go fight they might bring weapons so I just put a sepulu (machete) here (gestured down side of his pants)...someone brought a faga (gun) one time, a Black Power (adult gang) brought a faga cos they roll up in their car with blue bandanas full of teenagers, when I walked up to the car I said what's up, click-click, ooh shit shotgun. They thought I was Mongrel Mob (adult gang) cos I was decked out (dressed up) in red, tusa o le ta ta le fatu (my heart was beating) but ah like o le ai le mafaufau foi gale (I was thinking that...) shall I hook them, the one with the gun yeah still got those ideas, not really fefe [scared]." (Weezy)

"I went down like a real hamo but B-Real was taking lots of them down too...cos I got baseball batted before and they were rushing me (a pack of rival gang members hitting B-Sup) on the ground, they were like taking turns with the bat while I was crawling, my cousin had a feeling to run but he was like that's my family, that's my blood so he ran through all of them and he got the one that was hitting me with the bat" (B-Sup)

The second consequence from fighting but more importantly a socialization experience that would never (to a certain extent) have happened to any of the participants before they joined the gang was learning how to handle the injuries they received. Every gang member knows that injuries, wounds, and fractures are a part of being involved in a gang. Surviving a near fatal injury, handling an injury, and not letting an injury weaken the member's loyalty to the gang are all important learning experiences of being a gang member. The extent of injuries received by participants were serious and near fatal. They included being knocked out unconscious from a king hit/ blind shot, being hit by a hammer, vehicle, or brace knuckles. For instance Rasik suffered cuts to his head after a bottle was thrown at him and then he was knocked out unconscious by a rival gang member who kicked him with his steel cap boots.

> *"...I've been bottled in my head like there's this like if I cut my baldy (cut his hair bald) you'll see lots of ma'ilas [scars] on it, I've been batted (baseball bat) across the face to, my whole chin was just massive it wasn't bleeding it didn't have any scars but it was just massive, just fula [swollen]...the worst injury I've had is being you know steel capped (injured from a steel cap boot)...I was pretty much like blacked out (unconscious)..."* (Rasik)

Mynar talks about the treatment has had such as "stitches" because he got hit by a hammer, "metal plates" because his jaw got fractured from a sledge hammer, and other treatment he received from being hit by a vehicle and a wheel falling on his head.

> *"...fucken once I got like hammered once, here (points to area on his face where he got hit by a hammer) got some stitches, got blind shotted, Tongan shot... I've also been sledge hammered on the jaw you can see it (shows me visible markings) it's like ah fuck metal plates in and stitch over here another Tonga shot. I've been runned over (by a vehicle)...I had a wheel fall on my head."* (Mynar)

After another fight, where he did not notice his opponent wearing brace knuckles, but noticed that his opponent was stoned like he was on methamphetamine, he still lost the fight and could not eat any food because his jaw would not move. Mynar ended up in hospital having further metal plates inserted in his mouth area to add to the other metal plates he received earlier.

> "...then I had a one-on-one, then one of them came up but fuck I didn't know he had a brace knuckle, far I just ducked and hooked him fuck but I think he was fried up too like on the fryz [methamphetamine] he just one jab me fuck over got knocked out unconscious for like five minutes then the boys picked me up and took me down to the skate park then I woke up with a big fula (swelling) under my chin, bleeding everywhere. I went to hospital three days later cos it wasn't hurting aye but I couldn't eat...I went to have surgery my lower jaw was like cracked inside so they put some like metal plates or some shit inside."
> (Mynar)

Apart from the learning from more experienced gang members about physical fighting, participants also learned how to commit crimes. Whether the gang member was experienced or not before joining the gang, they would have learned skills (planning, organizing, coordinating, analysing, implementing, risk management, and post-execution) and habits (use of a small group only, looking for vulnerability, the best time to execute, and keeping the plan confined to two or three trustworthy members only) necessary for gang-related crime after joining the gang. The majority of the participants were not known to the police but after they joined the gang they were well known. Most of the participants after joining the gang had been arrested more than three times, some were placed in Youth Justice Residences, and few were on home detention. Some of the participants had committed petty crimes such as writing graffiti on walls and stealing lollies from shops before joining the gang. After they joined the gang their property crimes became more serious which included home invasions, aggravated robberies of liquor outlets and

petrol stations. A few participants were selling single cigarettes in schools before joining the gang. After they joined the gang they were selling marijuana, methamphetamine and cocaine, however, these activities were only undertaken by a few self-interested gang members who used the gang network to expand their drug sales without the full support of their gang.

The most common criminal activity for the participants learned after joining the gang was how to commit property crime. For example, some of the participants were taught how to boost or steal a car by either more experienced gang members or gang associates known as boosters (experienced car stealers) or by teaching themselves by watching. B-Sup and Gypsy were taught how to boost but Beserk saw how it was done and then taught himself. The information they described would be new knowledge and unique to the gang or a group of boosters within the gang with this specialist skills and accessed only after joining the gang. This is very clear in the response to my question: "Who taught you how to steal a car?"

> *"G----- M-------. He's one year older than me but back then I didn't know how to steal a car, I just tell him to steal it and then I'll take it off him. You pop the window the back window the little triangle window then you put your arm through and open it, get to the front seat pull that plastic thing off near the ignition and then you grab a vice grip then you put on the ignition thing and pop it, takes a couple of minutes."* (B-Sup)

> *"…one of my good mates he taught me how to boost cars…my first time wasn't scared mainly adrenalin buzz but I like it aye it feels good aye, I only go for mazdas…there's a rubber on top of the passenger window rip the rubber and the guard that plastic thing and then you just need to pull the window back just a little bit for your lima (hand) to fit, then take the ignition off with a vice grip or wrench, then screwdriver…"* (Gypsy)

> *"…just jumped in and learn right there how to drive it (laughing) and then crash start running, yeah I didn't know how to drive cars, I learn all by myself, like*

yeah, watching other people how they pull the clutch do the clutches, it's pretty easier cos we had heaps of cars, not like good cars but stolen cars and we all have test drives that's how the boys learn how to drive, they don't know how to drive they get the hang of it, I had heaps of charges." (Beserk)

Apart from boosting, the other property crime participants were taught is known as earning and doing the rounds or burglaries and robberies. 'Earns' is a gang term that refers to making money and 'doing the rounds' describes how gangs make their money by driving around and scope out a place to commit a burglary or robbery such as liquor retail outlets, residential homes, or petrol stations. This would be another socialization experience within the gang that only its members would be linked to this particular kind of information (when to rob, what to take, where to get rid of evidence, and so on) and then subsequently trained accordingly. The level of knowledge for this particular gang activity would vary just like their fighting and boosting ability. Whatever level the participants were at it would presumably increase after joining the gang and subsequently the seriousness of their thefts perhaps possibly intensified through the use of weapons and violence.

These participants graduated to another level of their criminal behaviour, which would have been fuelled by advice and training provided by more experienced gang members. Participants began to plan burglaries and robberies by scoping areas for potential targets, which were vulnerable and susceptible. Participants were also learning about what items to take and why and how to shift stolen items away from the hotspot quickly and efficiently. B-Kew described this process when he spoke about an aggravated robbery:

"I went in the dairy and fasi [beat] like the people inside and I grabbed the till and chucked to B Sup "fuck run" I'll go look for the office cos the office is where the dad works like its where the laptop is and stuff, then the bedroom go for jewellery, then I'm out, when I go in with the boys I don't take like tv and that I take things I can hold, get in the car drive, slang [sell] the stuff, before we do

By this time what these participants had learned about committing crime was at a point where they were confident due to the experience of having already committed many similar robberies. Before joining the gang these participants would not have contemplated a spontaneous robbery, but the socialization process wherein the customs and behaviours of the gangs have manifested and transformed them from small time delinquents to big time career criminals.

The final criminal activity that was learned by a few of the participants is called slanging. Slanging is the gang term for selling drugs like marijuana and methamphetamine (P). A few of the participants were already involved in slanging. Before they joined the gang a few of the participants were slanging, for example, Gypsy started selling cigarettes for $1 when he was thirteen years old, B-Red and B-Kew started running for adult drug dealers in their neighbourhood when they were eleven years old. So these participants had already had some training (if you like) on how to sell, who and where to sell to, and what to do if they got caught selling. A few other participants had marijuana and P available through the family like B-Ware (father), B-Kew (mother), and Dust (older brother) and also seem to know how to slang even though they said that they were consumers and not slangers. After joining the gang all these participants continued slanging and/or consuming for their own personal interests but not on behalf of the gang even though those within their gang disapproved but tolerated it. For example, Gypsy continued his slanging activity in the gang even though he had started doing it earlier.

> *"…started selling like late form two, fuck nah like I met this guy he's my one of my good friends to this day at school yeah hard, that's where I was selling it in school, joints, five dollar joints, but see you'll have it all ready for me, see and*

then boom, then I moved up you know, coming past the years third form…"
(Gypsy)

Apart from the above participants who had regular access and deeper involvement to drugs, the rest of the participants (the majority) were more interested in alcohol. It was not until the latter group though joined the gang when they were introduced to drugs. Of this group only some consumed it and only a few went further and slanged it by being taught by the group aforementioned who had prior experience before joining the gang. So knowledge of drugs, slanging, alcohol, consumption games, and operating a business were just a few of things that were learned in the gang. For those few who slanged they would have been taught new knowledge such as who to sell to, who to buy large quantities from, where to sell it, how to prepare it for sale, how to defend selling areas, how to confine the activity to two or three trustworthy members only, what to say to the police if asked, recruiting minors (aged 15 years and under) because they will not be prosecuted, and how to keep a low profile especially when carrying large amounts of money.

Those few participants involved in slanging were dealing in small quantities of marijuana. In Negro's case, it seemed he was happy to sell for another dealer because he got a free sample as his payment.

> *"I was selling drugs but like it was only like deals for this guy like he will give it to me, give me five tinees (small marijuana tin-foiled sticks) to sell off and he'll give me one tinee for free and like so he can make more money and I got a sess (shorthand for session) and he was just stand in the corner…"* (Negro)

On the other hand, there were others like Berserk who sold marijuana ounces not small amounts and was paid four to five hundred dollars which enabled him to buy whatever he wanted. He did not sell P point bags but other boys did, but he did sell cigarette packets he got from aggravated robberies to get more money.

"…I used to sell ounces for this lady she used to bring her batch from up north if I sell five ounces I'll get like four or five spot to myself, when I was fifteen I was cracking it, buy clothes, print my hats, print my tee, drink with the boys...I used to sell ciggie packets but not fryz (P) and other stuff, that time was robberies, hard, take from dairies plastic bag full of smokes flick it for five bucks, ten bucks, like rollies (aka tinnees) ten bucks." (Berserk)

To summarise, learning to be a gang member meant learning how to fight and learning how to commit crime, in some cases in order to survive, and in other cases to gain new and specialist knowledge about techniques and skills. Before joining the gang, participants had either limited or no experience in physical fighting and committing crime. For those who had relatively little experience after they joined the gang they would have accessed specialist new knowledge like how to use their hands effectively, how to look for vulnerable spots to inflict punches, how to avoid being hit, and how to control the physical fight to secure a win. This would be the same for those who had limited experience in committing crimes such as boosting or stealing a car, earns and doing the rounds or burglaries and robberies, and slanging or selling drugs. This group would learn how to steal a car in twenty seconds or rob a store in less than two minutes, where to sell it and how to get rid of the money they gained from the sale. They would also learn how to sell drugs quickly and how to remain undetected for long periods.

Those who had lots of experience became the teachers passing down their knowledge to newly recruited gang members interested in knowing. There were risks from the learning they gained as they were socialized into the gang such as being exposed to weapons and serious injuries during physical fights and a higher chance of being arrested by the police and punished by the courts. For those participants who had not been exposed to weapons they were taught how to use them, how to inflict serious injury, and how to get rid of them if they had to. However, even though

participants were trained how to fight and use weapons they still succumbed to injuries and even though participants received lessons on how to get away with committing crime they were still caught and brought to justice. What is evident is the learning within the activity that is typical of a gang socialization experience where a significant person(s), a process of learning (observation-duplication-and practice), and the internalization of new knowledge and skills are all part of the learning gained in the gang socialization experience despite the risk issues. Next we explore the reasons why gang members leave the gang (turning points) and whether their gang socialization experiences influence this factor or not.

6.3 Reasons for leaving/ Turning Points

This section is derived from the participant's responses to the question "what would be a turning point in your life where you leave the gang?" An interesting pattern emerged from the responses which was that long serving gang members (over 1 year) tended to be more at the stage where they were starting to think about life after the gang, compared with, those who had been recently recruited, they had no thought about the leaving the gang, not even after a few months when they get a full taste of gang life. These long serving participants I interviewed were already reaching a point in their gang life where they were ready to leave the gang because gang life brought more disappointment and regret compared to before they joined. The reasons included being tired of getting into trouble, causing embarrassment to their family, hurting their mothers, and a desire to have an intimate personal relationship and settle down. This group were perhaps at the crossroads and teetering on a significant turning point in their life and was waiting for a sign to leave the gang. For example, fatherhood (expecting to be a father, becoming a new father, or been a father for a while) is one such event that could cause long serving gang members to leave the gang (for some without hesitation). Another event

that could be a turning point was the process of becoming mature, moving from adolescence to young adulthood or from young adulthood to adulthood, where the body and mind reaches the final stages of development.

In relation to Fatherhood, all of the participants: those who were expecting to be a father, becoming a new father, or been a father for a while) recognized that fatherhood is more important than being a gang member and that it was not possible to continue being connected to the gang. But in reality, leaving the gang to be a father varied greatly in terms of whether they would do it or not. It could be that the turning point is when their children grow up into teenagers when leaving the gang is fully realised.

Weezy has been a gang member for a number of years and during that time he has had four children. He knows he needs to the leave the gang especially now his children are getting older and he is feeling the need to be more of a father than a gang member, and especially now his oldest child is a teenager the same age group he was when he joined a gang.

> *"...it's hard like…being a dad and also a gang member, cos on the other side of your head is like, I'll stop this for the sake of the kids but then when the boys come back, on again. I was fifteen when I started; shall I stop I won't do anything to anyone like I won't fight or anything cos I don't want them to do it aye when they grow up yeah, I don't want them to see me fight, I don't want them to see me getting hurt…."* (Weezy)

B-On is a new father, he preferred to wait until his son grows older and starts to understand things before he leaves the gang.

> *"...probably when my son gets older aye yeah probably when it gets to the time when he knows stuff then yeah probably stop then aye cos I wouldn't want him to grow up live the life I was living aye the gang life the blood gang."* (B-On)

Berserk, was ready to sacrifice his freedom and the things he loved doing to be a dad because he regarded the birth of his daughter (his first child) as one of the turning points in his life.

> *"Yeah trying to change my life cos I'm having a daughter got a calm down don't get locked up aye don't waste my time spending it in jail just a waste go in there...that's why need to cut down on crimes that get you busted like obvious ones police know you as...know your time aye when to go home then yeah know how to control your alcohol not oga kaea [stupid drunk]...be a changed man, totally changed man, yep probably start up my family, when my daughter coming on next month."* (Berserk)

With regards to those participants who were in a relationship and had no children (9 out of 25), all of them stated that they would leave the gang. In fact they all marked having a child as the turning point in their lives which would be significant enough to force them out of the gang. This is probably what B-Nigga means when he said he would not hesitate in leaving the gang if he became a father as this event would supersede his ties with the boys.

> *"...I like imagine myself if I was to have a kid, this would've been gone a long time ago like the gangs I would've put away I don't want my kids growing up seeing me like this and being in my situation that's why I'm like if I had a kid like last year or this year or whenever, my life would've changed, the boys wouldn't see me much out of them and yeah I will just commit myself to my family."* (B-Nigga)

The second critical event or turning point that could cause the participants to desist from the gang is maturation. This is when criminal behaviour slows down due factors such as age or getting older as participants begin to make more responsible decisions and come to a realisation that youth gang life does not lead to satisfaction all the time (Glueck & Glueck, 1974; Sampson & Laub, 2003). For example, we learned that fatherhood was an event that caused some participants to desist from gangs and leave and so

age is not the only factor that relates to maturation. Other factors that could be associated with maturation include employment, relocating, and getting married. Some of the participants pointed out that they had grown up and learned a lot about life and the future. They were aware that a critical event or turning point would influence them to leave or desist from the gang. It was interesting to sit back and listen to their reflections when I asked them to consider their future, for example, "what would you be doing in five and ten years' time, would you still be a gang member?" The answer from all of the participants was "no". There were two main reasons that signalled their maturing: a desire to restore their relationship with the family and becoming more self-confident and not dependent on the gang.

B-On would not be a gang member after ten years because of the challenges and difficulties he put his parents through when they were raising him, he also did not want his new born baby to grow up and give him a hard time like he gave his parents. So when B-On offered an opinion about how he has treated his parents in the past and wanting to make things right, in my opinion, this was a sign that he was maturing and coming to the realisation that by restoring his relationship with parents would also strengthen his relationship with his own family and ultimately leave the gang.

> *"...the stuff I put my parents through like just looking at my son like it just makes me realise how much my parents love me...all the shit I put them through I wouldn't want to put my son through like the life I was living cos I put my parents through the same shit..."* (B-On)

I can tell Radle was maturing as well because he realises that most of his life has been dedicated toward serving the gang and very little toward his mom and his own family. When he comes to the realisation that his life could have been different had he not joined a gang is a sign of maturation as well as the desire to want to help his family. In other words there was a

shift in his behaviour and outlook where instead of wanting to do things for the gang, he wanted to do things for his mom.

> *"...how would it feel if I wasn't in the gang I'll probably feel different now I'll be like whoa if I was living a good life, I could be like rich right now you know if I stayed in school I'd be so smart, my mom will have mean as mansion you know like for example and like me and my family will be perfect."* (Radle)

Lastly, Rasik always said "yes" to anything the gang wanted especially when he was newly recruited but after numerous years had passed he realises that he needed to say "no" more often because he realises his life would have been a lot different. In my opinion, this is another sign of maturation when behaviour shifts such as from being dependent to being independent so time makes people age and see things in another perspective.

> *"...I'm thinking about it aye man I shouldn't have done it and I had a more mature mind I would've just say no to it everything...my past is teaching me a lesson...I think that's what gives me my mature mind cos of my past you know...how many times I've been in like is it really worth doing all this shit?"* (Rasik)

Briefly there are two situations where participants would consider leaving the gang: fatherhood and maturation. In terms of fatherhood this would certainly be an influential factor toward desistance but only for long serving gang members who are also fathers and their children are teenagers. If you are a new father, leaving the gang is not considered until the child is old enough to understand things going on around him, whereas, if the gang member is an expectant father then there is no hesitation but to leave the gang. Both the new father and expectant father are long serving gang members but some differences include the new father is known as an OG (original gangster or founder), the expectant father is not, and the new father is separated from his partner and baby, while the expectant father is living with his partner and her family, so

perhaps these differences could explain the variation. Despite the variations the findings still indicate that fatherhood is an important desistance event where gang members can leave the gang. But it is very interesting that fatherhood is even considered an important turning point given that there could be other significant turning points like incurring a serious injury and being expelled from the gang that participants could have chosen.

Retrospection, reflection, and hindsight are what characterises maturation where looking back makes some participants want to change their behaviour and leave the gang. This is true for some of the participants who believed they had grown up, that they had experienced life to the fullest, and they were ready for a change in their lives. They were ready to take life more seriously and shift away from thinking and acting like a teenager and be more like an adult. They were ready to take on other social roles and stop being a gang member. All these realisations indicate how maturity is made up of different dimensions being not only biological but also social and a significant factor toward leaving a gang.

Perhaps this is an important consideration for social workers, when Samoan youth gang members are "ready" or when they are willing to change (listening and doing what is advised) and leave the gang. It could be that some anti-gang interventions are ineffective because it was not the right time or that more work is required. Ultimately it is going to take time so patience will be an essential attribute as well as introducing alternatives like putting together a rugby team so youth gang members can learn how to manage their aggression, improve their listening to authority, respecting people, and achievement in the context of sport. Any strategy that substitutes for the attractiveness to gangs will help young Samoan males desist, and/or prevent younger Samoan males from entering gangs in the first place.

There was no evidence where other gang members made it difficult for those wanting to the leave the gang. The only evidence of difficulty in leaving the gang was provided by those who described feelings such as loyalty and wanting to repay the gang for what it had done on their lives (protection, popularity, status, survival skills) versus leaving the gang. So I was a little surprised that gang members did not put pressure on those who wanted to leave and thus one of many positive contributions.

6.4 Positive contributions

This section presents an arrangement of gang socialization experiences that are considered by most of the participants as the positive contributions gang life provided for them. What these participants pointed out are also mentioned in the literature such as Klein (1995), Portillos and Zatz (1995), Bynum and Thompson (2008), and Kinnear (2008). For example, we have seen in previous sections that the majority of the participant's socialization experiences were predominantly negative and the role that the gang played in alleviating these circumstances was important. For example, in the family they grew up in, most participants chose the gang over the family (see section 4.2.2 & section 4.3) because the gang sheltered them from excessive physical punishment, the gang supported them during their family breakdown, and the gang comforted them during times they grieved and mourned the loss of a loved one. In society (see section 5.2), the gang protected them from being bullied at school, the gang demonstrated real faith not the church, and the presence of gangs was already established in some of the neighbourhoods they lived in meaning there was always an outlet for the participants to turn to for emotional, financial and social support if they wanted. In terms of the participants cultural and spiritual development (see section 5.1.4) the gang incorporated elements of fa'asamoa and religious practices in its activities and reconnected those who had been distanced from these experiences.

This section adds further positive contributions the gang provided to the participants and in so doing becomes a very important finding for the study especially in terms of originality as it is not often that such a topic is reported on. In the gang, they learned many things like how to fight and commit crime more effectively which at the same time built their confidence and coping skills up. It is the latter part of this statement that is important as we have read earlier, families, schools, and churches struggled to teach the participants these skills (see section 6.2). So this section is interesting because it challenges stereotypical views that gangs are a bad influence and that they are only engaged in criminal activities, and they contribute nothing positive to its members, families, and society at large. This may well be true but it has already been pointed out in the previous paragraph that there are many instances where gangs are not bad influences and offer lots of advantages to its members. Thus there is another story that is not being told but should be made known more frequently like the positive contributions that gang socialization experiences offer its members.

Personally I believe there are many benefits of gang socialization experiences. Being in a gang benefit its members by providing socialization experiences where their confidence is raised, where their sense of belonging and acceptance is heightened, and where they get a sense of achievement and feel what it is like to be successful. It also benefits its members through the learning of skills such as cooperation, organization, and teamwork (see section 6.2). Being in a gang also means members will be listened to and able to speak freely on any topic even those that their family find sensitive and forbid its sons to get advice on. Finally, the gang provide emotional support and guidance; they mentor their members and prepare them for survival.

I recall one story from Negro where he had been kicked out of his family home because his parents had had enough of him. Weeks passed by and Negro got homesick so he snuck back into his family home and noticed there was no electricity and nothing in the fridge or cupboards. He said he went back to the gang for help and they gave him an ounce of marijuana to sell and did not want any money from his sales. He made four hundred dollars, used a hundred to buy groceries and sneaked back into his house and filled up the fridge and cupboards with food and other items. Then he left three hundred dollars with a note "for the power" on the kitchen bench and left his family home. A few days later he sneaked back into his family home and this time it had electricity, cooked himself some lunch, cleaned up, and left.

Of the responses provided by the participants two main themes emerged: helping each other and helping the community to demonstrate how the gang they were members of contributed positively to their development and socialization experiences. In relation to the theme, helping each other, it highlights how gang members looked out for other gang members and how other gang members disapproved of fellow gang members and what they were doing.

For some of the participants being in a gang meant that there was always someone to comfort and support any of the gang members especially during times of personal turmoil. This is very important especially if any of the participants could not receive the kind of support they were after, for example, from their family, church or school, so when Renzo's relationship with his partner broke down he turned to his gang.

> *"Like when my relationship broke down the only people I turn to was my boys aye they kept me comfortable to just buy liquor and getting out of it, having fun, fighting, representing my hood, get out there yeah take your anger out on them aye instead..."* (Renzo)

Other participants recalled how they were arrested and held in police cells that no one from their family visited them but their fellow gang members did, which meant a lot to those incarcerated to be supported and remembered. For example when B-Kew got locked up, his parents had split up and lived far away, so when he tried to contact one of them he was unsuccessful, but his gang was there for him.

> *"…that's how the boys became a big part of my life, they're the ones that helped me through when I got locked up, sometimes my family is not there but my boys are always there, it'll be about when my mom and dad split up, when I keep having to move schools…"* (B-Kew)

While other participants like Negro recognized his gang's value in being the source that enabled him to build confidence and courage particularly at a time when he was new to New Zealand and he needed to find a way to adapt, to be accepted and to fit-in.

> *"Some of it was good cos like I can stand up to anyone if I wanted to that's what being in a gang made me like giving me the confidence to stand up to anyone..."* (Negro)

A few of the participants would voice their reluctance in participating in gang activities because fellow gang members were acting in a way that was not in the true spirit of the gang and needed to be warned. For instance, B-Red did not like what his gang were planning, to invade and rob an old lady's house, not because he was scared but because he knew it was wrong. He let his gang know of his disapproval from the moment they left their headquarters to the time they arrived at the house. As a result the gang listened and shows that members are allowed to speak freely because it stopped the home invasion and showed how some of the gang activities were getting too extreme.

> *"…they didn't hit the lady…they just threw the bottle at the house cracked the window, tagged on the house aye bro, like they just tagged all over the house,*

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> *the old lady just rang the cops but we were long gone and I was like far that was sad and he goes bro be happy we didn't hit the woman and I go, far bro, the RA (Red Army – the name of B-Red's Bloods gang) is getting over board for me now. He goes what do you mean? We're all changing."* (B-Red)

The second theme, helping the community, is further evidence that highlight the positive contribution that gang socialization experiences entailed for some of the participants. There were other activities that gangs were involved in that perhaps the public and the media never knew about and if they did know, the perception of gangs may be somewhat different. They included protecting the neighbourhood and preventing crime from happening in the areas they patrolled such as chasing away drug dealers selling to children, invading and shutting down homes selling marijuana, preventing robberies of stores, and keeping their streets and parks clean by picking up the rubbish.

Some participants like Beserk and his gang protected the Clendon area from the influences of drugs particularly on children.

> *"Cos doesn't that make us heroes if we chase people? Cleaning the streets up like what if someone goes and sell crack [drugs] to a little kid like fuck young age and start smoking P [methamphetamine] fuck they'll end up broke as…and we do over tinee [small marijuana packages] houses cos they're selling, they're selling it aye that's why we go do it and shut down their business so they'll be scared."* (Berserk)

Other fellow gang members like Radle, also mentioned they protected the Clendon area from potential robberies by chasing after thieves on behalf the store owner.

> *"…when we see like a dude from another hood trying to rob our stores we helped ah you know we just run in sole (man) are you robbing aye, we looked after Clendon, any like local, old people you know they run with their money we ran after them, we fasi [beat] them bro, give the money back, but yeah we do*

sometimes we do like a little robbery or something but like it's not really hard out." (JT)

PBS went around a few areas of Otara and picked up rubbish and chased away people who were drawing on walls illegally and made sure the park their gang made out as their headquarters was also rubbish free.

"…we used to do like you know last Saturday of the month we used to collect up all the boys, give them rubbish bags each and we used to all just walk around our street yeah and the park and pick up the rubbish, and we used to hate people coming over and tagging on our street aye, we always look after the kids when there's program at the park we're always looking after all the kids." (JRF)

Lastly, not all the gangs represented in this study were focused only on committing crimes, which is another misconception that perhaps need deconstructing and highlights the lack of understanding about gangs that societies like New Zealand have on them. Although a little contradictory but B-On's comment about his gang only recruiting those who were into fighting and not slanging (selling drugs), earns and doing the rounds (burglaries and robberies), and boosting or jacking (stealing or hijacking cars) is a very important one. It shows that not all gangs are the same especially the Samoan bloods youth gangs represented in this study. It shows the risks of generalising and classifying gangs as a homogenous entity. It also shows that perhaps the cultural element explains the variation in gang formation and functioning and highlights the fact that not all gangs are bad.

"Nah we're not into that we not into stealing and stuff because we're Samoans we're taught up better we don't do stand overs, steal cars I don't even know how to pop cars (steal a car), we don't even sell weed (marijuana) like the killa beez they tried get me and the boys to sell for them cos but we just told them nah we're not into it…we don't want to the risk of getting locked up away from my family that's the reason why we didn't do it." (B-On)

In a nutshell, this section is very important, because it provides a balance to the good and bad side of gang socialization experiences. There are positive contributions of gang socialization experiences to the participant's interpersonal and social development. Participants gained many benefits from their contact with the gang through growth in the development of their self-esteem, sense of belonging, confidence, and other essential attitudinal and personality attributes. Participants also gained a multitude of skills and advanced many of their abilities in collaborating, organizing, and networking. With the gang providing emotional support (being listened to, able to speak freely, and a choice) it is no wonder that some participants found it difficult to leave. These kinds of gang socialization experiences replaced or filled the void created by negative family and societal socialization experiences and their positive contributions go unnoticed.

There are also accounts of positive gang socialization experiences that are not widely reported. The participant's responses deconstruct stereotypical and derogative understandings about gang life. There are gang members within the gang who voice their disapproval at proposed gang activities and even to the point they stop them from happening. This could mean that most the crimes that are planned by gangs may be prevented by other gang members. Gang members also reported that they helped prevent crime in the neighbourhoods they controlled by chasing away drug dealers and rival gang members about to rob their shops. Lastly, one of the gangs studied in this project did not recruit any new members who were focused only on committing crimes but only physical fighting so not all gangs are involved crimes even though physical fighting is a crime (disorderly behaviour, assault). These examples are important to keep in perspective any discussion about the negative influences of gang socialization experiences because they prove that it is not entirely a negative one but also a positive gang socialization experience.

6.5 Chapter Summary

In closing, the findings about the participant's gang socialization experiences make this chapter a unique and fascinating contribution to the study. The findings about the behavioural and physical changes to the participant's mind and body after joining the gang is not surprising as this would be inevitable and expected. But the findings that trace the new knowledge and skills that participants were taught as part of being a gang member, the easy option of leaving the gang, and the positive contribution that gang life provides to its members and society are surprising, probably because I did not know much about these experiences. However there is a clear pattern threading through the gang socialization experience where participants before they joined the gang changed after joining the gang. Just what these changes are was the aim of this chapter as well as to identify and outline new discoveries.

Assuming that participants went into the gang with a relatively low level of emotional and physical change, this changed dramatically after joining the gang according to the participants. What is interesting is how aggression and anger levels intensified whether this was to disguise the fact that participants were afraid and did not want to show other gang members in case they were ridiculed. The pressure of proving yourself to the gang and wanting to make a name for yourself would have added to the feelings of insecurity and fear. Participants mentioned that they consumed drugs to prepare for fights by desensitising their bodies and mind so they are unable to feel pain and to be a better fighter but I suspect the other purpose was to suppress the fear. Participants would have been aware of the importance of gaining a reputation and status and a hard edge to their persona in order to be accepted by the gang, to be popular and gain notoriety among the gang world. The problem is it came at the expense of

extreme emotional and physical changes that resulted in erratic behaviour and an inability to interact with people apart from fellow gang members.

On the other hand there were instances where confidence and ego levels were also enhanced which would have been further boosted by the knowledge and skills that fellow gang members passed on. The participants provided lots of information about what they learned like how to fight and win a fight that would have increased their courage and self-pride. What is important is not the criminal activities that the gang was involved in but what the gang taught their members, the new knowledge and skills that the participants gained from this contact and how their development was subsequently influenced thereafter. Like the previous section I would have assumed that the participants entered the gang with poorly developed skills but after joining the gang these skills became fully developed. For example the gang would have taught them how to commit a crime and involved learning many skills such as planning, organizing, coordinating, analysing, and implementation. So the learning activity is typical of a gang socialization experience where a significant person(s), a process of learning (observation-imitation-reinforcement), and the internalization of new knowledge and skills are all part of the learning gained in the gang socialization experience

Clearly the participants' behaviour changed after they joined the gang and it was mainly attitudinal, emotional and physical. What is also evident is the role that gangs play in the development of its member especially in the teaching of new knowledge and skills. The gang does not hold on or forces their members to stay but it is the members who choose to remain connected or not even if there are compelling reasons for them to leave. It seems fatherhood and when they develop a mature outlook will participants consider leaving the gang. But it is a balancing act just like in the previous findings chapters where participants had to choose between the gang or the family and the gang or the school. Participants in this

chapter were faced with the dilemma of choosing to leave the gang and forge a new life or stay with the gang and work around a new life. There are also strong factors that portray gang influences in a positive light where the findings suggest that they encourage fellow gang members to support each other and mobilise gang members to protect their neighbourhoods, prevent crime, and maintain parks and facilities. All these key themes highlight what gang socialization entailed for participants and explain why Samoan young people drifted into youth gangs.

There is a relatively strong alignment between the theoretical literature and the participants' gang socialization experiences. Not in terms of reasons for joining the gang but the effects of gang activities on the participants after joining. Gang socialization recognizes the role that experienced gang members (or significant others) play as mentors and teachers to newly recruited gang members. They mould them and transform them (another key element of the socialization process) into fearless fighters, competent criminals, and loyal followers. In addition to the finding connectedness to socialization theory is another link with delinquency theory. Within the gang there are strains like serious injuries from physical fights and increase in criminal activities and other risks of joining the gang. These strains weaken the control that gangs have over its members where individual gang members go on personal vendettas and get revenge over rival gangs or sell drugs for personal gain both without the full support of their gang. However any kind of weakness the gang experiences is short-lived as gangs regenerate and learn how to be a gangster again and recycle gang activities all over again. How these three (strains, control, and learning) concepts are interrelated, integrated, dynamic is important in understand the role that youth gangs play on Samoan young people. The dynamism acknowledges the importance that life course or developmental criminology play in tracing Samoan young

people's childhood, adolescence, and youth adulthood socialization experiences to see how they are connected to youth gang involvement.

Finally, if Samoan young people are to be prevented from joining gangs then the attractiveness of gang culture needs to be where focus should target. That said, there are a lot of causal factors, however, that contribute to a predisposition to deviant behaviour and joining gangs. Nonetheless at the forefront of the Samoan young person's development should be his/ her culture, spirituality, familial and social domains. Which is apparent in the participant's life but vary greatly in terms of their negative and contradictory influences on the participants. Alternative substitutes is required to replace the desire to drift into youth gang like perhaps bringing back apprenticeships and establishing an industry that employs only young people and comes with a range of social services, education and personal skills training. This point is picked up again in the next chapter, discussion, but for now gang socialization experiences as outlined in this chapter is a vital component of understanding Samoan young people's contribution. By reducing the attractiveness of gang culture the gang socialization process could still be a benefit to its gang members.

Chapter 7 Discussion

7.0 Introduction

The literature and research is not strong on establishing whether cultural concepts like fa'asamoa and Samoan social institutions such as aiga (family), aoga (school), lotu (church), and nu'u (the village or neighbourhood) play any role in Samoan young people's involvement in youth gangs. It seems most of what is available regarding cross-cultural experiences is apparently strong for many ethnic minorities living in western countries but not so much on Samoan people living in New Zealand. Information is available confirming the link between social institutions and youth gangs but again Samoan-specific readings are limited. You are forced to generalize and assume that what the literature says is the same for all ethnic minorities.

The problem is it is not the same. Samoan youth gangs are not the same as European, Asian, African, and American youth gangs. But then again this is what makes this study unique and original as one of its objectives is to fill this gap in the literature and research by focusing on the Samoan context alone. I had a feeling that the literature and research to do with Samoan themes would be scant. Hence the aim of this chapter is to address the main research questions and others that are raised in the Introduction and the questions posed in the Theory chapter and start closing the circle. To do this a triangulation process is applied where the findings are cross referenced with the socialization and delinquency theoretical literature and then with my interpretations in order to identify and report on consistencies and inconsistencies. If there are consistencies or not both outcomes will still determine the implications for social policy and social work strategies in an effort to eliminate or minimize the

attraction of youth gangs on Samoan young people. So it is possible to eliminate or minimize the attractiveness of youth gang culture on Samoan young people but first the past and second, the current theoretical literature about delinquency need to take into account cultural strains, culturally-related lack of social and personal control, and culturally-related negative learning experiences in order to achieve this objective.

There are four sections in this chapter. Section 7.1 explores the question relating to the relationship between the theoretical literature about delinquency and socialization and what the participants' life stories in the findings said and discovers a strong correlation and consistency between the two dimensions. The evidence lies in the integration of the *causation-explanation* of delinquency provided by the theoretical literature and the *application-explanation* provided by the participants. Section 7.2 is where the relationship between the two dimensions diverges and the participant's life stories leads the discussion toward an argument calling for an addition to the delinquency literature known as a Pacific criminology, and an increased coverage of positive contributions by the gang to change society's perception of gangs. Section 7.3 translates strain, control, and learning theories of delinquency into strategies and programs in order for policymakers and social workers to be more responsive and effective in eliminating or minimizing the attractiveness of youth gangs on Samoan young people. Section 7.4 is the chapter summary which points out that there is a strong connection between the findings and the literature except in one area, and puts forward a number of suggestions for minimizing the attraction of youth gangs to Samoan young people living in New Zealand.

7.1 Consistency between the findings and the literature

Socialization theory adequately explains Samoan young people's involvement in youth gangs as its literature and research is consistent with the findings in this study. The principles of social interaction and the role of the significant others bring the literature and the findings together in three ways. Firstly a person is a product of his/ her environment. What he/ she observes both imitate and after many practices what is observed is internalized and reinforced as his/ her own behaviour even though it belonged to someone else. In my opinion, this describes the socialization experience the participants went through as they were growing up because when they were responding to my questions there was a lot of emotion behind their answers and the way they acted I knew it was sometimes moulded on someone else. As symbolic interactionists argue, a person's socialization experience is about the primacy of subjective meanings and not just on what is objectively true, it is the way he/ she learns to interpret and give meaning to the world through their interactions with others that is important in understanding why they think and act the way they do (Blumer, 1965; Sandstrom, Martin & Fine, 2003; Serpe, 1987; Stryker, 1980; Ulmer, 2011). What is interesting is that participants came into contact with a number of people like parents, older siblings, school teachers, church people and friends from the neighbourhood but they valued their interactions with family members and friends only and distanced themselves from the others. This explains why their childhood experiences would have been the first instances where they are observing, imitating, internalizing and reinforcing so either both or one of their parents or an older sibling was the significant person they chose to model their behaviour on (which could have been anything from anger to being quiet). But their thinking and behaviour changed once they became older and allowed themselves to be influenced by their friends.

Secondly, the relationships that the participants formed with other gang members is, therefore, a response against negative socialization experiences which emerged during the latter part of their childhood (8 years old and over) to adolescence and beyond. The participant's socialization experiences contained many examples of how it was stressful and challenging threading through their lifespan development. I would agree with Cohen (1965 & 1966) when he argued that Blumer's (1936 & 1937) version of symbolic interaction is more individualistic and connected to biological dimensions and less concerned with larger social processes. The socialization event may be an individual course where he/ she internalizes what is observed and develops but it is the externalities that influence the development the most. When I think about my own socialization nearly all of my thinking and behaving was modelled on contacts I had with people associated in my life and on some occasions I would modify to suit what I learned before I adopted it for my own development. I believe that individuals are a product of all the social influences around them, socialized by various institutions such as the family, school, church and the neighbourhood community, they take the best out of all these experiences (Cohen's version of symbolic interactionism) and develop them into what they consider worthwhile.

Thirdly, there are many reasons explaining why Samoan young people join gangs. One of them is because of the various social issues relating to adverse situations like weak family and societal socialization circumstances. Which is where the symbolic interaction perspective falls short, it focuses too much on the individual and fails to take into account larger social processes contained in the structures of society that function to keep its members developing in a particular way (social norms) (see Stryker, 1980 & 2008). Known as structural functionalism, theorists like Comte (1865), Durkheim (1893/1964), Merton (1938 & 1957) and Parsons (1951 & 1971) argued that the socialization experience is still based on

social interaction but not between the learner and the key person, instead it is between the learner and social institutions. The latter becomes the socializer through the learner's internalization of norms, standards and values set by social institutions like family, culture (identity, heritage, language) schools (education and preparation for workforce or advanced study), church (moral and spiritual living), and neighbourhood community (safe streets, environmentally friendly spaces, graffiti free facilities and collective efficacy). Thus there is no single factor influencing the participant's involvement with youth gangs but multiple factors such as personal and social strain (Agnew, 1985 & 1992; Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; Cohen, 1955; Merton, 1938; Messener & Rosenfield, 2001 & 2006), lack of social control by institutions like the family and lack of personal self-control (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Hirschi, 1969; Matza, 1964; Reiss, 1951; Sykes & Matza, 1957), and negative personal and social learning development because of poor role models and their bad influences (Akers, 1985 & 1998; Akers & Jensen, 2007; Burgess & Akers, 1966; Sutherland, 1947).

Apart from socialization theory, there is also consistency to be found between the literature on delinquency theories and the participant's socialization experiences. Delinquency theories such as strain, control and learning are all said to be significant markers in understanding the causes of youth gangs. When associated with socialization theory one can see that during the life course of an individual the journey is peppered with challenges relating to stress, social institutions failing to control them and the lack of personal self-control, and the learning of bad influences from friends or peers. The participants' life stories are filled with many examples that confirm the presence of factors associated with the strain-control-and-learning theories of delinquency and thus how they came to be a gang member. That said, there are three points connecting the theoretical literature on delinquency and the participants' responses that

either prove or disprove any knowledge claims, interpretations, and judgements.

The first point is that the connection between the literature on strain theories of delinquency and the findings that highlight the participant's responses about their socialization experiences are substantial. If strain is defined by the *failure* to achieve a goal because of disadvantages or barriers, or the *removal* of positively valued encouragement, or the *presence* of a negative provocations, according to Agnew's (1985 & 1992) General Strain Theory (GST), then the participant's socialization experiences met all three conditions. It seems family socialization experiences started positively (see section 4.2.1) as their childhood memories were filled with happy moments relating to spending time with the family and celebrating special events together. However from around eight years old and beyond it changed from high points to a series of low points (see section 4.2.2) because of various issues relating to family breakdown and family structure. In terms of family breakdown the participants lived through some relatively bad experiences such as parent separation or divorce, witnessing family violence, excessive use of physical punishment, which would have impacted upon their social bonds or quality relationships with their parents, siblings and extended family members (see Ardelt & Day, 2002; Juby & Farrington, 2001; Unnever, Cullen & Agnew, 2006).

Compounding the lack of family intimacy and functioning were difficulties in trusting and holding quality relationships and a weak family structure. This means they grew up in a variety of family settings like in single-parent environments particularly where the father is absent, others in homes where they are the youngest sibling or the only child so being picked on or being lonely was a common occurrence, or a few were raised by parents where one of them is a step-parent and did not accept them as a son, or raised by extended family members like grandparents during their early

childhood years and then passed on to their biological parents from their later childhood years and beyond and thereafter did not receive the same care and attention (see Comanor & Philips, 2002; Demuth & Brown, 2004; Heck & Walsh, 2000; Lieber, Mack & Featherstone, 2009). Futhermore, from a Samoan perspective a typical "family" is not restricted to the nuclear family members (mother, father, son and daughter); it should be fine for grandparents, or aunties, or uncles, or older siblings or even the wider community like church members to raise younger children. Within such family configurations there is the susceptibility to an over stretching of resources and financial strains. This occurs because village-like communal living in the Samoa Islands is very different to the urban-individualistic living in New Zealand. The latter lifestyle disconnects and isolates them from their collective support despite attempts by them to replicate the former lifestyle they are used to in a foreign land. Hence the reality which emerged from the participant's life stories is that there is considerable variety in the patterns of relationships and style of organisation in Samoan families and, consequently, quite different outcomes. Some of these are likely to strengthen commitment to family, others are more likely to alienate young people from their families, and Samoan families may experience higher levels of strain compared to non-Samoan families (see Kaufman, Rebellon, Thaxton, & Agnew, 2008).

Strains are not only confined to the family home but also apparent in other societal socialization experiences such as school, church and the neighbourhood community. The most significant strain felt by the participants at school was being bullied because this experience turned them into bullies and difficulties in holding a trusting relationship with their teacher (see section 5.2.1). As confirmed by Lee & Cohen (2008), the authors found that schools are not only the source of an individual's strain and subsequent delinquency but also be a source for coping with strain and minimizing delinquency. The reason why the participants failed to achieve their National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA)

levels so as to either enter the workforce or continue onto more advanced education is because their schooling experiences disadvantaged them and became a barrier (see Curry, Decker, & Egley Jr., 2002; Staff & Kreager, 2008). On the other hand, it may be the case that the participants failed to complete their schooling because they put the needs of the gang first and education second so it is not the fault of the school but the student (see Pyrooz, 2014). I think it is the school at fault. Even though the teachers are not trained to deal with behavioural and socially-related issues as they are educators not social workers, but their teacher-training curriculum should have at least advised them on how to identify and respond to problems with their student's learning capacity and outcomes and their school management and governance should have considered employing staff to assist teachers with their student's social issues.

In relation to church socialization the strains felt by the participants included a confusing experience (attending two different denominations on the same day), backstabbing by church members questioning their family's faith and integrity, and hypocrisy (see section 5.2.2). I think it was out of respect for their parents why participants continued to attend church, even though some of them were in a gang, it was merely a duty and obligation as many of its teachings (moral living) were removed by the participants because the church was ineffective in motivating them and their gang became more important. Yet it is not clear from the findings that the reason why they joined a gang is because of church despite the strains I mentioned earlier. Baimer and Wright's (2001) meta-analysis of 60 studies focused on establishing whether religious beliefs and behaviours deter criminal behaviour or not show that religion exerted a moderate effect so it was still inconclusive. Perhaps it was because of the way I measured the religion-delinquency association as Sloane and Potvin (1986) in their study discovered which led to re-designing and then applying more sensitive tests of significance where they found stronger, rather than moderate, effects of religion on all offending, rather than

some. Nevertheless, like school, the church shared some of the blame, not the participants, because the church minister especially should have been more proactive and supported families under his/ her ministry who had problems with raising their teenage children. As a consequence, the participants turned to their friends from the neighbourhood, school and church, which became instrumental in supporting the participants to overcome the strains they experienced but also distracted those from achieving school qualifications and trusting their religious teachings (see Desmond, Soper & Kraus, 2011; Kreager, Rulison, & Moody, 2011).

For the participants the neighbourhood community they grew up in and the friendships they made was probably the first time their personal network expanded to incorporate other people outside of their family and church circles. Their neighbourhood communities, however, introduced them to further strains such as living in single-parent family households dependent on income support from the government, paying rent for substandard housing belonging to the government, low income, high unemployment, and poor run down facilities (see section 5.2.3). These responses are consistent with studies linking socially disorganized neighbourhoods with delinquency and crime (Bursik, 1988; Eitle, & Turner, 2002; Harding, 2009; Roosa, Burrell, Nair, Coxe, Tein, & Knight, 2010; Sampson & Groves, 1989; Shaw & McKay, 1942). Their responses also show poverty-related psychological problems including anxiety, depression, aggression, relationship problems, physical problems, and trouble with the law (Karriker-Jaffe, Foshee, & Ennett, 2011; Santiago, Wadsworth, & Stump, 2011). More importantly, the effects of poverty on children and adolescents create a rebellious behaviour that serves as a psychological safeguard against their hostile surroundings and a disruption of a child's or children's everyday activities are associated to juvenile delinquency (see Jarjoura, Triplett, & Brinker, 2002; Wareham, Cochran, Dembo, & Sellers, 2005). Thus the presence of negative provocations like living in a socially disorganized neighbourhood, opportunities for work and

income from gang crime and drug sales are more likely to compete directly with opportunities from conventional sources of income (Boardman, Finch, Ellison, Williams, & Jackson, 2001). Delinquent gangs provide jobs, food and clothing, role models and self-affirmation. They satisfy basic individual and social needs in the same way that stable families, prosocial peers (like church members), and legitimate employment and they reinforce conventional behaviour (to a certain degree).

The second point is that the connection between the literature on control theories of delinquency and the findings based on the participant's responses about their socialization experiences are extensive. Hirschi's (1969) social bonding perspective, which focuses on the controlling aspects of social institutions (family rules, school regulations, church scripture and community neighbourhood spirit) and its relationship with people, and Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) self-control concept emphasising the individual's ability to control his/ her emotions are both at the heart of control theories. According to these theories if social bonds and self-control are weak then one of the outcomes is delinquency and involvement in gangs. This understanding is consistent with the findings as there are numerous accounts of where the participant's relationships with social institutions broke down and instances of becoming emotionally charged and unable to control it (see section 4.1, 5.2, & 6.1).

One of my concerns is the transferability of poor social bonding and self-control from one social institution to another over the life course of a person's development. Children rely on their parents to role model behaviours such as how to resolve an argument or how to treat other people and to provide an environment where rules are adhered to by adult family members too; routines like family chores are shared by all family members, and where regular praising and incentives are apparent (see Rebellon & van Gundy, 2005). Generally, I suspect this is not what happened in the participant's family socialization process (at least in an

ongoing way), instead, there would have been little or none of the things I described previously. As a consequence, not knowing how to problem solve and value relationships, not being able to comply to rules, work in teams, and be goal-oriented meant they transferred these behaviours to their school and church that resulted in negative societal socialization experiences (see Davis, Tang & Ko, 2004). In my opinion it is not the participant's inability to conform and comply to authority that is the cause for their involvement in gangs, it is the failure of social institutions and the weak relationships between teenage children and their parents, school teachers and students, church members and leaders that paves the way for alternative other sources like neighbourhood friends and peers involved in gangs (see also Longshore, Chang, Hsieh, & Messina, 2004). So I think the participants warmed to the gang's control rather than the other social institutions because they were being listened to, praised, and rewarded. In return the participants allowed themselves to be controlled and respected the authority of the gang and followed (to a certain extent) the gang's rules and advice (even if it was negative). To society gangs are mostly thought of as negative influences and need controlling whereas to the participants they generally saw them as positive influences

In relation to neighbourhood communities, control theory, and the participant's responses are consistent. For example social disorganization and control theories both propose that social order, stability, and integration are conducive to conformity, while disorder and malintegration are conducive to crime and deviance (Gibson, 2012; Gibson, Poles, & Akers, 2011; Gibson, Sullivan, Jones, & Piquero, 2010). Thus some neighbourhood communities are better able to generate conformity to rules that promote law-abiding behaviour than others because of little community cohesion, poor community institutions, and a lack of collective efficacy such as a willingness to exercise control (like tell the children to keep their community safe and clean) and a willingness to trust or help

each other (neighbourhood watch) (Sampson & Groves, 1989; Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997).

The third and final point is that the connection between the literature on learning theories of delinquency and the findings about the participant's socialization experiences are abundant. According to learning theorists all behaviour is learned and not genetically programmed so delinquent acts are learned behaviour, in small informal group settings, and developed from collective experiences (Akers, 1985 & 1989; Burgess & Akers, 1966; Sutherland, 1942 & 1947). All three circumstances (social learning, group setting, and collective experiences) are consistent with the participant's learning socialization experiences. The social learning experience is prevalent in the participant's family (chapter 4) and societal socialization (chapter 5) backgrounds where family members, school teachers, church members, and community people would have been instrumental in what, how and why they learned. However it is their friends or peers that had the most pervasive influence after the participant's parents, which I found very interesting and concerning. Friends are an essential part of any young person's development because it can determine how the young person will turn out and what activities he/ she will be involved in. This is why I consider chapter six to be the most important chapter out of the three findings chapters. Chapter six demonstrates how their friends/ gang members were able to re-socialize them into another way of life and became fully immersed into the gang culture (see section 6.1 & 6.2; Akers, 1998; Bengtsson, 2012; Jensen & Akers, 2003).

Social learning theory, therefore, explains how people become influenced through acquiring new knowledge and new found discoveries facilitated by a peer and how this peer or peers can also influence people from making the correct decision. For example throughout the participant's socialization experiences the responses they provided to questions relating to what they considered important between the family, their Samoan

culture versus the gang, surprisingly, the results were mixed (see section 4.3 & 5.1.4). In relation to the family versus the gang, most felt the gang was more important than the family, some did not, and few did not know. With regards to the Samoan culture versus the gang, most did not know, some felt the Samoan culture was more important, and few did not. This could explain why gangs are regarded as family rather than their own family because the gang was less restrictive, they understand young people better, they teach important things (see section 6.2), there was more to be learned from the gang than from school and church, they provide a source of employment and income, and their own form of pastoral and counselling (Fite, Preddy, Vitulano, Elkins, Grassetti, & Wimsatt, 2012; Hochstetler, Copes & DeLisi, 2002; Matsueda, 1989). Hence it is important that the choice of friends that young people make is carefully monitored and managed accordingly because the role that a peer plays in swaying the participant toward one direction or the other and variables that operate in-between both motivate and control criminal behaviour as well as promote and undermine conformity (Akers, 1998; Matsueda & Anderson, 1998). Thus the probability of criminal or conforming behaviour occurring is a function of the balance of these influences on behaviour operating in one's learning history, at a given time, or in a given situation.

Finally the neighbourhood community is another area that influences the social learning development of people especially if the presence of gang culture is already apparent. Gang culture can be present in the family home, school and church as well as the neighbourhood community as the findings confirm. This means there is a strong likelihood that the participant's first set of friends outside of their family and church circle were from the neighbourhood, which for some they were the sons of adult gang members living in their street. According to Gibson, Poles, and Akers (2011) economically and socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods; for example, tend to have a greater concentration of delinquent peers, thus

increasing the chances that youths will have more friends who are delinquent. Most of the participants' friends were delinquents so they learned a lot from them and from neighbourhoods that were mainly substandard. So if the costs of living are high (rent, grocery shopping, electricity and telephone, and other household running costs) and the income being earned by adults is insufficient (including income support from the central government) then it makes the participant's friends influence more compelling. Child poverty deprive children of essential resources in order to survive and develop and thrive, leaving them unable to achieve their full potential or participate as full and equal members of society and susceptible to influences like bad peers and gangs (see Reinarman & Fagan, 1988). As a result, some participants were forced to sell drugs in order to support their families and pay for groceries and electricity or to pay for things that their families could not provide like cars, smart phones and laptops.

Briefly it is clear that a strong relationship between the theoretical literature on socialization and delinquency and the life stories that the participants shared in the findings. It is not only the fact that socialization and delinquency theories adequately explain Samoan young people's involvement in youth gangs but I noticed three clear patterns between socialization theory (symbolic interaction and structural functionalism) delinquency theory (strain, control, and learning theories), and the findings. The causes behind Samoan young people's involvement in gangs are not explained by a single theory but a range of theories. When you integrate these theories together then I start to gain a clear understanding of how overwhelming, severe and extreme the participants' socialization experiences were and identify the links that connect specific factors in the socialization and delinquency theories that lead Samoan young people into delinquency and gangs. These specific factors are not only the interpersonal issues that affected the participants' socialization but also the social issues mainly emanating beyond their family home and in

schools, churches, and the neighbourhood community. Given the strains, lack of controls and negative learning experiences the participants remembered in their family they may be already looking for a reason to escape and relieve the pressure, frustration, and anger. They may be looking toward church and school as an outlet because this is the next form of support outside of the family home. But after a few years at school and church and the experiencing of more strains, lack of controls within these institutions, and further negative learning experiences that this would be the (turning) point where they were pushed over the line and in their search for another outlet they found it in the neighbourhood and in the gang.

7.2 Inconsistencies between the findings and the literature

Despite the strong evidence highlighting numerous connections between the theoretical literature on socialization and delinquency and the findings based on the participants' life stories; I also discovered the opposite, where there were gaps in the delinquency literature especially. Existing theories on delinquency and youth gang phenomenon suggest that they can be explained by personal and social strain, the lack of social and self-control, and exposure to negative learning experiences. However information from the participant's cultural and gang socialization experiences (section 5.1, chapter 6) reveals additional causes of delinquency and youth gangs other than that provided by the literature. There are two reasons why I do not think there is a strong relationship between the delinquency literature and the findings: limited research on whether culture has anything to do with Samoans' association with youth gangs and a tendency for past and existing publications to report on the derogatory side of youth gang. That said I am perhaps signalling a new direction for delinquency theory which can only add value to its existing

theories and issue a challenge for researchers to consider developing further the ethnic minority perspective on youth gangs.

Firstly, very little was found in the literature on the question of whether culture (fa'asamoa) has anything to do with Samoan young people's involvement in gangs. The closest I got was a theory called cultural socialization, which describes the transfer of cultural knowledge, processes and applications usually from the parent to the child but this was useful in putting fa'asamoa in the category of cultural socialization and giving the concept of fa'asamoa relevance and credibility. Then I came across a few articles from Hawaii, Virginia (America), and Australia where acculturation, settlement issues, and generational differences over the importance of fa'asamoa seem to contribute to various social problems like delinquency. Faced with the reality that the literature was very limited in what I was looking for I made it one of this study's objectives to fill this gap and develop the argument further by demonstrating why the cultural factor should be considered as a prominent delinquency theory.

It is important to clarify what I mean by the term [fa'asamoa] *culture* because it is an ambiguous word and known by a range of definitions, characteristics and attributes. Culture refers to the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society like Samoan culture. It is a way of life, a lifestyle and unique only to its members. For Samoan people everything that they do, the way they think and the way they behave is about being respectful because this not only provides a good name for the individual and his/ her family but also demonstrates how much they value the other person and his/ her family. Samoans are generally instinctual people, they think from their heart, using senses and feelings when they speak so they are aware of the words they use and how they are acting all the time. Sometimes this gets them into trouble because their responses may be vague and unclear when asked to give an opinion or judgement about somebody or something but this is because

most feel uncomfortable about talking about another person or an object. Most are used to referring to other Samoan people for advice before they decide. For example, see the brief dialogue below:

> Inquirer: *"What do you think about what the lecturer said? He was wrong aye?"*
> Samoan: *"Um, I think the lecturer is right but I also think you are right too."*

This simple dialogue is typical of most Samoans where their actions are thoughtful and carefully crafted so as to not offend the other person and to demonstrate how important the other person to them. It also shows vagueness and perhaps frustrate people especially those who are not familiar with fa'asamoa. For example, avoiding eye contact when talking to people is a typical Samoan behaviourism because not to do this is considered confrontational and mannerisms such as saying "tulou" (or "excuse me" when walking past people) or sitting down if the person one is speaking to is sitting down too or when engaged in a debate or an argument he/ she backs down because this is the more respectful and humble way of resolving a conflict rather than engage and potentially make the situation worse. All thinking and behaviour are linked to certain protocols in which adherence or compliance is important because this is what makes a Samoan a better person and the family he/ she is from and their mana/ status in Samoan society. So a comprehensive understanding of the cultural makeup of ethnic minorities like Samoan young people living in western contexts is essential in explaining their involvement in gangs.

Very little was found in the literature on the question of fa'asamoa and youth gangs but in the findings there was some compelling evidence to suggest that perhaps there should be. In sections 5.1 and 6.6 are accounts of how fa'asamoa was practiced in the youth gang which I found very fascinating. There were many examples of how gang members integrated their Samoan identity and its practices into the gang thereby adding uniqueness to the gang's culture and lifestyle. If one of their members

was injured and hospitalized after a fight with another rival gang (fa'alavelave or crisis), the members would instinctually come together (fono or meeting) and decide on things like that each contribute a small monetary donation into an envelope (mealofa or gift) to be passed on to the family of their injured gang member. Then they would travel to the hospital, sit and wait patiently until the family acknowledges them and invites them in (lotomaulalo or humility). It is a critical moment because I would assume the family are already annoyed at the gang and blame the gang for their son's injuries and for the inconvenience they have created.

Yet the gang remains quiet, not in defiance, but to allow the family (if any) to express their disapproval and anger at them. Then one of the gang members would stand and convey a lauga or speech in a special Samoan language reserved only for matai or high chiefs. This means that this gang member is a titled high chief and specially trained with this oratory skill. This was another interesting finding wherein gang members were actually matai and bestowed these titles and authority to be leaders of their family. One of the most important institutions of fa'asamoa and Samoa society was also incorporated into gang culture. This was something I never expected and is not apparent in existing literature and research about youth gangs. This cultural process would have touched the hearts of the family members who were angry at them and even turned their actions from blocking the gang's hospital visit to allowing the gang to see their son/injured fellow gang member. Following the lauga would be the mealofa or the envelope that the visiting gang brought with them and passed on to a family member. This gesture is not about buying the family's approval for access, but a sign of respect (fa'aaloalo or respect) that the gang is apologetic and acknowledges the family's anguish with a small token of good will. In this example the gang utilised many of the important processes in fa'asamoa to respond to a fa'alavelave or crisis where I assume is not apparent in past and existing literature on delinquency or gangs. It also adds to the argument that existing theories

on delinquency is somewhat limited in its capacity to explain phenomenon such as Samoan people's involvement in gangs. Nowhere in the literature did I come across where gangs utilised fa'asamoa processes as part of their gang activities.

I wonder if other ethnic minority gangs living in predominantly Western contexts practice elements of their culture in their gang. The gangs in this study prayed before they consumed a meal and before they battle a rival gang. Few gang members made sure they got home to prepare the food, attend church, and clean up before they left home and rejoin the gang. Other gang members learnt how to speak the Samoan language from other gang members and they also learned about fa'asamoa and their cultural heritage. So for those gang members who stated they knew nothing about fa'asamoa, once they joined the gang they found out more about fa'asamoa compared to before joining the gang (see section 5.1.1). This was a similar experience for those who migrated from Samoa to settle and permanently live in New Zealand, these gang members found it easy to adapt to the New Zealand way of life after joining the gang because members would teach them how to cope as opposed to before joining the gang. Even those born in New Zealand found relief particularly over identity crises (learning to be a Samoan and learning how to be a New Zealander at the same time) in the gang because members were also from the same background and experienced the same thing so how they managed this was passed on to other gang members.

There is a link between being a Samoan (culture, ethnicity, or race) and delinquency and youth gangs. The ethnic minority perspective represented in American, Europe and Asian cross-cultural studies and publication on delinquency and youth gangs is not the same (nor should it be assumed or generalized as homogenous) as the Australian, New Zealand and South Pacific (Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia) contexts. Even though there are Pacific peoples living in the Americas, Europe and

Asia regions, any studies and research conducted on these communities should be compared to where there are higher concentrations of Pacific people which are the South Pacific, New Zealand and Australia zones. This is one of the arguments that Braithwaite (2013) argues in his article where he challenges the Australian and New Zealand Society of Criminology to lead and create a pathway for the development of a Pacific criminology.

> *"We need to teach more Pacific law and Pacific criminology and to graduate more Pacific PhDs who will become future leaders of the study of crime in Pacific countries and Pacific universities. But of course we cannot teach more if we do not learn more about the Pacific."* (p. 6)

I am accepting the challenge and agree with Braithwaite that a Pacific criminology is both important and necessary. Past and existing theories on delinquency and youth gangs are valuable for understanding historical origins to current debates and issues. However we need a Pacific criminology that represents a new intellectual endeavour rather than a logical elaboration of previous work on deviant subcultures, to dissolve conventional understandings and accepted boundaries, and rework existing subcultural and interactionist approaches. A Pacific criminology will provide a 'real' explanatory traction when integrated with historical and contemporary criminologies of power and inequality. A Pacific criminology will reinvigorate the study of crime and youth gangs by integrating a host of alternative concepts. It is a by-product of the term 'by Pacific for Pacific' where publications and research on Pacific peoples, delinquency and youth gangs lead the scholarship field as the voice and not others who are not from the same culture, the same region, and from the same lived experiences.

By adding the term 'culture' to delinquency theories such as strain, control and learning, enhances an ethnic minority perspective that is unique to this side of the world (the South Pacific Ocean) and is therefore more representative. For example, success and well-being for Samoan people is

not measured through materialism such as owning luxury car, a yacht, a home, and a business. Instead success and well-being is based on altruism and benevolence like being able to help when asked and helping by giving even though it could mean further financial hardship. This is what is a cultural strain is about, when the Samoan person is obligated to give rather than receive and in a way where he or she does not expect anything back in return.

Another illustration is control theory, which is based on people's ability to establish strong social bonds and personal self-control. Social order is at the heart of control theory and without it would mean a state of normlessness or anomie perhaps even anarchy. Thus the role of social institutions such as the family, school and the church is vital in establishing social control and personal self-control otherwise social problems like delinquency and youth gangs evolve. From a Samoan point of view, the Samoan family home, the Samoan churches, and the Samoan preschool, are examples of social institutions unique to Samoan people and thus project cultural-related control theories. The failure of the aforementioned Samoan-specific social institutions to impose social order on young Samoan people could mean alternative social institutions are sought like gangs. The Samoan family home struggling to instil discipline, the Samoan church struggling to retain young people's interests in faith-based ideals and the Samoan preschool struggling to foster bilingual education are examples of culturally-related control theories for delinquency.

In relation to learning theory for delinquency the cultural learning experiences like learning the gagana (Samoan language), the aganu'u (Samoan protocols), and fa'asamoa can force some Samoan young people to seek-out alternative ideas because it is difficult being a Samoan living in New Zealand and the multiple learning experiences that he or she must come to grips with (dual identity, assimilation, acculturation, and

integration). Hence when the term 'culture' is placed in front of learning theory of delinquency it reminds us of the role that culture plays as an associated contributing factor. Once this learning is compounded with learning about how to be a New Zealand-Samoan as well as other complex learning experiences the whole feeling becomes daunting and problematic.

So the study's proposed version of Pacific criminology (cultural explanations and perspectives of strain, control and learning theories of delinquency) does not refer to the variation in norms, values and beliefs that supposedly exists between classes in society as in cultural deviance theory (Akers, 1997 & Matsueda, 1997). The major tenet of cultural deviance theory is that conformity to the prevailing cultural norms of lower class society causes crime. Lower class subculture has a unique set of values and beliefs, which are invariably in conflict with conventional social norms so members of the working class commit crimes as they respond to the cultural norms of their own class in an effort to deal with problems of social – middle class - adjustment. I have come across the term "cultural criminology", which is a recent developed field of research that combines aspects of cultural studies, sociology and criminology to explain and address the effects of popular culture, media and subcultures on criminal behaviour (Ferrell, Young, & Hayward, 2008; Hall & Winlow, 2007; Hayward & Young, 2007). But the Pacific criminology I am referring to in this study is not about the way in which criminals and their subcultures are portrayed by pop culture and the media, whether the criminals conform to pop culture and vice versa. So culture has everything to do with Samoan youth being involved in gangs, up until now it has not been clear what that could be, and how it could add value to existing delinquency theories.

Secondly, very little was found in the literature on the question of what kinds of activities apart from delinquency and crime do gang members

participate in as part of the gang lifestyle and gang culture. The study was not only interested in finding out about the participants family and societal socialization experiences but also their gang socialization backgrounds in order to get a complete picture of the causes of gang phenomena and ways to address it. This is the reason why a third findings chapter was put together (chapter 6 Gang socialization) because the results outlined in this sub-section were unexpected and suggests that the literature has not reached this level of analysis yet. I think the literature may touch on the themes covered in chapter six but not in detail and at the level where it is obvious that the research managed to elicit large amounts of rich information from the participants that other researchers perhaps were unable to do.

In my opinion, the gaps in the theoretical literature on delinquency are highlighted in the findings to do with "learning to be a gang member" and "the positive contribution of gang life" (sections 6.2 and 6.4). The word "gang" is overused and is synonymous with the phrase "the evils" of youth culture and its incumbent violence, drugs, alcohol abuse and sexual misconduct. There is a lot of hysteria and speculation about the breakdown of teenage society like they are usually from dysfunctional families, are poorly educated, faithless, and no respect for the neighbourhood they live in. This dim view, at best, is misguided. I was a youth justice social worker, a community youth worker, and a youth specialist worker for over ten years, and what was clear to me is that gangs are the not the problem, society is the problem.

One of the gangs this study was involved with called Pearl Baker Stylez (PBS) at the time recruited Samoan young people who had been bullied, abused by their parents and teachers, frustrated with their church and their bible class leaders, and struggled to fit in except for the neighbourhood they grew up in. Members were allowed to hold on to their membership on the basis that they refrained from criminal activity

and substance abuse because they were a fighting gang only, which means the only time they got into trouble with the police was when they went looking for revenge on a rival gang. This is the same gang I mentioned earlier that took the time to practice fa'asamoa, say their prayers, and teach their members how to speak Samoan and so on. The PBS also patrolled their neighbourhood streets they looked after and if they found out that a rival gang was preparing to rob one of the shops in their area they would intimidate and scare them away. They cleaned up the rubbish in the parks where they hanged out and they scared away taggers or people who write or draw on the walls of properties and other facilities.

There are number of other positive contributions to be acknowledged that the PBS gang provided for its members. The gang attracted many Samoan young people because of the family-like experiences it provided that included unconditional love, positive role models, and proper discipline. This is important because their own family, school, and church were now unable to reach the participants anymore as the gang's influence was too strong. The gang taught its members how to fight in order to protect themselves, how to survive, what it means to be respectful, the importance of self-control, how to be resourceful, initiative-driven, and cooperative. Another vital contribution that reinforced the participant's trust in it, and gave them a sense of belonging, self-worth, and self-confidence perhaps for the first time. Gang members were also gaining status as feared and hardened individuals, popularity and fame as word got around to other young people about their exploits, they were becoming somebody rather than nobody, they were being accepted and finally found a place where they fit-in and able to express themselves freely. Imagine if communities embraced the youth gangs in their areas and made use of these groups of young people to assist in community development activities relating to the enhancement of the community's image and its services. Further positive contributions can be generated from the relationship where derogative and stereotypical notions about

youth gangs such as they are a social evil are replaced with a new found realisation that they are a social necessity. Or a strategy that involves the gang leader or OG (original gangster - the founder), who has incredible charisma and leadership qualities and can get people to do all kinds of things, such a person would be a valuable asset in addressing youth gang issues by channelling that gift in a positive direction.

In sum, not all youth gangs are bad and if there is insufficient research and publications to support this claim society will continue to be misled by inaccurate and unbalanced reporting by the media, government, communities, and other paranoid critics. As demonstrated there are many positive contributions that some gangs provide for its members so not all gangs have criminals, delinquents, alcohol-fuelled thugs, drug dealers, and violent hoodlums. There is a need to understand youth gangs and their world a lot more by regularly exploring and explaining their stories from their point of view. There is also a need to consider alternative delinquency theories other than strain, control, and learning because of different contexts, varying conditions, and unique elements that are not necessarily factored-in to past and existing theoretical explanations such as the ethnic minority backgrounds in the South Pacific which would be very different to the same ethnic minority living in Europe, Asia and the Americas. Without plentiful amounts of research and literature based on a Pacific criminology youth gang researchers in this region are forced to draw on cross-cultural studies and publications conducted elsewhere and make generalizations from these while wondering about the validity and credibility of their claims. Research and literature are essential not only for representing a particular voice and for righting imbalances around negative and positive influences on its members, they are also important in order to know how to address youth gang issues and the kinds of strategies, programs, policies, and practices required.

7.3 Implications for social policy and social work practice

Gangs remind us (society) of our failures and the need to change our approach to them. We need to sever the attraction of youth gangs on Samoan young people by substituting or creating alternative pathways to those things that appeal to Samoan young people like money and success. For example, reintroducing cadet recruitment and apprenticeships would be a vital step toward removing barriers or blockages to opportunities, one of the key principles of strain theory of delinquency. I remember when the New Zealand Police and the Armed Forces would visit secondary schools and speak to senior students in an attempt to win their interest. I also remember when it was possible to leave secondary schooling and take up an apprenticeship.

Another example, is the need for motivating and mobilising better coordinated and effective social responsibility approaches like getting the teachers, church leaders, parents and older siblings, community leaders and business representatives to come together and build a partnership dedicated to assisting young people toward fulfilling their aspirations. This is one of the key themes of control theory of delinquency where restoring social bonds is significant not only between the teenager and his parent(s) but also with the wider community. Another example of minimising the attractiveness of youth gang cultures is to utilise gang members, especially those who have recently left, to lead a program where they are face-to-face with another peer and begin the process of persuading the peer to leave the gang, which is one of the key aspects of learning theories of delinquency. Hence there is a lot to be learned from socialization and delinquency theories that enable policies to be formulated so social work practices, intervention programs, and social services are more responsive and effective in addressing social problems related to youth gang activity. Using some of the key threads of strain, control and learning theories of

delinquency this section demonstrates how these three theories can be applied to policymaking and social work.

Firstly, strain theories indicate that policy interventions need to address the various types and sources of strain in order to tackle the issue of youth gangs. It should be borne in mind, however, that while these theories point to a wide range of sources and types of strain, policy interventions should focus primarily on those that have the strongest relationships to crime and delinquency. Programs might be designed that reduce the blockage of positively valued goals by creating greater access to educational and economic opportunities. If legitimate opportunities are blocked then an alternative pathway like delinquency and criminal activity can be countered by society through the establishment of legitimate opportunities for those groups that have been relatively deprived of that access. The expansion of opportunities in society as a whole can come about through promotion of economic prosperity, creation of new jobs and apprenticeships. The individual's ability to take advantage of legitimate opportunities and carry a perception that such opportunities are realistically available can be enhanced through educational and job-training programs. That is why I like the current government's idea of keeping young people at secondary schools longer and providing better support for school leavers in obtaining and keeping a job. National-coalition party government youth policies such as Youth Guarantee allows 16 and 17 year olds access to a programme of educational study towards school level-qualifications free of charge. This is a positive move and one that will address the hold that gangs have on (Samoan) young people because it provides them with a choice to where they would like their education to be either at a school, a polytech, a wānanga (provision of education in a Māori cultural context), a private training establishment, or through an apprenticeship.

If job training programs and employment opportunity initiatives are to serve as viable strategies for discouraging youth crime, they must be created with an understanding of the job characteristics and employment types that are more likely to benefit youth (Farrington, Gallagher, Morley, St.Ledger & West, 1986; Largeson & Uggen, 2013; Paternoster, Bushway, Brame & Apel, 2003; Ploeger, 1997; Sullivan, 1989; Thornberry & Christenson, 1984; Zweig, Yahner & Redcross, 2011). Something that my participants confirm as the key to keeping Samoan young people from joining gangs is to have access to more jobs after leaving school or free courses. As Mynar states

> *"Reckon more job works should be made available, and courses, free courses, do local events, park, like some programs…"* (Mynar)

Uggen (2003) found that the "ideal adolescent job" is one that has age-appropriate benefits, mainly supporting the importance of school and providing an opportunity to learn new and useful things. Youth with these types of jobs (examples included office clerks and museum ushers) had the lowest levels of school deviance, alcohol use and arrest. Allan and Steffensmeier (1989) found that the availability of full-time employment (regardless of quality) was associated with low arrest rates among juveniles, but for young adults, low quality employment (defined as jobs characterized by low wages, few hours and less meaningful) was associated with high arrest rates. Williams, Cullen & Wright (1996) cautioned against leading juveniles into temporary jobs that require few skills, especially when these jobs act as an alternative to school rather than as a complement. The researchers argue that these types of jobs often lock youth into a future of employment that is neither meaningful nor productive, and are therefore unlikely to deter future criminal behaviour. It is important to also note that for young people, jobs which require less skill and are often characterized by instability, have been linked to higher crime rates (Crutchfield & Pitchford, 1997), while jobs that are subjectively

rewarding and that offer benefits have been found to reduce criminal behaviour (Wadsworth, 2006).

There are many illustrations of ways in which quality job training and pathways to youth employment opportunities are designed to keep young people from gangs and crime (see Largeson & Uggen, 2013; Paternoster, Bushway, Brame & Apel, 2003; Zweig, Yahner & Redcross, 2011). One strategy is to stage a mock workplace in which the participants become employees and engaged in product planning, attend staff meetings, and receive a small weekly pay through job shadowing and short-term job placements. Another design could include four main components: first, basic education attainment; second, occupational skills training; third, support services (such as transportation services, childcare, and counselling); and lastly, job placement assistance. Perhaps a program based on an intensive model of individual case management (with an emphasis on mentoring), education, community service activities, and developmental activities such as employment-readiness skills training and role-play interviews would more effective. Whatever the design, the clearest point to be drawn from the literature is that initiatives to reduce youth crime must be comprehensive, taking into consideration the individual and various needs of targeted youths.

If Strain theory shows how delinquent youth gangs form because of unequal opportunity and the availability of delinquent subcultures and opportunities, then the objective should be to provide legitimate opportunities and to counter the influence of delinquent subcultures. Although greater access to quality education is one policy derived from strain theory, for example, making higher education more affordable especially for students from low decile areas, there are other areas where the idea of reducing blockage to achieving and enhancing better access to opportunities could be applicable as well. One might also work to limit the loss of positively valued stimuli or the persistent exposure to negative

stimuli among adolescents (Agnew, 2006). For example, research indicates that child maltreatment, such as excessive physical discipline and punishment increases the risk of delinquency, just like exposure to violence in the home, in schools and in the neighbourhood community. Accordingly, policies designed to limit exposure to violence should reduce strain, which in turn should reduce involvement in delinquency. This would be a very important task for social workers to undertake as it would require effective family intervention skills to persuade the parent(s) to attend anger management counselling and relationship building with teenage children courses especially if one or both are reluctant.

Secondly, just like Strain theory is important in understanding the attraction of youth gang culture and thereby develop policies to minimize the attractiveness, research examining the impact of various aspects of control theory can shed some light on potential areas of policy development as well. Control theories indicate that policy interventions should be early and primarily focus on family, school, church, and the neighbourhood community who control some aspect of the young person's life to make sure young people in their care are supported accordingly otherwise they would be held to account. All these people bring a control-aspect in young people's lives: a parent, school teacher, church minister, bible class leader, best friend, older brother, community leader, social worker, police officer, counsellor, and doctor; their interventions, the activities and the attention they give young people is the difference between being attracted or not being attracted to youth gangs for some.

As discussed, social control theory asserts that the role of the parent is paramount to the bonding of young people to the family. This bond is seen as fundamental to diminishing a child's propensity for delinquent involvement and youth gang participation. As research in this area (see Cernkovich & Giordano, 1987; Mack, Lieber, Featherstone, & Monserud,

2007; Weber, Miracle, & Skehan, 1995) has largely found a strong relationship between parental attachment and lower levels of delinquency, providing support to parents in the form of parenting skills training could be an effective step toward addressing youth crime by building strong bonds between parents and children.   According to Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990),

> *"…policies directed toward enhancement of the ability of familial institutions to socialize children are the only realistic long-term state policies with potential for substantial crime reduction"* (p. 272-3).

More generally if we accept that social bonds are essential, policies that encourage children to bond with their parents (and vice versa) through affectionate relations, consistent discipline practices, and commitment, or that encourage involvement in lawful recreational activities, offer a simple way to ensure that children conform to the expectations of society.

An early intervention social control/ social bonding program, another important initiative is called Fresh Start (Ministry of Social Development, 2011). It is also an early intervention program that features a number of initiatives aimed at helping children and young people at the lower end of offending, or at risk of getting into trouble, or serious and persistent offenders.   It allows for community youth programmes, structured programmes, such as community youth development programmes led by the police. It provides an Innovation Fund for grass roots organizations to provide local solutions to local youth offending and it hosts court-supervised adventure camp activities or community based youth development activities with mentoring.   Afterwards residents are discharged and assigned a mentor to continue the support started within these environments. This would be a very important task for the social worker/ youth worker who is assigned to the discharged resident because they would be responsible for making sure the resident reintegrates back into the community smoothly and once the intervention is withdrawn the

resident should be law-abiding and independent. Effective communication skills, patience, consistent, and dependent are going to be some of the important traits that the social worker/ youth worker should have to be a mentor. Nevertheless, this follow-up strategy, I think, is another key to addressing youth gang problems because too many programs, in my opinion, provide intervention and then withdraw once it is deemed that the young person has reformed or rehabilitated. This is good but the positive effects (the lessons learnt, the reinforcement of pro-social behaviour, and other elements) diminish. Once this happens then the young person drifts back into old habits including re-joining his friends and the gang. So a follow-up strategy like post-mentorship in any intervention program is crucial if any program is to have long lasting effect over reforming youth offenders and subsequently reducing or eliminating the "attraction" to gang lifestyle, delinquency and crime.

Beyond the family, schools play a prominent role in the socialization of young people and could also play a key role as an insulating factor against crime. The school can provide support to young people that they may not be receiving elsewhere. In light of this, Sprott, Jenkins and Doob (2005) advised that, as school bonds have been found to play such a significant role in reducing violent offending, it seems antithetical for schools to implement "zero tolerance" policies on bullying and intimidation practices, which only serve to further exclude and isolate young people who have acted violently and sever their ties to the school. Instead, young people deemed to be at risk or delinquent should receive greater support from the school, not less. The authors suggest that policies promoting school cohesion and bonding young people to their schools should be favoured. The Social Worker in School (SWiS) role is going to be very important in making sure the confidence of disillusioned students with school staff (see section 5.2.1) and school processes are restored in order for the student to be successful in their schooling and for the school to celebrate their achievement in bringing through an at-risk student. SWiS is also going to

be essential in addressing the social needs of the student so the teachers can work with their educational issues and where the school's relationship with the parents and the wider community is further developed. Thus school cohesion and bonding programs attempt to make schools safer for students, encourage strong social bonds between students and teachers, and provide extracurricular activities so that students are more involved in schools. For example, Gottfredson, Gerstenblith, Soule, Womer, and Lu (2004) found that participation in after school programs is associated with less delinquent behaviour among middle school students. However, this diminished delinquent behaviour is not due to greater supervision by adults in charge of the programs or greater levels of involvement in conventional activities. Rather, students enrolled in after-school programs have more positive relations with peers and fewer intentions to use drugs. The effects are especially pronounced when these programs emphasize the learning and development of social skills and character development.

Thirdly, learning theories have probably influenced more prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation programs than any other theory of delinquency. This is appropriate given the substantial evidence that programs that focus on family interactions, peer associations, and attitudes about delinquency may be the most effective among the various alternatives (for example, Greenwood, 2008). If criminal and delinquent behaviour is acquired and sustained through social learning processes in social environments, then it should be possible to modify that behaviour to the extent that one is able to manipulate those same processes or the environmental contingencies that impinge on them. This is the underlying assumption of prevention and treatment programs that have relied on the application of social learning principles. Policy-makers should focus on developing and implementing preventive and rehabilitative programs that use social learning variables to change behaviour in a positive direction. Examples of programs guided by social learning principles include mentoring, behavioural modification, delinquency prevention, peer

counselling and gang interventions. The idea behind some of these types of programs is that providing positive experiences and role models for young people serves to expose them to conventional norms and values that might diminish future delinquent or criminal acts.

There are a range of strategies underpinned by a learning theoretical perspective such as pro-social peer group learning (see Empey, 1972; Weeks, 1958) and teaching family model programs (Braukmann & Wolf, 1987). In terms of pro-social peer group learning, delinquent boys residing in a statutory youth justice facility during the day would be allowed to go to school, work, and participate in other activities and then return to the residential facility at night. The next morning they would attend a guided group interaction session which is facilitated by staff and discuss their experiences and learnings based on developing non-delinquent attitudes and behaviour. At the end of the program, the attendees should have developed attitudes favourable to obeying the law, regret and remorse, and would be more likely to succeed in staying out of trouble later. Another pro-social peer group strategy could be a program with officially appointed reformed delinquents who had the responsibility and authority to form groups, orient boys coming in, set standards and rules for behaviour, determine punishment for rule violation, and decide when a boy was ready to be released from their residential facility. This is an interesting strategy because it allows peers to case manage other peers and cultivate a pro-social and anti-delinquent peer culture. The boys gained recognition and status in the group for conforming rather than antisocial behaviour. In addition, the strategy would foster the boys' definitions favourable to conforming behaviour and peer influence to motivate them toward conformity and away from delinquency.

The teaching family model is a strategy that shifts away from the almost exclusive reliance on the peer group facilitation in residential facilities toward orientation within two groups: a parent group and an adolescent-

focused group. The former group involves a married couple or de facto relationship ("teaching parents") and six to eight delinquents or "at-risk" youth living together as a family. In the parent groups, several sessions are held with a therapist to help parents develop monitoring, discipline, problem solving, and other effective socialization and disciplinary skills through instructions, discussion, and role playing. The latter group stage individual sessions to help develop and improve communication skills, self-control, pro-social attitudes, and pro-social peer associations. Competent foster parents are also trained in the same fashion that includes how to use behaviour management methods, to implement and maintain a flexible and individualized behaviour plan for each youth (see Eddy & Chamberlain, 2000).

Thus each theory (Strain, Control, and Learning) influences the design and intention of social policy development and social work practice approaches in order to address the attraction of youth gang culture and its activities. The integration of each three theories is essential to the multi-faceted intervention plan this study recommends as the participant's responses indicate their socialization experiences highlight many areas that could have caused them to join or form a gang so focusing on a single issue will be insufficient and counterproductive. Social work practice and social policy interventions must focus on an early intervention approach and target the Samoan young person as well as the young person's family members, school, church and neighbourhood community. Social workers should have a range of skills (communication, information gathering, critical analysis, report writing, advocacy, empowerment, conflict management, knowledge about youth culture, how to engage Samoan people, and a commitment to ethical and professional principles) and the right personality and background for their intervention plans to work. Social policymakers must rely on consultations with social workers or other professionals, youth gang members, community leaders and service providers to ensure policies are responsive and effective. In order for

school, church, and neighbourhood strategies to be successful in minimizing the attractiveness of youth gang culture on Samoan young people they need to draw on strain, control and learning theories; their principles and motivations to inform the social work and social policy education curriculum on addressing youth gang phenomenon.

7.4 Chapter summary

The triangulation of the theoretical literature, the findings, and the interpretations of the author makes for a process that exposes any factors such as consistencies and inconsistencies and signals any implications for social policy and social work practice. In terms of consistency, when you add the social and personal strains, the lack of control by social institutions and self-control, and the pervasive influence of poor role modelling and negative learning experiences, the outcome is a socialization experience that is overwhelmingly challenging and the need to seek out other options becomes a very real motive for young people like a gang. There were indeed generic and specific patterns, events, and activities between the theoretical literature on socialization and delinquency and the life stories provided by the participants/ gang members. The consistencies were connected by many illustrations where the defining features of strain, control and learning theories of delinquency were supported by the statements, experiences, and demonstrations prevalent in the participant's socialization background.

With regards to inconsistencies the most significant factor that was not apparent in the theoretical literature but highlighted in the findings is the cultural factor. While there is a cultural socialization theory or cultural deviance theory, these were still limited in explaining what this research has found. When you add the word "cultural" to the words, "strain", "control", and "learning" the outcome is "*cultural strain*" or the stresses of

dual identity processes (fa'asamoa and western) and incorporation of a knowledge like a Samoan concept of success which is not about materialism but altruism, "*cultural control*" or the lack of "control by culturally-related institutions (aiga - family, aoga – education and schooling, lotu – church, religion and spirituality, and nu'u – the village or neighbourhood)" and the lack of "culturally-related self-control" (disrespectful, lacks humility, individualistic rather than collectivist), and "*cultural learning*" or the pervasive influence of poor "cultural role modelling" and negative "cultural learning" experiences (rejection or abandonment of fa'asamoa), the outcome is a need for a Pacific criminology perspective. By adding the word "cultural" the socialization experiences is not only overwhelmingly challenging but the effect is two times even more compelling compared to not adding the word "cultural" and thus for Samoan people and other ethnic minorities living in western contexts a very important factor associated with delinquency and youth gangs. There is existing cross-cultural research and theoretical literature to draw on but respectfully, an African youth gang is hardly the same as a Samoan youth gang, for example, in terms of their socio-cultural socialization backgrounds.

We need to consider strategies to eliminate or minimize the attraction that youth gangs have on Samoan young people and assist policymakers and social workers to be more responsive and effective in their interventions. Why any Samoan young person would want to work for $8.50 an hour and earn $200 a week when he can sell marijuana sticks in two hours and make the same amount is the key question. The answer is to reintroduce apprenticeships and cadetships and create pathways where access to jobs is a hundred percent guaranteed. A need to create substitutes and opportunities for Samoan young people to access freely where they are earning good money and contributing to their family and the wider community. There was a time when these opportunities were available at secondary schools when job expos occurred and government

departments visited to attract potential trainees. But the focus should not only be on the Samoan young person, we need to assist our social workers working with families to reinstate values of schooling, advanced study, and employment. We need to assist our social workers working in health, education, justice, child protection, community, and other sectors because to address concerns surrounding youth gangs requires a multi-faceted approach that is collaborative, coordinated, resourced and fully participated by every level in society.

My socialization experiences are not the same as those of other Samoans. There will be variation between New Zealand-born Samoans and Samoan-born Samoans mainly around acculturation, assimilation and integration. I do not think there are any differences between a Samoan-born youth growing up in New Zealand and having to understand and fit-in to the New Zealand way of life and a New Zealand-born Samoan having to learn both a Samoan cultural identity and language and to adapt to New Zealand culture and its way of life. There will be intergenerational differences between older and first migrants and the younger and second generation Samoan peoples especially on the issue of whether to continue teaching fa'asamoa or not. I think when Samoan-born young people leave Samoa and migrate to NZ to settle down they are more exposed to delinquency than what exists (if any) in the Samoan Islands and thus are more likely to participate in criminal activities and gangs.

I agree with the principles of integrated theory, delinquency cannot be explained by a single theory like Strain and discount Control and Learning delinquency theories because they are intricately interrelated and dynamically interdependent. The victimization and traumatic experiences felt by most of the participants during their family socialization extended into societal and cultural socialization encounters. The interpersonal and social strains they experienced were partly derived from a lack of self-control and social control in the family, schooling, church and

neighbourhood environments they grew up in. These strains and the waning controlling influences catalysed their entry into youth gangs where they were re-socialized into gang life and were shown how to commit crimes, how to be a better fighter, and more importantly, how to survive and how to handle conflict. When most of their socialization experiences can be pieced together in the way I have described previously, it demonstrates the value of integrated theories of delinquency and fits-in with any analysis of Samoan youth gang phenomenon, especially as a holistic approach that accommodates the various domains of influences in order to establish an understanding of why Samoan young people join or form a gang.

When you add the developmental life course theory of delinquency perspective, which is another form of integrated theory, I am able to trace from early childhood to adolescence through to adulthood the socialization experiences of Samoans and pin point the beginnings of gang interest. It would be a significant turning point in their lives just like at the other end of the scale where interest in the gangs diminishes and various ways of desistance set in causing the gang member to leave the gang. So one can identify the triggers that influence Samoan young people to join or form a gang, the changes to their persona and social development after joining the gang, and a further de-socialization and re-socialization process in order to transition back into society.

Chapter 8 Conclusion and Recommendations

8.0 Introduction

Socialization and delinquency theories offer satisfactory explanations for Samoan young people's involvement in youth gangs. The key is to eliminate or minimize the attraction of youth gangs on Samoan young people by creating alternative pathways otherwise society will continue to contend with this subculture and its influences. Hence this chapter reflects what has already been established in the previous chapter, discussion, and also the theory, method, and findings chapters, to provide a sense of completeness by bringing this study to some resolution, reacquainting the reader with the central themes and referring back to my overall point of view on the topic, which appears again in my opening sentences. It draws out the implications, significances, relevance and interests of my responses in relation to youth gangs, Samoan culture, and the participant's socialization experiences. Finally, it is a critical reflection and evaluation, challenging and defending my point of views and standing by knowledge claims and recommendations.

Chapter 8 is made up of five sections. Section 8.1 canvasses chapters 1-7 and outlines the researcher's key learning areas, which include being wrong in my assumptions and discovering new knowledge. Section 8.2 offers some predictions based on the findings and recommendations for future research actions. Section 8.3 outlines some of the things in this study that could have been done but was not due to its scope, focal points and objectives so these are acknowledged and stated as limitations. Section 8.4 lists the some of the strong points and the significant importance this study bears for not only Samoan people but also New Zealand and the global community. The last section, 8.5, are

recommendations based on what the participants shared and my interpretations and thoughts overall.

8.1 What was learned?

When I reflect on what I learned from each of the chapters in this study I realise that I am becoming an expert in the field of youth gangs including the breadth and depth of theoretical knowledge I have gained. I am also becoming an expert in life story/ biography method, analysing large quantities of information, and the ethics around researching topics involving human subjects. These developments in my academic and research career have strengthened and both sit alongside a strong social work practice background. Thus this section provides further insight into the many areas I have also developed due to the key learnings I have identified from chapters 1-7.

Chapter 1 opened by contextualising the study and highlighted various structural issues impacting on Pasifika community development particularly Samoan young people since their parents arrived to settle in New Zealand. In the 1950s and 1960s my parents were enticed to leave Samoa and their families to take up employment and opportunities to forge a new way of life. By the 1970s Samoan migrants were not wanted and blamed for the downturn in New Zealand's economy and systematically deported back to Samoa. It was also at this time that children of the first wave migration emerged as a distinct population group. These New Zealand-born children grew up during the Dawn Raids and overstayer campaign undertaken by Immigration official and police officers as well as the 1977 Bastion Point land occupation protest. New Zealand's race relations record was being challenged and issues such as a lack of fairness, inequality, marginalization and racism. When they were developing into teenagers the 1981 Springbok Rugby Tour divided New

Zealand over South Africa's apartheid separatist policy and the Welfare State had been dismantled for Neoliberalism. Race relations, racism and inequality became an international issue and it mobilised New Zealand-born Samoan youth to make sure the needs of their community was addressed accordingly. So by the time these adolescents became young adults the days of universal free education and healthcare had gone and replaced with user pays, goods and services tax on consumables and targeted income support based on those who could prove they deserved it.

I described how I became interested in youth gangs because of my past relationships I had with gang members when I was a youth justice social worker while based in residence and in district offices. Whenever I spoke with these Samoan gang members in the back of my mind I wondered how was it possible for Samoan young people to find themselves in a gang when I thought that they had the same upbringing as me. I thought that all Samoan young people were taught fa'asamoa or the Samoan way of life to insulate and protect them. I was wrong. I learnt that not all Samoan young people (NZ-born and Samoan-born) had the same upbringing as me, that fa'asamoa is not always a protective factor but part of the problem, and other factors are just as important than the cultural factor like the role or lack of it that social institutions have on Samoan young people and their choice to join a gang.

In chapter 2 I identified a theoretical framework for the study to assist me in understanding what had been said in the past and today about youth gangs. My first literature review began looking at the historical origins, what the classical and contemporary issues were, and what kinds of strategies, programs, and policies in the past and today was applied for addressing youth gang concerns. I learned that socialization theory particularly structural functionalism is the best perspective for explaining the socio-cultural experiences of Samoan young people and the impacts,

issues and problems they encounter. Socialization is more than just an individual process based on observing, internalizing that which is considered symbolically valued, and play out the new learning in further social interactions. Socialization is about the interactions between the individual and social institutions (family, school, church and the neighbourhood), this is how Samoan young people develop their social identity.

I also learned that a developmental integrated theory of delinquency is the best way to define and describe the reasons for Samoan young people's involvement with gangs. While social and personal strains, the lack of social and personal control, and the learning of bad influences from friends are all equally appropriate and relevant explanations for Samoan young people's association with gangs. The integration of these delinquency theories when viewed over the life course reveal not only connections but also the triggers, the extent, and the areas where intervention and support are required to address youth gang concerns. According to the theory Samoan young people join gangs because of stressful life events, poor social bonding and lack of self-control, and negative learning experiences from poor role models which starts at an early age and accumulates over time through adolescence to adulthood. The discoveries outlined above generated further questions such as what role (if any) does culture/ fa'asamoa play in the theoretical literatures explanation of youth gangs and what would be an appropriate research design in order to answer this question and others.

In chapter 3, I outline the research design and process leading up to the collection of the information and the procedures afterwards that influenced the formation of subsequent chapters. I found from reading through the gang research literature a method where the researcher utilized a technique called life story interviewing which is like putting together a biography. I learned that the technique emphasised letting the

participant talk and lead the discussion rather than the researcher, a small amount of leading questions with prompt or follow up questions, and the discussion could be about anything just as long the main topics (family, societal, and gang socialization) formed the backbone of the interview. I knew this technique would suit the prospective participants (Samoan youth) because unlike surveys and structured questionnaires the participants were given the licence to share anything rather than be herded in a particular direction which can limit their willingness and how much they want to share. I learned about the importance of designing good questions, to keep them straightforward and short, and how to modify my interviewing style to suit the participant's background like using their jargon in the asking of questions.

During and after the interview I learned about the therapeutic nature of life story interviewing as many times participants broke down in tears and expressed many emotions (anger, happiness, embarrassment, pride and others) when they spoke to me. Some had said that I was the first person they had opened up to and others had left the gang not long after the interview. Maybe it was because of my social work background, perhaps it was good timing, or they were committed once and for all to leave the gang because they had released the burdens they were carrying around. I learned that even though I was confident and assured of my ability to avoid trouble and anything that would jeopardise my safety I agreed with the recommendation to abandon my aspirations to undertake ethnography and take up an observer-inquirer role instead. I spent eighteen months in the field of which six months was spent on getting to know my participants and vice versa before interviews were conducted so in some way this was a modified version of ethnography.

I learned how to manage large quantities of information particularly when I was moving toward the process of reporting on the findings. I amassed nearly a hundred themes and had to find a way to merge the bulk of them

and narrow the number of themes down to manageable number. This is one of the reasons why this study has three findings chapters but more importantly, I enrolled on a training course and learned how to use a particular software to enable the information I collected to be sorted and filtered into categories (themes) based on the participants responses. The learning I gained in this experience was tremendous and expanded my research skills enormously. So the process before and after the collection of information from prospective participants helped hone in on research skills and turn them into a specialism for me to be utilised for future projects.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 are indicative of that refinement process I mentioned in the previous sentence as each of these chapters were regularly amended and improved. All three chapters represent a successful outcome given the research design and are at the heart of the thesis in terms the rich and in-depth quality of information the research design elicited from the participants. With regards to the findings to do with the participant's family socialization experiences I learned that the family institution plays a major role in influencing Samoan young people to join a gang. I learned that the participant's family socialization experiences were mostly negative because their family failed them and this set the course for most of the participants toward delinquency, crime and gangs. I also realised that this was a reason why most of the participants were not raised the fa'asamoa way because their families either chose not to or did not know how to. However the family is in need of constant intervention, support, and resourcing to make sure their teenage children do not look elsewhere for gratification and love.

So chapter 5, cultural and societal socialization experiences are secondary causes to Samoan young people's involvement in gangs. I was surprised to learn that most of the participants were bullied at school, probably because I was never bullied when I was at secondary school, and this was a

major contributor to the formation of gangs in schools for protection, popularity and pride. I was not surprised though to learn that churches lacked any impact on the participants because as a Samoan I would agree that churches are generally useless and do nothing to neither support parents nor create the means to retain young people's interest in it.

Both the school and churches though are in a good position to make a significant contribution to keeping Samoan young people away from gangs and it starts with having a look at what they are not doing right not at what the Samoan young people are doing is wrong. In terms of the neighbourhood communities the participants come from they are low decile areas populated mostly by low income families with low socio-economic statuses and living in poverty including their children. This is common knowledge, what is important is that the community needs to rally together and generate strategies to build a positive community spirit, to develop business growth and job opportunities, to work with private and public agencies by securing finances and resources to upgrade facilities and infrastructure to uplift the community image and increase community pride. This work is already happening in communities like Ranui, West Auckland, and Porirua, Wellington.

Chapter 6 is probably where my learning was the greatest because in sections 5.1 and 6.4 I learned that fa'asamoa was part of gang life and I did not expect to come across this discovery. Ironically fa'asamoa, in my opinion, is supposed to prevent and keep Samoan young people away from gangs and yet the participants in this study and the gangs they came from practiced some of the elements of fa'asamoa which the literature did not cover and further added originality to this study. To also learn that a gang patrolled their neighbourhood to ward off potential robberies and graffiti especially from their rival gangs is another aspect I did not expect to find. I also learned in great detail some of the teaching passed on to gang members like criminal activity and the changes to their

temperament, attitude and social interaction before and after they joined the gang. In sum this is what I mean about this chapter drawing the greatest learning for me because I discovered information that I was not expecting.

Finally, in chapter 7, I learned about the various strategies available for addressing youth gang issues and I wondered given the multitude of options, the level of intervention, the involvement of so many private and public institutions, and the years and decades that have surpassed, why is it that societies like New Zealand still have problems with youth gangs. One of the reasons could be that policies and practices that suit non-Pacific youth gangs will not work on Pacific youth gangs because the solution cannot be something universal but particular and relevant. The solution cannot be a single approach operating independently from other single approaches but a multi-faceted collaborative intervention penetrating all sectors in society (an ecological perspective) and reviewed every two years in order to keep on top of new developments within the youth gang culture. Lastly, I also learned that it is essential that research of this kind is conducted on a regular basis so there is ongoing consultation with youth gang members in order to address the issues of their appeal to (Samoan) young people. In order to address youth gang problems you need to speak to youth gang members and build a response from this level up. As one participant said "gangs will never die, but you can control them."

8.2 Directions for future research (what remains to be learned)

This section discusses what the findings chapters 4, 5, and 6 forecasts in terms of future research and suggests some predictions for what could happen if the findings in this study are not taken seriously and instead an number of future research projects should be considered in order to

address the issues highlighted in the findings. Moreover the findings generally point to the elimination or minimization of youth gang attraction to Samoan young people otherwise the youth gang phenomenon could be unmanageable and eventually destructive to society. The economic and social cost will be potentially high. The first three paragraphs suggest various ways for eliminating or minimizing the appeal of youth gangs on Samoan young people. While the remaining four paragraphs showcase a number of future research projects worth pursuing such as replicating this same study and change the topic to Samoan girls in gangs or undertake a post-doctoral study and follow up the same participants after ten years.

Generally the findings indicate a worrying sign of ongoing (Samoan) youth gang activity unless its attractiveness is eliminated or minimized by creating alternative pathways such as apprenticeships and cadet schemes, abolishing the student loan scheme for low income families, and approving training programs that have a hundred percent employment placement. As early as eight years old is when a few of the participants joined a youth gang and got involved in criminal activities and delinquency. Early intervention and a multi-faceted approach is required to support families, schools, churches, and the neighbourhood community to help their children and young people develop into law-abiding citizens. At the same time, families, school, churches and the neighbourhood community need to be more socially responsible rather than depending on local and central government.

The findings also indicate what strategies are required in order to do their part in distracting Samoan young people from gangs. (Samoan) families need to be more interested in their children and teenagers lives, they need to listen, and they need to change their ways because the way they are raising their children and teenagers is not working. Schools need to be more proactive in identifying children and young people at-risk and then know what to do about it without interfering too much with their main

responsibility which is to teach and prepare them for employment and advanced education. (Samoan) churches need to also be more proactive and contribute more towards the development of their congregation member's children and teenagers by getting the church minister to visit families on a regular basis, by setting aside church money for families going through extreme hardship or to purchase things like school stationary or school uniforms, and by staging homework centres, sports games, and other activities to keep their congregation member's children and teenagers busy and support parents who work long hours.

At the moment the youth generation of this time is faced with technological and computer-related gadgets, social network websites like Facebook, Youtube, and Twitter, and exposure to aggressive marketing by music, fashion, and even dietary adverts. This is a huge shift and transformation compared to when I was a teenager where the internet was just beginning, where the latest gadgets was the Sega Megadrive console, and yahoo instant messenger was the only means of social networking. The youth today and in the future will take gangs not only to an international level but will conduct its activities online which is already starting to happen with cases of cyberbullying, smartphone text bullying, and the development of websites where photos are posted of their victims and videos are uploaded showing their crimes. Imagine a Samoan youth gang who has two or three hackers in their membership who are able to break through bank computer security systems and steal and then disappear without a trace because the internet protocol addresses the gang used was untraceable. It would be interesting to have more material on how gangs use new technology and for what purpose.

During the course of the life story interviewing there were a range of potential research topics that I thought about that be would interesting to explore and report on. It would be interesting to research the language, gestures, symbols and various forms of body language that is unique to the

Samoan youth gangs only and compare this to other ethnic minority youth gangs in New Zealand and worldwide. The participants used a very different form of communication in public which took me a few weeks to understand and I found it a fascinating aspect of youth gang culture worth exploring and record because it could assist those in the field of practice with connecting and building relationships with these young people.

It would also be appealing to study the relationships the gang and its members had with the various organizations and the people who come from them to learn more about the outcomes of this contact. The range of social institutions included the police, child protection and youth justice, counselling, residences, mentoring, indigenous and many other social services. The participants mentioned they had contact with one or more social service because of their wayward actions and so it would intriguing to explore what kinds of socialization experiences were felt by the participants. It could also be useful to find out what works and what does not work in terms of the programs, policies, projects, and the people who implement these. For social work education and training this information would be highly desirable.

I would recommend the following research projects for future action. In other words the next projects are what I would undertake after this one. I would repeat this study and collate life stories from Samoan females in gangs and I would follow up this study by re-interviewing the same participants after ten years or I would stay in touch with them until such time report on their socialization experiences in adulthood. Firstly, I think a research project that replicated the same research design as this study and an amended literature review to strengthen the gendered aspect of the study would set up a study that looked at the socialization of Samoan adolescent girls and their involvement in gangs. A research project reporting on Samoan girls in gangs would be another original, in-depth,

and comprehensive exploration of a phenomenon that is largely unknown in New Zealand and worldwide.

Secondly, I would also replicate this study with some amendments to suit and undertake a post-doctoral research on the same participants and follow-up on their socialization experiences and their association with gangs. Some of the participants in this study were already fathers with children, others were new fathers, and few were expecting to be a father and awaiting the birth of their first child. Over time it would be interesting to find out how the fathers with children who will be teenagers by the time I conduct the follow-up study are doing as well as their teenage children. This would be the same approach for the new fathers who would be experienced by the time I interview them and those fathers who were expecting their first child. One of the interesting conversations I had with these fathers was about desistance or reasons for leaving the gang and whether being a father would do it or that one day their child(ren) could become a gang member. They assured me they would leave the gang and they would not let their children join a gang.

8.3 The shortcomings of what was done

There are three areas in this study if I was given the opportunity I would consider revising: the cultural factor, strategies for addressing problems relating to youth gangs, and the theme of desistance and why would gang members leave the gang. This section is not highlighting areas in the study that was not done properly but due to the time, scope, purpose and objectives of this study it was not possible to explore further the areas identified below.

Firstly, I would repeat the exploration of cultural factors and its relationship with Samoan young people in gangs (if any). It means

reviewing the interview questions and restate them in a way where this area of exploration is stronger and the information it collects is clearer and detailed so as to make firmer judgement claims about the relationship between fa'asamoa and the youth gang phenomena. Insofar to gather more information about the cultural concept to see if it was indeed a cause or not for Samoan young people to seek out gangs for refuge or were there other reasons.

Secondly, I would revisit the area of what participants consider as appropriate strategies to address youth gang issues and explore further and identify information essential for the development of Social work skills, training programs, and curriculums particularly for those social work students interested in working with youth gangs and for current practitioners looking for fresh alternatives and approaches on the frontline. Asking participants further about what they felt was good about social work intervention and what they felt was required to improve social work intervention was perhaps a missed opportunity but this was not the focus of this study.

Thirdly, I would explore the area of desistance further and find out more information about what it would take the participant to leave the gang. Would there be reasons to stay on despite some of them were fathers? I would want to know their motivations for either leaving or staying and the effects their choices have on other people and on themselves. I would be interested in finding out whether the desistance experience would be like the following pattern; socialization (before joining the gang) – re-socialization (joining the gang) – de-socialization/socialization (leaving the gang/reintegrating back into society).

8.4 The benefits and advantages of the research

There are four benefits and advantages this study provides: originality and pioneership; national and worldwide significance; represents private and public interests; and brings to the fore the voice of gang members.

Firstly, there is no other study close to this one that features comprehensive, exhaustive and complete life stories of (Samoan) gang members. At the heart of the study is eighteen months of relationship building and information gathering from twenty-five gang members, which over hundred hours of digital audio recordings were transcribed, resulting in three findings chapters, and discussion points leading the way for changes in delinquency theory literature and a call to unite against youth gangs through the dismantling of things that appeal to Samoan youth about gangs and create job and advanced education opportunities instead. Thus this study is original and pioneering because it is the first of its kind and leads the scholarship in Samoan/Pacific youth gang work (or the ethnic minority perspective) and signal the inclusion of a Pacific criminology to the theoretical literature.

Secondly, the study would benefit countries who host small concentrations of Samoan and other Pacific cultures in their communities particularly those experiencing rising levels of Samoan youth gangs and concerns around violence, substance abuse, and inter-ethnic conflict. For example, Australia has been the latest country of choice for many Samoan communities who originally settled in New Zealand because opportunities and conditions are better in Australia. Last year it was reported in the Australian media of a conflict between Samoan youth gangs and indigenous youth gangs and I was left wondering how much Australian authorities knew about Samoan people and fa'asamoa because this would

assist in creating effective and responsive programs to address Samoan youth gang activity in their communities.

Thirdly, the study provides essential information for policymakers, social workers, community and government service providers, managers and chief executive officers, researchers, the Pacific community here in New Zealand and worldwide, and anyone else who has a vested interest in ethnic minority youth gangs.

Lastly, the study represents the voice of youth gang members and what they said informed many parts of this thesis such as the theoretical framework, the method, the findings, and discussion. What they shared will add value to the existing literature and research on youth gangs and other related areas.

8.5 Recommendations

I recommend the establishment of New Zealand's first and only (youth) gang research unit to lead the Australia-New Zealand-South Pacific criminological perspectives aimed at the elimination/ minimization of the attraction of youth gangs, to be hosted by a qualified and advanced tertiary institution (also in partnership), and partially resourced-funded by government (also in partnership) contracts to explore projects of interest in a number of avenues such as girls in gangs, fatherhood and gangs, and cultural identity and gangs.

I recommend a social policy initiative aimed at bridging young people into job creation opportunities and the elimination/minimization of the attraction of youth gangs, to be driven by the Ministry of Social Development, and partially resourced-funded by the aforementioned

government agency the reintroduction of apprenticeships, cadetships, secondments, trainee programs, and scholarships.

I recommend a social policy initiative aimed at the education retention of young people and elimination/minimize of the attraction of youth gangs, to be driven by the Ministry of Education, and partially resourced-funded by the aforementioned government agency a review of the following issues: anti-bullying programs, student-teacher relationships, identification and responding to student social issues, and school-community relationships (parent focus).

I recommend a social work education initiative aimed at effective and responsive youth-focused social work practice and the elimination/minimization of the attraction of youth gangs, to be driven by the Ministry of Social Development, and partially resource-funded by the aforementioned government agency the establishment of a youth development course with a focus on preparing social worker students for employment in youth justice, delinquency, family intervention, community development, and ethnic minority practice.

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Subject: Formal RESC Response to research proposal
Sent: Thursday 22nd April, 2010 1:17pm
Cc: Alison.Chetwin@police.govt.nz

Appendix A

Talofa Moses
I have attached the Formal RESC Response to your proposal, *Ethnography of Youth gangs in South Auckland: a Samoan perspective*

In terms of next steps, it is my responsibility to seek the District Commander's approval, and to guide you through obtaining security clearance and getting the research agreement and deed of confidentiality in place. I will also identify a Police liaison person to assist with contacting staff and/or any other logistical issues that might arise during your fieldwork.

The application form for security clearance is attached. Please post the form back direct to me, despite what it says on the form. Mike O'Brien will also need to obtain security clearance if he will be seeing the raw data. Security vetting takes about a week from when I receive the form.

It is helpful if the researcher and the supervisor both understand the requirement for submitting the thesis and any papers resulting from it for comment, prior to publication, so it would be a good idea to forward the RESC Response to Mike.

Another useful thing to be aware of is that the approval relates specifically to the project as described in the proposal. If you find that you need to make changes once you get underway, please get in touch outlining these proposed changes.

Congratulations on the approval. I hope we can work through the next steps quickly so that you can move into the next stages of the project.

Lynn Jenner
Co-ordinator Research and Evaluation Steering Committee
Evaluation Services Team
DDI: (04) 4707088
Ext: 44588

(See attached file: 2010-04-22 Formal RESC response Faleolo.doc)(See attached file: 2008-12-05 Security Clearance Form - Contractor.doc)

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The Samoans of South Auckland: Life history, Socialisation and Youth Gangs

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Researcher Information

Talofa lava and greetings, my name is Moses Ma'alo Faleolo. I am a Samoan PhD student. My supervisors are Professor Michael O'Brien and Professor Cluny Macpherson. I have worked with young people for over ten years both in the community and for the government.

I am interested in learning about youth gangs in South Auckland. I believe the best way to achieve this is to listen to youth gang members. What you have to say will help many people understand what youth gangs are really like and what young people are going through in their lives. It would be really awesome if you decided to be a part of this study I am doing. You will represent and speak on behalf of Samoan young people and your knowledge would assist many others understand what young people's needs are and ways to meet these.

My study

I'm looking for 30 volunteers to be a part of my study. If you are one of them then it's because you're Samoan, a male, aged 16 years and over, either in a gang at the moment or an ex youth gang member, and lived in South Auckland all your life.

You'll need to come to two sessions. The first one is only for half an hour where I'll go over the study with you and answer any questions you might have. The second session is on another day and will last for about two hours. In this session you only have to do one thing and that's telling your life story in your own words.

It'll be fun and really interesting. You don't have to be a good writer: just write what you can, keep it real and be upfront. It's not a test but a chance for you to have your say.

If you want, I can digitally record what you want to say about your life story rather than write about it. It's up to you just let me know what's best for you.

You'll receive a small compensation for participating: you can choose between a $20 petrol voucher **or** a $20 mobile phone recharge card. Up to you, just let me know. And yeah, plus a feed on the day you share your life history story.

You might find the exercise a little bit upsetting cos you'll be remembering some things that you didn't like. Let me know if this happens okay, there will be support for you on the day.

What you write and what you say that is digitally recorded is **private** and **confidential**. No other participant will see it and you will not be identified in any way whatsoever. I will be

the only one who knows who you are and knows what you wrote and said on the digital voice recorder. My supervisors will also see what you've written or heard what you said but they won't know who you are. A transcriber (someone who will transfer the digitally recorded information onto paper) will hear what you said but won't know who you are. This person will be signing a form to make sure they keep your information private. All names and identifying features will be removed from the transcription.

The information that is collected: your life story and/or your digital voice recording will be secured and locked in a filing cabinet at Massey University. Only my supervisors and I will have access to it. I will meet with you once the study is finished to tell you what I have found out. After ten years, I will get rid of the information you give me.

Criminal disclosure
Every step will be taken to keep your identity and the information you have provided private and confidential. However, should any information of a criminal activity that the police don't know about it and which is deemed by me and my supervisors to be a risk to you, or to others or the wider community, it will be passed on to the police.

Volunteers Rights
If you agree to take part, you have the right to:

- Decline to answer any particular question;
- Withdraw from the study after the briefing session;
- Withdraw from the study until one week after the second time we meet;
- Ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- Provide information on the understanding your name will not be used;
- Be given access to a summary of the project finding when it is concluded;
- Ask for the digital voice recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview;
- Return any digital voice recordings

Contact information
If you have any questions regarding the study you can contact Moses Faleolo on (09) 414 0800 extension 9069 or Professor Michael O'Brien on (09) 414 0800 extension 9161.

The Samoans of South Auckland: Life history, Socialisation and Youth Gangs

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

I have read the Participant Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I wish/do not wish to have my recordings returned to me.

I wish/do not wish to have data placed in an official archive.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Participant Information Sheet.

Signature: .... **Date:** ....

Full Name - printed ....

Committee Approval Statement
*This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application **09/059**. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please*

The Samoans of South Auckland: Life history, Socialisation and Youth Gangs

Researcher: Moses Ma'alo Faleolo

AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPTS

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the

interview(s) conducted with me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used in reports and

publications arising from the research.

I confirm that no identifying information will be included in the thesis, and any publications
or presentations.

Signature: .... **Date:** ....

Full Name - printed ....

Committee Approval Statement

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application 09/059. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Denise Wilson, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800 x9070, email humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz.

Exercise 1: TRACING THE INDIVIDUAL'S SOCIALISATION

1.0   *Cultural Identity development*

1.01   What was it like growing up and learning your Samoan culture? If you knew nothing about your Samoan identity, can you explain why? How do you feel about this?

1.02   What's it like being a [Samoan-born]/ [New Zealand-born] growing up in New Zealand? If you were born in Samoa what was it like before you migrated to New Zealand?

1.03   Was it (being Samoan) a reason why you joined the gang? Explain. Was it (being Samoan) a reason why you left the gang? Explain.

2.0   *Personality and behavioural development*

2.01   Tell me what sort of person were you before you joined the gang? Now that you are in a gang, what sort of person are you now? Explain any changes that have happened to you as a result? [Examples: tough guy, fearless, bravado, risk taker, intimidates, macho, loyal, respectful, committed, unselfish, caring, reliable, good listener, etc]

2.02   Why do you think and behave like someone else when its not really you? How do you manage these competing identities?

2.04   Was it (your personality and behaviour) a reason why you joined the gang? Explain. Was it (your personality and behaviour) a reason why you left the gang? Explain.

3.0   *Social development*

3.01   Family socialisation (Family structure and functioning)
       Tell me what it was like growing up in your family? Today, is the family you grew up with still regarded by you as family?

3.03   How were you disciplined and for what reasons? Who punished you? How did you feel about being punished? Who carries it out and how do you feel about being punished now?

3.04   Do you feel your parents were always there for you? If not your parents, who else in your family was there for you? How often did you and your parents do activities together?

3.05   Was it (your family) a reason why you joined the gang? Explain.

4.0   Societal socialization

4.01   School
What was school like for you when you were a child? What about now, what is school like for you? What were the high points and the low points? Explain any changes?

4.02   Was it (school) a reason why you joined the gang? Explain.

4.03   Religion
What was your religion growing up? What did you like about church? Do you still go to church today? If so, why? If not, why not? What were the high points and the low points? Explain any changes.

4.04   Was it (church) a reason why you joined the gang? Explain.

4.05   The Hood
What childhood memories do you have of the neighbourhood you grew up in? What is good about the area you grew up in? Any bad things? What about today, are you still living in the same area you grew up in? If so, why? If not, why not? Explain any changes. What were the high points and the low points?

4.06   Was it (the area you grew up in) a reason why you joined the gang? Explain.

4.07   Friends/Peers
Who were your friends when you were growing up? What activities did you and your friends participate in? Did you have any best friends? Who and why? What were the high points and low points?

4.08   What about now, what kinds of friends do you have now? Are they the same childhood friends? Explain any changes. Today, what activities do you and your friends do? Have any of them been arrested by the police? Is your best friend from the gang or outside of the gang? Does your best friend like school? Do your parents like your best friend? Do you talk about your problems with your best friend?

4.09   Was it (your friends) a reason why you joined the gang? Explain.

5.0   Gang socialization

Tell me were you delinquent and violent before you joined the gang? If you weren't, why do you think the gang selected you?

5.01   What did you learn from the gang? What new knowledge and skills did you learn?

5.02   Did you find yourself becoming more delinquent and violent whilst in the gang compared to when you were not in a gang? How did you feel about this and how did you manage it? What about when you left the gang?

5.03   Is approval from the gang important to you? Why? What would you do to get gang approval? Give examples.

5.04   What do you think are the positive contributions of gang life?

Exercise 2: MEASURING THE INDIVIDUAL'S SOCIALIZATION

6.0   Cultural identity and Gangs
        Which is important to you, your Samoan identity or gang identity? Explain.

7.0   Family and Gangs
        Were you closer to the gang or your family? Explain.

7.01   Who did you trust the most in your family? Who did you least trust in your family? Explain each situation.

7.02   Some people say young people join gangs because they are more family-like and better than their own blood-family. What do you think? Explain.

7.03   When you are with the gang, did you keep in touch with your family? Who in particular and why? Are your friends in the gang closer to you than your family? Explain. How did you manage to balance your family and gang responsibilities? Give examples. Do you have anybody else in your family in a gang? If you do how do you feel about this and why?

7.04   The commitment, loyalty, respect and love you show to the gang – is it more, the same, or less for your family? Is gang approval more important to you than approval from your family? Why? Was this how you were like before you joined the gang?

8.0   Social environment and Gangs
8.01   School
        Was schooling more, the same, or less important to you compared to being in a gang? Explain. Which is important to you, learning at school or learning from the gang? Explain. Who would you trust the most, the school (staff, school friends) or the gang? Explain.

8.02   Religion
        Was religion more, the same, or less important to you compared to being in a gang? Explain. Which is important to you, learning at church or learning from the gang? Explain. Who would you trust the most, the church (church minister, clergy, church friends) or the gang? Explain. When you are with the gang, do you think about church? If so, why? If not, why not?

8.03   Was the neighbourhood more, the same, or less important to you compared to being

in a gang? Which is important to you, learning from your neighbourhood or learning from the gang? Who would you trust the most, the neighbourhood (friends) or the gang? Explain. When you are with the gang, do you think about the neighbourhood? If so, why? If not, why not?

8.04   Friends

How important are the friends in the gang to you? Are they more, the same, or less important than your friends outside of the gang? [non gang members, school friends, church friends?] Explain. Who would you trust the most, your friends from the gang or friends from outside of the gang? Explain.

Exercise 3: FUTURE/SUMMARY

9.01   What advice would you give to someone wanting to join a gang?

9.02   What advice would you give to someone wanting to leave a gang?

9.03   What strategies or solutions would you recommend in order to eliminate or minimize the attractiveness of youth gangs? Give an example? Explain.

9.04   Where do you see yourself in ten years time?

MASSEY UNIVERSITY

5 May 2010

Moses Faleolo
ci- Associate-Professor M O'Brien
College of Humanities and
Social Sciences Massey
University
Albany

Dear Moses

HUMAN ETHICS APPROVAL APPLICATION _ MUHECN 091059
"The Samoans of Auckland: Life History, Socialisation and Youth Gangs"

Thank you for your application. It has been fully considered, and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern.

Approval is for three years. If this project has not been completed within three years from the date of this letter, a reapproval must be requested.

If the nature, content, location, procedures or personnel of your approved application change, please advise the Secretary of the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Dr
Denis
e
Wilson
Chair
Human Ethics Committee: Northern

cc: Associate-Professor M O'Brien
College of Humanities and Social Sciences