EXPERIENCE-BASED LESSONS FROM MALES IN THE NORTHERN AREAS OF PORT ELIZABETH ON FACTORS THAT HAS PROTECTED THEM FROM BECOMING INVOLVED IN GANGSTERISM

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I, Desira Julie-Anne Davids hereby declare that this submission is my own work, and that the above-mentioned treatise has not previously been submitted for assessment to another university or institution for any other degree, or diploma, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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- The participants of this study for opening up to me and sharing their stories with me.
ABSTRACT

Limited research exists, both internationally and in the South African context, on factors protecting community members from becoming involved in gangsterism. This phenomenon has been found to be more prevalent in so-called 'coloured' communities and predominantly amongst males. Existing research on gangsterism mainly focus on the history and origin of gangsterism, risk factors that cause certain youth to be more vulnerable in becoming involved in gangs, and specific interventions aimed at curbing the phenomenon. The proposed study therefore aimed to explore and describe the experience-based lessons from selected males on factors that have protected them from becoming involved in gangsterism.

The study employed a qualitative research approach that was explorative, descriptive and contextual in design. Participants were chosen through a purposive sampling technique and data was collected using semi-structured interviews. The trustworthiness of the research process and the findings was enhanced by employing a variety of data verification strategies. The study utilised the Ecological Systems and Resilience models as theoretical lenses. The study found that the benefits of family support, influence of faith or religion, positive role models and opportunities for furthering one’s education could be cited amongst the factors that protected participants from becoming involved in gangsterism. Amongst the recommendations of the study was lobbying for tertiary education specifically for young boys from previously disadvantaged communities plagued by social ills such as gangsterism, the restoration of disintegrated family units through the assistance of professionals, as well as the restoration and strengthening of the role of spiritual leaders in their involvement in the moral regeneration of communities. It is anticipated that findings of this study will be helpful in understanding the factors that protected males from becoming involved in gangsterism and make recommendations on how these protective factors could be strengthened so as to prevent more males from becoming involved in gangsterism.
Key Concepts: Gangsterism, Buffering / Buffer, Protective Factors, Community members

Concept Clarification

Gangsterism

The Free Dictionary defines gangsterism as: “The culture of belonging to organised gangs of criminals, especially involving violence.” Or: “The habit of using organised violence to achieve one’s end.”

Protective factors

Fraser and Terzian (2005:56) indicate that a protective factor refers to any circumstance or resource that minimises the impact of risk and contributes to growth-orientated developmental outcomes.

Buffering/Buffer

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines a buffer as: “something that serves as a protective barrier.”

Community Members

The Merriam-Webster online dictionary define community members as: “A social group of any size, whose members reside in a specific locality, share government, and often have a common cultural and historical heritage”
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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Gangsterism is rife in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth, South Africa. Sporadic incidences of gang related violence result in an increase in the registration of crimes like murder, attempted murder, assault with grievous bodily harm, burglaries and illegal possession of firearms and drug related cases. Statistics on the phenomenon of gangsterism are not readily available on the statistical records system of the South African Police Services, but are compiled at the affected police stations for operational purposes (Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature, 2014:19).

According to a study conducted by the Helenvale Urban Renewal Programme (HURP), the first gang was formed and named the ‘Panga Boys’ in the Northern Areas in 1968 (Helenvale Urban Renewal Programme (HURP, 2011:2). Subsequent forced relocation, from various Port Elizabeth suburbs declared as “whites only” areas to areas such as Helenvale and Schauderville in the Northern areas, further contributed to the increase in gangs. Six years after the proclamation of the first municipal housing scheme, there were already five established gangs operating in the Northern Areas (Helenvale Urban Renewal Programme (HURP, 2011:2). Since then, gangsterism has continued to grow from generation-to-generation, contributing substantially to the stigmatization of the Northern Areas, which are, at the time of writing, well known for their gangs and for high levels of crime, poverty and unemployment and low levels of education (HURP, 2011: 3).

By 2010, gangs such as the Paparazzi’s, Boomshakas, Blinkpen Boemelaars, Untouchables, Von Boeties and the Westsiders dominated the area, continuing a consistent trend of gang life (HURP, 2011:3). The trend of new gangs continuously emerging has had an enormous impact on the community. The impact includes territorial limitations of certain people not being able to move around in areas where rival gangs are in “control” of those specific areas, and family members being targeted due to their siblings’ involvement in particular gangs.
With regard to involvement in gangs, Ward (2007:9) specifically states that if a person is exposed to more risk factors than protective factors, their risk of becoming involved in gangsterism also becomes higher in comparison to others that are not exposed to so many risk factors. In other words, if a person lives and grows up in a community where drugs or firearms are readily available, with high levels of poverty, unemployment, absence of meaningful jobs and social disorganisation, they are more at risk of becoming involved in gang-related activities than their counterparts in less affected circumstances (Ward, 2007:9).

Residing in one of the areas where research participants were sampled from, the researcher observed that in spite of the widespread existence of gangsterism and the predominantly male membership of gangs, some males residing and growing up in the Northern areas where gangsterism is so prevalent have never been involved in gangs or gang-related activities. Thus, this study attempted to find out what protective factors have played a role in buffering these males from becoming involved in gangsterism.

1.2. PROBLEM FORMULATION AND MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Even though the phenomenon of gangsterism has been the topic of many research studies (Jonas, 2015; Wilson, 2014; Wilson, 2013; Wolf, 2012; Cooley, 2011; HURP, 2011), both internationally and locally, there are limited published South African and international studies that look at the factors protecting males from becoming involved in gangsterism.

The risk and protective factors found by researchers to both attract and discourage males from becoming involved in gangsterism ranged from material gain, availability of alcohol or drugs and a position of dominance, to the ability to be able to survive financially. Amongst the factors internal to the individual was the presence or absence of a sense of belonging, loyalty, esteem and identity (Owen & Greeff, 2015:13-18).

In a review of 200 articles on youth gangs originating from a variety of databases in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Europe, it was found that status;
respect, friendship, belonging, protection, and monetary gain are factors motivating gang involvement (O’Brien, Daffern, Chu & Thomas, 2013). The factors discouraging gang involvement, were personal factors (ambition and aspiration, identity, responsibility and morals), relational factors (respect for others, family values, positive relationships and reputation), fear (of consequences and of danger), avoidance (of unpleasant psychological experiences and of loss) and purposelessness (denied benefit and illogicality) (Owen & Greeff, 2015:18).

The motivation behind the proposed study initially emerged out of the researcher’s personal interest to seek interventions that could deal effectively with the problem of gangsterism. The realisation that a need exists to develop an understanding of the factors protecting males from becoming involved in gangsterism further augmented this interest. Reason for this being the limited published South African and international studies that looks at the factors protecting males from becoming involved in gangsterism. Community members residing in areas plagued by gangsterism are often negatively affected by the stigma attached to these communities. However despite having grown up in these areas, many males residing in the Northern Areas never became involved in gangs or gang-related activities. This raises the question as to why they never became involved and what has been the factors protecting them against involvement in gangsterism.

As the literature review for the study progressed, it became apparent that even though the studies done by researchers looked at a number of aspects related to gangsterism, limited research exists on the factors protecting males from becoming involved in gangsterism. It was therefore the aim of the proposed research to explore and develop an understanding of the protective factors buffering males against gang involvement.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTION, GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The following research question was therefore posed for the purpose of this study:
What are the experience-based lessons from males residing in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth on the factors that have been protecting them from becoming involved in gangsterism?

The research goal for this study was to:
To develop an understanding of the experience-based lessons from males residing in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth on factors that have been protecting them from becoming involved in gangsterism.

The objectives for this study were to:

• Explore experiences of males residing in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth on the phenomenon of gangsterism within their community
• Explore the experience of the impact of gangsterism on a personal, familial and community level.
• Explore and describe the protective factors males residing in the northern areas of Port Elizabeth experience as buffering them against becoming involved in gangsterism.

1.4. OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH APPROACH, DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2005:71) describe research methodology as being the manner in which research problems are solved. This section presents the research approach, research design and the research methods that were employed in order to meet the goal of the study.

1.4.1 Research Approach

This study utilised a qualitative research approach. According to Monette, Sullivan and Dejong (2008:7), qualitative researchers engage in naturalistic inquiry, studying real-world settings inductively to generate rich narrative descriptions and construct case studies. Qualitative research was selected because it is an approach that seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon under study from the participants’ point of view. Participants are considered to be experts in their
experience of the world and are able to articulate and describe their experiences in a manner that makes sense to them.

Qualitative researchers see data as meaningful when understood within the context and environment in which research participants operate or live, rather than in an experimental setting (Creswell, 2003:181-183). This is in line with the goal of this proposed study. This study was qualitative in nature, because the researcher was interested in gaining understanding about what study participants saw as protective factors that prevented them from becoming involved in gangsterism from their point of view.

1.4.2. Research design

Monette, Sullivan and Dejong (2008:9) state that a research design is a plan outlining how observations will be made and how the researchers will carry out the project. The research design of this study, in line with its goal, is an explorative, descriptive, contextual research design, reflecting the aim to explore the protective factors that prevented participants from getting involved in gangsterism—factors which are barely addressed in existing literature.

Babbie (2007:88-89) explains that an explorative research design is appropriate when a researcher examines a new phenomenon about which little is known. Descriptive design is used in this study since its purpose is to observe situations and events and then describe what was observed (Neuman, 2006:35).

Contextual designs are, according to Ritchie and Lewis (2003:27), concerned with identifying what exists in the social world and the way it manifests itself. This is appropriate to the current study as it deals specifically with the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth (in a geographical sense) and the topic being explored is in relation to experience based lessons learned by participants on factors that have been buffering them against becoming involved in gangsterism.

Complementary to the explorative, descriptive and contextual approaches to research design, this study also utilised a Transcendental / Psychological
Phenomenology as a tradition of inquiry. Transcendental phenomenology refers to identifying a phenomenon (or situation), then removing the researcher’s own experience, and collecting data from others who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark & Morales, 2007:254). Removal of the researcher’s own experience is referred to as bracketing (Creswell et.al, 2007; Kafle, 2011). Kafle (2011) further explains that this school of thought focuses around suspension of the researcher’s personal opinion so that it concludes at a “single, essential and descriptive presentation of a phenomenon” (Kafle, 2011:186).

1.4.3. Research methods

In this section, the key aspects of the research methods will be explored, including research population and sampling, entry into the research site, methods of data collection, methods of data analysis, data verification, ethical considerations and the dissemination of the findings of the study.

1.4.3.1. Research population and sampling technique

The research population of this study consisted of males, 25 years and older, from two different communities in the northern areas of Port Elizabeth, namely Schauderville and Helenvale. The motivation for choosing males aged 18 years and older was that they have surpassed the stage of adolescence which, according to the developmental stages, is the most vulnerable phase in an individual’s life and one in which the individual is still seeking his/her own identity (Identity versus role and confusion stage of psychosocial development). Since the study focus was on the experiences of participants who had not participated in a gang or gang-related activities, eligible males of 18 years or older would have managed to go through the vulnerable developmental phases without giving in to the temptation of becoming involved (Erikson, 1968:118).

Adulthood also brings with it a maturity that fosters the need to make meaning of one’s life and reflect on past experiences, whereas adolescents are not able to do so because they lack sufficient experience. Adulthood often brings a clearer
understanding of life experiences, when it is known under what circumstances an expressed idea is true or justified (Daniels & Adams, 2010:46).

The two communities were selected as both came into existence due to the forced relocations that took place during Apartheid, resulting in many social challenges—such as a lack of resources to meet the basic needs of the people and high unemployment rates—that led to the establishment of gangs as a means to survive (HURP, 2011:2). The reason for selecting only two communities relates to feasibility factors, such as financial constraints, available time and the scope of the study.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used a purposive sampling technique that is criterion-based. Criteria for inclusion in the study were:

- Males, aged 18 years and older;
- Residence in one of the two communities identified for more than 2 years;
- Willingness to participate in the study

The researcher aimed to include between 12 and 15 participants, but the principle of data saturation was applied. In total 11 participants were interviewed during the study.

1.4.3.2. Entry into research site

A research proposal was submitted to the Faculty Research Technology and Innovations Committee (FRTI) of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the Nelson Mandela University, and subsequently to the Research Ethics Committee. Upon approval of the proposal by the aforementioned committee, a pilot study was conducted, followed by semi-structured interviews with participants.

Entry to the research site was negotiated and participants were recruited by approaching gatekeepers in the form of Ward Councilors, Civil Society Organisations, formal and informal groups, and Spiritual and Traditional leaders. The reason for taking this approach was because the gatekeepers approached were familiar with what is happening in their communities, knew the organisations and
sectors active in their communities and how to access them. They therefore provided the link between the researcher and the participants.

A verbal and written explanation on the research study to be conducted was provided to the gatekeepers to guide the selection of participants. However, the gatekeepers that were approached did not turn out to be very helpful in the identification of suitable research participants. Potential participants were therefore approached by the researcher, based on her personal knowledge of the males in both population sites.

1.4.3.3. Data collection method

Semi-structured interviews were used, facilitated by open-ended questions contained in an interview guide. The rationale for using semi-structured interviews was that they allowed the researcher to get a detailed picture of the participants’ experienced-based lessons on the factors that have been buffering them against becoming involved in gangsterism.

De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2011:351) claim that the use of semi-structured interviews gives both the researcher and the participants much more flexibility, and the researchers are able to follow avenues that emerge in the interview. The participants are also able to give a fuller picture of the phenomenon being considered, which is of particular value when providing information on a personal matter.

The advantages of using an interview guide are that the questions are set beforehand, yet it allows the opportunity for probing by the interviewer as well as gives participants an opportunity to provide detailed, rich information as the questions asked are open-ended (De Vos et al., 2011:351). Additional interviewing skills such as paraphrasing, clarification and probing were also used during the interviewing process. The following questions were used to guide the data collection process:
Biographical questions

1. Age: How old are you?
2. Marital status: Are you married?
3. Profession: If employed, what job do you do?
4. Race: What is your race?
5. Language: What is your home language?
6. How long have you stayed in this community?

Main interview questions:

1. What is your view on the gangsterism issue in our communities?
2. Do you think joining a gang is a choice? How so?
3. Were you ever approached or tempted to join a gang? If yes, how did you resist the temptation?
4. What in your opinion are the things that have been protecting or keeping you from becoming involved in a gang?
5. If you could give any advice to people out there about what can protect you from getting involved in gangs, what would it be?

1.4.3.4. Pilot study

A pilot study according to Bless and Higson-Smith, (2000:52) involves testing the actual program on a small sample from the community for whom the research is planned for. The authors go further by saying that this allows the researcher to identify any difficulty with the method or materials and to investigate the accuracy and appropriateness of any instruments developed for data collection (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:52). It also allows the researcher to determine the community’s likely response to the actual program when it is implemented (Bless and Higson-Smith, 2000:52).

The researcher conducted a pilot study to test the appropriateness of the data collection tool and method to be used in the study.
1.4.3.5. Data analysis

A two-fold systematic process of data analysis was followed in this study, namely lower and higher coding. The data analyses were done under the supervision of two research supervisors and an independent coder was employed to authenticate the data and to ensure validity of the findings.

The process was guided by Tesch’s eight step model of qualitative data analysis, as reflected in Creswell (2009:142-145). The steps taken were as follows:
1. The researcher transcribed the audio-recorded interviews and interview notes for each participant;
2. The transcripts were read repeatedly, and notes were made on the side of the transcripts of the researcher’s impressions of the participant’s responses;
3. The data was organised into categories of related or similar topics and concepts;
4. Then abbreviations for each of the identified topics were created;
5. The identified categories were connected to create meaning and understanding of participant’s responses;
6. Alphabetised codes were assigned to each theme and category;
7. All data material belonging to each theme/category was assembled in one place, using the cut-and paste method;
8. Producing the account of the research, including reporting the findings, was undertaken through compiling a report to publicise the findings of the research and add to the existing knowledgebase on the research topic.

1.4.3.6. Data verification

The general criteria employed to ensure trustworthiness of the research findings were credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (as recommended by Cho and Trent (2006:322). These criteria are considered, in turn, below.

The main aim of ensuring credibility is to prove that the inquiry was conducted in a manner that ensures that the subject is accurately identified and described (De Vos
et al., 2011:420). To ensure the credibility of this study, the services of an independent coder was utilised to conclude the data analysis process and the supervisors closely monitored the entire process.

The requirement of the criteria of transferability is to establish whether the findings of the research can be transferred from one specific situation or case to another (De Vos et al., 2011:420). In order to achieve transferability, a dense description of the research methodology that was employed in the research report was given.

The criteria of dependability entails looking at whether the research process is logical, well documented and audited (De Vos et al., 2011:420). In this respect, various individuals were engaged to examine the study and some of the raw data, so as to assess whether the findings were plausible, based on the data collected. This strategy is known as peer review (Merriam, 2009:220).

With regard to confirmability, it is necessary to establish whether the findings of a study can be confirmed by another (De Vos et al., 2011:421). For this research study, peer reviews with two research supervisors were used, together with reflective notes maintained by the researcher during the entire research process, as methods of establishing confirmability.

1.5. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations applicable to the research include the avoidance of harm; the voluntary participation, informed consent and anonymity of research respondents; matters of privacy and confidentiality; and, finally, the debriefing of participants. How these considerations were addressed in the study is described below.

With regard to avoidance of harm, the researcher ensured that no harm will come to participants by avoiding questions that were threatening, and by conducting the study in a non-threatening environment, where participants would feel free to share their views, knowing that they were safe. In some instances, the venues where the interviews took place were brought closer to where some participants stayed, for safety’s sake.
According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport, (2011:116) respondents should not be forced to take part in a research project. The researcher did not force participants in any way to participate in the study, as they were asked to fill in consent forms after the details of the study had been explained to them. They were made aware that they had a choice whether to continue or not.

All possible or adequate information on the goal of the research, the expected duration of participant’s involvement and the procedure that would be followed during the research was explained to the participants by the researcher. Participants were asked to fill in a consent form (see Appendix 4); with the understanding that they would participate voluntarily for the duration of the research, or opt out at any time should they feel uncomfortable.

To meet the requirements of anonymity, the researcher explained to the participants beforehand that their real names or identities will not be used or exposed when transcription of the interviews takes place, and that they will be deemed anonymous.

During this study, the researcher did not infringe upon or violate the respondents’ privacy in any form. In this study the researcher ensured that the participants’ privacy was respected and that the principle of confidentiality was upheld at all times.

After the interviews, the researcher provided an opportunity for participants to debrief where they could share their feelings about and experience of the participation in the study. This was done to check if any of the participants required referral to a psychologist to deal with any trauma experienced as a result of the recollections they shared during the research interview. None of the participants required referral to counseling services.

In consideration of the requirement to abstain from deception, no information relating to the study or its effects were withheld from the participants of the study, and all care was taken to ensure that the participants were not deceived in any way or form.
With regard to the action and competence of the researcher, the researcher was competent to conduct this study and was ethically mandated to work within the ethical guidelines of the social work profession to which she belongs.

**1.6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The study made use of a combination of the Ecological Systems and Resilience models as theoretical lenses. The Ecological Systems model explains the impact of different systems of an individual’s environment which have an effect on that individual’s development. The Ecological Systems model helps in understanding the influence of interrelated social systems, whilst the Resilience Model points out the inherent factors of resiliency in an individual that causes them to survive and thrive amidst adverse circumstances and environments. A detailed explanation of these theories and their application in the context of this study will be provided in chapter two of this research report.

**1.7. DISSEMINATION OF FINDINGS**

It is intended that a hard copy and an electronic copy of the completed research report will be submitted to the Nelson Mandela University’s library. Further, a journal article will be submitted, with the aim of publication.

**1.8. STRUCTURE OF REPORT**

This research report is structured as follows:

Chapter one presents an outline of the topic being investigated. It provides a historical account of the factors that have led to present day circumstances before giving a brief summary of the work that has already been done in the field being investigated. This chapter ends by providing a brief overview of the research approach, design and methods used in this study. A more detailed account of these and their application thereof is provided in chapter three of this research report.
Chapter two reviews the theoretical frameworks used in the research study as well as relevant literature as appropriate to the study.

Chapter three presents an in depth account of the research design, the research methodology and the methods used in the study.

Chapter four presents the research findings of the study. These findings are discussed and contextualised within relevant literature

Chapter five presents the conclusions and the recommendations stemming from the research study.

1.9. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented an outline of the topic being investigated. It provided a historical account of the factors that have led to present day circumstances before giving a brief summary of the work that has already been done in the field being investigated. The chapter ends by providing a brief overview of the research approach, design and methods used in this study. A more detailed account of these and their application thereof is provided in chapter three of this research report. The following chapter will present the theoretical frameworks used in the research study as well as relevant literature as appropriate to the study.
CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter one aimed to orientate the reader to the context of and motivation for a study on the experience-based lessons from males in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth on factors that has protected them from becoming involved in gangsterism. This chapter introduces the reader to and motivates for the selection of the theoretical perspectives used as lenses for the specific research study. Further, explanation is provided in relation to what has been discovered in previous literature about the history, origin and evolution of the phenomenon of gangsterism. The chapter also looks at the impact of gangsterism, as well as the contributing factors—particularly social and economic factors—and the risk and protective factors, with particular reference made to attracting and discouraging factors with regards to the phenomenon of gangsterism.

2.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For the purpose of this research study, a combination of the Ecological Systems Model and the Resilience Mode were utilised. Explanation and motivation for utilising these specific models is discussed below.

2.2.1. Ecological systems model

Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) Ecological Systems model explains the impact of different systems of an individual’s environment which have an effect on that individual’s development (Duerden & Witt, 2009:110). The model helps in understanding the influence of interrelated social systems. According to the theory, an individual is situated at the center of five complex layers that make up their environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The theory distinguishes between five different layers, namely: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the macrosystem, the exosystem and the chronosystem.
The micro system is the environment closest to the individual, in which the individual directly participates and interacts. The micro system environment includes the family, the neighborhood, school and peers (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In this layer of environment, relationships have a dual faceted impact on the individual—towards the individual and away from the individual. Bronfenbrenner (1979) identifies these as being bi-directional influences which he asserts occur across all levels of environment.

The meso system refers to the interconnections between the different microsystems, providing a connection between the structures of the person’s micro system—that is, for example, between teachers and parents, between church and the neighborhood. Strong and positive connections between the microsystems provide a supportive context for individuals. The ecological systems model assumes that an individual’s development is enhanced in the meso system, provided that the relationships amongst the microsystems are consistent and positive (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1989).

The macro system comprises of cultural values, customs, and laws and may be regarded as the outermost layer of the person’s environment. Other examples included in this layer are the economy and the socio-political factors in the broader environment of societal factors that have an impact on the development of the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The exosystem, in contrast to the micro and meso system layers, represents a larger system in which the individual does not function directly. An example of this would be the workplace of a child’s parent(s). Although the child is not directly a part of it, the “happenings” of this structure invariably affect the systems that the child operates in (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The chronosystem contain elements within it that can be external (such as the timing of a parent’s death), or internal (such as the physiological changes during the natural aging process of the individual) (Berk, 2004:25).
Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Model has been utilised in many research studies by various research scholars (Onwuegbuzie, Collins and Frels, 2013; Algood, Hong, Gourdine and Williams, 2011; Lee, 2011; Wideen, J Mayer-Smith and Barbara Moon, 1998). A study done by Algood, Hong, Gourdine and Williams, (2011) used Bronfenbrenner’s (1976; 1977) ecological systems framework to examine how socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender and special education), - micro (parent-child relationship and domestic violence), - exo (parenting stress, parent’s social support and area of residence), and macro systems level (culturally defined parent practices) factors influence or inhibit maltreatment of children with disabilities (Algood et.al, 2011:1142).

Another study by Lee, (2011) looked at identifying an ecological prediction model of bullying behaviors. Based on an ecological systems theory, this study identified significant factors influencing bullying behaviors at different levels of middle and high school. These levels include the microsystem, mesosystem, exo system, and macrosystem. More specifically, the ecological factors investigated in this multilevel analysis were individual traits, family experiences, parental involvement, school climate, and community characteristics. Using data collected in 2008 from 485 randomly selected students in a school district, this study identified a best fitting structural model of bullying behavior. Findings suggested that the ecological model accounted for a high portion of variance in bullying behaviors. All of the ecological systems as well as individual traits were found to be significant influences on bullying behaviors either directly or indirectly (Lee, 2011:1164).

Onwuegbuzie, Collins and Frels, (2013) utilised Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Model to frame quantitative, qualitative, and mixed research. The authors hoped that through providing the three elements – philosophy, policy, and practice – as they align to the nine issues/controversies in mixed research with the framework of Bronfenbrenner, educational and social science researchers might continue the dialog for understanding research relationships/ implications, as well as the utility and scope of mixed research (Onwuegbuzie et.al, 2013:7).

As it goes in research, no model or theory is without critique and the Ecological Systems Model is no exception. Ecological models have been central to health
promotion for several decades now. Based in part on the success in reversing the epidemic of tobacco use, there are high expectations that interventions based on ecological models can reverse the obesity epidemic by improving environments and policies that drive physical activity and nutrition behaviours (Glanz, Rimmer and Viswanath, 2008:479). The authors argue however, that a weakness of many general ecological models of health behaviour is their lack of specificity about the most important hypothesized influences. This puts a greater burden on health promotion professionals to identify critical factors for each behavioural application. A related weakness, even for behaviour-specific ecological models, is the lack of information about how the broader levels of influence operate or how variables interact across levels (Glanz et.al, 2008:480). A major challenge for those working with ecological models is to develop more sophisticated operational models that lead to testable hypotheses and useful guidance for interventions. Other key challenges of ecological models of health behaviour also warrant attention (Glanz et.al, 2008:480).

Whilst the ecological systems theory helps to understand the bidirectional influence of the interrelated social systems on the individual's decision not to become involved in gangsterism, the following selected theory argues that in spite of being exposed to difficult social conditions, some males still chose not to get involved in gangs. The researcher seeks to utilise the Ecological Systems Theory to describe how the intricate layers of individual and environmental factors that existed in the living environments of the participants aided them in their decision not to join gangs.

### 2.2.2. Resilience model

According to the researchers’ understanding, individual resilience refers to those inherent, internal personality traits and characteristics an individual possesses, that causes him/her to be able to cope and survive in the midst of adverse circumstances. Family and community resilience on the other hand refers to the external factors around the individual that might have an impact on the individuals’ ability to be able to withstand these adverse situations or circumstances. These factors can be seen as strengthening or enhancing the existing resilience of that particular individual. Even though the concept of family resilience are also made
mention of, it should be emphasised that this particular study focused on individual resilience.

Resilience theory was first introduced in the 1970’s by Canadian ecologist C.S. Buzz Holling, (Folke, Carpenter, Walker, Scheffer, Chapin & Rockström, 2010:20) and has been studied from different perspectives (Brown-Baatjies, Fouché & Greeff, 2008; Van Breda, 2002, Patterson, 2002, Patterson & Garwick, 1994, McCubbin & McCubbin, 1993, McCubbin & Patterson, 1982). Numerous scholars have provided varying definitions of the phenomenon and definitions continue to evolve as the scientific knowledge of the field increase (Herman, Stewart, Diaz-Granados, Berger, Jackson & Yeun, 2011: 259).

Resilience is defined by Dass-Brailsford (2005:574) as being “the ability to maintain competence despite stressful and difficult life circumstances”, whilst DiCorca and Tronick (2011:1) declare that “resilience is often associated with extreme trauma or a system’s ability to overcome extraordinary odds”. Masten and Powell (2003:4) describe resilience as patterns of positive adaptation in the context of significant risk or adversity. Further, Seccombe, (2002:385) states that the widely held view of resiliency as an individual disposition, family trait, or community phenomenon is insufficient, as resiliency cannot be understood or improved by merely looking at these factors. Instead, careful attention must be paid to the structural deficiencies in society and to the social policies that families need in order to become stronger, more competent, and better functioning in adverse situations (Seccombe, 2002:385).

Fraser & Terzian, 2005; Ungar, 2005; Walsh, 2006; McWhirter et al., 2007 cited in Soji, 2013, suggests three main clusters of variables that appear to facilitate positive adaptation under conditions of risk: (a) individual attributes or characteristics, including positive temperamental or dispositional qualities; good intellectual functioning; self-efficacy; positive self-worth; perceived competence; sound problem-solving skills; internal locus of control; accurate and realistic attributions of control; and positive future expectations, or a sense of optimism; (b) a warm, nurturing family environment; a structured, stable home; a sound relationship with a primary caregiver; and (c) broader environmental variables and/or pools of networks, such as positive familial support sources and identification models; links with social networks.
such as linkages with effective schools; connections to pro-social organisations; and neighborhood qualities (Soji, 2013:27). In light of these, the research study aims to utilise both the Resilience and Ecological systems Models to identify the specific variables in the participants’ lives and immediate surroundings that played a role in preventing them from becoming involved in gangsterism. These stemming from the premise of the Ecological Systems Model that the individual is situated at the center of all these variables that can either facilitate or constrain the resilience of that particular individual.

An important component of resilience, however, is the hazardous, adverse and threatening life circumstances that result in individual vulnerability. An individual’s resilience at any moment is calculated by the ratio between the presence of protective factors and the presence of hazardous circumstances (Van Breda, 2001:18). Polk (1997) cited in Van Breda, (2001:18) has synthesised four patterns of resilience from the individual resilience literature:

- **Dispositional Pattern.** The dispositional pattern relates to physical and ego-related psychosocial attributes that promote resilience. These entail those aspects of an individual that promote a resilient disposition towards life stressors, and can include a sense of autonomy or self-reliance, a sense of basic self-worth, good physical health and good physical appearance.

- **Relational Pattern.** The relational pattern concerns an individual's roles in society and his/her relationships with others. These roles and relationships can range from close and intimate relationships to those with the broader societal system.

- **Situational Pattern.** The situational pattern addresses those aspects involving a linking between an individual and a stressful situation. This can include an individual's problem solving ability, the ability to evaluate situations and responses, and the capacity to take action in response to a situation.

- **Philosophical Pattern.** The philosophical pattern refers to an individual’s worldview or life paradigm. This can include various beliefs that promote resilience, such as the belief that positive meaning can be found in all
experiences, the belief that self-development is important, the belief that life is purposeful.

From the various definitions provided above, it is clear that the successful adaptation of a system to unfavorable internal or external stimuli in the environment is rooted at the core of the concept which is delineated by resilience. However, currently, there is very limited qualitative work exploring why certain expressions of resilience are held beyond that of statistical association. In addition, psychological resilience research should include multi-disciplinary studies that examine dynamics of resilience across the lifespan of systems (Birkmann, Changseng, Wolfertz, Setiadi, Karancı, İkizer, Kuhlicke, Kunath, Dressler, Deeming & Fordham, 2012:13). Despite profound differences in how authors understand resilience, they often share the common perception that the different types of resilience are understood as rather static and frequently mutually exclusive entities. It is, however, possible that a better approach might involve the understanding that the very meaning of resilience might change (or better, how an observer observes resilience of a system might change) during the process. Sometimes it might be perceived as being a static and fixed entity, whereas in other phases it might become fluid and more process oriented. What is missing, therefore, as argued by the various authors, is a more dynamic element to the analysis, which focuses on social context conditions before, during, and after a crisis and how the meaning of resilience itself might change under changing context conditions (Birkmann et.al, 2012:19). The next section will focus on research studies that applied and utilised the Resilience Model in their respective studies.

The capacity of an individual to cope during difficulty is central to their resilience. Pearlin and Schooler (1982:109) cited in Van Breda (2001) define coping as "the thing that people do to avoid being harmed by life strain" (Van Breda, 2001:19). These authors conducted 2300 interviews in the urbanised Chicago area. An intervention was conducted in an occupational setting to enhance the coping of employed mothers. The group-based intervention was based on Pearlin and Schooler’s “model of coping and adaptive behavior: attacking the problem, rethinking the problem, and managing the stress".
In comparison with a control group, at 6-month follow-up, intervention participants reported significantly lower work-family and work environment stress, higher social support from work sources, less avoidance coping, and lower psychological symptomatology.

This intervention demonstrates the practical and clinical value of resilience theories. By promoting positive, constructive coping skills, the investigators were able to make significant changes to the problems experienced by the participants, even though these problems were not specifically addressed. The individual approach to resilience has tended to emphasise resilience as an internal phenomenon, an emphasis that is only challenged later, and with difficulty, by family resilience researchers.

Van Breda, (2002:9) looked at the utilisation of the resilience theory in military social work. The study specifically focused on how families in the South African National Defense Force (SANDF) respond to the stress of deployments, zooming into individual and family level resilience. The study identified eight (8) principle clusters of factors that promote effective family coping with deployments, of which amongst others were: emotional continuity, positive perspectives on separations and the presence of support systems, particularly family, naval, community and religious systems, for the employee and family (Van Breda, 2002:9).

Other studies (Brown-Baatjies; Fouché and Greeff, 2008:43) utilising the resilience model looked at family adjustment and adaptation in the face of crises, or going through certain family stressors. These studies found that the acknowledgment that ethnicity, culture and diversity in family structure are important to an understanding of family stress and family resilience has opened the door for employing the Resiliency Model in the South African context, and it has been applied in a number of studies. Published South African research successfully employing it as a conceptual basis include studies of resilience among families where a parent has accepted a voluntary teacher’s retrenchment package (Der Kinderen & Greeff 2003: 86-94), the prevalence of resilience in migrant families (Greeff 2007:189-200), resilience in families in which a parent has died (Greeff & Human 2004: 27-42), and variables associated with resilience in divorced families (Greeff & Van der Merwe...
Family resilience is a novel concept in South African research and this is demonstrated by the fact that the above studies are fairly recent and tend to be exploratory in nature. In as much as the phenomenon of gangsterism under study focused on individual resilience factors specifically, one cannot ignore the bidirectional influences of the family on the resilience of the individual participants and the role it played in buffering them from gang involvement.

The researcher therefore aims to use this theory to unravel the intrinsic and inherent traits of participants that enabled them to resist the temptation of becoming involved in gangs or gang-related activities. These factors will be explored from an ecological systems perspective as this will allow the researcher to not only include individual or family traits of participants, but also look at the impact/influences of peers, immediate surroundings, socio-political factors, structural deficiencies of society, etc., that could have played a role in preventing/protecting participants from becoming involved in gangs/gang-related activities.

2.3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Creswell (2009:25) explains that the literature review accomplishes several purposes, namely: it shares with the reader the results of other studies closely related to the one being undertaken; and it relates a study to a larger, ongoing dialogue in the literature, filling in gaps and extending prior studies. It also provides a framework for establishing the importance of the study as well as a benchmark for comparing the results with other findings (Creswell 2009:25).

In identifying the available literature and research studies, the key words and their synonyms “gangsterism”; “protective factors”; “buffering” or “buffer” and “community members” were used to narrow down the search. Numerous sources were consulted, including the computerised databases EBSCOHOST; E-Journals; Humanities International Index; NEXUS; SABINET online; SAGE; Google Scholar and other sources of academic literature.

In this chapter the history, origin and the evolution of gangs will be discussed in terms of what has already been documented in previous literature, both in an
international and a South African context. Consideration will be given to the impact of gangsterism, as well as the contributing factors (particularly social and economic factors), and risk and protective factors, with particular reference to attracting and discouraging factors with regards to the phenomenon of gangsterism.

2.3.1. History, origin and evolution of gangs: International context

Various articles have been written on the history and origin of gangsterism, both in an international and a South African context (Jonas, 2015; Wilson, 2014; Wilson, 2013; Wolf, 2012; Cooley, 2011; HURP, 2011; Standing, 2005). Wolf (2012) writes about the history of violent crime and its steady increase in Central America over the past twenty years. She states that a key driver of crime in the region is the activity of street gangs (Wolf 2012:43).

Gangs are a common phenomenon in almost every country and are no longer restricted to the disadvantaged communities or trailer parks (Triplett, 2004:117). Similarly, Egley and Howell (2011:35) state that gangs are no longer confined to inner city domains, as gang activity has been documented in suburban and rural areas. Moreover, gang membership is no longer limited to people of a minority but has evolved into accommodating other races and social circles as well, cutting across all psychosocial structures such as race, socio-economic status, ethnicity and culture (Egley & Howell, 2011:35).

The inclusiveness and expansion of gangs have changed the nature of gangs worldwide. In the past, gangs were viewed as groups of young men that are more or less defending their territory and were more known for settling their disputes through fist fights and knives (World Bank Institute, 2000). Solving the disputes between gangs, according to World Bank Institute (2000), has evolved to gangs resorting to using sophisticated weaponry such as guns. More firearms are now noticeable in places where regular, traditional street fighting was observed (Odzer, 2011:185).

A study done by Cooley (2011:911) found that, prior to the late 1950’s; the youth gang problem in Chicago was mainly a product of the city’s European-ethnic communities. Black gangs were small-scale neighborhood clans that, despite an
occasional felony, were largely in the business of looking out for each other. But in the 1960’s large and ambitious gangs emerged, coinciding with the decline of the Chicago employment market for blacks, especially for young men.

Various research studies (Bennett & Holloway, 2004; Duffy & Gillig, 2004; Rizzo, 2003) confirm that gangs are predominantly comprised of males. South Africa’s National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO) (2011) reports that, of offender referrals to NICRO diversion programs in the Western Cape, 80% are male and 66% are from the Coloured population. The predominance of males and the Coloured population in gangs is confirmed by various research studies done in the Western Cape (Macmaster, 2010; Calix, 2013; Magidi, 2014; Owen & Greeff, 2015), where the phenomenon of gangsterism is so prevalent, as discussed later in this chapter.

2.3.2. History, origin and evolution of gangs: South African context

Knox and Monaghan (2001:91 cited in Jonas, 2015:12) describe South Africa as a ‘crimo-generic society’, the origins which can be traced back to its Apartheid past. The violent legacy of South Africa’s past and the transgressions of Apartheid pass laws has, to some extent, justified the concept of crime ‘as a means to an end’ in the eyes of the general public (Jonas, 2015:12). They further state that crime has increased since the early 1980’s and has continued to rise in the new political dispensation (that is, since 1994). The increase from the 1990’s, however, is not much different from the experiences of other nations undergoing political transitions to democracy, where changes in societies have also opened up new spaces for the development of crime.

Jonas (2015:13) argues there are significant links between the evolution of gangsterism in the Eastern Cape and that of the Western Cape and notes how this development was characteristic across the Coloured communities. It further confirms that racial segregation during the same historical epoch had a similar effect on communities which were forcefully removed to the peri-urban areas. Gang culture has found the ideal breeding ground in areas which are plagued with social dysfunction and disintegration (Jonas, 2015:13-14).
Pinnock (2007:115) expands the above view by writing that gangs in South Africa came about as a result of poverty and Apartheid’s massive social divide. In a similar manner to gang evolution on an international level after the great depression, gangs in South Africa can be said to have formed as a result of increased poverty and—specific to the South African context—Apartheid. One may then say that poverty and Apartheid changed the order of society. This view sees gangs in South Africa as a response to the stresses of poverty. Given the segregation laws that were formerly imposed in South Africa, which led to high levels of poverty amongst certain ethnic groups—mainly Black, Coloured and Indian—it therefore becomes relevant to consider the social ills and racial divide as relevant devices that contributed towards the formation of gangs in South Africa (Pinnock, 2007:115).

2.3.3. Impact of gangsterism

2.3.3.1. Increased criminal activity due to the presence of gangs

According to Berns, (2007:406), communities with a high population density can experience the negative effects of reduced behavioral freedom, personal space violation, excessive social contact and inability to maintain desired privacy. Additionally, communities characterised by high density tend to be associated with more violence, higher crime rates and greater victimisation rates than low density communities (Berns, 2007: 406-407). A study by Magidi, (2014) also found that the presence of gangs, through their criminal activities, increased fear amongst learners as some have the fear of being robbed or being victims of violence (Magidi, 2014:108).

2.3.3.2. Non-gang members getting injured during gang fights

Sanders (2017:15) write about gangs in San Diego performing random drive-by shootings without taking into consideration that there could be innocent bystanders or children in the immediate surroundings. An article in the Athlone News (25 October 2017) covered a story of a male and a female being shot and killed, and two others also being injured, in gang cross fire in Manenberg, Cape Town. The male
victim was an innocent bystander standing on a street corner when the shooting started and the female victim was lying on her bed inside a Wendy house structure when the bullet killed her. During these incidents, a police officer who was attending to the crime scene was also injured (Athlone News, 25 October, 2017).

2.3.3.3. Being labeled a gangster and victimised for staying in the same area as gangsters

From a sociological viewpoint, Zevallos (2003:26) wrote that “where we come from matters and can be overtly hazardous to how people perceive us”. This view is confirmed by a study done by Ralphs, Medina and Aldridge (2009) on the consequences of staying in a gang inhabited area for non-gang youth in Britain. They found that non-gang youth were frequently victimised by gangs, just for residing in the same areas of their rivals. When young people encountered others from rival gang areas, typically they would be asked: ‘who you down with?’ Some young people in this study reported that their mobile phone contact lists were searched with possible repercussions depending on whom they were found to associate with. These confrontations occurred on public transport and in the city centre, shopping centres, and entertainment venues, as well as in rival gang areas. The fear of victimisation that resulted restricted the mobility of these non-gang young people (Ralphs et.al, 2009:488).

2.3.4. Factors contributing to gangsterism

2.3.4.1. Social factors

Owen, and Greeff (2015:13-18) cited material gain, availability of alcohol or drugs and a position of dominance, to the ability to be able to survive financially as external factors drawing young adolescent boys to join gangs. Alagappar, Len, George, Lee and Wong, (2005:4) also found that students without proper upbringing, bad surroundings, negative family environment and social influence, as well as those in need of material goods and money, are amongst those more likely to join gangs. According to the Victim Services and Crime Prevention Unit operating under the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General in Vancouver, parents are able to
show their children that status and a good life can be achieved through legitimate means: careers, trades, sports, and the arts (Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Victim Services and Crime Prevention, 2011:13).

2.3.4.2. Economic factors

The unemployment and underemployment crisis convinced many boys and men to permanently turn to outlaw capitalism as an alternative (Cooley 2011:911). A study done by Taylor (2013:340) about the reasons why young American boys join street gangs, found the same to be true. Community economics, specifically unemployment, is related to how children in families are socialised. There is evidence that economic hardship threatens the psychological well-being of parents and undermines their capacity for supportive child rearing. When parents have difficulty coping financially and share their problems with their children, children experience increased psychological distress (McLoyd, 1998; McLoyd & Wilson, 1990, cited in Berns, 2007: 409). Wallace, Patchin and May, (2005:106) points to the discrepancy between having high economic aspirations and a lack of means as a drive to engage in criminal activities and join gangs. Gangs are therefore seen as a means to achieve those aspirations collectively which people cannot attain on their own because of a lack of access to financial incentives. In addition, Berns, (2007:409) points out that failure to address the economic needs of families, especially the threat of poverty, leads to social consequences affecting individuals, families and the whole community. These social consequences in turn impose enormous costs on the community, including expenditures for treatment of illnesses and chronic health conditions, special education, foster care, prisons and welfare (Berns, 2007:409).

2.3.5. Risk and protective factors

2.3.5.1. Risk factors

A number of studies on the risk factors that lead to certain young people being predisposed to becoming involved in gangs and gang-related delinquent behavior found that those youths who were more at risk were impulsive, with a low sense of
guilt; had weak parental attachment bonds or unstable home environments with absent fathers. They lacked parental monitoring; and reported disconnectedness within families, familial involvement in gangs and a commitment to negative peers (Wood & Alleyne, 2009:105; Esbensen et al., 2009:315-317; Ward, 2007:9; Wijnberg, 2012:3).

A recent South African study by Owen and Greeff (2015) looked at factors attracting and discouraging adolescent boys from becoming involved in gangs in communities with high-prevalence of gangs. This study was conducted in the Western Cape, using an exploratory qualitative approach. Methods of data collection used were focus groups (where participants had to complete questionnaires) and individual interviews with participants comprising of twenty three male adolescent learners, who resided in gang-prevalent areas (the majority being from the Cape Flats) (Owen & Greeff, 2015:9). The findings of this study pointed to external and internal factors that attract young males to become involved in gangs. External factors ranged from material gain, availability of alcohol or drugs and a position of dominance, to the ability to be able to survive financially. Amongst the internal factors were a sense of belonging, loyalty, esteem and identity (Owen & Greeff, 2015:13-18).

Daniels and Adams (2010:45) found that gangsterism forms a certain backdrop to childhoods characterised by a lack of personal validation in families, scarcity of suitable role models and personal economic deprivation. The street gang provides the stability and validation that was lacking in their home environments (Daniels & Adams, 2010:45).

2.3.5.2. Protective factors

The factors discouraging gang involvement, were personal factors (ambition/aspiration, identity, responsibility, morals), relational factors (respect for others, family value, positive relationships, reputation), fear (fear of consequences, fear of danger), avoidance (avoidance of unpleasant psychological experiences, avoidance of loss) and purposelessness (denied benefit, illogicality) (Owen & Greeff, 2015:18).
MacMaster (2010:258-266) looked at the challenge of gangsterism as experienced in Cape Flats communities with strong church affiliation and found that the church has always been a source of support in strengthening the resilience of the residents, providing them with a sense of hope. Community members reported holding onto their faith that they will be able to endure the most traumatic adversities that might come their way. Churches are among the few institutions that sustain a coherent focus on issues of character, meaning, and purpose in life (Muller & Ellison, 2001:158). This socialisation may encourage young people to focus on "big picture" concerns, such as what kinds of people they want to become, what long-term goals they have, and how best to accomplish them (Muller & Ellison, 2001:158).

Amongst other factors, the role and influence of family, school and positive role models were also identified as protective buffers against the phenomenon of gangsterism. These issues are discussed in the following sub-sections.

2.3.5.2.1. Family factors

A study done by Daniels and Adams, (2010:45) also reported that morals and family values were amongst the factors that discouraged youth from becoming involved in gangs. Having a father or father figure present has also been confirmed by various researchers as yet another protective factor against gang involvement and delinquent behavior for young adolescent males (Richter, Desmond, Hosegood, Madhavan, Makiwane, Makusha, Morrell & Swartz, 2012; Langa, 2010; Richter & Morrell, 2006). Having a father present when growing up can also be seen as a determinant of what kind of men they will end up to be when they reach adulthood. Although Ratele, Shefer and Clowes (2012:563) do not directly identify the correlation between the absent parents and gang prevalence, other studies (Boyce, Essex, Alkon, Hill-Goldsmith, Kraemer & Kupfer, 2006); Bronte-Tinkew, Moore, Capps & Zaff, 2006) emphasise the impact of a present father as a powerful tool leading to reduced psychological stress, positive intellectual development and less anti-social behavior. The assumption would therefore be that the absent parent, especially a father, would inevitably lead to increased anti-social behavior, which might be joining gangs.
2.3.5.2.2. School factors

Calix (2013:122-126) and Magidi (2014:111), in studies on the role that schooling plays as a determinant of youth involvement in gangsterism, found that the inability of the school to moderate Coloured identity left youth more vulnerable and, ultimately, more likely to participate in gang activity. They further state that strong school presence within a community holds the potential to build necessary self-esteem, confidence, and determination in youth that is needed to make sense of an extremely racialised and fragmented social reality and can also generate positive social capital, moderating Coloured youth identity, and ultimately, reducing youth involvement in gangsterism (Calix, 2013:122-126; Magidi, 2014:111).

2.3.5.2.3. Positive role models

Having positive role models has also been identified as a protective factor against delinquent behavior and gang involvement in young adolescent males. The presence of an adult in an adolescent’s life may be a distinguishing factor between youth who successfully avoid the negative effects of risks they face and those who follow trajectories toward deviance (Werner & Smith (1982), cited in Bryant & Zimmerman, 2003:36). Identifying certain adults as role models indicates that youth believe that these individuals are worthy of imitation in some respect and that their attitudes or values are ones that they would like to assimilate (Taylor, 1989 cited in Bryant & Zimmerman, 2003:37).

Yet another protective factor against gang involvement and anti-social behavior identified by research studies is the participation in wholesome pursuits, such as sports and other extra-mural activities (Parker, 2010:54; Spaaij, 2009:253; Alagappar, George, Lee & Wong, 2005:4).

2.4. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented and explanation of, as well as motivated the utilisation of, the specific theoretical perspectives as lenses relevant to this research study. The chapter also gave an overview of literature, from both international and South African
contexts, as it relates to the history, origin and evolution of gangsterism, the impact of gangsterism, and the contributing factors (particularly social and economic factors) and risk and protective factors. In this respect, particular reference was made to attracting and discouraging factors with regards to the involvement of young males in the phenomenon of gangsterism. The following chapter of this research report will discuss in detail the application of the selected research methodology.
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter starts by providing a detailed account of the research approach and design employed in this study, followed by a description of the application of the qualitative research process utilised to achieve the goal and objectives of the study. The chapter ends with a detailed description of ethical considerations, problems experienced in the research study and the limitations of the study.

The aim of the research was to develop an understanding of the experience-based lessons from males residing in the northern areas of Port Elizabeth on factors that have been protecting them from becoming involved in gangsterism. The rationale and the motivation behind the research methodology employed to achieve the aim of the research are presented in this chapter.

3.2. THE CHOICE OF A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

With specific reference to this study, the researcher utilised a qualitative research approach. According to Monette, Sullivan and Dejong (2008:7), qualitative researchers engage in naturalistic inquiry, studying real-world settings inductively to generate rich narrative descriptions and construct case studies. Qualitative research was selected because it is an approach that seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon under study from the participants’ point of view. Participants are considered to be experts in their experience of the world and are able to articulate and describe their experiences in a manner that makes sense to them. Qualitative researchers see data as meaningful when understood within the context and environment in which research participants operate or live rather than in an experimental setting (Creswell, 2003:181-183). This was in line with the goal of this study.
3.2.1. Research design

Monette, Sullivan and Dejong (2008:9) states that a research design is a plan outlining how observations will be made and how the researchers will carry out the project. This study adopted a qualitative, explorative, descriptive and contextual research design in order to meet the research goal and objectives. Babbie (2007:88-89) explains that an exploratory design is appropriate when a researcher examines a new phenomenon about which little is known.

Upon review of literature on the phenomenon under study, it became evident that available literature tended to focus on the risk factors of gangsterism and less on the protective factors that serve as buffers against becoming involved in gangsterism. Using an explorative research design was therefore suitable to meet the research objectives, being:

- To explore experiences of males residing in the northern areas of Port Elizabeth on the phenomenon of gangsterism within their community
- To explore their experience of the impact of gangsterism on a personal, familial and community level.
- To explore and describe the protective factors males residing in the northern areas of Port Elizabeth experience as buffering them against becoming involved in gangsterism.

Descriptive design was used since its purpose is to observe situations and events and then describe what was observed (Neuman, 2006:35). Contextual designs are, according to Ritchie and Lewis (2003:27), concerned with identifying what exists in the social world and the way it manifests itself. This was considered appropriate as the study dealt specifically with the northern areas of the Nelson Mandela Bay in a geographical sense, and the topic explored related to experience-based lessons learned by participants on factors that had been buffering them against becoming involved in gangsterism.
Complementary to the explorative, descriptive and contextual research designs, this study also used Transcendental / Psychological Phenomenology. (CR Chapter One, page 5, 4th paragraph)

The researcher believes that reality is constructed by individuals based on their experiences of the world around them and therefore respect that participants have lived experiences that are unique to them. Since the researcher originates from one of the communities where participants were sourced from, she was struggling to remain objective at times during the data collection process due to certain personal biases. These biases stem from the researcher’s personal experience of the phenomenon under study and the fact that she too has been affected by it on a personal level, having lost family members due to the phenomenon of gangsterism, as well as almost being caught in cross fires where gangs were shooting on each other in her community. Taking reflective notes after each session with the assistance of her supervisors has helped the researcher to bracket her own experiences and biases in the process. The researcher had to do this in order to make sure that her own personal experience of the phenomenon under study as well as her biases does not interfere or contaminate the data collected from the research participants.

3.3. RESEARCH METHOD

In this section, the following aspects of the research methods will be explored: research population and sampling, entry into the site, methods of data collection, methods of data analysis, and data verification, ethical considerations and the dissemination of the findings of the study.

3.3.1. Research population, sampling technique and process

De Vos et al. (2011:223) describe the research population as “all potential subjects who possess the attributes in which the researcher is interested”. Babbie (2013:115) explain that sampling is “that group about whom we want to draw conclusions”.

In qualitative studies, non-probability purposive sampling techniques are utilised as they make it possible for the researcher to seek out individuals in the context of the phenomenon being investigated (De Vos et al., 2005:328). Creswell (2007:120) points out that the participants of a qualitative study may be located at a single site, although this does not necessarily have to be the case. He goes on to say that participants need to have all experienced the phenomenon being explored and be in a position to articulate their lived experiences to the researcher (Creswell, 2007:120).

The research sample consisted of males, 25 years and older, from two different communities in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth, namely Schauderville and Helenvale. The prevalence of the phenomenon of gangsterism in these communities forms part of the reasons for selecting them for this study. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used a purposive sampling technique that is criterion-based. The researcher looked for participants that were 18 years and older, since the study was interested in their lived experiences, participants that were willing and available to participate in the study and have lived in their respective communities for more than two years. This was done through the researcher’s own knowledge of participants, since the ward councilor’s offices the researcher approached to assist her in this endeavor, turned out not to be successful.

3.3.2. Entry into research site

A research proposal was submitted to the Faculty Research Technology and Innovations Committee (FRTI) of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and to the University’s Research and Ethics Committee for approval and to gain consent to proceed with the study.

Following approval from both respectively, the researcher embarked on approaching potential suitable participants through her own personal knowledge of the males in both population sites, providing them with written, as well as verbal details about the study. Participants were asked to sign a written consent form prior to the interview, and all aspects of how the research would be conducted were clearly explained to participants.
3.3.3. Pilot study

Bless and Higson-Smith, (2000:52) describes a pilot study as an exercise that involves testing the actual program on a small sample from the community for whom the research is planned for. The authors go further by saying that this allows the researcher to identify any difficulty with the method or materials and to investigate the accuracy and appropriateness of any instruments developed for data collection. It also allows the researcher to determine the community’s likely response to the actual program when it is implemented (Bless and Higson-Smith, 2000:52).

The first pilot study conducted by the researcher was not approved by the supervisors, as they felt that it was rushed and the data collected was not rich and comprehensive enough. A second pilot interview was then conducted; after the researcher realised that the first one was rushed due to the fact that the duration of the interview was not communicated to the participant beforehand therefore the session was rushed because the participant had another appointment to be at. The researcher made sure that this did not happen again with the second pilot interview and therefore had enough time to ask all the interview questions and get the desired outcome out of the interview. This second pilot interview was then accepted by the researcher’s supervisors and permission to proceed with the actual study was then granted.

3.3.4. Methods of data collection

The method of data collection used for this study, were semi-structured interviews facilitated by open-ended questions contained in an interview guide. The rationale for using semi-structured interviews is that they allowed the researcher to get a detailed picture of the participants’ experienced-based lessons on the factors that have been buffering them against becoming involved in gangsterism.

De Vos et al. (2011:351) claim that this method gives both the researcher and the participants much more flexibility, and the researchers are able to follow avenues that emerge in the interview. The participants are also able to give a fuller picture of
the phenomenon since it is a personal matter. The advantages of using an interview
guide is that the questions are set beforehand, yet it allows opportunity for probing
as well as give participants an opportunity to provide detailed, rich information as the
questions asked are open-ended. Additionally, interviewing skills such as
paraphrasing, clarification and probing were also used during the interviewing
process. The following biographical questions were used to guide the data collection
process, before the initial interview questions were asked:

1. Age: How old are you?
2. Marital status: Are you married?
3. Profession: If employed, what job do you do?
4. Race: What is your race?
5. Language: What is your home language?
6. How long have you stayed in this community?

The main interview questions asked were the following:

1. What is your view on the gangsterism issue in our communities?
2. Do you think joining a gang is a choice? How so?
3. Were you ever approached or tempted to join a gang? If yes, how did you resist
   the temptation?
4. What in your opinion are the things that has been protecting or keeping you
   from becoming involved in a gang?
5. If you could give any advice to people out there about what can protect you
   from getting involved in gangs, what would it be?

Participants were at liberty to share freely and openly on their experiences, and the
interviewing skills of focusing and probing were used to ensure that participant’s
responses were in line with the goals and objectives of the study.

3.3.5. Challenges experienced during data collection process

Throughout the study the researcher had to be aware of her own personal
experience of the phenomenon under study in order to make sure that it did not
interfere or contaminate the data collected from research participants. This was necessary seeing that the researcher also comes from one of the communities where some of the participants were sampled from and has been affected personally by the phenomenon of gangsterism. This was at times a daunting task, for it required being able to remain neutral and objective and not get drawn into the experiences shared by the participants. However, the researcher found that bracketing her own personal experience during the interviews through the process of centering and refocusing on the research topic, as well as keeping reflective notes throughout the whole process to be quite helpful in this regard.

3.3.6. Preparation of data for the coding process

The researcher transcribed all the recorded interviews verbatim prior to the commencement of the coding process. Copies of the transcripts of the recorded interviews were sent to an independent coder, together with a set of the interview questions and the goals and objectives of the study in order to guide the process of theme identification. The researcher and the independent coder conducted coding separately.

3.3.7. Methods of data analysis

The process the researcher followed to prepare the data collected for analysis was as follows:

- Various types of coding were applied first to every transcription to determine specific attributes of participants, dominant emotions and reactions expressed, values participants they ascribed to, differences in the views and opinions they shared, as well as the judgments they assigned when evaluating the phenomenon under study.
- Notes were kept about the researcher’s hunches throughout this process. This assisted the data analysis process, as it opened the researcher up to explore more than just the protective factors that participants perceived as having
buffered them from becoming involved in gangsterism, but also to bring out the voice of the researcher in the writing of the initial findings chapter.

The process the researcher utilised during data analysis was two-fold, namely lower and higher coding. During the lower coding process, various types of coding were applied to each transcription as explained in the previous paragraph. This type of coding was helpful in identifying the intensity of the emotions expressed by the participants at a particular moment during the interview process. This process captured the essence of the participants’ expressions, adding to the richness of the data collected, as experiences were expressed with emotion and intensity by the participants. This, in essence, is the very character of the qualitative research approach, as it is an approach that seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study from the participants’ point of view (Monette et al., 2008:7).

The two processes—lower and higher coding—are unpacked in further detail below. Firstly, the processes of lower coding included the following:

### 3.3.7.1. Lower coding:

During the process of lower coding, the researcher applied to all the transcriptions various types of coding that she found to be relevant to the specific study. These included attribute coding, emotion coding, value coding, versus coding and evaluation coding.

Attribute coding was done to determine specific attributes/features of participants as discussed (in Table 4.1)—that is, their age, profession, home language, marital status, and so on.

Emotion coding was utilised to determine the dominant emotions, sentiments, reactions and feelings displayed by the participants when expressing their views and opinions towards the gangsterism issue in their communities. This is in line with the objectives of the study, which was to explore the experiences of males on the phenomenon of gangsterism and its impact in their respective communities, as perceived by the participants of the study.
Value coding was applied to determine the values and beliefs predominantly shared by participants, which was also indicative of a few protective factors that participants found to be buffering them against becoming involved in gangsterism. Again, this was in line with one of the objectives of the study, which was to explore and describe the protective factors participants experienced as buffering them from becoming involved in gangsterism. The predominant values and beliefs shared by participants are discussed in Chapter Four.

Versus coding was used to identify conflicts or differences of opinions between participants in terms of their responses to specific interview questions. In this study the main difference of opinions between participants was that some believed that joining a gang was a choice and others felt that one’s circumstances sometimes makes the choice for you.

Evaluation coding was applied to determine how participants assign judgments when they evaluate certain things. In particular, this related to their own views and opinions on how they evaluate gangsterism and what they saw to be the contributing factors to it.

3.3.7.2. Higher coding

After the process of lower coding was complete, higher coding was applied in the form of the eight steps of Tesch’s process, as reflected in Creswell (2009:142-145). The steps were completed as follows:

1. The transcriptions were read repeatedly with the researcher making notes on the side of the transcripts of her impressions of the participant’s responses.
2. The data was then organised into categories of related/similar topics/concepts
3. After this, abbreviations for each of the identified topics were found.
4. The researcher then connected these categories to create meaning and understanding of participant’s responses.
5. Then alphabetised the codes for each theme and category.
6. Assembled all data material belonging to each theme/category in one place, using the cut-and-paste method.
7. Producing the account (reporting the findings), the researcher compiled the report to publicise the findings of the research and add to the existing knowledge base on the research topic. The data analysis was done under the supervision of two research supervisors and an independent coder was employed to authenticate the data and to ensure validity of the findings.

3.3.8. Methods of data verification

De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2011:420) assert that data verification is an essential part of the research process as it ensures the validity and reliability of the data collected. The criteria considered to ensure trustworthiness, was that recommended by Cho & Trent (2006:322) (CR Chapter One, page 10)

**Credibility:** The services of an independent coder to conclude the data-analysis process was utilised with both supervisors monitoring the whole process very closely. The above-mentioned measures also assisted in ensuring the dependability of data collected.

**Transferability:** In order to achieve transferability, the researcher provided a dense description of the research methodology employed.

**Dependability:** The researcher made use of peer reviews to ensure that the findings were plausible based on the data collected.

**Confirmability:** The researcher made use of peer reviews with two research supervisors, whilst maintaining reflective notes during the entire research process. (CR Chapter One, page 10). In addition, the researcher and the independent coder separately coded the data collected. As a further aspect of confirmability, the findings of this research were confirmed by another study conducted by Kelly and Ward (2017) with participants from the Cape Flats. Although their participants were ex-
gang members, the same protective factors identified in this study as perceived to have prevented participants from becoming involved in gangsterism were confirmed to be amongst the factors that aided their participants in their desistance from gangs.

3.3.9. Ethical considerations

Utmost care was taken during this research study to ensure that all ethical standards were taken into account, especially due to the fact that the study dealt with human beings. The following ethical considerations served as a guide to the researcher:

Avoidance of harm: The researcher ensured, to the best of her ability, that no harm would come to the participants by avoiding questions that were threatening and conducting the study in a non-threatening environment, where participants would feel free to share their views, knowing that they are safe. (CR Chapter One, page 11)

Voluntary participation: No participants were forced in any way to participate in the study; all participants were asked to complete a consent form to indicate that they were participating in the study out of their own free will. (CR Chapter One, page 12, 1st paragraph).

Anonymity: The researcher explained to the participants beforehand that their real names or identities will not be used or exposed when transcription of the interviews takes place, they will be deemed anonymous. The researcher also ensured that no names were used when writing the findings chapter; all participants were referred to as Participant A, B, etc. (CR Chapter One, page 12, 3rd paragraph).

Violation of privacy/ confidentiality: During this study, all care was taken to ensure that the identities of the participants were kept confidential at all times. (CR Chapter One, page 12, 4th paragraph).

Deception of participants: All care was taken to ensure that the participants were not deceived in any way or form. (CR Chapter One, page 12, 6th paragraph).
**Competence of the researcher:** The researcher was competent to conduct this study and was ethically mandated to work within the ethical guidelines of the social work profession to which she belongs. (CR Chapter One, page 13, top of the page).

**Debriefing of participants:** After the interviews, the researcher provided an opportunity for participants to debrief where they could share their feelings about and experience of the participation in the study. This was done to check if any of the participants required referral to a psychologist to deal with any trauma experienced as a result of the recollections they shared during the research interview. None of the participants required referral to counseling services. (CR Chapter One, page 12, 5th paragraph).

### 3.3.10. Dissemination of results

The findings of the study will be presented in the form of a Masters Treatise, which will be accessible from the Nelson Mandela University Library or from The Department of Environmental Health and Social Development Professions. It is also the intention of the researcher that the findings of this study will be published as a scholarly article, but, more importantly, that findings of this study will be helpful in understanding the factors that protected males from becoming involved in gangsterism, and allow for recommendations to be made on how the protective factors could be strengthened in preventing more young males from becoming involved in gangsterism.

### 3.4. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The methodology of the study was dealt with in this chapter. The researcher motivated for the use of the qualitative approach and gave a comprehensive overview of the various research processes that were carried out during the conduct of the research exercise.

The following chapter will give an overview of the discussion of findings and literature control of the study.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND LITERATURE CONTROL

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The research sought to answer the following question: “What are the experience-based lessons from males residing in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth on the factors that has been protecting them from becoming involved in gangsterism?” The research goal of this study was to develop an in-depth understanding of the experience-based lessons from males residing in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth on factors that has been protecting them from becoming involved in gangsterism.

The findings of this study will be presented according to themes, sub-themes and categories that will be supported by direct quotations or storylines from the transcribed interviews. Reference and comparison to relevant literature will also be provided to substantiate, challenge or negate the themes that emanate from the study or from literature of previous scholars. In this chapter the demographic profile data of the participants will first be presented, followed by a discussion of each theme. In addressing the issues of confidentiality, participant numbers are used for all participants.

4.2. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

The sample for the study comprised of male participants between the ages of 25 and 50 years, from two different communities in the Northern Areas of Nelson Mandela Bay, formerly known as Port Elizabeth. All the participants were Coloured. Most of these participants were either born or raised in these communities, or they have been residing there for most of their lives. The following section will present the demographic data of the participants in a table form, followed by a discussion.
Table 4.1. Demographic Profile of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE RANGE</th>
<th>MARITAL STATUS</th>
<th>EMPLOYMENT STATUS</th>
<th>LANGUAGE</th>
<th>EDUCATION LEVEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25-35 years</td>
<td>6 Married</td>
<td>1 Full time Minister (Pastor)</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>Out of 11 participants, 5 have a tertiary qualification and 1 is still busy studying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-46 years</td>
<td>2 Divorced</td>
<td>3 unemployed at time of study with 2 having a tertiary qualification</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>Out of 11 participants, 5 have a tertiary qualification and 1 is still busy studying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47-50 years</td>
<td>3 Single</td>
<td>4 Self-employed</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>Out of 11 participants, 5 have a tertiary qualification and 1 is still busy studying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 Employed</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>Out of 11 participants, 5 have a tertiary qualification and 1 is still busy studying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Student</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>Out of 11 participants, 5 have a tertiary qualification and 1 is still busy studying.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3. DISCUSSION ON THE DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Creswell (2007:120) points out that the participants of a qualitative study may be located at a single site, although this does not necessarily have to be the case. He goes on to say that participants need to have all experienced the phenomenon being explored, and to be in a position to articulate their lived experiences to the researcher (Creswell, 2007:120).

The participants of this study were males, 25 years and older, from two communities in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth: namely, Helenvale and Schauderville. The ages of the participants ranged between 25 and 50 years old. This was in line with the selection criteria of the study, since the researcher was interested in the lived experiences of participants. Similarly, the selection criteria of the study meant that participants were all Coloured males.

Most of the participants had been staying in their respective communities since birth. Six of the participants were married, two divorced and three were single.
Of significance in relation to the participants’ employment status was that three of them were unemployed at the time of the interviews, but not without having some sort of tertiary education or some even doing voluntary work in their communities at the time. This is significant, taking into consideration that the communities these participants come from and grew up in are known for having social challenges such as poverty, high rates of unemployment and gangsterism (amongst others). Despite this, they managed to rise above these circumstances and make something of their lives. This is in line with DiCorca & Tronick, (2011:1) which defines resilience as the ability to overcome extraordinary odds despite having to deal with extreme traumatic events. (CR Chapter Two, page 19). They did not allow their surroundings to determine where they end up in life, which is very commendable when taking into consideration that the goal of the study was to explore the factors that protected participants from becoming involved in gangsterism.

4.4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This previous section focused on the demographic data of the participants of the study. The following section will present the themes, sub-themes and categories which emerged from the process of data analysis. The four principal themes relate to the participants’ experience of gangsterism, the impact of gangsterism, factors contributing to gangsterism and protective factors (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2. Themes, Sub-Themes & Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>SUB-THemes</th>
<th>CATEGORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1:</td>
<td>of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of</td>
<td>1.1. Lack of freedom/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gangsterism</td>
<td>restricted movement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2. Emotions regarding change in the type and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>behaviour of gangs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3. Murder of siblings due to gang involvement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The ensuing sections will discuss the core themes with their accompanying sub-themes and categories. Discussion will be supported by direct quotations from

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>SUB-THEMES</th>
<th>CATEGORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Theme 2: Impact of gangsterism | 2.1. Increased criminal activity due to presence of gangs | 2.2. Non-gang members getting injured during gang fights  
2.3. Being labelled a gangster and victimised for staying in the same area as gangsters |
| Theme 3: Factors contributing to gangsterism | 3.1. Economic factors | 3.1.1. Low socio-economic status of family and community  
3.1.2. Unemployment |
|                              | 3.2. Social factors                     |                                                                           |
|                              | 3.3. Political factors                  | 3.3.1. Political interference  
3.3.2. History of apartheid |

| Theme 4: Protective factors | 4.1. Benefits of family support | 4.1.1. Values and principles  
4.1.2. Strict parents  
4.1.3. Having a father present  
4.1.4. Gangs should not replace family systems |
|                            | 4.2. Influence of the church/faith/religion | 4.2.1. Spiritual encounters  
4.2.2. Role of the church |
|                            | 4.2. Influence of positive role models | 4.3.1. Fathers  
4.3.2. Older siblings  
4.3.3. Teachers  
4.3.4. Spiritual leaders  
4.3.5. From the broader community |
|                            | 4.4. Fatherhood                         |                                                                           |
|                            | 4.5. Education                          |                                                                           |
4.6.2. Other extra-mural activities |
participants’ interviews which will be discussed and contextualised within the body of knowledge available—specifically, reference to relevant literature will be provided.

4.4.1 Theme 1: Experience of gangsterism

Participants reflected on their experience of gangsterism on a micro, meso and macro level. The ecological systems model explicitly emphasises the role or impact of the various layers (micro, meso and macro) on the individual’s functioning (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The resilience model expands on this notion; referring to the effect the various systems have on strengthening individual resilience (Masten & Powell, 2003:4; Seccombe, 2002:385).

Participants all shared their views on how they perceived and experienced the phenomenon of gangsterism in their respective communities. They reflected on their experiences of restrictions on their movement within the community, particularly due to gang-related shootings. They also expressed their surprise and disgust with the type of gangs prevalent in their communities at present, and with the manner in which the gangs behave. Participants compared the gangs of the past (whom they claimed still had a sense of “respect” when it came to elderly and church people) to the present gangs (who do not show any respect, causing children and bystanders to be killed in gang crossfires.) Participants’ views are contained in the discussions of the sub-themes that follow.

4.4.1.1 Sub-theme 1.1. Lack of freedom/restricted movement

Participants shared the view that the lack of freedom and restricted movement in their own communities reduced their quality of life. The incidence of random and frequent gang shootings caused participants to stay at home rather than go out. They explained it as follows:

Participant A: ...jy kan jou nie self geniet selfie, al is jy by n social event, dan moet jy nou worry, hoe gaan jy by die huis kom, of gaan ek veilig by die huis kom? (You can’t enjoy yourself, even if it’s a social event, because you have to worry about whether you will reach home safely)
Participant A: …*jy kanie by die straat af loopie, jy moet altyd kyk wie kom aan, watte kar kom op of verby jou en uh, jy voel baie onrustig. Jy hetie die vermoe om jou vryheid te belie nie*… (*you can’t walk down the street without always having to look behind you at passing cars, feeling uneasy, not being able to enjoy freedom of movement*…)

Participant B: … *there was a time I couldn’t even go to work because of gangsterism violence.*

When expressing themselves with regards to the restriction of movement in their own communities due to the presence of gangs and gang activities, the reactions of the participants pointed to, amongst other things that they were extremely tired of the issue of gangsterism in their communities. They wanted solutions to put an end to gangsterism; some research participants expressed willingness to play a part to achieve those solutions. Participants displayed various emotions, such as anger, frustration, fear and feeling unsafe. One participant, (Participant B) reported that there was a time that he felt like inviting all the gangsters to the stadium and bombing them.

Participant B: *There was a time when I actually felt that they should all just be invited to the stadium and be bombed!*

This indicated the extreme frustration of participants with the fact that the phenomenon of gangsterism continued to grow in the community unabated.

Another aspect that stood out from the participants’ responses was their frustration at being robbed, from being able to have social lives and moving freely in their respective communities:

Participant A: *uh dit is rerag problematic, uh want jy is, voel unsafe wa ever jy gaan, uh, jy kanie by die straat af loopie, jy moet altyd kyk wie kom aan, watte kar kom op of verby jou en uh, jy voel baie onrustig. Jy hetie die vermoe om jou Vryheid te belie nie, vernaam inie noordelike gebied wat ons bly en uh,*
dit, dit raak onse leefwyse. (uh, it's really problematic, uh because you are, you feel unsafe wherever you go, you can't walk down the street, you have to always look who's approaching, who drives past you and uh, you feel restless. You don't have the ability to enjoy your freedom, especially in the Northern Areas where we stay, and it impacts our lives)

They also expressed being tired of living in constant fear, for the safety of their families and children as well as themselves. Participants felt that gangsterism was getting out of hand. Chappell, Peterson and Joseph (cited in Magidi, 2014:46) confirm that living in fear prevents people from socialising and may affect individual longevity and relationships with the community. The authors report that people end up being afraid to go outside because they feel they might become the next victim, either deliberately or accidentally (Chappell, Peterson & Joseph, cited in Magidi, 2014:46).

The inability of research participants to participate in community events or go places without restriction, because of the presence of gangs, hinders the development of positive relationships between the various social systems—such as those of individuals, families, peers and the broader community. This affects the meso-level interactions between the micro level systems to such an extent that there is no social cohesion amongst community members (Magidi, 2014:46).

Despite the expression of such negative emotions towards the phenomenon of gangsterism and its impact on their social functioning, it should be noted that research participants still managed to adapt and function in the midst of such adverse circumstances. It can be noted that regardless of all the reported restrictions on movement the participants reported still being able to do certain things pertaining to their normal routine, such as going to work, school, and church. Drawing from the resilience perspective and the participants' stated views, it can be concluded that the participants interviewed were nonetheless able to create a sense of 'normalcy' for themselves and their families in an 'abnormal' environment (Masten and Powell (2003:4).
4.4.1.2 Sub-theme 1.2. Emotions regarding change in the type and behaviour of gangs

Participants expressed their feelings regarding the type of gangs that were currently prevalent in their communities, as well as the behaviour of contemporary gangs in comparison to those operating when they were growing up. They described the behaviour of gangs at present as extremely violent and disrespectful. One participant had the following to say:

Participant C: …gangs were not as violent as their practices has been of late, gangs still had a fair sense of, I would say, perverse decency, they had respect for old people, you know those sort of example of asie ou mense verby kom, sit die ouens hulle bottelkoppe weg: “hallo auntie”. If the elderly passed by them, they would put away their bottle necks [weapons] and greet them.

Other participants concurred:

Participant D: And, uhm, at that time when I was growing up, we had gangsters then, by that time there was like a conduct amongst the gangsters, so-called gangsters: “don’t, leave the old people, leave the children, leave the women, and don’t bother people who don’t bother you.” So, we grew up in that environment of respect, I would say, but there’s currently no respect for life, none whatsoever, uh, even in the area where I live, it’s very dangerous…

Participant E: …we grew up here, there was no such things like these things, because there was fighting, there was crime, but the people that was fighting, that was involved in gangsterism, they were people that was respectful and they had respect for others. Nowadays the young boys that are running up and down with guns, they don’t have respect even for older people; they don’t have respect even in their own houses.
Strong emotions were expressed by research participants with regard to the type of gangs in their respective communities, and their unacceptable behavior, and ranged between surprise, disgust, anger and frustration. Many of the participants reflected on the type of gangs that existed when they were growing up, pointing out that at least those gangs had a sense of ‘respect’ to stop their fighting when they would see elderly or church people passing by. Participants frequently compared the old and new type of gangs, attributing positive qualities to the gangs operating when they were growing up. In contrast, contemporary gangs were viewed as having no respect for life in general.

Berns (2007:415) states that change over time in the macro system, which is referred to as the Chrono system in the ecological systems model, can affect the status quo within the micro, meso and other parts of the system. This should be noted when considering research participants’ comparison between the gangs prevalent when they were growing up and contemporary gangs. The change in the type and behavior of gangs might be attributed directly to changes in the macro system over time in the respective communities. Socio-political changes in the macro system, such as the disintegration of the family system, and changes in population density, technology, and the role the media plays, as well as changes in cultural and religious belief systems, are contributing factors to change in the Chrono system (Berns, 2007:405).

Another change in the macro system that could have contributed to the change in the type and behavior of current gangs is the easy accessibility and availability of drugs and weapons at present, which might not have been the case with the gangs of old. In the past, gangs were viewed as groups of young men that were defending their territory and were known for settling their disputes through fist fights and knives. However, solving disputes between gangs, according to World Bank Institute (2000), has evolved to use of sophisticated weaponry such as guns. More firearms are now noticeable in places where there were formerly regular, traditional street fights (Odzer, 2011:185).

Attention should also be paid to the fact that gangs are a social grouping (dysfunctional) under the micro layer of the ecological systems model, but the bi-
directional influence of this system on the rest of the layers—the meso and macro layers—should not be ignored (Berns, 2007; Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Negative factors used by gangs to manipulate communities for their own personal gains, such as intimidation, may result in community members fearing the gangs. This fear is further fueled by the media’s portrayal of gangs as notorious and violent (Herald, 13 July, 2016; Herald, 9 January, 2017). Despite these and other negative factors experienced by individuals living in communities affected by gangsterism, the resilience portrayed by such individuals should not be ignored, especially the fact that they have been able to survive in the midst of adversity for so many years (Weakley, 2006:4).

4.4.1.3. Sub-theme 1.3. Murder of siblings due to gang involvement

One of the participants painfully recalled how the sudden death of his eldest brother, due to his involvement in gangs, caused him and his family tremendous loss and led to his decision to never get involved in gangs himself. The participant reflected as follows:

*Participant F:* Yeah, because what I want to tell you, is that, my one, my elder brother, he was shot ne, he was killed… the police there at Louis Lagrange, they tell us how he picked up the parts of his head, because they shoot him point blank! Man; that was also a thing for me to decide what to do….

The participant continued to reflect on why this made him decide to never get involved in gangs:

*Participant F:* Because my brother was involved in many things… The morning the police came with his friends, because they caught his friends, but they killed him. And that’s where I start to think twice, hey, I can’t do that, I don’t want to be part of that, I want to do my own thing.
The participant expressed sadness and regret that his brother had to lose his life. He shared his sense of guilt that he was powerless to prevent it from happening, because he was only 15 years old at the time. Erikson (1968:18) refers to this age as the most vulnerable phase in an individual’s life, where one is still seeking to establish his/her own identity. He goes further by saying that if the adolescent does not succeed in forming a strong identity rooted in family, race or ideology, adulthood becomes very difficult, with genuine intimacy being almost impossible and stable long-term relationships unlikely (Erikson, 1968:118).

The participant regretted the loss of an older brother that was a role model to him—Irrespective of his gang involvement—as his brother provided a form of income for his family. In effect, this not only led to the loss of his brother, but also a loss of income needed by the family to survive. The death of his brother also caused sudden changes in the family. The participant reported that he had to move to live with his grandmother for safety reasons and that his mother was hospitalised with sudden illness brought on by the death of his brother.

The participant spoke about the positive impact of staying with his grandmother and how this exposed him to religion and church. Participating in church activities would later serve as a protective shield for him, as he ended up becoming a minister:

Participant F: …when I engaged with my granny and I stayed with my granny, my cousin was there, my mother’s sister’s daughter was there, we stayed together and she was also serving God at (names the church) and she was the one, further on from there, she raised me up, going to Sunday school, going to the youth and that. There it transformed, God took charge of me and He just transformed me into a better person.

It could be argued that, even though he had to face extreme adverse circumstances at a very young age, his inherent individual resilience, as well as the positive support systems in the micro layer of his life in the form of his grandmother, protected the participant and prevented him from also becoming involved in gangsterism (Berns, 2007; Masten & Powell, 2003; Bronfenbrenner, 1979).
Although the sudden removal from living with his mother to stay with his grandmother following the death of his brother could have had a very negative impact on his life, it turned out to be a catalyst in protecting him from a life of gangsterism.

Participant F: …*when I engaged with my granny and I stayed with my granny, God took charge of me and He just transformed me into a better person.*

Aside from the support of his grandmother and others, for example, his niece who took him to prayer and bible study sessions, he had support from some young people he met at church.

The positive change in the life of this research participant also extended to the home environment, in so far as living in his grandmother’s house was more structured. There were rules, and there was a more stable income in the form of her monthly pension. In contrast, in his previous home he reported that everyone could just come and go as they pleased; there was no steady income apart from what the eldest brother contributed from his involvement in gangsterism.

The account given by this research participant of the consequences of his brother’s death clearly points to the bi-directional relationships and influences the various systems in the meso layer have on each other, depending of course on the quality of these relationships. In the case of this specific participant, the relationships within his grandmother’s home enhanced his individual resilience, as well as provided a buffer/protective measure against gang involvement in the midst of the adversity the family was faced with (Berns, 2007:23; Masten & Powell, 2003:4; Seccombe, 2002:385).

For Participant F, the death of his brother changed his attitude towards gangsterism. He decided that he did not want to become involved in or be part of gang activities and developed a total abhorrence towards gangs and gangsterism as a whole. This response from the participant contradicts the findings of various studies which report that youths with familial involvement in gangs are more at-risk of becoming involved in gangs and gang-related delinquent behaviour (Wijnberg, 2012:3; Thornberry,
4.4.2. Theme 2: Impact of gangsterism

Participants attested to the impact that gangsterism had on their lives as individuals, their families and the community at large. This correlates with the Ecological Systems Model which claims that what happens in one part of a system, also impacts other parts of that system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The three sub-themes that emanated from consideration of the impact of gangsterism are: (i) increased criminal activity due to presence of gangs, (ii) non-gang members getting injured during gang fights, and (iii) being labelled a gangster and victimised for staying in the same area as gangsters. These sub-themes, with supporting verbatim quotations, will be discussed in the ensuing sub-sections.

4.4.2.1. Sub-theme 2.1. Increased criminal activity due to presence of gangs

Participants reflected on how the presence of gangs in their immediate surroundings caused them to be constantly fearful and anxious that anything illegal could happen at any time, just for the mere fact that gang presence is directly linked to criminal activities. They were also frustrated that their day-to-day routine had to be controlled or even disrupted by the constant presence of these gangs. The intensity of their expressed emotions regarding this was very high. These are their reflections:

Participant B: …there was a time that I couldn't even go to work because of gangsterism violence.
Participant A: Toe’t ek studeer het ok, ek het laat vanie kampus af gekom ok, dan staan die ouens so inie straat in, jy weet, jy word bang, joe, gan ek nou veilig by die huis kom? (When I was still studying, I used to come home a bit late from class and the gangsters used to hang around the street, you know you get scared: “Am I going to get home safely?”)

The accounts given by the research participants provided an indication that they were very troubled and traumatised by the constant presence of gangs in their immediate surroundings. They were scared of being targeted by the gangs, by being robbed or mugged, or of being killed by a stray bullet:

Participant B: So, but there’s crossfire’s, there’s drive-bys and all those type of things, it will obviously bring a sense of fear in your life.

The research participants were experiencing similar effects to those identified by Berns (2007), since the persistent presence of gangs in their immediate surroundings also violated their personal space and desired privacy. In addition, high population density in their respective communities meant that the participants had no choice but to have excessive social contact with gangs.

However, despite exposure to adversity, the participants continued with their daily lives and coped under adverse circumstances, drawing from intrapersonal, interpersonal and community resources. Their individual resilience and family support were amongst the resources cited that they could draw from, as well as the religious and other organisations they were affiliated to on a community level.

This correlates with the findings of Weakly (2006:5) who reports that resilience in a high-risk community is related to the use of intrapersonal, interpersonal and community resources.

4.4.2.2. Sub-theme 2.2. Non-gang members getting injured during gang fights

Some of the participants reflected on innocent bystanders who had recently become victims of gang fights and random gang shootings in their communities:
Participant A: "...baie skietery wat in die noordelike gebied gebeur, was baie onskuldige mense betrokke... (In many of the shooting incidents happening in the northern areas, many innocent people got hurt...)

Participant F: "...for me I will say that, because the children, also the children that’s going to school, coming out of school, they are the vulnerable ones that can be hurt in the shootings and whatever related, gang-related issues is in the area.

Participants expressed a range of responses—including sadness, frustration, anger, disgust and pity—to the killing of innocent bystanders and children as a result of gang violence in their respective communities. They also expressed sadness and pity towards the families of those killed in the cross fire of gang shootings. This correlates with what Sanders (2017:15) wrote about gangs in San Diego performing random drive-by shootings without taking into consideration that there could be innocent bystanders or children in the immediate surroundings. (CR Chapter two, page 26-27)

The above reports raise, again, the question as to how people staying in communities where innocent family members are being killed manage to cope and survive against all odds. It would seem from available literature on resilience (Weakly, 2006; Masten & Powell, 2003; Seccombe, 2002), as well as the participant’s articulations, that the inherent resilience of the individuals helps them to cope amidst the adverse challenges they are faced with.

4.4.2.3. Sub-theme 2.3. Being labelled a gangster and victimised for staying in the same area as gangsters

One participant reflected on and expressed his unhappiness at the fact that he was being labelled as a gangster and victimised for just staying in the same area where the gangsters also reside. Notably, the emotions expressed by the participant were intense, because he felt stigmatised and discriminated against because of the surroundings he came from, even though he had no involvement in gangs or gang activities whatsoever. He reflected as follows:
Participant B: *In the area where I stay it's basically, if you are a guy who dresses well, you have tattoos on your body and you have money; you are associated with a gang, even though you just live in the area. So, if you stay where I stay exactly I have to be careful when I walk out, because people tend to think I'm part of a gang, because I live in the area, I'm living close where they are.*

Participant B: *So basically, couple of months back there was this gang war from the gangsters on top versus the gangsters where I'm staying and obviously the gangsters on top know that we all stay there and I was a bit scared to drive past the other gangsters because they know I stay there. And then I just decided that I'm gonna go to them and say 'guys you know I'm not involved in these things, I just stay there, I work and you guys know that.***

The participant expressed disappointment that people would make assumptions about others based on where they stay and label or stigmatise them before getting to know them personally. The participant also felt it unfair, as well as unsafe, to have to go to rival gangs to verify that just because they (the participant) stays in the same area as the gang’s rivals does not mean that they are also part of that gang. The participant felt that he placed his life at risk through having to do that.

Despite the emotions of anger and disappointment (amongst other things) expressed by the participant, he was still able to draw from his inherent resilience and the values he had been taught in his family to be able to deal with and withstand the stigmatisation, discrimination and victimisation that came with being unjustly labelled a gangster. This evidence finds support in Masten’s (2001:233) definition of resilience as ‘the class of phenomenon’ that is characterised by good outcomes in spite of serious threats to adaptation or development.
4.4.3. Theme 3: Factors contributing to gangsterism

Participants reflected on and acknowledged that there exist certain factors that contribute to the phenomenon of gangsterism in their communities. Amongst those they cited were economic, social and political factors, which will be discussed below.

Sub-theme 4.4.3.1. Economic factors

Economic factors were one of the first contributing factors to gangsterism pointed out by one of the participants. The participant linked this to the low socio-economic status of the family and community, as well as to unemployment. His reflection is further elaborated upon under the category below.

Category 4.4.3.1.1. Low socio-economic status of family and community

One of the participants indicated that gangsterism is fuelled by a combination of low economic status, inequality and status frustration, specifically pointing to the low socio-economic status of families as well as the community at large:

Participant C: A lot of it has to do with the history of economics and of power. So giving young people the opportunity to access economic power and participation in a sense of being in gangs is a form of identity.

The participant’s view was that gangs will always exploit opportunities to evade the law when it comes to illegal ways of making money. The participant also felt that gangs will always be able to manipulate communities for their own personal gain, because they had seen that it worked. According to the participant, not only are these economic factors part of the root causes of gangsterism, they also play a major role in sustaining gangs. Gangs operate within communities affected by poverty, where they become providers of the basic needs of many people in the form of food, payment of rent and school fees. It was therefore not surprising that a woman from Valhalla Park, Cape Town, shouted on the arrest of Colin Stansfield (a well-known leader at that time of the gang known as The Firm) in 2000: “Wie gaan
nou vir ons kinders sorg?” [Who will take care of our children now?] (MacMaster, 2007:284).

Considering that most of the participants in the study were either employed, or had some form of tertiary education, at the time of the interviews, it could be argued that having an employment opportunity or opportunity to further their studies had served as a protective factor in preventing these participants from also getting involved in gangsterism as a means of survival.

Wallace, Patchin and May (2005:106) points to the discrepancy between having high economic aspirations and a lack of means as a drive to engage in criminal activities and join gangs. Gangs are therefore seen as a means to achieve those aspirations collectively which people cannot attain on their own because of a lack of access to financial opportunities. In addition, Berns (2007:409) points out that failure to address the economic needs of families, especially the threat of poverty, leads to social consequences affecting individuals, families and the whole community. These social consequences, in turn, impose enormous costs on the community, including expenditures for treatment of illnesses and chronic health conditions, special education, foster care, prisons and welfare (Berns, 2007:409).

**Category 4.4.3.1.2. Unemployment**

The issue of unemployment was also amongst the contributing factors some participants cited as being responsible for gangsterism in their communities:

> Participant F: From my point of view, I will say unemployment is the key in gangsterism in Helenvale, in the areas where we live in the community. If people are not working, they turn to gangsterism…

> Participant E: But here in Helenvale it’s mostly the contribution of unemployment…

Community economics, specifically unemployment, is related to how children in families are socialised. There is evidence that economic hardship threatens the
psychological well-being of parents and undermines their capacity for supportive child rearing. When parents have difficulty coping financially and share their problems with their children, children experience increased psychological distress (McLoyd, 1998; McLoyd & Wilson, 1990), cited in (Berns, 2007:409).

Unemployment, as experienced in different neighbourhood settings, has different connotations and hence different effects on children. Neighbourhoods plagued with high levels of joblessness tend to have high levels of crime, gang violence and drug trafficking (Berns, 2007:409). Cooley (2011:911) found that the unemployment and underemployment crisis in Chicago convinced many boys and men to permanently turn to ‘outlaw capitalism’ as an alternative.

The stated views of participants of this study revealed that the issue of unemployment does not only affect those unemployed adults in families, but it cuts across all levels of the ecological systems model—from the macro, down to the micro level. However, the element of individual resilience which was enabled by strong family support systems cannot be ignored when taking into consideration that the communities in which participants lived have been existing for many years and have survived despite the challenges of poverty and unemployment so prevalent within them.

4.4.3.2. Sub-theme 3.2. Social factors

One of the participants felt that, because families benefit from gangsterism, parents—specifically mothers—will never make any attempt to stop their children’s involvement in gangs and gang related activities. He shared that he felt parents directly contributed to gangsterism, especially in his community. He reflected as follows:

*Participant G: But the simple solution to the problem stops by ons as ouers. Want dit isie mense wat basies die problem complicate en wat ek noem die major contributor towards die crime. (But the simple solution to the problem stops with us as parents. Because they are the people that*
basically complicate the problem more and what I call the major contributors towards the issue of crime.)

Uhm, wane n outjie gan kom, hy gan in twelve most probably inbreek, metie understanding; sy look of warped understanding dat twelve se mense ‘better off’ is, which I don’t believe, en hy gan breek in en hy steel whatever, let’s say flat screen TV en ‘n paar electronics en hy verkoop dit, ek meen die first thing wat ek gan vra as ‘n ouer, wa kom jy anie geld, jy werkie, wa kom jy anie tekkies en they don’t care, daai mannetjie sal twee drie honderd rand in sy ma se hand sit en like, we go on. (When a young boy comes home after breaking in and he steal—let’s say a flat screen TV and a few electronics—and sells it, the first thing I would ask as a parent is where he gets the money from, knowing that he doesn’t work. But if that boy gives his mother a two or three hundred rand, it’s fine)

The sentiment of the participant was shared by Community Safety MEC Dan Plato of the Western Cape in the Athlone Newspaper (17 September 2016) when he was reported to have said that mothers were key to keeping children out of crime. He went further by saying that once mothers changed their attitudes, communities would change. Plato is reported to have said:

If your son is a hit man, he is a killer; a hit man is a beautiful name for a killer. If your son has a gun in the house and you say nothing about it, you are agreeing with what he is doing. Drugs and gangs are ripping our communities apart. (Athlone News, 17 September, 2016).

The strong emotions expressed by the participant included disappointment, anger, disgust and frustration that parents, especially mothers, could allow their children to become involved in gangs and gang activities for the sole purpose of benefitting from it. The participant felt that these mothers had no regard for the lives and income lost by the victims of their children. According to the participant, it seemed as if the negative potential consequences of gang involvement were not considered, as long as the family can benefit from the criminal activities their children involve themselves.
in. The participant expressed that if parents stand up for what they know is right, gangsterism can easily be curbed or minimised in their community.

A recent South African study by Owen and Greeff (2015:13-18) cited factors ranging from material gain, availability of alcohol or drugs and access to a position of dominance, to the ability to be able to survive financially as external factors drawing young adolescent boys to join gangs. This would appear to confirm the participant’s view. Alagappar, Len, George, Lee & Wong (2005:4) also found that young people without proper upbringing, bad surroundings, negative family environment and social influence, as well as those in need of material goods and money, are amongst those more likely to join gangs. According to the Victim Services and Crime Prevention Unit operating under the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General in Vancouver, parents are able to show their children that status and a good life can be achieved through legitimate means: careers, trades, sports, and the arts (Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Victim Services and Crime Prevention, 2011:13).

Taking into consideration again the bi-directional influences of the various systems in the meso level on the development of the individual, the relationship between parent and child comes to the fore. The family functions as a system of interaction and the way it conducts personal relationships has a very powerful effect on the psychosocial development of children (Berns, 2007:55). Reflecting on what the participant said about mothers directly contributing to their children’s involvement in gangsterism because of them benefitting from it, this becomes even more apparent that the influence of these mothers on their children involved in gangsterism plays a role in them either continuing or quitting the life of crime, based on their mother’s relationship and influence on them (Berns, 2007:409; Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

4.4.3.3. Sub-theme 3.3. Political factors

Participants also cited political factors contributing to gangsterism in their respective communities. The categories of political interference as well as the history of Apartheid will be reflected on below.
Category 4.4.3.3.1. Political interference

One participant cited political interference as a contributing factor to gangsterism, especially in the Helenvale community. He claimed that political interference complicates gangsterism as the issue is being politicised by politicians and used to score votes. He mentioned that if someone comes up with a workable solution to the issue of gangsterism, their ideas will be shot down if he/she is not affiliated to the “right” political party:

*Participant G:* Uhm, ek dink uhm, die problem met Helenvale se gang-related problems compared to the other areas, is baie complicated, hieso word alles ge-politicise.” (Uhm, I think the gang-related problem of Helenvale is very complicated compared to other areas, here everything is being politicised)

Unfortunately, if I belong to a certain organisation, even if I come with the greatest, the most brilliant idea, they will look at me: ‘oh no, he’s from the ANC,’ swipe it (making swipe moves with hands), or ‘no, he’s from the DA’, swipe it and that’s the complicated part of, of our gang, gang problem here in Helenvale. So, (sigh)…

The participant came across as feeling helpless, powerless and at a loss for words with regards to what he calls political interference or a certain bias to a specific political affiliation when attempting to address the issue of gangsterism, particularly in his community.

Category 4.4.3.3.2. History of Apartheid

One participant also reflected that the history of Apartheid played a huge role in contributing to the existence of gangs, with particular reference to the forced removals that led to the existence of such communities like Schauderville and Helenvale:

*Participant C:* Apartheid had a very particular outcome, a very particular nuance to it, because they use laws to oppress and to subjugate uh and
in that process making illegal any other forms of resistance. So, the uh, the quid pro quo for apartheid has been an increase in this and the system that you then operate under in anti-apartheid environment system of navigating legal mechanisms to achieve a just and moral outcome, but you do so via illegal means, sometimes you are prepared to sacrifice that.

Knox and Monaghan (2001:91) (cited in Jonas, 2015:12) describe South Africa as a ‘crimo-generic society’, the origins of which can be traced back to its Apartheid past. By this the authors mean that the violent legacy of South Africa’s past and the transgressions of Apartheid laws has, to some extent, justified the concept of crime ‘as a means to an end’ in the eyes of the general public. Political liberation in 1990 brought a crime explosion as social controls were loosened and certain new opportunities opened up for the growth of criminal activity. Rising crime is related to political, social and economic trends which took root before the formal political transition to democracy but the trend was accentuated by it. Louw and Shaw (1997:3) suggest that crime rates in black townships have been high for years, but that racial segregation largely insulated whites from its effects.

The erosion and then collapse of apartheid boundaries allowed crime to move out of the townships and into the suburbs, where it is more likely to be recorded (Louw & Shaw, 1997:3). Pinnock (2007:115) expands on this view by explaining that gangs in South Africa came about as a result of poverty and Apartheid’s massive social divide. With this view, just like after the great depression on an international level, gangs in South Africa can be said to have formed as a result of increased poverty and, specifically, in the context of Apartheid. It could be said that poverty and Apartheid changed the order of society. Given the segregation laws that were formerly imposed in South Africa, which lead to high poverty in mainly Black, Colored and Indian ethnic groups; it therefore becomes relevant to consider the social ills and racial divide as relevant elements that contributed towards the formation of gangs in South Africa (Pinnock, 2007:115).

It is evident from study participants’ views that the so-called previously disadvantaged communities that came into existence due to the enforcement of
segregation laws in the Apartheid regime, had to turn to illegal means of survival. Amongst other strategies, this led to the formation of gangs so as to adapt to the macro system influences such as those of economics, political ideology and technology (Berns, 2007:103; Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Over years of staying in communities plagued by poverty, unemployment and other social challenges such as gangsterism, it is commendable how these individuals have still been able to survive and sustain them over time, drawing on their own personal means and ways of resilience in the face of all these social challenges.

4.4.4. Theme 4: Protective factors

In line with the last objective of the study, participants were asked to reflect on the protective factors they experienced as buffering them against becoming involved in gangsterism. Fraser and Terzian (2005) indicate that ‘protective factor’ refers to any circumstance or resource that minimises the impact of risk and contributes to growth-orientated developmental outcomes. Protective factors in this research are those individual, family, school and community factors that help to promote positive personal assets, protect the individual from potential negative effects of the risk factors which, in this case, are becoming involved in gangsterism.

The Ecological systems model posits that an individual’s development is enhanced in the micro and meso systems if the relationships amongst the microsystems are consistent and positive (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner (1979) contends that factors in the person’s environment interact with an individuals’ internal behavioural, and cognitive and emotional make-up, and influence the way a person acts, thinks and feels, and, ultimately, the way in which they function and develop. In line with this view, participants identified factors within the micro and the meso systems that acted as buffering mechanisms.

Research participants’ reflections regarding the factors that served as protective shields included the benefits of family support, the influence of the church/faith/religion, the influence of positive role models, and fatherhood, education
and participation in wholesome pursuits. These factors are discussed as sub-themes in the following sections.

**4.4.4.1. Sub-theme 4.1: Benefits of family support**

Participants spoke about the support they received from their families during challenging times. For some of the participants, the support from family meant that they were raised with the right values and principles that would make a difference in the choices they make in life:

Participant B: ...also the values and stuff that has been set in the household, if there's no values, you tend to have no life! Ja.

Participant D: Ja and also it's the principles my father taught me.

For others, family support meant that the fact that their parents or caregivers raised them very strictly helped them in their decision not to become involved in gangsterism:

Participant E: I would say parenting, parenting in our days, it was very strict.

The following reflections bear testimony to these observations.

**Category 4.4.4.1.1. Values and principles**

Many participants attributed the fact that they never got involved in gangs or gang-related activities to the values, morals and principles they were taught in their households whilst growing up. For example:

Participant G: ...personally in my life or in my brothers’ lives; we, because we believe we were raised the correct way...
More participants confirmed this by reflecting on the role discipline, self-respect and the ability to be content with one’s reality played in their upbringing. Participants shared the following:

Participant E: *It wasn’t like that, that’s how we learned that it’s not about having things and being part of gangsterism that will bring you these brand name things in life, it’s about being respectful, it’s about being obedient to your parents… Self-respect and discipline and it started in my house, my mother and my father. That’s the thing that prevents me from doing, or being part of a gang. And the rules; the commandments…*

Participant B: *…also the values and stuff that has been set in the household, if there’s no values, you tend to have no life! Ja.*

Participant D: *Ja and also it’s the principles my father taught me.*

Participants’ reflections clearly indicated that they were guided by the values and principles taught to them by their parents when they were growing up; they believe that without these values and principles, they could have ended up very different people as adults.

A study by Daniels and Adams (2010:45) reports that morals and family values were amongst the factors that discouraged youth from becoming involved in gangs. The quality of the interrelations and bi-directional influences in the meso level of an individual’s development plays a pivotal role in that particular individual’s socialisation and identity formation. This is due to socialisation outcomes being affected by many variables, such as those related to biological, sociocultural, and interactional factors (Berns, 2007; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The values and principles that were instilled in the participants when growing up can therefore be seen as protective factors that prevented them from becoming involved in gangsterism. Drawing from the resilience model, it can be argued that these values provided an enhanced resilience in the participants to be able to resist gang involvement or involvement in any anti-social activities or behaviour.
Category 4.4.4.1.2. Strict parents/caregivers

Participants showed appreciation for the fact that their parents brought them up in a strict manner. They specifically referred to the rules that were implemented in their homes and the manner in which their parents enforced these rules. They believed that this contributed to them not being interested in gang involvement whilst growing up. This is how they reflected:

Participant A: ...ek het baie streng ouers gehad, dankie Vader ve dit! Ek kosie laat inie huis in gekom in, ek moet al 8 o'clock al wasie rules gewees... (I had very strict parents, thank God for that! I couldn't come home late at night; I had to be home by 8 o'clock that was the rules.)

Other participants said the following:

Participant E: I would say parenting, parenting in our days, it was very strict.

Participant B: If I had a choice, I would have been a gangster, but because of my mother's backbone, I was just like: “eish, my mother's gonna moer me!”(Laughs) put it that way! Basically if my mother didn't have a strong backbone, I would've probably been a gangster!

Considering the utterances made by participants, it seemed clear that they did not regret growing up with strict parents or parenting. Participants showed appreciation for the manner in which their parents raised them. Some participants attributed their non-involvement in gangs directly to this fact and confirmed that it definitely served as a protective factor against becoming involved in gangs and gang activities.

Berns (2007:130) reflects on the macro system influences on parenting to provide an understanding of political, cultural, socioeconomic and ethnic/religious values or practices that, indirectly, have contributed to children’s socialisation and development. She states that, in the past, an autocratic traditional family system order was followed where the father was the authority who had power over the
mother and children. Berns (2007:131) claims that in many countries this has been replaced by a democratic modern family system, where the rights of all family members are now being considered. This attributed to the macro system influences on parenting over time. These statements by Berns (2007) might be considered valuable when looking at how the youth of today respond to authority figures, based on the manner that they have been socialised in their respective families and other variables in the macro system. This must be considered when looking at the manner in which the participants of this particular study were raised to obey and respect authority figures, starting from their own parents in the house, spreading to the broader community and society as a whole.

**Category 4.4.4.1.3. Having a father present**

Participants spoke about how most of them were fortunate to have their fathers present in their lives, not only physically but also as role models, guiding them into becoming the men they are today. Participants’ memories of this made some of them very nostalgic when speaking about their fathers. One of the participants reflected on how important his father’s approval always was to him. These were their reflections:

Participant C: *I loved my father dearly and I think his approval of me was, without a doubt the biggest thing. …but my father’s moral authority in the family, his quiet uhm ways, I never wanted to disappoint him… So, he was a non-smoking, non-drinking, non-swearing man, uh very Biblical, loved old people and always cared for others. I’ve never ever met a person that had something negative to say about my dad.*

Another participant also said:

Participant D: *…my father said; I’m always gonna refer to my father, because he’s the most important person in my life. As you get older you realise that, all the things your father has taught you, you using it now for your children you know?*
Participant H: *The first thing was, was my father. My father was a no nonsense man. I've watched my father beat up gangsters left, right and centre, uhm, just because they were either rude in front of him, or because they were targeting weak people in front of him; he wouldn't allow that and I saw how, uhm, fierce gangsters respected somebody that wasn't a gangster and so on.*

The manner in which participants spoke about their fathers clearly indicated the very pivotal role fathers played in the lives of the participants, as well as their development and identity formation from adolescents to male adults. It can therefore be assumed that the role of a father is crucial when it comes to the development and identity formation of a child, especially boys, growing up and that it should not be taken for granted that having their fathers in their lives to guide and be role models to them also served as a buffer against gangsterism for these participants.

Various studies, (Richter, Desmond, Hosegood, Madhavan, Makiwane, Makusha, Morrell & Swartz, 2012; Langa, 2010; Richter & Morrell, 2006) confirm the importance of fathers in the lives of their children, stating that the absence of fathers or father figures in the lives of, especially, boys can be detrimental to the type of men they become when they are adults. The presence of their fathers can also be seen as enhancing and nurturing the participant’s inherent resiliency in the face of adversity (Berns, 2007:131; Masten & Powell, 2003:4; Seccombe, 2002:385; Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Various studies, (Wijnberg, 2012; Wood & Alleyne, 2009; Esbensen, Peterson & Taylor, 2009; Ward, 2007), found that youth prone to become involved in gangsterism are those with weak parental attachment and absent fathers. Although Ratele et al. (2012:563) do not directly identify the correlation between the absent parents and gang prevalence, other studies (Boyce, Essex, Alkon, Hill-Goldsmith, Kraemer & Kupfer, 2006; Bronte-Tinkew, Moore, Capps & Zaff, 2006) emphasise the impact of a present father as a powerful tool that leads to reduced psychological stress, positive intellectual development and less anti-social behaviour. The assumption would therefore be that the absent parent, especially fathers, would inevitably lead to increased anti-social behaviour. In this regard it might be joining
gangs, maybe due to increased psychological stress and poor intellectual development which all contribute to motivation to join gangs (Ratele et.al, 2012:563; Boyce et.al, 2006:123; Bronte-Tinkew et.al, 2006:194).

The benefits of family support were also confirmed by Kelly and Ward (2017) who did a study with ex-gang members on the Cape Flats to explore, amongst other things, how former gang members make sense of their gang joining and desistance. Most of the participants cited the support, love and unconditional acceptance from their families, when they came out of prison, as one of the main reasons for them leaving gangs and staying out of gangs and gang activities (Kelly & Ward, 2017).

**Category 4.4.4.1.4. Gangs should not replace family systems**

Participants advised that parents should be cautious and ensure that gangs do not replace their family systems and emphasised the importance of the sense of belonging as well as support provided by family. The commented as follows:

*Participant B:* So, so from that uhm, very unique parental support structure, family support structure, I can say I was very lucky, so definitely that had a huge, you know, a huge role….my personal experience is, if you, if you have family, a support structure, uh if you have communication in your household, that wouldn't happen…

*Participant H:* …gangsterism do provide a sense of belonging and that’s a fact, especially for young boys, but that sense of belonging only lasts until you become a victim within that own gang…

Skiba and Peterson (2000:145) report that gangs’ lifestyles create a mind-set of loyalty, pride and love for youth who are disengaged from their families. They further report that where the youth is coming from a dysfunctional family, in which they may be neglected or do not receive adequate attention from their families, the gang can easily replace the family as a key influential factor. When bonds are created in the gang, these bonds may replace traditional family systems.
The above view is supported by Larson, Smith, and Furlong (2002:1088), who stated that it is very easy for a gang to replace family systems as gang members find a new family system that may be supportive or provide the attention which may have been missing in their traditional family setting. The family bond can therefore enhance positive resiliency factors that will enable an individual to resist the temptation to be drawn into gangs and gang related activities based on these and other responses from participants. The strong family attachment of the participants built resilience in them that served as a buffer against gang involvement (Wijnberg, 2012:3; Wood & Alleyne, 2009:105; Esbensen et.al, 2009:315-317; Ward, 2007:9).

4.4.4.2. Sub-theme 4.2: Influence of the church, faith, or religion

Participants attested to the influence of the church, faith, or religion as a powerful tool to overcome gang involvement. They recounted stories from their childhood and how the foundation of faith and religion laid by their parents has provided a guiding light along their way, up until their adult years.

Participants came from different religious backgrounds, some from the Christian faith and others from the Islamic faith. However, all of them shared the same experience of how their faith or religion and the religious teachings they were raised with, kept them from becoming involved in gangsterism. Categories emanating from this sub-theme were, firstly, religious encounters and, secondly, the role of the church.

Participants reflected as follows:

Participant H: *Uhm I became a Christian when I was 13 years old and I believe for me that was a moment that really gripped me out of such temptations.*

Another participant concurred:

Participant A: *…dit is hoe ek die approach gelewe het inie lewe, van kleins af, Godsdienis, priority number one, asie deur Godsdienis gewees hetie, was ek okie, hoe kan ek se, instaat om vorentoe te ken gaan inie lewe nie, want ha het ek nou my guidelines gekry virie lewe jy weet. (…that is how I always approached life, since I was little; religion, priority*
number one, if it had not been for religion, then I would not have been, how can I put it; able to go forward in life, because there is where I got my guidelines to live my life you know)

Others also confirmed this by saying:

Participant E: That’s how, church is a big, is a big solution and the contribution not to be involved in gangsterism, because if you do things for the church and if you find yourself in the church, then you make yourself happy in the church, then you won’t see the need to join gangsterism.

Participant D: Ja, the main thing also above my father, for me personally, was my firm belief in my religion you know, Islam. You know, it has kept me rooted…

Participants’ reflections indicated that they truly believed that the role their faith or religion played in their lives growing up directly contributed to them never getting involved in gangsterism or gang activities.

Participants displayed strong convictions when it came to their faith and religion that they were raised with, which can be seen in the manner they expressed themselves. A study by MacMaster (2010:258) on the challenge of gangsterism, as experienced by faith-based communities on the Cape Flats, found that the church has always been a source of resilience to the residents, providing them with a sense of hope. Residents cling to their faith as a means of being able to endure any form of traumatic experience they may encounter (Macmaster, 2010:258).

Religious communities may build social capital in part by providing norms, values, and information for young people. Clearly most religious groups articulate proscriptive norms. For instance, they discourage certain lifestyle choices (such as sexual promiscuity, substance use/abuse) and behaviours. Sometimes they sanction such behaviours informally, through social pressure, and at other times overt private or public rebuke is used (Stark, 1996; Grasmick, Bursik, & Cochran, 1991; Thornton
& Camburn, 1989; Cochran, Beeghley & Bock, 1988) cited in (Muller & Ellison, 2001:158). Many religious communities also uphold prescriptive norms, in that they try to promote an understanding of what is expected of young people in the way of spirituality, behaviour, dating, altruism, and civic commitment (Elder & Conger, 2000; Donahue & Benson, 1995; Eklin & Roehlkepartain, 1992 cited in Muller & Ellison, 2001:158). Churches and synagogues are among the few institutions that sustain a coherent focus on issues of character, meaning, and purpose in life. This socialisation may encourage young people to focus on "big picture" concerns, such as what kinds of people they want to become, what long-term goals they have, and how best to accomplish them (Muller & Ellison, 2001:158). Drawing from the Ecological Systems Model as well as the Resilience Model, the church can therefore be seen as one of the most pivotal positive influences in the relational interactions a person has in the meso level of his/her development, as well as a critical enhancer in the building of resilience in an individual’s life so as to be able to cope and deal with adverse situations (Berns, 2007; Masten & Powell, 2003; Seccombe, 2002; Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Category 4.4.4.2.1. Religious encounters

Some of the participants reported that their lives changed for the better and reached a turning point after experiencing certain religious/spiritual encounters. Some described it as ‘a touch by the Holy Spirit’, or a ‘deep level of encountering God in church.’ This is how one participant explained it:

Participant I: Ma, weet jy wat uh Desira; om my die keerpoint, soos ek jou gese het, die keerpoint in my lewe, wasie dag van haai Ash Wednesday, 19…1998 of ’97. Uuhhhmmm…. is 19, ek lieg, 1996. 1996 what you call it; het haai keerpoint gekom in my lewe. Wa ek daarie dag, wat ek kerk toe gaan, (giggles), niemand glo my gewoonlik as ekit se nie, wat ek kerk toe gaan, wat ek begin praat met die Here, ne? Ennnn… ek het uit die kerk uit gekom; daai dag, heeltemal ’n veranderde persoon! (But you know what uh Desira; the turning point in my life was that day of Ash Wednesday, 19… 1998 or ’97. Uuhhhmmm…its 19, I’m lying, 1996, the turning point came in my life. Where I went to church that day; nobody
believes me when I say it; I went to church and I started talking to God. I came out of church that day a totally changed person!)

Another participant said:

Participant B: …if you've experienced God in your life, there's no turning back, because if you've literally experienced the Holy Spirit, you won't be able to stand behind a gun and shoot someone, because the Holy Spirit will convict you, you know what I'm saying? You won't, you won't feel the same again. On a Sunday I've stood in church and then God touched me. I have been touched; I have experienced the Holy Spirit…

The experience of a ‘higher power’ or the Holy Spirit as described by the participants came with great conviction, as they truly believed in its contribution to their decision not to get involved in gangsterism. Religious encounters that caused conversion to Christianity are described by Peel (2003:18) and Kolapo (2000:94) when they speak about the work done by missionaries amongst the Yoruba people in Nigeria. According to the authors, this tribe practised other religious beliefs prior to the visits of the missionaries, but, after experiencing certain spiritual encounters, converted to Christianity (Peel, 2003:18; Kolapo, 2000:94).

**Category 4.4.4.2.2. Role of the Church**

One of the research participants attributed the fact that he never got involved in gangsterism to the active role the church played in the community when he was growing up:

Participant J: And the area was; the area was full.... If you would go on a Wednesday or a Tuesday, Uhh, sometimes Thursday, each and every corner there's church! They had these churches come out and pray and we find our families being there, being prayed for! Nowadays it's no more, because of crime.
The reflections of the participant on the role the church played in society when he was growing up inadvertently again points to the meso level relations of an individual’s life, when taking into consideration the quality of those relations as well as the influences it has on that particular individual, be it positive or negative (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Based on the participant’s reflections, the influence of the church was a positive one when he was growing up, not only to himself, but to the broader community. It can therefore be said that the role of the church those days (and presumably still today) was to enhance the inherent resilience of individuals and families, providing a sense of hope and direction, in the midst of adversity, that things will get better (Masten & Powell, 2003:4; Seccombe, 2002:385).

Macmaster (2010) confirms that the role of the church in the face of gangsterism should be a pertinent one, possibly using ex-gang members as “bridges” to reach out to gangsters. Training in professional counselling for clergy were amongst the recommendations of the study, as well as a stronger focus on child and youth ministry, in order to prevent young people from becoming at-risk to gangs and gang involvement (Macmaster, 2010:258-26). Religious communities may also promote and energise other forms and sources of social capital. Most obviously, many religious communities encourage a heightened sensitivity to the importance of families and their problems (Wilcox, 1998; Thomas, 1988; Thornton, 1985). Churches and synagogues often try to guide and nurture families, with advice on issues pertaining to marriage, parenting, and other topics, conveyed through classes and seminars, literature and pastoral advice (Wilcox (1998) cited in Muller & Ellison, 2001:159; Ellison, Bartkowski & Segal, 1996; Garland & Pancoast, 1990) cited in (Muller & Ellison, 2001:159-161).

Moreover, many congregations sponsor family-support activities directly, thus providing opportunities for parents and their children to spend time together (Caldwell, Green, & Billingsley, 1992; McAdoo & Crawford, 1990) cited in (Muller & Ellison, 2001:159-161). Thus, in various ways, religious communities may stimulate the development of closer parent-child relations (Pearce & Axinn; 1998; Wilcox, 1998 cited in Muller & Ellison, 2001:159-161). For adolescents, this is an especially important source of social capital, in short supply in recent years due to the
multifaceted social and economic pressures on families (Muller & Ellison, 2001:159-161).

4.4.4.3. Sub-theme 4.3. Influence of positive role models

Participants also attributed the fact that they never got involved in gangs or gang related activities to the presence in their lives of role models other than their parents. Participants referred to role models who set an example for them that they could look up to, who encouraged and motivated them to make something of their lives, as well as were concerned for their safety. They mentioned older siblings, teachers, pastors or spiritual leaders and role models from the broader community as having a positive influence on them:

Participant B: Seeing my cousins become this, it obviously creates a yearning inside of me. If you have a cousin that becomes a lawyer, a doctor, it must create something inside of you like, 'I wanna be like that'…

Participant H: The other thing for me is in school, I don't know why, but I can, in every year of my uh-uh-uh of my high school life there was a certain male teacher that really invested in me… throughout my life there were male figures, that’s what I wanna come down to, that encouraged me not to be part of gangsterism and so on.

Category 4.4.4.3.1. Fathers

Participants ascribed their non-involvement in gangs to having their fathers as well as other father figures as role models to look up to, modelling positive behaviour that they could imitate.

Participant D: Ja, it's, I don't actually wanna say predominantly my father, but the father figures around my father, which is my mother's brothers, even my grandfather…

Another participant said:
Participant H: The first thing was, was my father. My father was a no nonsense man. I’ve watched my father beat up gangsters left, right and centre, uhm, just because they were either rude in front of him, or because they were targeting weak people in front of him; he wouldn’t allow that and I saw how, uhm, fierce gangsters respected somebody that wasn’t a gangster and so on.

The above-mentioned correlates with what has been confirmed by researchers such as (Richter, Desmond, Hosegood, Madhavan, Makiwane, Makusha, Morrell & Swartz, 2012) that having a father or father figure present can serve as a protective factor against gang involvement and delinquent behaviour for young adolescent boys. (CR Chapter two, page 32)

Fathers can therefore be regarded as the primary influence on an individual in the micro level that also develops their very first ability to be able to be resilient in adverse situations because of the positive influence of the fathers and modelling of exemplary behaviour. Unfortunately, same can be true if the father’s influence is of a negative kind.

Category 4.4.4.3.2. Older siblings

Some participants ascribed their non-involvement in gangs to the fact that they had older siblings as role models to look up to:

Participant B: Seeing my cousins become this, it obviously creates a yearning inside of me. If you have a cousin that becomes a lawyer, a doctor, it must create something inside of you like,' I wanna be like that', unless, that can only create something inside of you unless you have positive impact on your life.

Participant H: The other factor was my two older brothers; I mean hulle skop ons somme uit mekaar uit as hulle nog dink, as hulle nog hoor ons is besig met n ding, dan slat hulle jou en jy wil mosie aanhou pak kry nie,
verstaan jy, so, they kept me from gangsterism… (They kicked us if they even thought, if they even heard that we were busy with something, then they would hit us and you don't wanna be hit all the time you understand)

Like parents, siblings provide an emotional bond, advice, and assistance. They also model behaviour that adolescents may be inclined to imitate. Adolescents may be more aligned with the views of siblings than with those of parents as they are closer in age (Bryant & Zimmerman, 2003:39).

The Ecological Systems Model confirms the attachment bonds that can form between the various interrelated systems that can have an impact on each other, whether negative or positive. In this case, the positive influences of older siblings can be seen as developing and enhancing positive resiliency in the participants that assisted them in their disinterest to become involved in gangs or gang related activities.

**Category 4.4.4.3.3. Teachers**

Participants praised the teachers that had a positive impact on their lives as they were growing up and attested to the fact that that positive impact also contributed to them not becoming involved in gangs and gang activities.

Participant C: ...*the idea that my teachers; that the people at school actually care for me and actually have an interest in my success, uhm, those things for me were things that I used… So, so, so teachers and again, social schooling… influenced in the choice not to be involved. …my parents never sat with me with my books, I still, I can't recall in my high school that my parents ever bothered with that, uhm, but my teachers did. And their influence, their classroom instruction, their mentorship outside of the classroom, was very important to us as fillers for the rest of your life…*

Another participant:
Participant H: The other thing for me is in school, I don’t know why, but I can, in every year of my uh-uh-uh of my high school life there was a certain male teacher that really invested in me, I mean I can mention their names, it’s incredible when I think about it. I would not be here and not be able to mention those people that were always there… throughout my life there were male figures, that’s what I wanna come down to, that encouraged me not to be part of gangsterism and so on.

The manner in which participants reflected on the positive influence their teachers had on them growing up suggested that they were surprised that somebody other than their biological fathers or relatives could care about where they end up in life. Participants showed great appreciation for the positive contribution made by teachers to them becoming the men they were today. One participant said the fact that the teacher’s mentorship did not end at the classroom door was very important to him, as it taught him lessons that he could take with him for the rest of his life.

This therefore echoes the Ecological Systems Model’s premise that the influences in the messo level play an important part in the development and growth of the individual on the micro level. This then directly refers to the interaction that took place and the relationships that was built between the participants and their teachers on a messo level that had a positive impact on enhancing their already existing resilience or developing resilience within those lacking that type of influence at home.

An article in the Gallup by Linda Lyons, Education and Youth Editor, stressed the importance of male role models in the classroom (Gallup News, 6 August, 2002). According to the author, the lack of male teachers could have far-reaching social implications. This in light of the fact that more and more children are being raised in female-headed households and do not have male counterparts present in their lives, especially young boys. The author goes further to say that other than parents, teachers have the most consistent contact with children and are therefore important role models (Gallup News, 6 August, 2002).
Another article written by Martino (2008) also raised concerns in terms of the fact that a need exists for more male teachers as role models in elementary schools (Martino, 2008:190).

**Category 4.4.4.3.4. Spiritual leaders**

One participant mentioned that having spiritual leaders to look up to and provide guidance was amongst the factors that kept him from becoming involved in gangsterism:

*Participant H: and my youth leaders, they kept me from gangsterism. So basically, I think it’s, there were male role models other than the false role models that are gangsters…*

The participant’s description of his relationship with his youth leaders from his church and other spiritual leaders, such as his pastor, was one of admiration and also aspiration to be like them one day. This is very evident in his attribution of his non-involvement in gangs to his youth leaders. Lazar and Bjorck (2008:406-407) found that because the relationship between young adolescent Israeli Jews and their spiritual leaders continued into adulthood, religious support from spiritual leaders would play an even more important role in predicting positive psychological functioning among Israeli religious individuals when compared with Protestants in the United States. This, the authors claim, is due to Protestants not living in segregated religious communities and thus an individual’s possibilities for regular interaction with spiritual or religious leaders are limited to the clergy or other leaders (Such as elders or Sunday school teachers) of their place of worship (Lazar & Bjorck, 2008:407).

**Category 4.4.4.3.5. The broader community**

Having male role models from the broader community participants stayed in were also amongst the reasons given for them not becoming involved in gangsterism.
Participant D: The positive male role models in the community, I think I, I, I misnamed it earlier when I said the father, the father figures or the fathers in our community, it's actually what you are saying now: positive role models, being male role models in our community. There's not a lot of them, you know, so..

Participant B: I used to take a lot of other people as role models…

Participant C: … There’s one other thing that I’ve forgotten to mention; the influence of people in your street, or in your community uhm, is also a thing that we underrate. Uhm, the guy that helped me get through high school, especially helped me with matric preparation and passing, was my next-door neighbour who was a teacher. …Uhm a neighbour across the street, a man that died many years ago, Uncle Bill, he used to always have time to talk to me, uh whether I knew what he was saying or not, it was just the fact an old man took time.

A study by Daniels and Adams (2010:45) reinforces the above experiences by stating that gangsterism forms a safe backdrop to childhoods characterised by a lack of personal validation in families and the scarcity of suitable role models. Adults play a central role in the socialisation of adolescents. The presence of an adult in an adolescent’s life may be a distinguishing factor between youth who successfully avoid the negative effects of risks they face and those who follow trajectories toward deviance (Werner & Smith, 1982 cited in Bryant & Zimmerman, 2003:36). Identifying certain adults as role models indicates that youth believe that these individuals are worthy of imitation in some respect, and that their attitudes or values are ones they would like to assimilate (Bryant & Zimmerman, 2003:37). Research on mentors and role model interventions offers evidence that adolescents’ relationships with significant adults contribute to their identity development and foster resilience. Bryant & Zimmerman, (2009:37-38) found that, for adolescent male offenders who did not live with their father, having a substitute adult male role model (namely “Big Brother”) was associated with outcomes more similar to those of males with fathers than to those of males with non-resident fathers.
The Ecological Systems Model helps in understanding the influence of the interrelated social systems. Looking up to, admiring, or viewing a significant other in the family as a role model may distinguish resilient youth from more at-risk youth who do not view the adults in their family as worthy of imitation. The presence of positive familial role models may decrease the likelihood that youth will become involved in deviant behaviour and experience psychological distress and academic difficulties (Bryant & Zimmerman, 2003:38, 41).

4.4.4.4. Sub-theme 4.4. Fatherhood

Two of the participants specifically recalled how the birth of their child—the upbringing of which they really wanted to part of—played a major role in their non-involvement in gangs:

Participant E: …and when I got my first child at the age of...at the age of uh 19 years old, that gave me the other reason not to be part of gangsters. And most important of that reason is that, I asked myself, if I'm a gangster, how would my child grow up? And what was in my mind, is, was, is that I didn't want my child to point a finger back to me and say: “how can you tell me not to be a gangster, but you are part of the gangsters? How can you tell me to live a clean and a free life, but you are not doing?”

Participant I: Uh, ma basies ook, uh Zira, nou dat ek daaraan dink; my dogtértjie, my baby, het gebore 1996, uh 1995, sorry, (mentions daughter’s name) daai tyd gebore, 1995. Ek dink daai't ok ‘n keerpunt, die laaste, die laastes, want die vorige kind het net aangegaan en what you call it, ek het nog nooit deel deel gevorm vanie what you call it in haar lewe nie. Maar nou, toe (mentions baby’s name) bore, die laaste baby; wou ek graag deel geword het van, van, van… (Interviewer: haar opbrengs) haar opbrengs en goete soos haai. Maar ek het ook besef met drugs en met what you call it, sou ek nie deel kon vorm van what you call it nie, van haar opbrengs nie. …wat beteken sou ek aan gehou het, sou ek maklik n gangster gewees het verstaan jy en dit sou definitief nou my
familie, my kind in gevaar stel. (But basically also, now that I think about it; my daughter, my baby was born in 1995. I think that was also a turning point in my life, because I was never part of the previous child’s life and I really wanted to a part of this one. And I also realised that with doing drugs or things like that, I was never going to be part of her life. So if I maybe became a gangster, it would’ve definitely endangered my child’s life)

A study done by Kelly and Ward (2017) also found that fatherhood resulted in young males leaving the life of gangsterism for the sake of their children. Fatherhood supported them in leaving the gang life because it gave them a new-found sense of meaning and purpose. This is consistent with a study by Moloney, MacKenzie, Hunt and Joe-Laidle (2009:7), where participants referred to fatherhood as a ‘turning point’ in their lives and a factor in desistance from a life of gangsterism and crime.

4.4.4.5. Sub-theme 4.5. Education

Most participants in this study advocated education as a major factor in achieving independence. One of them said it did not matter whether he obtained his degree 20 years after finishing school; it was the highlight of his life.

Participant E: My mother always said: “look after yourself, get an education...So I strife and I run and I told myself: “I must finish school.”

Participant A: ...ek het van kleins af gese ek wil university toe gaan…na 20 jaar se werk het ek ek toe NMMU toe gegaan, 2011, totdat ek nou 2015 my graduation gedoen het, 2015. En jy weet dit isie highlight van n persoon se lewe en as jy terug kyk, dan sien jy ook uh, waardeur jy gekom het en gangsterism was, jy weet was ‘n issue gewees wat, hoe ken ek se, jou nie jou gemotivate reragie. (... I had a desire to go to university since I was little. After working for 20 years, I went to NMMU; 2011 until 2015 when I graduated, 2015. And you know it’s the highlight of a person’s life and when you look back, then you also see how far
you’ve come and gangsterism was, you know, how can I put it, was an issue that didn’t really motivate a person.)

Studies on the role that schooling plays as a determinant of youth involvement in gangsterism (Magidi, 2014:111; Calix, 2013:122-126) report that the inability of the school to moderate Coloured identity left youth more vulnerable and, ultimately, more likely to participate in gang activity. Further, strong school presence within a community holds the potential to build in youth the self-esteem, confidence, and determination that is needed to make sense of a racialised and fragmented social reality. Schooling can also generate positive social capital, moderating Coloured youth identity and, ultimately, reduce youth involvement in gangsterism.

4.4.4.6. Sub-theme 4.6. Participation in wholesome pursuits

Participants recommended participation in wholesome pursuits to escape gangsterism, as they could attest to the fact that their involvement in sports and other extra-mural activities whilst growing up played a role in them not becoming involved in gangs or gang activities:

Participant E: … Sport was the biggest role also of preventing me of becoming part of a gangster.

Participant B: So for me that is my drive, so that is why basically I get a break away, to experience something different so I can implement that in my life.

This correlates with what Spaaij, 2009 and Parker, 2010 had to say about the role involvement in sports and extra-mural activities plays in preventing gang involvement (Parker, 2010:54; Spaaij, 2009:247, 253).

Category 4.4.4.6.1. Sports

Some participants attributed the fact that they never showed interest in gangs to their involvement in sports:
Participant G: … no one of my brothers; I had two brothers, never joined a gang, uh, I mean we were involved in sports, my father had, uhm let us participate in the sports that we like. So those were most probably the reasons why I never joined a gang.

Another participant said:

Participant J: But I had this thingy in my mind as to: that sports is a vehicle, getting you out of this, because you are exposed…

Interviewer: And my next question on top of that, sorry to interrupt you; would be did you resist and you know, what, in which manner did you resist, or were you tempted to join?

Participant J: … the approach was there, but I was young and strong, because I'm in sports…

Another participant echoed this:

Participant E: … Sport was the biggest role also of preventing me of becoming part of a gangster. I participated at school in sports, to keep me busy with the positive things, like playing, I did play rugby for the schools and I played soccer. And Saturdays and Sundays, Sunday afternoons, Sunday mornings church and Sunday afternoons I also played rugby. So all these positive things that I tried to capture for myself, to keep me away from the negative things.

Sport is often praised for its potential to promote certain societal outcomes. These outcomes cover a multitude of policy areas, including health, community cohesion and safety, integration of minorities, urban regeneration and crime prevention and reduction (Kidd, 2008, Coalter, 2007, Walseth & Fasting, 2004, cited in (Spaaïj, 2009:247, 253). Sport is seen as potentially contributing to a wide array of social issues, including social integration and participation, community safety and crime reduction (Spaaïj, 2009:253).
Category 4.4.4.6.2. Other extra-mural activities

Two participants also spoke about how being removed from their usual environment and surroundings and being exposed to new environments, new people, new experiences and new opportunities on a regular basis had contributed to them not wanting to follow the norm of becoming involved in gangsterism. Gangsterism seemed to be the norm in their usual surroundings, but being exposed to new surroundings, experiences, people and opportunities helped them to realise that there was much more to achieve and it created a yearning for better things. Exposure to new surroundings and people broadened participants’ horizons to look and aspire beyond the daily way of life in their communities.

Participant B: Not actually, so basically for me, I’ve done this a lot, where I’ve moved to a certain family member’s area. Uhm I’m a person who like to experience things and with me experiencing something, that makes me wanna give something. So, if I come to a certain area, I adapt to that behaviour, so I learn those behaviour and I go back and I try to implement that behaviour where I’m staying and that is what driven me to become a better person, because I love to experience things. I know what it is to be out there, I know what it is to wanna become something; I’ve seen what people have become from making successes from nothing to something. So for me that is my drive, so that is why basically I get a break away, to experience something different so I can implement that in my life.

Another participant shared his experiences of going out of his environment with the church youth camps, and described how that influenced him positively to believe in a better life beyond gangsterism and crime:

Participant H: And those days, what we have done, we had youth camps and we would go out of the area for a week or so and there we would’ve learned things and you learn the things there and you come and live it
here in your life. You learn positive things there, not to worry about your circumstances, but to look out for a brighter future.

Participants in a study done by Alagappar et al. (2005:4) suggest that more healthy and productive activities be made available for teenagers to occupy their time with and keep them away from involvement in gangs and gang activities. Participation in sports and other extra-mural activities was also recommended by Parker (2010:54), who found that children of poor socio-economic backgrounds tend to be less involved in structured activities and spend time playing outdoors and ‘hanging out’, which can further cause poor school grades and behaviour problems. Such circumstances negatively influence their decision making abilities, thus increasing the chances of them being recruited by gangs.

Drawing from both the Ecological Systems and Resilience Models, the relational and bi-directional influences of the systems on a micro, meso and macro level does have an impact on the individual’s development and growth as a person. This influence can be positive or negative, depending on the quality of those relational interactions between the various systems (Berns, 2007:309, Masten & Powell, 2003:4, Seccombe, 2002:385; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The role that education, participation in sports and other extra-mural activities played in buffering the participants of this study against becoming involved in gangsterism is evident from reflections and the literature that was presented.

4.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the findings of the study. Participants reflected on what they perceived to have been amongst the factors that protected or prevented them from becoming involved in gangsterism despite the fact that they lived and grown up in the very same areas where the phenomenon of gangsterism was prevalent. Amongst the protective factors cited by participants were the influence of the church, faith, or religion and of positive role models, involvement in fatherhood and education and participation in wholesome pursuits. Participants also reflected on their experience of gangsterism in their respective communities, citing particularly the restrictions it placed on their movement and social lives, causing disruption in their
daily routines. They also expressed their surprise and disgust with the type and behaviour of contemporary gangs in their respective communities.

The next chapter will be dealing with the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of gangsterism has been the topic of many research studies over the years, both in an international and South African context (Jonas, 2015; Wilson, 2014; Wilson, 2013; Wolf, 2012; Cooley, 2011; Helenvale Urban Renewal Programme, 2011). As the researcher reviewed the literature, it became apparent that even though the studies done by these researchers looked at a number of aspects related to gangsterism, limited research still exist on the factors protecting males from becoming involved in gangsterism. It was therefore the aim of this research to explore and develop an understanding of the protective factors buffering males against gang involvement.

To achieve the goal of the study, the following objectives were formulated:

• Explore experiences of males residing in the northern areas of Port Elizabeth on the phenomenon of gangsterism within their community
• Explore their experience of the impact of gangsterism on a personal, familial and community level.
• Explore and describe the protective factors males residing in the northern areas of Port Elizabeth experience as buffering them against becoming involved in gangsterism.

Chapter one of this research study presented an overview of the history and origin of gangsterism in an international and South African context, problem formulation and rationale behind the study. In addition, an overview was presented of the research methodology to be applied and an indication given of how the report will be structured.

Chapter two dealt with the two models used as theoretical frameworks for this research study, motivating the reasons behind using these models. More specifically,
the ecological systems model and the resilience model were considered in relation to the phenomenon under study. The chapter also gave a review of literature based on publications on the research topic by other scholars.

Chapter three explained the research design and methods as applied to this research study. The rationale for using a qualitative research approach, and selection of a descriptive, explorative and contextual research design was given. The use of a complementary approach—namely transcendental /psychological phenomenology—was also addressed. The use of a purposive sampling technique that is criterion-based was discussed, as was data analysis using lower and higher coding techniques, the latter being guided by the eight steps of Tesch. The criteria employed to ensure trustworthiness of the research findings, being credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, were also reviewed.

Chapter four presented the findings of the study, accompanied by literature control. At first a demographic profile of the research participants was presented, specifically focusing on attributes such as age, marital status, employment status, language and level of education. The major themes, subthemes and categories were then discussed to present the findings of the study, accompanied by relevant literature references.

This chapter presents a summary of the key findings of the study. Recommendations are made, based on the findings and conclusions of this study.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS USED IN THE STUDY

5.2.1 Research approach

This study utilised a qualitative research approach, because the researcher was interested in gaining understanding on the protective factors that participants perceived as what prevented them from becoming involved in gangsterism from their point of view.
5.2.2 Research design

A descriptive, explorative and contextual research design was selected for this study. Complementary to the explorative, descriptive and contextual research designs, this study also utilised a Transcendental / Psychological Phenomenology. Transcendental phenomenology refers to identifying a phenomenon (or situation), then removing the researcher’s own experience, and collecting data from others who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark & Morales 2007:254). This was necessary, since the researcher had to remove her own experience of the phenomenon under study, so as to ensure that the data collected from research participants were not interfered with or contaminated by the researcher’s own experience of the phenomenon. This was done through refocusing and centering before each interview and keeping reflective notes throughout the duration of the research study.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used a purposive sampling technique that is criterion-based.

5.2.3 Data analysis and verification

Data analysis was done using lower and higher coding techniques, with the higher coding done guided by the 8 steps of Tesch as reflected in Creswell (2009:142-145). The following general criteria were employed to ensure trustworthiness of the research findings: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Cho & Trent 2006:322).

5.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The following sections present a summary of the findings relating to the study objectives, structured according to themes and subthemes that emerged from the analysis.
5.3.1. Theme 1: Experience of gangsterism

Participants all shared their views on how they perceived and experienced the phenomenon of gangsterism in their respective communities. They reflected on their experiences, mentioning restrictions on their movement within the community, particularly due to gang-related shootings. They also expressed their surprise and disgust with the type of gangs prevalent in their communities at present and the manner in which they behave. Participants compared the gangs of the past, whom they claimed still had a sense of “respect” when it came to elderly and church people, to the present gangs who do not show any respect to anyone, killing innocent children and bystanders without concern.

5.3.1.1. Lack of freedom/restricted movement

Participants shared that the lack of freedom and restricted movement in their own communities reduced their quality of life. The incidence of random and frequent gang shootings caused participants to stay at home rather than go out. When expressing themselves with regards to the restriction of movement in their own communities caused by the presence of gangs and gang activities, the reactions of the participants pointed to, amongst other things, being really frustrated with the issue of gangsterism in their communities. One participant said that there was a time that he felt like inviting all the gangsters to the stadium and bombing them. Participants also expressed being sick and tired of living in constant fear, not only for themselves but also for their families and children. Chappell, Peterson and Joseph (cited in Magidi, 2014) confirm that living in fear prevents people from socialising and may affect an individual’s longevity and relationships with the community. Further, the authors state that people end up being afraid to go outside because they might become the next victim, either deliberately or accidentally (Chappell, Peterson & Joseph cited in Magidi, 2014:46).
5.3.1.2. Emotions regarding change in the type and behavior of gangs

Predominant emotions expressed by participants with regards to the type of gangs currently in their respective communities, as well their unacceptable behavior, were surprise and disgust. Participants frequently compared the old and new type of gangs, going as far as attributing positive qualities to the gangs that were prevalent when they were growing up. Berns, (2007:415) states that change over time in the macro system (referred to as the Chrono system in the ecological systems model) can affect the status quo within the micro, meso and other parts of the system. The change in the type and behavior of contemporary gangs might possibly be attributed directly to the changes that took place in the macro system over time in these respective communities.

5.3.1.3. Murder of siblings due to gang involvement

One of the participants painfully recalled how the sudden death of his eldest brother due to his involvement in gangs caused him and his family tremendous loss and led to his decision to never get involved in gangs himself. The death of his brother changed the participant’s attitude towards gangsterism; despite that it was a form of income for his family at the time. He reports that he developed a total abhorrence towards gangs and gangsterism as a whole. This response from the participant contradicts the findings of various studies which report that youths with familial involvement in gangs are more at-risk of becoming involved in gangs and gang-related, delinquent behavior (Wijnberg, 2012:3; Howell, 2010:4; Wood & Alleyne, 2009:105; Ward, 2007:9; Curry, Decker, & Egley, 2002; Esbensen et al., 2009:315-317).

5.3.1.4. Conclusions related to the experience of gangsterism

Based on all the above-mentioned, it can be concluded that participants really didn’t feel safe to move around freely in their own communities due to the constant presence of gangs. It can also be assumed that some participants did not receive the needed assistance to deal with and grief the loss of loved ones due to gangsterism. As a result, they might not have found closure over the issue.
5.3.2. **Theme 2: Impact of gangsterism**

Participants attested to the impact that gangsterism has had on their lives as individuals, and those of their families and the community at large. This correlates with the ecological systems model which predicts that what happens in one part of a system, also impacts other parts of that system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The three sub-themes, addressed below, that emanated from this theme are: (i) increased criminal activity due to presence of gangs, (ii) non-gang members getting injured during gang fights, and (iii) being labeled a gangster and victimised for staying in the same area as gangsters.

### 5.3.2.1. Increased criminal activity due to presence of gangs

Participants reflected on how the presence of gangs in their immediate surroundings caused them to be fearful and anxious that anything illegal could happen at any time, for the mere fact that gang presence is directly linked to criminal activities. They were frustrated that their day-to-day routine had to be contained or disrupted by the constant presence of these gangs. A study by Magidi, (2014:108) similarly found that, through their criminal activities, the presence of gangs increased fear amongst learners, as some have the fear of being robbed or being victims of violence.

### 5.3.2.2. Non-gang members getting injured during gang fights

Participants expressed sadness, frustration, anger, disgust and pity towards the killing of innocent bystanders and children due to the ongoing gang violence in their respective communities. They also expressed sadness and pity towards the families of the bystanders and children killed in the crossfire of gang shootings; and frustration, anger and disgust because they felt that the killings of innocent people were unnecessary and unacceptable.
5.3.2.3. Being labeled a gangster and victimised for staying in the same area as gangsters

One participant reflected upon and expressed his unhappiness with and disgust towards the fact that he was being labeled as a gangster and victimised as a result of staying in the same area where the gangsters also reside. The participant also expressed disappointment and disgust that people would make assumptions about others based on where they stay, and label or stigmatise them before even getting to know them personally. In a similar manner, a study by Ralphs, Medina and Aldridge, (2009) on the consequences of staying in a gang inhabited area for non-gang youth in Britain found that non-gang youth were frequently victimised by gangs for residing in the same areas of their rivals. The fear of victimisation that resulted restricted the mobility of these non-gang young people (Ralphs, Medina & Aldridge, 2009:488).

5.3.2.4. Conclusions related to the impact of gangsterism

Increased criminal activity due to presence of gangs, non-gang members getting injured during gang fights and being labeled a gangster and victimised for staying in the same area as gangsters were amongst the things mentioned by participants pertaining to the impact of gangsterism in their respective communities. It can therefore be concluded once again that participants have to constantly live in fear in their own communities: fear of becoming targeted by gangs, hit by strayed bullets or even labeled merely for staying in the same area as gangsters. This once again points to the fact that participants don’t feel safe in their own living environments.

5.3.3. Theme 3: Factors contributing to gangsterism

Participants reflected and acknowledged that there existed certain factors that contribute to the phenomenon of gangsterism in their communities. Amongst those they cited were economic, social and political factors, which will be discussed below.
5.3.3.1. Economic factors

One of the participants indicated that gangsterism is fueled by a combination of low economic status, inequality and status frustration, specifically pointing to the low socio-economic status of families as well as the community at large. Wallace, Patchin and May, (2005:106) points to the discrepancy between having high economic aspirations and a lack of means as a drive to engage in criminal activities and join gangs. Gangs are therefore seen as a means to achieve those aspirations collectively which people cannot attain on their own because of a lack of access to financial incentives. The issue of unemployment was also amongst the contributing factors cited by some participants. Similarly, this was a factor identified by Cooley (2011:911), who found that crises of unemployment and underemployment convinced many boys and men to permanently turn to ‘outlaw capitalism’ as an alternative.

5.3.3.2. Social factors

One of the participants felt that, because families benefit from gangsterism, parents—specifically mothers—would never make an attempt to stop their children’s involvement in gangs and gang related activities. He shared that he felt parents directly contributed to gangsterism, especially in his respective community. The sentiment of the participant was shared by Community Safety MEC Dan Plato of the Western Cape, reported in the Athlone Newspaper (Mohedeen, 2016), when he said that mothers were key to keeping children out of crime. He went further by saying that once mothers changed their attitudes, communities would change. “If your son is a hit man, he is a killer; a hit man is a beautiful name for a killer. If your son has a gun in the house and you say nothing about it, you are agreeing with what he is doing. Drugs and gangs are ripping our communities apart,” (Mohedeen, 2016).

5.3.3.3. Political factors

Political interference and the history of Apartheid were cited by participants as factors contributing to gangsterism. Pinnock (2007:115) expands this view by explaining that gangs in South Africa came about as a result of poverty and
Apartheid's massive social divide. With this view, just like after the great depression on an international level, gangs in South Africa can be said to have formed as a result of increased poverty and specifically in the context of Apartheid. One may say that poverty and Apartheid changed the order of society. Given the segregation laws that were formerly imposed in South Africa which lead to high poverty in certain ethnic groups mainly Black, Coloured and Indian, it therefore becomes relevant to consider the social ills and racial divide as relevant tools that contributed towards the formation of gangs in South Africa (Pinnock, 2007:115).

5.3.3.4. Conclusions related to factors contributing to gangsterism

From the above it can be concluded that there exists a need for these contributing factors to be addressed as it further fuels the already challenging phenomenon of gangsterism these participants has to deal with in their respective communities on a daily basis.

5.3.4. Theme 4: Protective factors

In line with the last objective of the study, participants were asked to reflect on the protective factors they experienced as buffering them against becoming involved in gangsterism. The following sub-themes emanated from participants’ reflections regarding the factors that served as protective shields. They include benefits of family support, influence of the church or faith or religion and of positive role models, and the experience of participation in fatherhood, education and in wholesome pursuits.

5.3.4.1. Benefits of family support

Participants spoke about the support they received from their families during challenging times. For some of the participants, the support from family meant that they were raised with what they considered to be the right values and principles that would make a difference in the choices they make in life. For others, family support meant that their parents or caregivers raised them very strictly, which helped them in their decision not to become involved in gangsterism. This is in line with a study
done by Daniels and Adams, (2010:45) reporting that morals and family values were amongst the factors that discouraged youth from becoming involved in gangs.

Participants also spoke about how most of them were fortunate to have their fathers present in their lives, not only physically but also as role models, guiding them into becoming the men they are today. Various studies, (Richter et al., 2012; Langa, 2010; Richter & Morrell, 2006) confirm the importance of fathers in the lives of their children, stating that the absence of fathers or father figures in the lives of, especially, boys can be detrimental to the type of men they become when they are adults.

5.3.4.2. Influence of the church, faith or religion

Participants’ reflections indicated that they believed that the role their faith or religion played in their lives when they were growing up directly contributed to them never getting involved in gangsterism or gang activities. Participants displayed strong convictions when it came to discussing the faith and religion that they were raised with. Religious communities discourage certain lifestyle choices (e.g., sexual promiscuity, substance use/abuse) and behaviors, and sometimes even sanction them informally, through social pressures or overt private or public rebuke (Stark 1996; Grasmick, Bursik, & Cochran 1991; Thornton & Camburn 1989; Cochran, Beeghley, & Bock 1988).

5.3.4.3. Influence of positive role models

Participants also attributed the fact that they never got involved in gangs or gang related activities to the presence of role models in their lives other than their parents. Participants referred to role models who set an example for them that they could look up to, who encouraged and motivated them to make something of their lives, as well as look out for their safety. They mentioned older siblings, teachers, pastors and spiritual leaders and role models from the broader community as having a positive influence on them. Identifying certain adults as role models indicates that youth believe that these individuals are worthy of imitation in some respect and that their
attitudes or values are ones they would like to assimilate (Taylor (1989), cited in Bryant & Zimmerman, 2003:37).

5.3.4.4. Fatherhood

Two of the participants specifically recalled how the birth of a child, whose upbringing they really wanted to part of, also played a major role in their non-involvement in gangs. This is consistent with a study by Moloney, MacKenzie, Hunt and Joe-Laidle, (2009:7), where participants referred to fatherhood as a ‘turning point’ in their lives and key to their desistance from a life of gangsterism and crime.

5.3.4.5. Education

Participants advocated education as a major factor in achieving independence. One of them even said it did not matter whether he obtained his degree 20 years after finishing school; it was the highlight of his life. Studies (Magidi, 2014:111; Calix, 2013:122-126;) on the role that schooling plays as a determinant of youth involvement in gangsterism, found that the inability of the school to moderate coloured identity, left youth more vulnerable and ultimately, more likely to participate in gang activity. They further state that strong school presence within a community, holds the potential to build the self-esteem, confidence, and determination in youth that is needed to make sense of an extremely racialised and fragmented social reality. Schooling can also generate positive social capital, moderating coloured youth identity, and ultimately, reduce youth involvement in gangsterism.

5.3.4.6. Participation in wholesome pursuits

Participants recommended participation in wholesome pursuits to escape gangsterism, as they could attest to the fact that involvement in sports and other extra-mural activities whilst growing up their played a role in them not becoming involved in gangs or gang activities. Participation in sports and other extra-mural activities was also recommended by Parker (2010:54), who found that children of poor socio-economic backgrounds tend to be less involved in structured activities and spend time playing outdoors and ‘hanging out’ which can further cause poor

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school grades and behavior problems. Such circumstances negatively influence their decision-making abilities, thus increasing the chances of them being recruited by gangs.

5.3.4.7. Conclusions related to protective factors

Most importantly, participants shared factors that they believed played a role in protecting them from becoming involved in gangsterism, despite the fact of living and growing up in the same communities where the phenomenon of gangsterism is so prevalent. Amongst other things, the role and influence of religion, faith and the church, benefits of family support, influence of positive role models, fatherhood, education and participation in wholesome pursuits such as sports and other extra-mural activities were amongst the protective factors cited by participants.

Conclusions can therefore be drawn that the role of faith or religion, benefits of family support, influence of positive role models and other factors mentioned by the participants, can play a crucial role in the prevention of gang involvement if strengthened in order to be implemented in practice.

In respect of the study process and methodologies, the researcher feels that the aim and objectives of the study were successfully achieved as the researcher managed to identify and highlight the experience-based lessons from males residing in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth on the factors that has been protecting them from becoming involved in gangsterism.

5.4. CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO THE SELECTED RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODS

The selected qualitative research approach and methods proved to be appropriate in reaching the goal of the study. The researcher found that a qualitative approach of which the design was explorative, descriptive and contextual allowed for a more in-depth analysis of the data. It offered an analysis of participants’ perceptions on what they perceived as protective factors that buffered them against becoming involved in gangsterism. The utilisation of the Transcendental / Psychological Phenomenology
complimentary to the explorative, descriptive and contextual, aided in the removal of the researchers’ personal experience of the phenomenon under study, therefore preventing the data collected from research participants from becoming contaminated and of no value to the study. In the use of the designs the researcher was able to explore the issue as it comes across to the research participants. The research was also able to capture feelings and emotions from participants and offer to this study first hand experiences of participants in relation to, and compared with, other studies. The researcher was therefore able to make reliable findings on the factors that protected research participants from becoming involved in gangsterism.

5.5. RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Based on the responses of participants about the role education played in their not becoming involved in gangs, and the manner in which they advocated education as a major factor in achieving independence, the following recommendation is made:

- To advocate and lobby for opportunities for higher/tertiary education for young males from previously disadvantaged communities plagued by social ills such as crime, poverty, unemployment and gangsterism.

Participants shared and reflected at length about the benefits of family support, citing specifically the values and principles they were raised with, having strict parents growing up and having a father present in their lives to guide them into becoming the men they were. The current state of the family structure has changed over time, more so in communities such as Helenvale and Schauderville. Families need to take back control of their parenting roles, their families and the community. Therefore, the following recommendations are made:

- To facilitate the restoration of disintegrated family units, offering professional support to rebuild the family resilience needed to buffer young males from gang involvement (involving services from social workers, psychologists, and family counselors.)

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• To reinforce the importance of parental responsibility and involvement in the development and growth of youth, and young adolescent males in particular. This could be achieved through the presentation of parenting workshops by either the Social Development or Education department.

The influence that religion, faith and the church had had was shared by all participants of the study, with a strong conviction being one of the main reasons they never got involved in gangs or gangsterism. Of note should be the fact that all participants came from the Christian faith and from the Islamic faith. The following recommendation is therefore made to spiritual/religious communities:

• To advocate, restore and strengthen the role of spiritual leaders and their involvement in the moral regeneration of communities. Civil organisations and the broader community could advocate for this.

Participants spoke about not feeling safe in their communities due to the constant presence of gangs. This to the extent that they could not even move around freely in their own living environments for fear of being victimised by gangs. Based on that the following is recommended:

• The safety of ordinary community members in gang ridden areas should be made a priority by government and private sector.
• The Ministry of Safety and Security should look at measures to make community members feel safe to move around in their own communities. This could be done through more visible policing, capacitating community members to patrol their own streets, or establish neighborhood watches where communities can take back their own streets with the necessary training in safety and security.

Participants also indicated suffering and grieving the loss of loved ones due to gangsterism. The following is therefore recommended:
That assistance is offered to families in gang ridden areas that are struggling to get over the loss of loved ones due to gangsterism. This could be done through the professional services of grief and trauma counseling and other related support services to families.

Based on the views of participants on the factors contributing to gangsterism in their respective communities which in their opinion only makes it worse, the following recommendations are made:

- On the issue of gangsterism becoming a form of employment, the following is recommended:
  - That government in partnership with private sector addresses the high unemployment rate in the gang ridden communities.
  - Create alternative opportunities to the life of gangsterism and crime in the form of either skills development opportunities or entrepreneurship opportunities for those who wants to leave the life of gangsterism behind.
  - Concurrent with the above-mentioned, social-related rehabilitation programs such as life skills, conflict resolution and other alternatives to violence programs can be run to aid in the rehabilitation of ex-gang members and their re-integration into their respective communities.

- To address the issues raised by participants where parents encourage their children’s involvement in gangs because they are benefitting from it, the following is recommended:
  - That parenting programs be run to educate parents surrounding their parental responsibilities when it comes to modeling exemplary behavior in front of their children and to teach them right from wrong, not to encourage them do go and do wrong.

- When it comes to addressing the issue of political interference contributing to gangsterism, the following recommendations are made:
- That communities mobilise and hand over memorandums to the relevant authorities wherein they state that politicians will not be allowed to come and use gangsterism as a lobbying tool to score votes during elections in their communities, they will be banned if they attempt to do so, because the people have the power to ban certain political parties and prevent them from campaigning in their respective communities if they so wish.

- Write to the relevant authorities (Public Protector), to ensure that abuse of political power to take advantage of the issue of gangsterism to score votes will not be allowed.

5.6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Informed by this research study the following emerged as possible topics for future research:

- Cultural identity as contributing factor to gangsterism, especially in so-called ‘coloured’ communities.
- A more in-depth analysis of the role of religion/faith in non-gang involvement
- Age of young males joining gangs currently getting younger. What are the contributing factors to this phenomenon?

5.7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Every study, no matter how well structured or well-constructed, has some limitations which may directly or indirectly affect the outcome of the study. In this study limitations were noted in respect of the researcher’s personal experiences, the language of communication used in participant interviews, and the choice of exploratory research as a framework for the study. These issues are discussed below.
5.7.1. **Researcher's personal closeness to the topic**

Although the researcher found the use of the transcendental/psychological phenomenology to be very helpful in removing her own personal experience of the phenomenon of gangsterism from the study, it cannot be denied that it was not easy to remain neutral and objective throughout the duration of the study, as some of the participant’s stories resonated closely with the researcher's own experiences of the gang phenomenon. This occurred to the extent that, on occasions, the researcher had to refocus and center herself to avoid getting too personally entangled with the shared experiences of the participants.

5.7.2. **Language of communication**

The first language of most of the participants was Afrikaans and the interview questions were in English. After having interviewed two participants, the researcher realised it would have been better to allow all participants to express themselves more freely by answering the questions in their mother tongue. Although the researcher mentioned to the participants that they were free to answer the interview questions in Afrikaans, the fact that the questions were asked in English subconsciously caused the research participants to also respond in English.

After starting asking the questions in Afrikaans to the remaining nine (9) participants, (apart from those who claimed that they had no problem speaking English), the researcher found that participants were able to disclose much more information and express themselves better when speaking Afrikaans compared to when they were answering in English. Thus, the researcher concluded that the participants who only responded in English, were not able to express themselves easily which limited them in disclosing more information that could have been of value to the study.

5.7.3. **Use of explorative research**

The explorative nature of the research inhibits an ability to make definitive conclusions about the findings, primarily due to small sample sizes used not being generalisable to the population at large (Burns & Grove, 2001). This view suggests
that the study is limited in its ability to project findings because of a smaller sample size. It should, however, be acknowledged that the study highlighted the critical themes relevant to the topic focus on which the study was based and was most suitable in obtaining new information about the phenomenon being studied.

**5.8. SELF-REFLECTION**

Merriam-Webster (2013) defines self-reflection as a process of learning by a process of meta-cognition and synthesis which is a reflection on one’s thinking process. The author further defines this process as the self-observation and reporting of conscious inner thoughts and sensations. A constant question held by the researcher throughout this process of self-reflection was “Am I going to achieve the objectives of the study?” In attempting to answer this question, the researcher had to therefore reflect on the process and look at the self during the research process.

The process of conducting the research was authentic, as supported by the documentation that was submitted in the research proposal. All necessary steps of initiating contact with the participants, obtaining permission from all relevant parties and the manner of conducting of interviews were followed. The researcher therefore managed to conduct the research in a logical process guided by the relevant literature.

With regards to the researcher’s role in the research process, it can be said that the researcher was central in every process undertaken during the study, and was active in making sure that the research complies with ethical standards.

Another very important element to reflect upon is the fact that the researcher grew tremendously on all levels, not only academically, but also on a personal level. Listening to the stories shared by participants has resulted in a deepened level of empathy from the researcher’s side towards not only the participants but everyone who has to face and deal with adverse situations on a daily basis, not only in the face of gangsterism. It was the researcher’s first experience pursuing a master’s degree and it has to be said that even though the experience was overwhelming at times, the end result is, in the researcher’s opinion, all worth it in the end.
Taking into consideration the entire above, if the question: "Have I achieved the objectives of the study?" can be asked again, the response would definitely be yes. However, it has to be noted that, despite being happy with the outcome of the study, the researcher still feels to some extent that there is more that could have been done by the study and more that can still be done by further research.

5.9. **FINAL CONCLUSION**

The objectives of the study appear to have been met satisfactorily. The results of the study reveal that there are a variety of protective factors that participants experienced as having been buffering them from becoming involved in gangsterism and/or gang-related activities. Strategies to strengthen these protective factors in order to utilise them to prevent more young males from becoming involved in gangsterism should now be urgently looked at.
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: LETTER TO GATEKEEPERS

Date:


Dear Sir/Madam,

I am currently enrolled for a Master's degree in Social Work at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. I have to complete a research treatise as part of the requirements of the course, and the title of my research is “Experienced-based lessons from males in the Northern Areas on factors that has protected them from becoming involved in gangsterism”. At present I am making preliminary enquiries to establish if such a study would be feasible. My request to you is to identify potential research participants who meet the following criteria:

- English or Afrikaans speaking males 18 years and older from the community, who has not been involved in gangsterism.

The research study involves conducting semi-structured interviews aimed at exploring the experience-based lessons of males residing in the Northern Areas on factors that has been protecting them from becoming involved in gangsterism.

My research supervisors are Dr. Zoleka Soji and Mrs. Zurina Abdulla from the Department of Social Service Professions at NMMU. Any questions regarding the study can be directed to the student in person or the primary study leader who can be contacted at 041-5044821or Zoleka.Soji@nmmu.ac.za

Your kind assistance is appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Mrs. D. Davids
Social Work Research Masters Student
Contact number: 073 340 7011
s210118040@nmmu.ac.za

Dr. Z. Soji
Research supervisor
Zoleka.Soji@nmmu.ac.za
APPENDIX 2: LETTER TO PROPOSED PARTICIPANTS

Dear Participant

I am a Social Worker currently studying towards a Master’s Degree in Social Work at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. One of the requirements of the degree programme is that I complete a research study.

I am a resident of the Northern Areas and have observed that, in spite of growing up or living in this area plagued with gangsterism, many males still did not get involved in gangs or gang-related activities and I wanted to find out why, what has been amongst the factors that have prevented or protected them from becoming involved in gangsterism?

The focus of my study will therefore be on understanding the experience-based lessons from males in the Northern Areas on factors that has protected them from becoming involved in gangsterism.

This research study can only be conducted if I am able to obtain participants who would not mind sharing their experiences on the question posed above. To this end I would need to conduct one interview of approximately one hour with you. The day, time and location of the interview can be arranged to suit you. The content of the interview will be recorded, but at all times confidentiality and privacy will be ensured. The study will conform to the ethical guidelines and requirements of the university, and I will enter into individual confidentiality agreements with each person interviewed.

My research supervisor is Dr. Zoleka Soji, and she can be contacted at 041-5044821 or Zoleka.Soji@nmmu.ac.za. My contact details are 073 340 7011.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and I hope to hear from you.

Yours sincerely

Mrs. D. Davids
Social Work Research Masters Student
s210118040@nmmu.ac.za

Dr. Z. Soji
Research supervisor
Zoleka.Soji@nmmu.ac.za
APPENDIX 3: PERMISSION AND RELEASE FORM; RECORDINGS AND TRANSCRIPTIONS

USE OF AUDIO RECORDINGS AND WRITTEN MATERIAL FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES – PERMISSION AND RELEASE FORM

Participant’s Name: __________________________________________________________
Contact details:
Address: _____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
Telephone No: ___________________________________________________________________

Name of researcher: Desira Davids

Level of research: MASW (Masters in Social Work - Research)
Brief title of research project: Experience-based lessons from males in the Northern Areas on factors that has protected them from becoming involved in gangsterism.

Supervisors: Dr. Zoleka Soji and Mrs. Zurina Abdulla

Declaration

(Please sign in the blocks next to the statements that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The nature of the research and the nature of my participation have been explained to me verbally and in writing.</td>
<td>Signature:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I agree to participate in an interview and to allow audio-recordings of these to be made.</td>
<td>Signature:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The audio-recordings will be transcribed by a transcriber.</td>
<td>Signature:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Once the data have been transcribed the recordings will be destroyed.</td>
<td>Signature:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Date: ______________________________________________________________________

Witnessed by researcher: ______________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX 4: CONSENT FORM

Consent form

I, _____________________________, agree to participate in this research.

The following points have been explained to me;

1. Participation is entirely voluntary and I can withdraw my consent at any time.
2. The focus of this research is on experience-based lessons from males in the Northern Areas on factors that protected them from becoming involved in gangsterism.
3. Participation is limited to one, semi-structured interview, with the possibility of a further personal interview if the researcher requires clarification on any point.
4. Although no discomfort or stress is foreseen, should I experience any discomfort or stress I reserve the right not to answer any question at any time during the group session or interview.
5. Should I experience discomfort or distress the researcher will provide details of counseling services available at the Psychological Services Centre at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, or psychologists in private practice.
6. Participation in this research is entirely confidential and information will not be released in any individually identifiable form.
7. The researcher will answer any questions I wish to ask about this research now or during the course of the research process.
8. The results of the research will be made available to me if I so wish. Should I require a copy of the research I will communicate this to the researcher and provide the researcher with my postal details.

__________________________
Signature of participant
__________________________
Signature of researcher
__________________________
Signature of research supervisor

Researchers:

Researcher: Desira Davids
Email: s210118040@nmmu.ac.za
Tel: 073 340 7011

Research supervisor: Zoleka Soji
Email: Zoleka.Soji@nmmu.ac.za
Tel: 041 5044821
APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Participant’s number: ___________
Date of interview: _______________________________________
Name of interviewer: Desira Davids

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consent form explained and signed</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permission and release form (recordings and transcriptions) explained and signed.</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Interviewer introduces herself and clarifies her role as student researcher.
- The interviewer explains the goal of the research and the purpose of the interview.
- The interviewer explains and clarifies the “Consent form” and the “Permission & release form”. After the participant has signed the form, the researcher will proceed to switch on the audio recorder.
- During the interview the interviewer will use the following interviewing skills to explore and clarify the participant’s responses: minimal verbal responses, paraphrasing, clarification, reflection, reflective summary, listening and probing.
- The interviewer advises the participant that she will take notes of the participant’s responses during the interview to ensure accuracy of the data collection and assure the participant of the confidentiality of the notes.
- The interviewer thanks the participant and asks whether she may proceed to ask the questions as in the interview schedule.
- Once the participant is at ease and indicates that the interviewer may proceed, the following questions will be asked:

**Biographical questions**

1. Age: How old are you?
2. Marital status: Are you married?
3. Profession: If employed, what job do you do?
4. Race: What is your race?
5. Language: What is your home language?
6. How long have you stayed in this community?
Main interview questions:

1. What is your view on the gangsterism issue in our communities?
2. Do you think joining a gang is a choice? How so?
3. Were you ever approached or tempted to join a gang? If yes, how did you resist the temptation?
4. What in your opinion are the things that has been protecting or keeping you from becoming involved in a gang?
5. If you could give any advice to people out there about what can protect you from getting involved in gangs, what would it be?

After the interviewer has posed all the research questions and the participant has responded adequately:

- The interviewer requests if she may contact the participant should any part of the interview need further clarification at a later stage.
- The interviewer will thank the participant and explain that a copy of the research report will be made available to participants should they request a copy.
- The interview will then be ended and the interviewer will bid the participant farewell.
Research interview

Participant 10

Biographical questions:

Interviewer: Good morning, as explained to you already, my name is Desira and I am a Masters student at NMMU and I'm doing my research in terms of you know, males in specifically Schauderville and Helenvale community, but from the Northern Areas, who in spite of growing up in the very same area where the gangsterism is such a problem you know, never got involved in gangsterism. So, I just wanna thank you I know that uh we sprung it on you very suddenly, but I thank you for availing yourself and uhm you know, agreeing to do the interview with me. I'm gonna first ask you a few biographical questions ne, because uh, the purpose for that is just my participants are males, 18 and above. So I'm just gathering it for statistical purposes so that I am know, you know, I want to interview males from various ages you know and various walks of life. So I'm just gonna ask you a few biographical questions. As already explained to you, everything will be anonymous, your name won't be mentioned, you are welcome to answer me in Afrikaans at any time, don't feel obligated to answer me in English because the interview will be in English. If you feel you express yourself better in Afrikaans, you are welcome to do so; I don't have a problem with that. So first I would like to know how old are you?

Participant 10: I'm 24, turning 25 this year.

Interviewer: Ok, You might wanna speak up you know, cause, let me put it closer to you, because my voice is a bit loud. (Putting the audio recorder closer to the participant)

Participant 10: Put it here. (Pointing next to him)

Interviewer: Ok and your marital status, are you married?

Participant 10: Single.

Interviewer: Your profession, are you employed and what job do you do?

Participant 10: At the moment I'm not employed, I decided to study this year, I just registered myself as a first year logistic student...

Interviewer: At NMMU?

Participant 10: No, Dower campus.

Interviewer: Ok, I know this sound, may sound you know like an awkward question, but what is your race?

Participant 10: My race? I'm colored.
Interviewer: And your language, your home language?

Participant 10: Bilingual actually, English and Afrikaans, but preferably English, ja.

Interviewer: Uh tell me, how long have you been staying in the Schauderville community?

Participant 10: Basically all my life, I would move, say for two weeks, stay at someone's place, something like that ja, so basically it's been all my life, it's always been in and around the Schauderville community.

Interviewer: So you were born there, you grew up there for your, almost 25 years now?

Participant 10: Yes.

Interviewer: Thank you. I hear you say that you would like move away for two weeks or so, is there any specific reason for that?

Participant 10: Not actually, just to get a break from the area basically, because things get hectic in the sense that people get so used to you; they become, things tend to become a norm. If they ask you a five rand every day and there's a day that you don't wanna give, they tend to: "jy bly swak kom, jy bly..." you get what I'm saying? So it's for me to break away from the community, ja.

Interviewer: So do you find that some other communities are a bit quieter than like you say the Schauderville community? (Participant: Ja). Like for instance now, you're breaking away now, as we speak?

Participant 10: Ja, so basically this community has peace and quiet, no one bothers you; there's, there's no people in the streets (laughs). So this is more, more thinking time, ja.

Interviewer: Ok, can you check for me if that thing is recording, is it running?

Participant 10: Yes, it is.

Interviewer: Ok, so uhm, ja, you know, I'm listening to you and like you said, you know, sometimes you need a break; I can relate you know, I can relate. You know some of us are not that fortunate sometimes you know, to just break away and stuff, especially when you have responsibilities and family responsibilities and things, but uhm when you break away like this and you come to another community like this to have some me-time like you said; and uh, the thought of returning to Schauderville, does that bring a negative feeling sometimes?

Participant 10: Not actually, so basically for me, I've done this a lot, where I've moved to a certain family member's area. Uhm I'm a person who like to experience
things and with me experiencing something, that makes me wanna give something. So, if I come to a certain area, I adapt to that behavior, so I learn those behavior and I go back and I try to implement that behavior where I'm staying and that is what driven me to become a better person, because I love to experience things. I know what it is to be out there, I know what it is to wanna become something, and I've seen what people have become from making successes from nothing to something. So for me that is my drive, so that is why basically I get a break away, to experience something different so I can implement that in my life.

**Interviewer:** So that would be positive obviously?

**Participant 10:** Positive ja.

**Interviewer:** Ok, so thank you for that, were going to get to our main interview questions now. And I explained to you, you know, what the research is about you know and growing up in the Schaudervelk community, I assume that you would've had your own experience of the gangsterism issue in itself, but uh, I want to ask you the question in terms of your own personal view, what is your view, you know, how do you feel about this gangsterism issue in our communities, how does it make you feel, what is your view in terms of the gangsterism issue?

**Participant 10:** Joh, my honest feel?

**Interviewer:** Uhm.

**Participant 10:** There was a time when I actually felt that they should all just be invited to the stadium and be bombed! (Interviewer laughs)(Participant laughs), ja, because there was a time that I couldn't evens go to work because of gangsterism violence. In the area where I stay it's basically, if you are a guy who dresses well, you have tattoos on your body and you have money; you are associated with a gang, even though you just live in the area. So if you stay where I stay exactly I have to be careful when I walk out, because people tend to think I'm part of a gang, because I live in the area, I'm living close where they are. So, you have to make sure your friends, your friends group is perfect, make sure you don't associate yourself with them. So, my honest view is, you are labeled, no matter what, because you are from the area, you are labeled, but it's what you make of it. So basically, couple of months back there was this gang war from the gangsters on top versus the gangsters where I'm staying and obviously the gangsters on top know that we all stay there and I was a bit scared to drive past the other gangsters because they know I stay there. And then I just decided that I'm gonna go to them and say 'guys you know I'm not
involved in these things, I just stay there, I work and you guys know that.' They were like 'nay, we know who's all gangsters' and all that. So, but there's crossfire's, there's drive-by's and all those type of things, it will obviously bring a sense of fear in your life. So basically for me, what I basically think is, choice.

**Interviewer:** Ja, like uh, when you say that you couldn't even go to work, like, you know, because of the gang issue and because of being labeled; the people that are labeling you, is it the neighbors?

**Participant 10:** It's gangsters.

**Interviewer:** The gangsters themselves? (Sounding surprised) Ok, why do you think is that? You spoke about staying in the facinity where the gangs, you know, also reside, but uh, you know, I mean to go to the extremes to go to explain to a rival gang that you're not part of, you know, (participant: uhm) gangs in that facinity that is like in war with them, it's, it's, it's crazy!!

**Participant 10:** It's basically because, if you are a young man, drive a nice car, your car has nice wheels, it has nice music, you wear nice clothing, you don't bother yourself with any of these activities that they do; they start to wonder: 'what do you do?' So now they start bothering you, even though they know you're not a gangster.

**Interviewer:** They just assume that you obtained it illegally?

**Participant 10:** Uh ja, that's because their mindsets are so corrupted, they possibly think that this guy went to break in to get this money, this guy rob people, this guy stole this, he did that to get whatever he needs to get and he's so quiet, he doesn't want us to eat of the cake. So let us try to find out, let us bother him, he will come out with the secret; that is basically how they work.

**Interviewer:** So it's like, what you're actually saying is: it's too good to be true for them that you obtained it in a legal way, because of the fact that they are so...

**Participant 10:** Ja, they are basically trapped in a certain mindset, you see that is also another point why I say I prefer to go out of my community, to experience a certain thing, so I can better my life by my experience and adapt it into my community. So people can see like, a lot of people in the community like: 'oh this guy just bought him a new car, he started working a couple of months back, he just bought him a car, this guy is bettering his life, he can see... Kids ask me: 'Hey, What happened, how, Where did you come?' No, if you work, if you can go out there and experience what you have to experience in life, not just sit in a close and listen to these drug stories, these how to get quick rich stories, your mind won't be intoxicated.
by, whatever, your everything, your judgment in life it won’t be clouded by these things.

**Interviewer:** Ja, so, so, in actual fact, also not becoming you know, sucked in with that kind of mindset, is also something you have to struggle with on a daily basis would you say?

**Participant 10:** On a daily basis just a, but basically for me, my personal experience is, if you, if you have family, a support structure, uh if you have communication in your household, that wouldn’t happen, because immediately if your mother sees that you not speaking, you just go to your room; you’re in drugs. Either you high, hiding something, did something. So if you’re family immediately takes, gives you attention...A lot of these kids involved in gangsterism has parents, a mother and father, then you have kids like I didn’t grow up with a father, I grew up with a single mother and my mom was basically the role of mother and father. If you have to like see that, but eish, all these kids that are gangsters, they actually have fathers, it’s because they lack attention; that is what they lack. So basically for attention they tend to make a scene: ‘ek gaan rob nou’, I’m gonna rob someone, because there’s no attention and they want attention.

Even if it means I’m gonna get scold at home, just because I want attention, I’m gonna do this to get this attention; it’s gonna raise red flags for everyone, everyone’s gonna speak of me, that is what is going on in the community. And also on a personal note, basically the study like what you’re doing, I’ve also done it for myself! Uhm, I’m a very tactical person in the sense that I was saved and I thought hey, you know what, I need to speak to these people, because it’s pointless of me getting up on a Sunday going to church, on a Monday I’m going to work, Wednesday I’m going to church again and I come home, but I’m not giving anyone of the insight that I’m getting. I asked myself this question: ‘what is it, what is it?’ On a Sunday I’ve stood in church and then God touched me and it was like, that is what they have to receive, what you have received. I have been touched, I have experienced the Holy Spirit; it’s all about experience. You can stand in a choir, you can stand on a church corner and preach, it will go in here (points to his ear) and it will go out here (points to the other ear), but if the experience of life is not there, what is gonna happen? Basically, uhm there, they are empty, only thing that is popping inside of them is negativity, negativity, negativity. You as an individual can go and speak to them; then you are telling a leke story, you’re not giving them an experience, you see.
So, if these for an example like you said, you are working with young kids in the community, the program with raise a child, don't know what the initiative is called, but uh, for me personally, I believe that if you can take that kid out of its surroundings and take it to another sort of environment where things are happy, jolly, it's fun, where fun is you take things of your mind, but then you have to realize the fact that things are temporary, if you have to go home in the community, there is poverty, there is alcohol, there's drugs, there's violence, there's a lot of things, factors contributing to that. It's not only about an experience as well, experience is only temporary, but then there's permanent things at home: 'haasie krag geltie, haasie ditjie, die kiners ganie skooltoe more nie, because haasie brood nie!' So now you have to stay at home because there's no money and your father's drinking, you like stressed, you're mother's crying, you as a person think 'eish, I have to go rob now! I need to go make money for my mother, because my father's a no-good!' So there's a lot of factors contributing, but basically for me, for I've experienced is that you need to take that person out and work on their mind without them knowing about it. If you can change their form of thinking, easy, easy for you to get them out of...

Personally, I was nearly trapped in gangs, I was 16, I was staying in Schauder; my mom bought me a car. And then these people were like 'take me here'. For me it was cool driving them, it was some sort, sense of protection, at school nobody would, everybody knew, don't bother that man, cos that man have friends that is this and that and this and that. Till I was put in a situation one day where, my cousin had the same car as mine and he was a gangster. And they used his car to go shoot and they thought it was my car and the gangsters pulled me over and they nearly killed me. Then I was like you know what, this is not me! How can I do something like this and these guys nearly killed me! And then it just took me that to realize that, they didn't evens like ruffle me up, you know, they just spoke to me. But it took me to realize that you know what, this is not what I wanna be, this is not who I am. So I needed to get out here and change my mindset, I said I'm going to my mother's house, stayed in Algoa Park for a year, came back and I was like: I have experienced different things, because I met new people with new mindsets and me as a person, I can adapt to any environment. So, with the friends I gained, their mindsets were of a different thing in life, their thing was like: 'jinne you know what, I can't wait to finish school and go work and study, but when I work, I'm gonna buy me a car.' It's because kids haven't grown up with things, having been spoiled and stuff
like that. I wanna buy me a car, I can't wait to give my mother this, you know what I'm saying, so that mindsets of them, basically...(Interviewer: influenced you?) It influenced me to become a better person, it was like hey, these kids have no goals, they have no ambition, they just have to go to school, or and go work, that's what their parents are drilling in their mind. Some parents don't even have that ambition for them to work, because I know personally of people that have children and their children basically do what they please, because the parents don't give a damn; you are your own individual if you are fourteen, from fourteen years old you have to do what you have to do. So, if their parents basically can influence them in a positive way, things would be different, but because the parents grew up with no insight on life, only behind these four walls, your yard and speak to your neighbor, nothing else, there is no hope for those children because of the parents' influential status on them.

**Interviewer:** Thanks for that, you actually touched a little bit on the following questions that I'm about to ask you. Ja, so uh, I've listened to you and like I said you know, you partly touched uh-uh-uh, on the questions to follow, but uh and the way you spoke already has given me an indication at least of what your answer would be on the next question, but I still wanna ask you, do you think in your opinion that gangsterism is a choice and depending on your answer, why do you say so?

**Participant 10:** Uhm, I won't say a choice. According to my findings it's, it's basically on your influential status, if you have proper influence; influence starts at home, if your mother is gonna influence you in a right direction, if your mother... If you for an example ask her 'mom, give a two rand' 'ek hetie, gan fokken rob, want jy fokken bly vra!' in that sense. If your mom can say that to you, you'd think it's ok, remember you are a kid, fourteen years old, you don't know right from wrong 100%, so if your mom can give you that answer, what goes on in your mind at that point in time? Remember, you have a good voice and a bad voice and at that point in time the bad voice uses that to his ability saying: 'ja, jou ma't gese is orite, so kom ons gaan.' you understand?

So, with you do not, have not had an experience with the Holy Spirit personally, the bad voice has power over your life, so you'll find yourself in a wrong situation at the wrong time. So for me personally, I won't say a choice, but because of generational curses, because of influential status at home, how your parents is basically raised you. You get a lot of kids that's gangsters that's got good parents who didn't want that for their children, but because they made one mistake, is when you nag, they
give, so and you get kids who don't have, so when the gangster says, ‘kyk hie, kom staan ha by my pos ek gaan jou paar tekkies gee’, it's WOW for them, because they have not experienced what's out there, that life can give. So for me personally; gangsterism is 50/50 a choice and it's also 50/50 how you've been raised. Because, if I had a choice I would've probably been a gangster, because what I saw is these guys with nice cars, I was 13, 14 and these guys would pull up with this cars, the sound was playing, they had money, and they have girls, gold, and those flashy things draw your attention. If I had a choice, I would have been a gangster, but because of my mother's backbone, because of I saw how my mother suffered, I saw her being the only parent, I saw what my sisters were becoming in life, my cousins were becoming. I was just like: “eish, my mother's gonna moer me!”(laughs) put it that way!

Basically if my mother didn't have a strong backbone, I would've probably been a gangster! If my mother didn't teach me about experiencing things: ‘you know what, here's a R100, don't sit here at home, go to Green Acres, go to the Boardwalk, go to the beach, meet new people, you understand? These kids have been growing up in this circle where everything, this is the only people you know, you don't know anybody else, you don't know what it is to take a taxi to the beach. They are so caught up in these shiners that it's out of the norm for them, so if you do it with them, they'd be like' this is the best time they've ever had'. Take them to a swimming pool; they don't know what it is like to go to a swimming pool if they are in this community. Because they only know the swimming pool around the area, but take them to a white swimming pool, they'd be like this is lavish for them! So, if I experience life at McArthur's or away, I'm experiencing all these things and these people are having so much fun and they tend to speak this high English, I wanna be that person, I wanna see those things! They don't see it here; do you get what I'm saying? Ja.

Interviewer: So are you saying if you get exposed to you know, more choices, for a lack of a better word, then what you see on a daily basis, you'll have a broader horizon in front of you to, (participant: to choose?) ja, to actually, to choose?

Participant 10: At the end of the day it actually works out to a choice. If you put a gun and a R200 in front of someone, but remember the R200 is consequences, the gun is also consequences; in the sense that, these gangsters say: ‘kyk hie, hies 'n R200 of 'n paar tekkies, right, ons gan ve jou die tekkies gee, ma dan gan jy nie
future moet iets doen.' So now they're gonna give you the gun: hiesie gun, gan skiet, ons gaan jou 'n R10 000 gee!' What is your choice?

**Interviewer:** Uhm, ja, that's actually, that's actually, I think you know, the question is kind of tricky! (laughs) (Participant: It's very tricky!) Because, at the end of the day, ja you do make a choice, even if your mother, you know, is making these negative confessions, you know, in any case, I believe it's true what you're saying, when you always hear negative things and even when it comes from a parent, you know, someone that you look up to, someone that you respect, you would obviously think 'nay, my ma dink ma dit van my, so ek ganit ma doen' (Participant: ek gan ma an ja) of soos jy netou gese het, your mother you know, sy keerit goed (Participant: ja) so you feel you have permission to do the wrong thing. But at the end of the day, doesn't it mean that you made that choice to go and do the wrong thing?

**Participant 10:** It does actually but, if you think about it that, as a youngster, as a young boy growing up, uhm, if your mother; you go out to the street, jy baklei, jou ma kom, sy vat jou paart, beginne skel die Auntie, shouting the lady. Uh, So, your mother at a young age is showing that she's taking your part. For me, my mother was always at work, so as ek baklei dit inie straat en ek kom huil huistoe enie mense se ek het baklei, dan word ek geslaan. In the sense that these kids out there start a fight, the mother's gonna come and come take their part. Even if it means she must fight with a friend, she will do that. At a young age it shows the kid that the parent will always be there. So if you for example come out and you rob someone, it's a choice you make, (Interviewer: Uhm) but because you weren't taught right from wrong, that is your mindset you adapted to. So it's all about adapting here, so you tell your mother: 'mommy gee twee rand', your mother say' hey, gaan rob man! Jy bly twee rande vra, doen iets met jou lewe!' 'Gaan rob' is an outstanding factor, it's something wow for them. They take that, they don't take' gaan doen iets met jou lewe'; they take 'gaan rob'.

**Interviewer:** Cause it's the easier way?

**Participant 10:** It's the easier way, they do it. You can't blame them because; it's only negativity being fed into their life. So if that person makes the decision to go rob, at the end of the day, it's not... (Interviewer: it was informed by what their parents said?)

**Participant 10:** Ja, the other day I read something that was on Facebook about this guy who was on life sentence, death, death sentence. It's a guy from America, they
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actually said his name is there, asked him his last words and he said: 'your honor I would like to stand and I would like my mother to stand.' And his mother was standing there and she was crying and he was like,' I personally feel that I'm not the only one who should be on this table, my mother should be on this table as well, because she didn't give me the opportunity...'

**Interviewer:** Oh ja, I saw that thing! I don't know that guy, was it a letter that he wrote, I saw that thing!

**Participant 10:** 'She didn't give me the opportunity to become a man, because she was always there for me' So, I was, there's this guy in our community, his mother, since small when we used to fight with him, someone beats him up, his mother comes out, she wanna beat you, your mother comes out, she's gonna wanna beat your mother. That kid went out and killed people, he robbed people. Even till today, his mother doesn't have a piece of bread; he's in St. Albans living lavish, because his mother runs up every day. So, from that person, from that, I was on the outside of that family, standing and watching in.

And I was like' this laatie!' and I used to envy my mother, hoekom, because if I have a fight and I come home and those people are crying and I'm crying, ek gaan nog steeds pak kry! If he fights, he goes home, he comes out; his mother comes with him out, hulle altwee gaan saam baklei! Comes home with blood on his sneakers, as a parent you would realize that 'hey, ve wiet my kind seer gemaak?' she would wash his sneakers. I didn't have a say, even if it was my own blood, my mother would phone the police! So it's just basically how your parents influences you, that is a choice, you can't choose your parent, you can't choose, that is why I say it's a 50/50 thing, you can't choose your parent and if your parent's influence on you is a good influence, then you gonna raise up to be good, it's straight up. If your parent's influence is going to be bad, your gonna do bad things.

**Interviewer:** Uhm, but again then, not to be devil's advocate, but again then, earlier on you said you know about young boys, youngsters whose been raised by good parents, yet they turned out bad! So, doesn't that also show you that, even though they were taught like good principles in the house, they still made the choice to take the wrong path?

**Participant 10:** It's, it's uh....

**Interviewer:** That's why I'm agreeing with you when you say it's 50/50, it's hard to say, it's difficult to say!
Participant 10: It's hard, ja, so, also the thing with it is like, environment, who you choose to hang around with, who is gonna, you just have to find, if you just can find in life a point that of who gives off positive energy and who's feeding your soul, then you have found the meaning of life. If s....If I feel like hey, if I'm gonna hang around with these guys that don't work, at the end of the day I'm never gonna get a job, because I'll never know what it feels like to have friends who has a job! For me personally, I, I, I was a very shy person, cause I came out of the negative community. And People ask where you stay? Schauder, ' yhooo, jislaaik, it's a no good! They think immediately that! When I went to my girlfriend's parents, luckily they came from Schauder, my prior girlfriend's parents they never came from Schauder, they were all white people. When I got there,' where do stay? No I stay in Schauder'.

They thought I was a gangster; I have tattoos. They immediately thought, but when I start opening my mouth, they were like:' are you really from Schauder?' Because if I stayed in my community, I would most probably be what these people wanted me to be, but because I went out and experienced things, met new people, adapted to their behavior, because the people I met, is the people I wanted to be. (Interviewer: Uhm) I didn't wanna meet people that I didn't want to be. If you are nothing, I can't meet you; because you're gonna add no value to my life! So, if you can find that turning point in life where, you know what you want and you know how to accomplish it, you've found the meaning of life! So basically it's, if you come out of a good home, surround yourself with bad people, you're gonna be bad, varke meng jou saamie semels, die semels meng jou... iets soos haai! (Giggles)

Interviewer: Bad Company corrupts good character! (Participant repeats after Interviewer)

Participant 10: So, if you're gonna be around those people, you obviously gonna adapt to their character! I've noticed that with my sister's kid; if he goes out and he comes there to Schauder, he goes out, he speaks nice when he goes out, but when he comes back,' moenie my se nie', it's because the friends speak like that.

Interviewer: Influence, influence!

Participant 10: So you're now picking up on that language, you not used to speaking like this at home, at home you're all:' Mommy this, Mommy that' So it's fun for you to do this, it's fun for you to go out there. That's why I tell my sister, don't send him here; keep him that side; let him not be influenced by this. If his not
influenced by this you're gonna find out his smoking, tomorrow it's dagga, from
dagga, nay is oka pipe, van oka pipe vind hy uit hy wil nou iets sterker he, is pille,
you get what I'm saying?

**Interviewer:** Ja.

**Participant 10:** So, if they don't have the proper influence, then you will never, you
can't change that person. I spoke to a couple of guys, this guy, you know ( mentions
name), was shot dead in Jameson road a couple of weeks back, a couple of months
back, just came out of St. Albans. I spoke to him, 'hoorie, jy kom nou uit die tronk uit,
uh, wat gan jy nou doen?' Hyt gese, 'hey, ek weetie, but ek wilie die lewe he nie!'
So ek se nou, 'but jys nou hieso, jyt uit die tronk uit gekom hieso' Hy se:' my mense
wil my nie he nie.' Because of the things he did in life, his people don't want him
there, so the only people he could put on his address, was the gangsters, because
the parole officer wants address. (Interviewer: yes) So he did that, he put them on
address, so he had to be there.

The Friday night, me and my girlfriend came to my house and there was this whole
church ceremony, but I spoke to him the Wednesday and said,' bra, hoekom bekeer
jy jou nie? Haas baie pastore wat ouens soos jy soek, because as jy 'n pastoor moet
word, as jy moet se wat gaan oor jou lewe aan, it is, it is touching, because onthou jy
was 'n moordenaar gewees, jy was 'n rower gewees, jyt baie influence gehad opie
die kinders; die kinders wou soos jy wees. Die kinders wil soos jy wees, want hulle
sien jys 'n man met 'n gun en 'n man met 'n gun, is 'n man met 'n plan!' But then we
spoke, toe se hy' weet jy wat, ek het gedink.' Friday night toe't hy hom bekeer,
vrydag aand, Sondag oggend word hy dood geskiet, cold blood.

And in my experience, that has happened to many gangsters where I know, who I've
communicated with, who I've spoken with; immediately when they take the turning
point, they get taken out! So, it's all about your environment, your surroundings,
because if you are for fourteen years been growing up in a negative community and
speaking negative things and receiving negative things, remember, the bad voice is
always gonna be there, the good voice fades away. So, in the example that when
you hear something good, the devil comes and the devil says 'hey, this guy has
been my slave for fourteen years and here Jesus comes and His gonna take him. So
you know what, I'm gonna set up a difficult obstacle for him.' There he gets killed.
For the devil it might seem like his winning, but for God it's a good thing, you know,' I've
gained a Soul', you know what I'm saying? (Interviewer: Uhm, ja)' and his out of

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this world, his not gonna cause harm anymore!' But, you know what I'm saying, but it's all whom you surround yourself with, if you start surround yourself with positive people from a young age, things are gonna go positive in your life, because, the people you hang around with, will...( Interviewer's cough blocks out last words of participant)

**Interviewer:** Sorry, no, I get you, I get you. The other thing also that you know, you mentioned and you pricked something in my mind, when you said that you know, when you surround yourself with the people that you know, you want to become, uhm, has that also got to do with your life goals, do you think also you know, if youngsters don't have a goal in their life, it's also where they become easily influenced to take the negative path?( Participant: Ja) Because uh, I believe, that's why I personally believe that, you know, if you don't have a goal in life, if you don't have a vision of where you want to be at least in five years’ time, you gonna, you know, it's easier for you to be influenced by negative groups and become involved in negative things. Do you, do you agree, or do I understand you correctly?

**Participant 10:** I agree with what you're saying ja, basically, if you don't have goals, you don't know what you're gonna become, it's because of your parents not having goals. Remember what happens to the fathers, happens to the sons. So, if you gonna be as an individual, gonna wake up in the morning, gonna do your norm, go to school, come back home. Your father does not have any aspects for you to go study further, your father does not have any aspects for you to get a good job, to become this person, to wear a pin-striped suit; you know what I'm saying? Because your father is just a person being at home as a father, you don't have a role model. The lack of role models, only role models you see is the drug dealer, gets out of his car, flashing his money, smiles and waves to the community who loves him and goes in, go cuts up his drugs, come out and speaks to his gangs and you wanna be that guy (in a dreamy voice). His role model, because your father cannot be a role model to you. If you don't have a father; another factor, there's no proper people that you can look up to, so for me personally, what I emphasize on is, going out there, experiencing things, meeting amazing people who you can say, for me personally, I used to take a lot of other people as role models. I used to come to a friend's house and say,' jistie, you know what, your father is a chartered accountant, your mother's this, you know, when I grow up, I wanna be like that man!' I was, I took... (Interviewer: you adopted actually, other role models, ja) Ja, so, so, I looked at other
people's fathers and I was like: 'Joh, this is what I wanna be, not this!' Look at this gangster, his the 'man of the moment', but if you look at the person who you really wanna be, his the 'man of the life', you know what I'm saying? So, if you can have a proper, broader view of life, because these gangsters they don't have it easy, if you want to go to Green Acres, then you just go. The last time they were in Green Acres, was when they were fourteen, when their mother took them to go buy Christmas clothes or school clothes. So, because they can't go anywhere, they only know 'ons gan rook 'n pil, ons gan roof iemand', that is the only thing they know. So basically, if you wanna take someone out of the, out of the comfort zone, out of the environment and put them in an environment where they don't know and that people can tell them,' you know what, relax, be yourself. What we do, you do.' So that is then basically how I grew up, right. My mother would tell me,' here's a R100 go to Green Acres.' Come in Green Acres, only English-speaking people! I didn't like speaking English, ek wil net Afrikaans gepraat het! So now I get there, I have to adapt, I have to start speaking English, shy; first time, second time, the third time you get used to things, then you say,' jy weet wat, ek wilie mee ha by die huis isie, ek gan nou elke week Green Acres toe!' Every week you go to Green Acres, you meet new people, same friends, another friend comes on; you become friends with that friend. That friend has a circle of friends and so it goes. So you become friends with a lot of people, so you meet new things, you experience new things, you do new things. You tend to forget, you tend to forget about the environment around. With me, December I went on holiday. Normally Decembers what I would do is be at home, gaan 'n bietjie drink, braai; that is what you do. I went on a holiday with friends of mine, we went to Knysna, had a ball of a time! I enjoyed and experienced so much things that, I don't wanna go back, because the negativity of the people,' o, wat ken ons die jaar', same old! That is why I can't go back right now. I need to first heal my mind before I go back, because I come from a holiday and it was so amazing, I've learned so much things, done so much, I've seen a different side of life. I've seen houses worth five, sux billion! So, if you have seen this, doesn't it burn up a desire somewhere to become something? So first me to go back to the community right now, is gonna kill the flame, you get what I'm saying? Interviewer: Uhm. (Nodding head) Participant 10: So, all I'm saying is, experience, if it's experience, opportunities, if you're gonna meet new people and there's gonna be enjoyment, that's the key.
Interviewer: You mentioned something interesting earlier when you said, you know, sometimes you have a father in your life but, that father himself doesn't have ambition, you know, he just doesn’t wanna, he doesn't, jy weet, hy wil nerens uitkom inie lewe nie?

Participant 10: 6-2, 2-10, huistoe.

Interviewer: Uh-uh-uh, ja, you know, uh-uh-uh, some would say these boys, because of lack of a father figure, they become gangsters, but when I listened to you it's interesting, like I said, that you could have a father, like present, physically a father, but not a role model, you understand? It's something interesting that you mentioned, because one would be of the opinion that, you know, if you have a father in your life, obviously it would be a positive influence, you wanna look up to your father. But you just mentioned you know, if your father, you know, cannot give you that guidance, then he might as well be absent, is that what you're saying?

Participant 10: Ja, that is basically, like I said there's people that come out of good houses, their houses is clean, vensters is gepolish, haas rooi paint opie stoep, mure is skoon, jy trek mooi aan, but, jou ma en pa is haso, but what can you say, they are only there for financial support. Your father's only there because his living there, you're father's only there because he needs to pay the rates and tax en ligte; your mother needs to provide food, that is only your father's role. Your father's there, but you have to come home, dan vind jy uit your father's inie 2-10 in, your father comes out if the 2-10...

Interviewer: So his not emotionally or psychologically of you know, (participant: his just there!) Psycho-emotionally his not available to you (participant: nothing) you know, to talk to about issues of life, to guide you, you know, to show you the way?

Participant 10: Even if your father is not working or something like that, he had ample time to invest in side of you, but he can't, because it started off from his father that couldn't invest into him. So basically it's a cycle that if you can break it by experiencing things, going to another family...

Interviewer: Like you adopted other father figures in your life, your friend's fathers, to, to look up to and you know, to follow, to get that recognition...

Participant 10: Ja, when I go to other people's houses and I see hey, this is how this father speaks to his children, how they do family time and you know what I'm saying I didn't have this, so now I know that one day when I have kids, I can't just go to work, can't just come, so, you know what I'm saying? (Interviewer: ja) It's a yearning in
your life to have someone, so you need to go out there and experience, that person's not gonna come to you, you need to go and experience. If you want a girlfriend, your girlfriend is not gonna come find you at home, you must go out and meet people! So, for you to better your life, you have to do something! You can't just do a negative thing for a positive reaction! You know what I'm saying, uh, ja.

Interviewer: Uhm, no, very interesting, it's actually, you know, you're the first person to mention that, like I said, normally you know, even myself, I just assume, because there's no father figures in these children's lives, these boy's lives specifically that turn out to join gangs, but, you've given me a whole new perspective now, uh thank you for that! Actually I need to write that out! (Laughs) Ok so, I heard you said earlier that uh you almost you know, also got really involved in gangs and stuff, the time when you spoke about they stopped your car and things like that. Uh, but my next question to you would be you know, were you ever approached to join a gang, were you ever tempted to join a gang and you know, how, if you resisted the temptation, how did you resist it, or did you maybe cave in, what was your experience?

Participant 10: Uh, basically, I'm probably gonna start speaking in circles, I was tempted, I was approached, I was, I was basically one foot in the door, but then I realized, hey you know what, my mother's influence in me, that is that can't happen, because, right enough, I'm gonna be put out at home, I'm gonna be a gangster and there's gonna time the party's gonna dry up here by the gangs, dan moet ek wee trug gaan huistoe en my ma gaan my nie huistoe laat ganie. If your parents have given you a positive input in life, if they invested positive things inside of you, you are so filled with positive things that there's no room for negativity. So, if you get that negativity, the positivity that's been invested in you, starts to eat up the negativity. So, what my mother invested in me,' ek sal rather voor 'n oop graf gaan staan, as voor 'n tronk', so you know what I'm saying, so, when these guys start, ' hey, nay, kom block hie saam met ons, ons gaan 'n dop drink en dan gaan ons line', ha gan ons dit gan doen', it, it wanted to be there, but because of the positivity that has been invested in me, ek het gedink ' hey, my ma't gese sy gan my vrek moer, as ek huistoe kom en ek kom van hulle af, moen ek ma nie huistoe komie, bly ma hanie straat in, moenie huistoe komie man!' So, all those things were in my mind because of what my mother invested in me. So, if your parents gonna invest negative in you,' ja man fokken, jy will 'n gangster wees!' you're gonna be a
gangster, because it's all negativity, there's no room for positivity in your life if there's negativity. So basically that is why I...

**Interviewer:** So basically it was because you didn't wanna disappoint your mother?

**Participant 10:** Uh ja and basically also the values and stuff that has been set in the household, if there's no values, you tend to have no life! Ja.

**Interviewer:** Ok, listen, did this happen once, you know, when they approached you, or you know, did it happen a few times?

**Participant 10:** No it happened once and then I was like you know what, this is not what I want, this is not how I've been raised, this is not the values that have been set for me, this is not what I see my life to be. Uh, I won't be able to live with killing someone, you know what I'm saying, so, that is basically how I got through myself like, yoh, it is, it's cool to hang out with these guys, these guys look like they have your back; your brothers, but at the end of the day you find out that they only used you for what value that you can add to their lives, in what, their negative things that they are doing, ja.

**Interviewer:** Ok, so, did they leave you after they saw that you didn't have any interest in becoming involved in gangs, or did they harass you, some, sometimes?

**Participant 10:** Not actually, I, I'm not a bang gat, ek like baklei, I love using my fists and they know also, ek, ek like baklei. So, they wouldn't bother me because it's, it's guys that I grew up with man, so basically, for me, everybody has this aspect on gangsterism, that American view, the TV puts things into your mind. So, hulle se ve jou,' kom skiet gun en as jy wil skietie, da gan ons jou skiet', it does not happen like that, does not happen like that... So, American gangsters and Port Elizabeth gangsters are different gangsters; here we have puppets, here these kids do something because of drugs, there's so, there's a lot of factors that plays a role in gangsterism: parenting, opportunities, role models, poverty; then you get drugs. A normal person won't shoot another person without drugs being an asset, a factor; you know what I'm saying? Gangsters don't give you free drugs, you have to buy everything; nothing is free from those guys, no...absolutely nothing! So, when you come to a certain point and you realize that you wanna be a gangster, it's a choice you made inside, but the choice cannot be overcrowded with positivity if you have no positivity in your life! These gangsters don't tell you, ' luister hie, gan skiet vir ons', unless you are willing; for a action, there must be a certain reaction, for reaction, there must be a certain action. You have to put yourself out there for them to come
to you to do that. I put myself out there, I wanted to be a gangster, because die goud en gerre enie karre was leke gewees; you get what I'm saying? So if....

**Interviewer:** Ja, ja, ja, it paints a glamorous picture.

**Participant 10:** Ja, so if you see all that and you're like,' yoh, this is what I want', attraction, the law of attraction is very important in this. So, these people see' nay, die mannetjie will 'n gangster, hy't n bumpy in hom in, hy staan op en hys net die ou, hy wil ok net die ou wees, roep hom laat hy hie by ons kom block, hy ken leke gan skiet ve ons, of hy ken leke rob, of hy ken pos staan, hy wil ok net 'n ou wees', you understand? And then you find out some gangs actually started off with guys just being friends, a group of friends that used to love hanging out together. Then they start fighting with another group of friends, because alcohol is a factor also, hulle gan disco toe, ons almal is dronk. Ek en my bra's, ons is 'n groep, vyf manne, haai ane bra's het nou ons aangekyk, of is oor 'n ger of tekkies trap, you know what I'm saying? So these guys who are not gangsters, are gonna fight with another crew that is not gangsters, at the end of the day they gonna find themselves being a gang. Jys nou die ouens en haais die ouens en baklei hulle mekaar. Then you get kids in the community wat julle like en die kids wil jou join and that is how gangs started. These gangsters didn't start by selling drugs, they didn't start by shooting gun, they were normal guys who used to like going out, but because of the influences from the community and what the kids saw them to be, you understand?

If a kid see you to be a gangster, dans jy 'n gangster. Because that kid can see through you, remember a kid has innocent eyes; if a kid see you as someone who has money, then you will have money, you know what I'm saying? So it's heavy, it's so much that you say, that you can say but, at the end of the day there's alot of factors contributing to it: alcohol, drugs, violence, abuse, uhm, no positive impact in your life, no role models, poverty. There's a lot of things which...a lot of people say that uh (giggles) it all started with apartheid government, let me put that way, because they put you in a poverty area, everybody squad together, they have the nice houses. It, it it all started because he system was created like that, it was, it's a system; they don't want to see you succeed, so they put you guys fighting together, you know what I'm saying? So, like in America, they used to buy the black people, then they let the black people fight each other in a ring; the white people, you get what I'm saying? So that is black on black violence; they started hating each other, because that is the mindset and those people they were breeding, because if you
are a good make and you fight and you kill this male, you had to produce. Because your child can work into a cotton field if it's a girl, if it's a boy he can fight with a spear, he can go to war for... you know what I'm saying? It all started back there and to root out that, it's a deep thing, it's a deep root you have to...

**Interviewer:** You know it does, it does, it has uh-uh-uh, real, real history. It does because I know, my what's a name of my, my, my paper, my dissertation, my introduction, my background, speaks about that. You know, how long and how far and how long gangs has been coming on and it does have that, it could come from the forced removals, because obviously we've been thrown here, there's limited resources, people will feed to survive, (Participant: you're fighting for that que.)ja, to survive, so, it is actually very deep-rooted, (participant mumbles something unclear) it is very deep-rooted. Like I always also say, people not staying in our communities might only see a youngster with a gun, they do not know how deeply rooted that thing actually is, (Participant: uhm, what that is.) but that's a whole other conversation! Uhm, you already again, you know, touched on this next question also partly, but I want you to specifically tell me now that, in your opinion, you know, I want you to really think back and in your opinion; you mentioned your mother, you mentioned the positive influence she had on your life, you mentioned the fact that you didn't wanna disappoint her, but amongst other things, apart from those things, if you can you know, point on your one hand for me, you know, the things that in your opinion, has kept you, or protected you from becoming involved in gangsterism. I'm not talking about the time when you were tempted you know, or when you were approached, I'm talking about really now, sitting here, 25 years old and you could look back on your life and you would say wow, you know, God has carried you, you are sitting here, you are still alive today, you've got ambitions, you're going to study further, (participant knife and uhm in between) but you come from that history, you come from that background; what has protected you and kept you up until now at this age that you feel like you're gonna study further now and better your life, I mean, you could've given up hope, coming from such an environment as Schauderville, you could've also like you said, ended up in a gang. But, apart from your mother and that Influence and that consistency of her in your life, are there any other things that you might, you know, you can think of that has kept you or protected you from, really now, becoming involved in gangsterism?
Participant 10: Uh, it might sound wrong, but uh, for the Coloured community, if you have people that come fetch you at your house that speak English, 'o nee, hyt wit brasse nou?' For me I found that, ek, I can't go to a 'normal' club like La-dee-da's, because La-dee-da's has this poverty, everybody wants to compete with each other, almal wil gangsters wees. For me, ek gaan White Tiger toe wa die wit mense is. Where there's white people there's no fights, there's no arguments, it's just enjoyment, you know what I'm saying? Personally for me its experience, number one factor, I had different experiences in life, uhm, uh...

Interviewer: Sorry, before you go further, is, does that have to do with your personality, are you very outgoing uh-uh-uh, adventurous kind of a person who like to, you know, dabble in...?

Participant 10: Not actually, ek sal kooi vat en movies watch; that is me that is the type of person that I am, but because of... (Interviewer: are you curious?) I'm very curious and especially for someone that's very curious, as jy nou sien hoe maak hulle 'n gun skoon, jy gaan wil se' laat ekit try', you know what I'm saying? So, for me uhm, you have to uh seek new opportunities, that's number one, number two, if you have experience, number three, if you've experienced God in your life, there's no turning back, because if you've literally experienced the Holy Spirit, you won't be able to stand behind a gun and shoot someone, because the Holy Spirit will convict you, you know what I'm saying? You won't, you won't feel the same again. Because before that I could, I could take a gun and literally point it at someone; you know what I'm saying? (Interviewer: Ja) That is the person I was, I had so much anger inside of me, because of the lack; I could do anything! Especially as ek gestry dit by die huis, voel ek net, ooooh, ek gaan nou, ek gaan nou net iets gaan doen, al moet ek my kar se vensters stukkend slaan, you know what I'm saying? En dit is how much....( Interviewer: Ja, take it out on something or someone, ja) So, if you gonna have arguments and stuff at home; now you must know there's poverty, it's all those factors; I didn't grow up in poverty, but it's what the community is going through. So basically for me its experience, role models, if you, if you have experienced the Holy Spirit, it all works out to those three factors, for me personally.

Interviewer: Together with your mother's Influence?

Participant 10: With my mother's Influence and how my family has influenced me. Seeing my cousins become this, it obviously creates a yearning inside of me. If you have a cousin that becomes a lawyer, a doctor, it must create something inside of
you like,' I wanna be like that', unless, that can only create something inside of you unless you have positive impact on your life. If you have been clouded with negativity, my gaan jammer voel ve jouself, my gaan se,' weet jy wat, ek is maar 'n no-good niksie, ek is maar die swart skapie vanie familie. Wees my maar jou dokter, ek gaan ma my niks weesie', you know what I'm saying?

**Interviewer:** Yes, yes, daai mentality.

**Participant 10:** So if your mindset has not been clouded with negativity, there's hope for you! If you can take a kid out of the Northern Areas and just speak positive things, kom bly by my, ons gaan jou skool toe stuur; kids don't wanna attend school anymore. Send him to school, out of school you start nurturing this boy, if you nurture him from a young age, his gonna grow up to be a proper person. His gonna grow up to be positive, he's gonna make something of his life, because he was taken out of a negative environment and put into something positive, you know what I'm saying? So, it's all about negative and positive environments, how you speak to someone, it's alot of factors, which it's a deep-rooted thing.

So basically my, I would say experience, opportunity! (Interviewer: Uhm) Opportunity, if you take someone out of high school, his gonna sit, It's difficult to find a job and if you give him an opportunity to better his life, he will better his life! No matter how much negative impact he's had prior, but if he has the willingness and there's an opportunity, you can change that person's life, because immediately if someone says that they're not used to four thousand rand a month, which is peanuts, you out R4000 every month in their hand and you take it away. That person's gonna be angry at you, he's gonna wanna fight you for that four thousand! So, for him to get that four thousand he would do every month what is required from him, you know what I'm saying? (Interviewer: Ja, ja) So, because they don't know what a four thouands rand is. So if you take someone out of high school and say you know what, here's a job, this is your duties; do this. If you do this every day, five days a week, end of the month, this is the amount you're gonna get, do it.

First week, he's enjoying it, if he enjoys it, he won't become a gangster, because he has, there was opportunity, his doing something positive, his getting money. You tell him, look here, this is the budget you're gonna work with, I'm giving you a budget; you know what I'm saying? Because a lot of people go to work; hulle werk en dan maak hulle skuld; einde vanie dag dan voel hulle,' nee, ek wilie mee werkie, because te veel skuld om te betaal!' If you can nurture that kid to say, look here, this is your
budget, this is how you're gonna work with things, if you, it's nurturing, if you gonna, if your parents is so much interested in you, they would invest good things in you. So it's all about investment, it's, it's so much factors, ek weetie watse topic om te touchie, you know what I'm saying, so ja, do basically that is....

**Interviewer:** Ok, thanks for that, then my last question to you uh, if you could give advice, any advice, to people out there about you know, what can protect you, you've already actually, I'm actually repeating myself, I feel like I'm repeating myself (laughs), because you answer my questions before I ask them! But for the sake of the interview, maybe you might've forgotten something, uhm, if you could give advice you know, to people you know, boys younger than you, families, parents, who ever in the community. If you could speak to people in the Schauderville community, like you said you spoke to some guys already and all of that; what kind of advice would you personally give them, you know, that could protect it even prevent them from becoming involved in gangs? You have mentioned already the opportunities, if there are opportunities available, the role models and stuff, but particularly something you might've forgotten, what kind of advice would you give?

**Participant 10:** Well, my advice is experience things out there, don't just be uh, sss, don't just be clouded in your community of what is happening, all the negative things in your community, because if you do surround yourself with negative things, negative things will impact your life. Basically for me, if you can get out there, meet new people, new opportunities, do new things, things that's just out of the norm for you, you gonna start to adapt to those out of the norm things, then you gonna feel like you experience those things, then you gonna search new adventures. You gonna wanna do new things; meet new people, because the people you've met had become boring. So you gonna wanna meet new people, new friends and by that you gonna start to adapt and if you can find that, then you have the recipe to success.

**Interviewer:** What if, what if perhaps a person is not as adventurous as you are, you know to, take a leap of faith, because it is actually what it really is, is a leap of faith, to go and test the waters elsewhere. Because coming from the Helenvale community myself uh, I can relate to you know, people, like you said, they’re, you are like there, only there, it is the only environment you’re used to, you never go out, you never get exposed to anything new, you know.

That is your mindset, you like a donkey with these things (points to sides of head) (Participant: blinkers yeah) and you , the current personality you have us not that of
wanting to experience new things, you know, be curious, because like you said, opportunities, new things won't necessarily come to you, you gonna have to go out there, because sometimes there are not you know, people that's going to come and fetch you and say, 'let's go somewhere else', you understand? If you are not going to, uh... (Participant: put yourself out there) put yourself out there, you know, like you said, 'wie nie waagie, salie wenie', (participant: uhm) you understand? So uh, it is, it is, from my opinion actually, it is difficult if the person's kind of personality is not like, kind of person that likes to put themselves out there, you know.

So, for me uh, I don't know, what is happening in our community is basically, people coming in like, there's a lot of opportunities, funding opportunities but, it's just like people cannot access it, because there are these gatekeepers, there are these other people who also always want to you know, uh-uh, benefit from opportunities and you know, deprive others, who actually are in need and at-risk, but they are not exposed to the opportunities, you understand? So, from that point of view and a community-based perspective now, what would your advice be?

**Participant 10:** Uhm, basically, I would like for an example, like you said, your guys are running a program in the community; I see a lot of programs is running in the Helenvale community, like your community Centre, like that new sports ground thing, that sports, indoor sports center thing? That is basically a perfect platform to start, where you can take kids and bring people from the outside and spend couple of days with them and say you gonna have to sleep over here man, don't go home let's have a camp in night for an example. And if it takes a week to change someone's mind, it takes a week to change someone's personality, to change the way that person speaks, walks and talks, it takes a week. Because I now have dealt with people, I had friends who was on tik, I tell them come stay with me. After a week those people started to adapt to my behavior, doing what I do, you know what I'm saying? So, it takes a week for, to change a mind, if it's a kid, it takes a couple of days, because it's very young. (Interviewer: that much easier)

That much easier, show that kid that there's more to life then growing up, going to school and doing nothing with your life. Then you, then you have reached, gas found success in your life, because, if you can better someone else's life, you know what I'm saying, so basically for me, it's if you can show that person that there's more to life than sitting at home, doing nothing, joining a gang, there's more to life! (Making shhh sounds) Simple, show a video clip of what it's like to go to Cape Town, cause
most of these people have never been out of their communities! (Interviewer: Ja, it's true) Show them what Cape Town is; show them how the people are enjoying themselves in Cape Town! Because these people are only seeing movies like Four corners, Noem my skollie, you know, it's good movies, at the end of the day they only see the negative (Interviewer: exactly!), because they've been invested in negatively. So they only see 'hosh...' en tronk goete, they don't see the positive side of how that guy changes his life, you know what I'm saying? They don't see that, so, these people are only, because these movies and these series that has been coming out now is only about how to success your life with negative, negativity, negativity! If you show a positive clip about people going away, spending money, enjoying themselves, meeting new people, having a ball of a time, without the negative vibes, they would wanna be like, 'how's that possible?' And if you ask yourself how's that possible, you would wanna experience it, because if it's not possible for a human being, the human mind it's not possible. If your mother says, 'don't go there', you may not wanna go there. So basically that is how it works!

**Interviewer:** Ja, no thank you very much, we have spoken a lot and we dealt with a lot of things and like I said again, it was you know, in the spur of the moment, but I appreciate that you set aside some time to do this interview with me. And then uh, I wanna wish you all the best with your studies and your endeavors and stuff. I wanna thank you once again because it is truly a success story when you can grow up in a negative, for lack of a better word, community, environment and still be able to have that hope that you can still become something positive in your life, it takes guts, it takes Faith, because it doesn't sit in anyone's, like they say in Afrikaans: 'dit sitie in enigeen se broekie!' You know, so I thank you very, very much, I appreciate your effort and then uh, I wish you well!

**Participant 10:** Thank you very much!