

An Opportunity for Redemption within Youth Justice?

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores how the interplay between agency, beliefs/values and behaviour generates possibilities/ potentialities for change among forty youth offenders in two Youth Offending Teams in the West Midlands. This research has a specific focus on the young people's religious identity and how their religiosity can be a potential resource for the process of change towards abstinence from offending. It is centred on engagement with the perceptions and values of youth offenders in seeking to engage and work effectively with them towards rehabilitation and the cessation of offending, with its application for improving practice in Youth Justice.

Recent work has shown that religion can either be used to justify or excuse criminal behaviour in terms of negative attitudes and behaviour towards others, or as a prospective moral template for changing behaviour. This thesis builds upon this work by examining the role of religiosity in shaping youth offending behaviours, how they make sense of religiosity within the context of their whole lives. The nature of redemption refers to the ability, opportunity and in what manner a young person turns their life around away from crime to a law abiding lifestyle, assisted by the Youth Offending Team/Service. Comprehending the signals of desistance through examining the young person's beliefs and values is paramount in creating the conditions for change. The notion of the good life as a life worth living is examined in this study as a means for practitioners to support the initial transitions to a better form of living through identifying youth offenders' future goals and intended strategies for achieving them, and moral exemplars to catalyse change.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The intersection between religion and criminal behaviour has implications for policy and practice. 'An Opportunity for Redemption within Youth Justice' explores the role of religion in shaping youth offending behaviours, in particular how a young person's beliefs influence their behaviour and how this understanding can generate possibilities for change away from offending. This introduction will set the scene by explaining the initial impetus for the research. It will then provide a rationale for the study, present the research aims and objectives, contextualise and introduce the key units of analysis in this thesis through employing the metaphor of a journey as a heuristic device to afford an overarching account of this research. Furthermore, some context to youth and youth crime is provided and definitions of key phrases that will be employed throughout the thesis, and finally an overview of the thesis is presented. The individual narratives of forty young offenders, including their criminal involvement and their experiences of religion provides the context for this exploratory research project. How religion and crime interact in the lived experience of young peoples' lives will be interrogated.

Impetus for the Research

The inspiration for this research stems from over ten years of experience as a Social worker within the criminal justice system; first in Probation and then in Youth Justice as a Probation Officer and Senior Practitioner, where the religious identity of young people, their beliefs and values was brought into open discussion in supervision sessions as part of

young people's lived experience and related to their presenting criminal behaviour. The nature of the relationship between a young person's agency, beliefs and values, criminal behaviour and the possibilities for change within the context of their emerging identities continued to intrigue me as a practitioner. The interplay of these different concepts made me wonder about how these young offenders could make sense or reconcile any seeming incongruence between their beliefs and values and their conduct with the notion of change and got me thinking as to what role religion actually played and beliefs and values more widely in the formation of these young people's developing identities. Religion was often promoted by young people as a resource for change in attitudes and behaviour and observed as highly salient in young people's lives. A number of service-users on my case load over time had religious conversions while in prison, where the religious identity was fore-grounded as a key motivation in the change process, especially with a young person with a persistent offending record and gang involvement from a Sikh background who converted to Islam. Religion as a marker of identity within Youth Justice can easily be neglected by practitioners, indicated by how often the religion field in the YOIS data base is often left incomplete. The conversations during my supervising of young people on statutory Court Orders were about how the young people lived their everyday life and what was of most concern to them, the importance of relationships and negotiating problems and difficulties and the existential questions raised by the contingencies of these everyday experiences. Moral questions about right and wrong, about what is or isn't appropriate behaviour such as harm caused to others in the use of violence following a drunken argument were regularly expressed in working with young people that made me reflect on the ethical basis of Youth Justice Practice. These experiences piqued my curiosity and

started the process of exploring the research literature and constructing a research problem.

This research was jointly funded by the Religion and Society Programme and the Youth Justice Board, as a collaborative PhD studentship. The Religion and Society programme is a £12.3 million research initiative funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Economic and Social Research Council to research on the interrelationships between religion and society. It was phase 2 of the programme on Youth and Religion which forms the basis of this research. It encouraged critical exploration of current schemes of classification and terms like religion, spirituality and faith, examining whether religion shapes young people's ideals and the interplay of religious identity with other forms and contexts of identity, how religion influences young people's behaviour. These helped frame the focus of the research and research questions outlined below.

Rationale for the study

The underlying assumptions and beliefs and values of young people will be appropriately interrogated as the object of enquiry. An assessment of the motivations for behaviour and sources from which young offenders draw their ideas provides valuable insight into the types of intervention that would assist in supporting the process of change. Empirically, this is probably the first time, to my knowledge, that religious identity and beliefs and values of young offenders in the Youth Justice system have been explored in relation to their attitudes to offending. Religious identity is often a neglected dimension in Criminal Justice (Spalek and Immortal, 2008) but has become more relevant in the last two decades because of increasing global mass migration and 'superdiversity' (Vertovec, 2007) in urban

contexts where people take religion much more seriously as part of their social identity, in spite of arguments about growing secularisation and the increasing decline in religious institutional attendance (Bruce, 2002). The young people in this study certainly have a wider experience of the plurality of belief as the context in which they 'swim' as diverse, complex and multicultural (Weller, 2008). The resurgence and prevalence of religion in everyday life means that it needs to be treated more seriously in the public domain (Habermas, 2008) and considered as salient in the criminal justice system. If practitioners are to develop their cultural sensitivity/ competence in working with their clients, then it suggests some exploration of religion and belief is required within the context of youth justice (Sue, 2001; Laird, 2008; Harrison and Turner, 2011).

Understanding the worldview of a young offender enables a clearer grasp of the processes of change on the journey of desistance. An individual possesses a unique configuration of belief and values, drawing on a wide range of resources that underpin a young person's orientation to the way the world 'is'. These refer to the 'perceptual apparatus', 'filters' or 'frame of reference' they utilise to enable them to navigate through the contingencies/ exigencies of the real world. Their perceptions inform the choices that they make as to whether to enter into criminal behaviour or whether to turn their lives around. Turning one's life around stems from the Greek work 'metanoia'- repentance as a key theological concept in redemption, also referring to notions of forgiveness. These beliefs and values form the basis of their morality and the structure of their moral reasoning. These things can be mediated by their early socialisation as part of the worldview outlook as a 'dynamic working model' of the self in relation to others and their wider context.

The singularity of a young person's lived social reality is vital to comprehending their moral agency and so a critical social work practice needs to be applied which considers a young person's behaviour in its own right. By "considering the narratives and accounts derived from young people themselves" (Muncie, 2009:153) greater understanding of their moral agency in relation to their attitudes to offending can be obtained. This will include the specific role of religion as forming part of a young person's worldview and its role in forming these attitudes to offending. A worldview is defined in this thesis as a person's underlying system of basic assumptions, 'beliefs and values' about their view of life and the nature of being and reality (adapted from Koltko- Rivera, 2000), which provides their moral orientation to the world.

"To discuss and unearth the meanings of crime" (Presdee, 2004: 283) within the purview of young offenders' belief systems will provide insight into the complex, layered and multifaceted reality of crime, the reformability of the offender and how young people can commence the journey of 'going straight'. The path towards abstinence from offending requires a better understanding of rehabilitation. This thesis seeks to supplement and extend the knowledge base in this area. Rehabilitation is advanced as the process of leading a good life in support of the Good Lives Model (Ward and Maruna, 2007).

Adolescence is a particular phase of life during which young people develop their personal and social identity (Coleman and Hendry, 1999). Their philosophy of life similarly begins to emerge at this stage, where the questioning of beliefs and values is considered vital for understanding 'who they think they are' (McAdams, 1985). Identity is also at the heart of the desistance from crime: Maruna (2001) underlines the importance of making sense of

oneself as a non-offender in order to achieve what Gadd and Farrell, (2004: 124) describe as a 'shift in identity' from an offender to a non-offender. This makes the issue of identity central to Youth Justice. Particular reference will be made to the religious faith identity of young offenders in this thesis and its intersection with other markers of social identity, such as age and gender. Religious identities "evolve through an interactive process with social factors and influences" (Hemming and Madge, 2012: 40). This exploration of young offenders' beliefs and values for the purpose of identifying and clarifying the causes of offending and possibilities for change fits within the context of primary desistance as the transitional phase between offending and desistance (King, 2010; Healy, 2010).

This thesis fills an existing void in the literature by providing an interdisciplinary study of the relationship between religion and crime within Youth Justice in England and Wales. It will contribute to the literature on the sociology of youth religiosity and youth crime in developing an understanding of belief and religiosity in everyday life, beyond the confines of institutional religion as young offenders' everyday practices including the practice of crime (Miller, 2013). Furthermore, it will contribute to social work practice. Youth Justice will be treated in this thesis as straddling the two disciplines of social work and criminology. While this study acknowledges the debates about welfare versus justice (Smith, 2005), the punitive turn in criminal justice and how YOT's are operating on an amalgam of rationales (Muncie, 2006) social work's core ethic of care is still prevalent in practice (Whyte, 2010). This thesis will reiterate the argument made by Mclvor and Raynor's book *Developments in Social Work with Offenders* (2000: 19) that:" social work skills [and values] remain central to effective engagement and intervention with offenders [whereby] the supervision of offenders is ultimately unlikely to be effective unless it is able to locate interventions

within the offenders' social context. In other words, the supervision of offenders constitutes social work because of its need to reflect a commitment to social justice and social inclusion." I believe that Social Work practice and values remains a central component of Youth Justice (Whyte, 2008; 2010) and is the approach taken in this thesis, although Youth Justice is informed by the interdisciplinary nature of other valuable professions.

Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of this research is to explore how the interplay between a young person's agency, beliefs and values and behaviour generates possibilities/potentialities for change. It is specifically focused on the importance of an engagement with the perceptions and values of young offenders in seeking to work effectively with them towards desistance and rehabilitation, with its application for improving practice in Youth Justice. The particular emphasis will be on the religious identity of young offenders, but broadly encompassed within beliefs and values.

This thesis will argue that religion, spirituality, faith and belief are coterminous with the broader concept of worldview containing a person's 'beliefs and values' about life (Sheldrake, 2013). This forms the basis of the phenomenon under investigation, the worldview of young offenders and how these beliefs and values influence their attitudes to offending within the context of their burgeoning identities. It is the interplay of agency, beliefs and values and behaviour, which enables both young people and practitioners to delineate the possibilities for change through a process of moral conversations. This dialogue forms part of the intentional dynamics of supervision in exploring the young

person's life-world and moral orientation to their social context, and leverages the young person's formal and informal interactions towards promoting change away from offending. It involves discussions about moral agency, especially as they pertain to criminal behaviour. Religiosity can be a source of moral values that inform a young person's ethical stance and this thesis will examine young person's belief systems in relation to how these shape their attitudes to offending and how they could influence change towards abstinence from criminal behaviour. Both the opportunities and barriers to change perceived by the research participants will be explored.

The Metaphor of the Journey

The metaphor of the 'journey' or 'journeying' encompasses a mythic quest for identity and meaning in life that connects the main themes of this thesis: young offenders, religion, beliefs and values, identity, behaviour and processes of change. The great poem *Ithaca* by the Alexandrian poet Constantine P. Cavafy (1992) refers to the mystical voyage to the beautiful Island of Ithaca evoking the discovery of the self in multiple relations, to the self, others, the world, and transcendence. It is about experiencing the journey rather than reaching the destination. In the process of the journey there may be a confrontation with our own 'daimons', with monsters Laistrygonians and the Cyclops-representing our feared selves as opposed to our hoped for and expected selves. The social interactions with the world are integral to the formation of the self in the process of becoming. A young person's heroic journey throughout life follows a particular arc of trying to establish their identity and define their personal story (Campbell, 2012; McAdams, 1985). There is a sense in which the journey of life can 'turn our worlds upside down' (Humphrey, 2008:107) when the

individual is presented with experiences and opportunities that hold out the possibility of change, what they have known suddenly becomes overwhelming and requires a shift in their perception.

A developmental perspective over the life course can also be conceptualised as a journey of continuous growth and change as individuals become more capable and individuated/actualised human beings, but possessing both powers to do things and liabilities not to do things, to influence the world around them. Likewise, the world can also constrain and shape an individual's agency. The tension between structure and agency is paramount in the debate between free will and determinism (Connor, 2011; Hay, 1995).

Religion and spirituality are also journeys of transformation that catalyses a person's desire in journeying deeper into one's own religious faith or belief and within one's communities of practice¹ with the idea of becoming a better person. This is achieved through the support of others who are on a similar journey that can often be fraught with difficulties and obstacles which need to be overcome. It can be the journey of conversion from the tendency to be self-absorbed, a transformation from the humanly 'inauthentic' to the 'authentic' where the religious or spiritual tradition offers wisdom for this process of change. There can be the trope of death to the old self and rebirth to the new².

¹ "Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (Wenger, 2007:n.p).

² Even within Buddhism the human person consisting of five aspects: bodily forms, feelings, perceptions, dispositions and consciousness – all of which are in a state of constant flux, which does not negate the sense of self (Jobling, 2010:75).

The meeting place or intersection between religion and spirituality and criminal justice social work is found in the metaphor of the journey, with both religiosity and desistance being concerned about processes of change. Desistance based practice (McNeill, 2011) involves practitioners supporting the offender's journey of change and taking account of their beliefs and values. The process of turning away from criminality involves a process of learning to be a good or a better person, as it does in religious or spiritual rhetorics. In this study the young people who commit crime cannot have said to have desisted but are nevertheless either considering whether to make a decision to leave offending behind them or treading along that pathway or moving towards more offending. It is a journey fraught with obstacles and blockages sometimes beyond the young offender's control. The role for Youth Justice is to encourage and support the journey towards abstinence from offending (Field, 2007), to go with the grain of young offender's self-reforming efforts, and to work with resistances to overcoming change. The social disadvantage of having a criminal record makes this a journey from social exclusion to one of social inclusion (Farrall, Bottoms and Shapland, 2010).

Youth Justice can make a positive contribution in young people's lives through providing opportunities for redemption, a chance for youth who commit crime to turn their lives around and redeem themselves and to enable them to overcome the structural impediments to change. This will allow them to make good on their past behaviours through instilling hope that life can be different and providing support and guidance. Redemption means "the moral quest to become a good[better] person" (Nellis, 2009:142): a journey towards optimal human flourishing with the horizon ultimately set by the individual (Seligman, 2011). This transposes a theological concept into a social concept, but

in my submission should not necessarily dismiss the theological as this can be significant for some individual offenders, for whom religious identity is salient. It reflects the 'journeying' metaphor we have invoked which can see developmental change over the life course as a viable and meaningful option on a purely secular basis but can also take account of people's religious and spiritual perspectives. Although, the concept 'secular' is also not a fixed, homogenous and uncontested term (McCutcheon, 2007). Redemption involves the process of transformation which requires a shift in identity and perception about the world. Redemption must also include "finding a way to 'make good' on a troubled and troubling past by making a positive contribution to families or communities now (Maruna,2001)" (McNeill et al., 2013: 11). The social context of redemption must be borne in mind, where the moral quest to be a good person unfolds within the socio-cultural conditions of the social world and requires the young person's re-integration into civil society.

There is the journeying between worldviews where a person acquires an insider appreciation of another's life world and may consider the possibilities of how this may shift the contours of their own worldview. These people may provide a moral template and possess qualities they wish to emulate through a programme of intentional practices.

The metaphor of the journey describes how human beings negotiate and live life as a process of learning, growth, change and development.

Youth and Youth Crime

There are increased anxieties about problematized youth (Brown, 2005) with seemingly growing delinquency and moral decline (Cohen, 2002) social disintegration (Pitts, 2001) and efforts to regulate their behaviour (France, 2007). The criminal justice system tends to

see young people as offenders first and children second; as young people that need to be controlled and managed rather than as resources to be developed, where often a deficit model is applied. A more nuanced and balanced representation is required of youth involved in offending, rather than responding to them through a prism of danger and safety (Waiton, 2001). Conveying a negative impression of them as a whole compounds the sense of danger where they are labelled and demonised. The problem of youth crime is not simply related to an objective number of criminal actions, but also depends on how we, as individuals as a society, feel about it and how we deal with it (Andersen et al., 2005). Miles (2003, 170ff) emphasises the central role played by consumption in the formation of youth identities. Fenwick and Hayward (2000) argue that crime reflects our consumer culture driven by market forces, where crime becomes a commodity and like any other decision to transgress is simply a lifestyle choice. A young person's life course is no longer predictable and uniform because society is more diverse and segmented (Smith, 2011). The transition to adulthood is often messy and complicated and steps taken can lead sideways or backwards (MacDonald and Marsh, 2005:35). Young people are being exposed to 'new risks', 'insecurity' and 'stresses and strains' (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997:9; Beck 1992; Coles, 1995) in rapidly changing social conditions.

While acknowledging that crime is fundamentally a social behaviour, a product of social order in which we live, ubiquitous across all social classes (Presdee, 2004; Sumner, 2004); young people's 'official' involvement in offending is minimal compared to the youth population as a whole. The disjunction between public perceptions and the actual extent of offending though is stark. Overall figures show there has been a long term fall in youth offending. Bateman (2012: 4) reports: "in 2002/03, there were 166,925 substantive youth

justice disposals recorded; by 2009/10, the equivalent figure stood at 155,855, a fall of almost 7%." An adult survey in 2010/11 found that 60% of adults in England and Wales believed crime had risen in the past two years (Innes, 2011). The public perception persists that youth crime continues to rise and is a continuing problem (ICYCAB, 2010). Media representations and the political agenda play their part in this spiralling problem of 'troubling' youth (Brown, 2005). There has been a 'total panic' over 'almost every aspect of the lives of young people' (Brown, 2005: 58). It fails to acknowledge that young people are more likely to be victims than perpetrators of serious crime (Armstrong, 2005). This is the wider context of social discourses and processes within which the lives of young people in this study are embedded.

Definitions of Key Phrases

'Young people' is a socially constructed category where the age boundary is fluid and contested. For Jones (1995) young people refers to those between the ages of 15 and 25 years (Jones, 1995), although the European Youth Forum represents young people up to the age of 35. I will refer to young people as reflecting the ages represented by the Youth Justice Board in England and Wales from the age of criminal responsibility at aged 10 to 18 years, although in view of debates about the age of criminal responsibility the lower end of this age range can as well be called children. Childhood is a protected phase of development and socially and culturally constructed term (Ariés, 1973). It is a vital notion regarding discussions about moral responsibility, 'doli incapax' (incapable of evil) and age of criminal responsibility. Young offenders will refer to those young people who are subject to supervision of a Youth Offending Team/Service.

For the purposes of this study, the term 'offending' or 'crime' will be taken to mean acts or behaviour which warrant legal proceedings for violations of the criminal law, but being aware that some offences may not have been detected but still constitute a breach of the law of the land, potentially requiring court proceedings. It relates to behaviour defined and sanctioned by the criminal law (Muncie, 2009). This also needs to take account of debates about including all social injuries and social harms (Hulsman, 1986). The social construction of law needs to be borne in mind (MacCormick, 2007).

Nye (2004) refers to the contested and counterproductive nature of defining religion but works from the assumption that there is a cultural activity that is labelled as 'religion' as a way of talking about certain acts of human activity. Religions are not timeless and unitary phenomena but do change over time (Asad, 1993). The focus in this thesis will be on how religion and spirituality are practised, experienced and expressed as per McGuire's (2008) notion of 'lived religion' in everyday life, and she uses spirituality and religion interchangeably. The broader notion of worldview will subsume the distinctions in the different categories.

A brief overview of the thesis will be outlined in the next section, to indicate the direction of travel for this 'journey'.

Overview of the Thesis

This introductory chapter has set out the context for this research, stressing the key aims, objectives, and concepts of the thesis.

2) Towards Defining Religion and Spirituality for Youth Justice

Chapter two describes the literature and the role of religion and spirituality (R&S) within Social Work. It includes an exploration of the complexity of definitions and relationship between the concepts of religion, faith, religiosity, belief, spirituality. It establishes that these concepts can be subsumed within the broader concept of worldview encompassing a young offender's beliefs and values, which is compatible with the approach taken in the social work literature. It will stress a particular approach to R&S, based on spiritual practices and its application to Youth Justice.

3) Theories of Crime and Desistance

In this chapter the literature in relation to the interplay between religion and crime is explored and general theories of crime and desistance is also examined. It is argued that there is a correspondence between the causes of crime and factors associated with the cessation of offending. Beliefs and values are significant to this extent as being the driver for a young person's behaviour towards or away from offending.

4) Methodology

This chapter will outline the research questions and research framework. It will provide justification for the use of in-depth semi-structured, narrative- biographical interviews with young offenders and photo-elicitation, and provide details about the sampling frame and

analytical framework. Some reflexivity regarding the processes of the fieldwork is also presented.

5) The Meaning of Crime

This chapter is devoted to the reasons for offending put forward by forty young offenders and their understanding of what it means to commit crime. This will explore some of the operative values that are demonstrated by the particular attitudes to offending, displayed in relation to peer group, the use of violence, life on the road, attitudes towards others, and involvement with gangs. The social context of offending will be scrutinized, including young offenders' personal situation and individual characteristics, such as their religious background, schooling, family context.

6) An authentic faith?

The notion of authentic faith is acknowledged, contested and problematised in this chapter by the research participants. They hold in mind a prototypical form of faith as an ideal, which is used as a plumb line to measure their own relationship to the concept of faith and their level of faith commitment. It is drawn from two complementary resources, the repertoire of self as possessing authenticity and the authenticity of particular faith traditions. The nuanced nature of lived faith is presented as forming the basis of this authenticity and challenges the usual binary of religious/not religious.

7) Facing Forward and Notions of the Good Life

This chapter focuses on the future outlook of young offenders and their vision for a changing world and the possibility of life change. It is the contention of this chapter that an understanding and acceptance of what constitutes a 'good life' can provide a focus and motivation for change in attitudes and behaviour. The place of religion within notions of the good life is examined, alongside what aspirations young offenders hold and what sort of person's they aspire to become.

8) Discussion and Conclusion

This will provide a synthesis of the arguments presented in the data chapters, relating the empirical to the theoretical discussions in the literature. It will highlight the interplay between theory and data and outline the central thesis. This chapter will return to the main themes of the thesis, the limitations of the study are identified and recommendations for further research are offered with some implications for Social Work practice.

CHAPTER 2: TOWARDS DEFINING RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY FOR YOUTH JUSTICE

This chapter will explore what we mean by religion, spirituality, faith and belief in order to comprehend the complex nature of the phenomenon under investigation, and to reach an operational definition of the term which will be utilised in this thesis. The object of study is the beliefs and values of young offenders and more specifically their religious identity in relation to their offending behaviour.

It will examine some major studies of children and young peoples' religious beliefs in showing how these have a bearing on this current research and will argue that these studies often interpret young people's religiosity through imposed frames of meaning rather than through young people's own interpretation or the co-production of representation. A review of the social work literature in regard to how this profession makes sense of Religion and Spirituality (R&S) will follow, in view of the increasing interest in this subject within social work, especially its role in effective social work practice in relation to cultural competence. As Hodge (2003: 293) argues:

“Culturally competent practice is predicated upon developing an awareness of the worldviews [beliefs and values] involved in practice settings (McPhatter, 1997). To develop the necessary empathic understanding of faith-based [and other] worldviews, social workers must be exposed to the stories and cultural narratives affirmed by people of faith [and none](Wambach and Van Soest, 1997).”

The dangers of religion are often over represented without a proper appraisal of religion's complex nature and its validity as a resource in young people's lives.

Lastly, this review will introduce the specific framework of Spiritual Askesis, showing how this can be linked to Youth Justice, as an effective framework through which young offenders' worldviews can be better understood and incorporated in practice. Therefore work with young offenders will be informed by what a young offender cares about most, ultimately in what motivates them and exerts normative claims on the conduct of their social life.

'Grasping hold of water' or 'catching the wind' or 'slippery fish' are analogous to trying to define the properties of religion and spirituality, although R&S have similar characteristics, certain family resemblances among their typical features (Saler, 2008). The ambiguity and vagueness of language is considered part of the exercise itself, it evades fixed conceptualisation because of the very complex nature of the phenomenon we are trying to describe (Shardlow, 1998). A definition has "... to have a strong connection with at least one family of meanings in usage, otherwise we are inventing pure technical jargon, which people will find it difficult to interpret , because it strays from the common usage" (Mason, 2004: 7). Defining what we mean by the object of our study is significant in making the distinction between a purely theoretical and an operationalised definition in research.

As Sharpe (1983) avers we must avoid postulating simplicity for such a variegated phenomena. Similarly, Turner (1991: 3) warns against "the effect of inducing a sense of theoretical sterility and repetitiveness" when we try to answer the question: what is R&S? He wants to explore new questions and inspire new topics of interest. It remains however a

pertinent question in framing our discussion about the role of religions faith identities within the Youth Justice system.

Furness and Gilligan (2010: 3) take a pragmatic and broadly phenomenological/interpretive approach, adopting Beckford's (2001) position in defining religion as "what individuals or communities say it is, rather than imposing narrower 'substantive' or 'functionalist' approaches. (Hunt, 2005)". What religions and different beliefs have in common is that they are important to someone and have an impact on behaviour, responses and their understanding of the world. Every individual learns how to use religion in everyday life and it is this 'common understanding' that is required if practitioners are to appreciate R&S's relevance in Youth Justice. This chapter engages with these issues without making an easy assumption about whether young people engage with religion in the same way as adults.

What is religion, spirituality, faith and belief?

Producing an operational definition for research purposes differs substantively from the vague 'breadth' definitions of more theoretical works in the literature, such as 'spirituality is a code word for the depth dimension of human experience' (Becker, 1994: 257)

Nevertheless, such designations are helpful in providing general or specific features we might wish to explore in grounding our research. We have to examine the individual properties different scholars have employed but also examine the nature of these definitions. This study wants to develop an understanding of spirituality and religion that can inform practical research, to seek to capture the underlying properties and processes

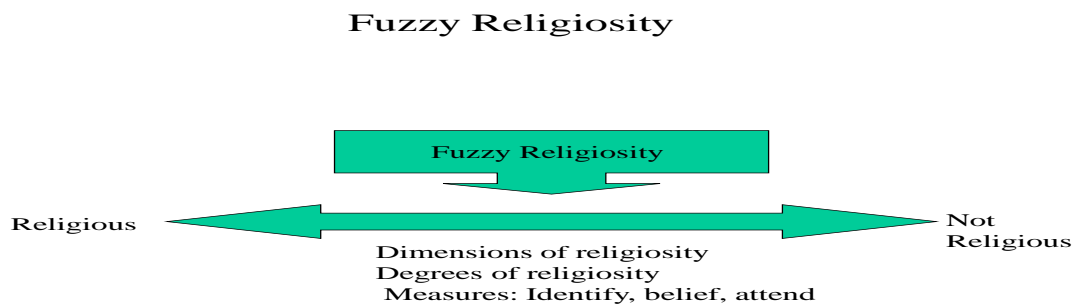
that characterize religion and spirituality. The research process involves the specific identification and development of a number of central categories through which R&S might be manifested.

R&S should not be seen as mutually exclusive terms. Spirituality is however, often seen in binary opposition to religion, as overlapping, as an adjunct to religion, as an integral part of religion or where there is confusion the terms are used almost interchangeably. Dyson et al (1997: 1184) write that “one of the major hindrances in defining spirituality is its relationship with religion.” Religion and spirituality are seen as either the same thing, related or different and this accounts for the majority of conceptualisations in the vast inter-disciplinary literature. Clear divisions are either made between these notions or complex explanations are proffered as to how they are related.

People may employ the term religion in extended and multiple senses, describing religion as a fuzzy category that allows for degrees of membership. Voas and Day (2010) explore the notion of the unexcluded middle for the Christian religion; this is an intermediate state between the two poles of observant orthodoxy and overt irreligion that enables a greater analytical sophistication in articulating what we mean by religion. It explores what they term ‘fuzzy fidelity’ where there “is some loyalty to tradition but in a rather uncommitted way” (Voas and Day, 2010: 3). As Voas (2009:161) explains, religious commitment is not dichotomous, so that people are either religious or not (R or not R) . In terms of belief, practice and self-identification “residual involvement is considerable.” In viewing the religious and not religious as two extreme, Voas and Day (2010) employ the notion of fuzzy

set theory, which allows degrees of membership rather than requiring everything to be either R or not R to articulate the kinds of 'fuzzy religiosity'. If we employ this concept in broader terms to look at how young offenders make sense of their religious identities, particularly in looking at degrees of religiosity for the other faith traditions, a strong framework can be applied to the raw data of narrative interviews. The specific dimensions of religiosity are observed, with three indicators of religiosity: self-identification, frequency of attendance at religious services and belief in God. 'Fuzzy belief' is not intended as a dismissive label but to reveal the complex nature of religiosity.

Figure 1 Fuzzy Religiosity



Source: Adapted from Voas & Day (2010)

Savage et al. (2006:18-22) suggest that 'Generation Y' youth are characterised by 'fuzzy' religious ideas, the residual importance of Christian concepts, individualised frameworks and a disengagement from substantive religious language.

These impressions also align with the work of theologian Marcus Borg. Borg (1989) identifies four meanings for faith, taken from a predominantly Christian perspective, that in my view have wider applications. He talks about faith as a way of the heart, a way of life, a particular orientation to all that is. The heart has a central place within Faith as Fiducia- "faith as trust is like floating in a deep ocean" (Ibid: 31). Being attentive to the relationship encompasses the meaning of faith as 'fidelitas'-fidelity with its ethical imperative. Faith as 'visio' or a way of seeing draws on Niebuhr's work: the Responsible Self. How we see the whole of what is will affect how we respond to life, whether we see it in a paranoid way as hostile and threatening-out to cause us harm, where the tendency is to respond defensively, or do we see the whole from a perspective of indifference, or as life giving and nourishing. Faith as assensus-"I give my heart to, commitment or loyalty to"- is at the core of the meaning of the Latin word credo, "I believe" but as Borg argues it is more than giving our mental assent to a list of propositions. The emphasis is about faith in relational terms.

Faith in these different guises resonates with Fowler's (1986) definition of faith in his stage based model of faith development, as being universal and relational. Faith has to do with the making, maintenance, and transformation of human meaning. It is a mode of knowing and being. In faith, we shape our lives in relation to more or less comprehensive convictions or assumptions about reality. Fowler (1986) presents a triadic diagram of faith.

He describes an explicit faith structure, "In communities, a self (S) is bound to others (O) by shared trust and loyalty. But our ties to others are mediated, formed, and deepened by our shared or common trusts in and loyalties to centres of supra-ordinate value (CSV)" (Ibid: 17). He suggests that faith is "an irreducibly relational phenomenon" (Ibid: 19). This relational quality forms part of the composition of religion outlined by Strausberg (2009).

He presents religions as the subject matter of theories of religion and religion as their theoretical object. He believes that theories of religion can usually be expected to address four interrelated questions: the specificity of religion(s), the origins of religion(s), the functions of religion(s), and the structure of religion(s).

The specificity of religion relates to its uniqueness, anything that is special about religion. Other terms invoked to address this question are content, components, typical or regular features of religion. Only if religion becomes identified with any specific properties, possessing its own regularities or communicated as a specific code are we able to recognise religion in observation. The regularities that are observed and attributed may be culturally postulated and constructed, but still regularities of ascriptions, determining what counts as religion, can be observed (Beckford, 2003). To posit religion's uniqueness, its sui generis ('of its own kind') quality does not necessarily preclude reductionist, naturalist, realist or constructionist positions (Engler, 2004). Religion is not an insular phenomenon as it interacts with other 'things', it has an interface with other systems, domains or social facts.

Origins relates to an emerging quality, or "a mechanism which makes specific conditions come to the fore" (Stausberg, 2009: 5), and is historically indeterminate, religion can emerge (originate) at any time, given certain conditions explained by a theory. Origins refer

to the factors that contribute to establish the regularities of religion. Origin should be distinguished from 'beginnings'.

The notion of function is relational, as it is the observer who assigns functionality as it relates social facts to other social facts. The observed functions can be operational without being perceived or realised by the actors. Stausberg (2009: 5-6) argues that functions should be distinguished from effects whereby the former notion is normative and the latter is empirical. He cites the example of religion arguably functioning to generate social cohesion but where the activities of religion can point to disruptive effects. Religion could cement social hierarchies or stir rebellion.

Structure can be associated with four specific questions: what are the aspects, dimensions, elements, components, recurrent patterns or building blocks of religion? Are all necessary or just one? Do they mutually confirm, and sustain each other or are they independent of each other? How and why do these elements hang together, are parts of joint constructs and attributions, whether they are interdependent (if so, how) or just arbitrary assemblies? (Ibid: 6).

The form, content of religion are aspects of forging a holistic view of religion that must similarly assess its role at every strata of the social world. For as Yip (2009: 2) argues "we must understand its significance and impact on all three levels macro (i.e. societal), meso (i.e. institutional) and micro (i.e. individual). This approach enables us to appreciate the complementarity as well as contradictions of these levels, which give rise to various contestation and accommodation which, though messy and inconsistent, offer us a more

accurate picture of how religion is lived". Encouraging us to explore religion as practice, McGuire (2008:213) argues that:

Individual religious commitment is evidenced less by avowed commitment to and participation in the activities of religious organizations than by the way each person expresses and experiences his or her faith and practice in ordinary places and in everyday moments. To understand modern religious lives, we need to try and grasp the complexity, diversity, and fluidity of real individuals' religion- as practiced, in the context of their everyday lives. Although studies of religious organizations and movements are still relevant, they cannot capture the quality of people's everyday religious lives. As messy as these lives may be in practice, individuals' lived religions are what really matters to them.

This is predominantly the focus that this research will take, but recognising that individuals are always embedded in social contexts and they interrelate through social interaction. We live our lives in different geographical, political and socio-cultural contexts that can produce significant structural factors that individuals can find empowering as well as constraining, such as young adolescents negotiating the boundaries of being under statutory supervision of a legally imposed sanction for having committed a crime.

Religion as practice is compatible with Day's (2009) notion of performative belief, and gives credence to approaching religion from this perspective. The embodied part of the way we live is encapsulated in Day's (2009; 2010) performative understanding of belief, they are brought into being in specific contexts, times and places. Belief arises as a collective, pragmatic means to impose order and achieve a sense of coherence, drawing on Durkheim. Language has the effect of doing more than merely conveying something, the speech act must account for the cultural framework in which it is being used and the function or 'meaning in use'. "Believing in belonging" is about belief in social relationships, about

beliefs being acted out in social context where sociality and connection to others is significant for people. Beliefs are performed or acted through social interaction, people do belief in social action and this in turn helps shape identities. Day (2010:26) asserts: "Belief is not separate from identity or social context but a way of creating who 'I' am relative to 'you' here and now." It stresses beliefs social and relational location.

Ruel (1982) makes a distinction between 'believe in' (trust in) and 'believe that' (propositional belief). She talks about the quality of relationship, that sense of trust and confidence in the original meaning of the word belief 'pistis' in Greek, denoting a person and event. Belief must be distinguished from its specifically Christian origins and use, which will affect its connotations in other contexts. Robbins (2007:14ff) concurs that belief can signify relational believing rather than assent to propositional truths. 'Believing in' signifies trust at the deeper existential level and these are 'essence like statements' on which people base their values for living.

While Asad (1983) is concerned to show under what conditions meanings are constructed and argues that belief is historically contingent, authenticated and legitimated by powerful leaders. He is interested in the question of how power creates religion, what are the specific processes of power and knowledge that constitute belief. He demonstrates that there are historical processes and power relationships at work in how a specific set of symbols makes authoritative accounts for the world.

Day(2009) sees young people's 'believing in' as them adhering to relationships and family as the most significant thing in their lives; people they can trust and with whom they can have an emotional relationship. They believe in a post-nuclear family where the structures

are flexible and boundaries shift. There is a sense of young people resourcing their beliefs from their social relationships, in concert with friends or relatives. Day (2009) emphasises how young people turned an experience of loss into one of belonging through continuing their relationships with the deceased, relocating the transcendent to the social and temporal through experiences of talking to their deceased relative, having a sense of them watching over and protecting them, guiding their behaviour. She calls this the secular social supernatural. Belief is “relocated to the social realm where it is polyvocal, interdependent, emotionally charged and illustrative of the experiences of belonging” (Day, 2009: 276).

It is important to be aware of the socio-cultural shifts that have taken place that ground these definitional explorations where religious faith and identity takes on a more personal dimension. This is the turn towards the subject, which Heelas and Woodhead (2005:2) describe as “the turn away from life lived in terms of external or ‘objective’ roles, duties and obligations, and a turn towards life lived by reference to one’s own subjective experiences”. Giddens (1991) has argued that late modern society is a world of traditions but not a traditional world. This denotes that, while traditions and institutions still exist in their transformed state, their scope and extent of influence in the lives of individuals are decreasing. In turn, life has become increasingly internally referential and reflexively organised. The process of detraditionalization has meant a shift of authority from without to within; the self has become the ultimate point of reference in the individual’s life course. This does not necessarily mean the total disappearance of traditions and the absolute reign of the self in the construction and management of individual and social life. The co-existence thesis, espoused by Heelas (1996) argues that the self and traditions co-exist and

intermingle inextricably, albeit with varying emphases. This will be observed in young offender's sense of authenticity in chapter 6.

Substantive definitions focus on the content of belief systems and its associated practices, on identifying the core elements that are present in socio-cultural systems that can be defined as 'religion'. In other words, substantive definitions focus on what religion is. It usually has some supernatural or transcendent referent such as in Edward Tylor's (1958) classic statement that religions are fundamentally constituted by 'belief in supernatural beings'. It is a widely assumed approach to definitions of religion. Indeed substantive definitions underpin the idea of a canon of institutionalised religions (eg Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism, etc).

The strength of this model is that it delineates a relatively clear field of study. On the other hand, it is hard to establish a set of universal core elements that constitute religion from a substantive perspective, because it is difficult to judge what the core elements should be. For example Theravada Buddhism does not include belief in a deity or supernatural force. There is often a failure to provide reflexive accounts of the social, cultural, and political contexts which have shaped these definitions. As Lynch (2007:130) argues:

"Rather than offering a framework for understanding universal religious categories within human societies and individual experience, concepts of 'religions' emerge out of a particular phase of the social imaginary shaped by Western culture and may distort as much as clarify our understanding of human cultures."

Religion as a concept has been critiqued as a product of a particular trajectory of Western intellectual thought, shaped by the Enlightenment, Western imperialism, and more recently the Western push for global legal, political and economic frameworks, such as by

Asad(1993); McCutcheon (1997, 2003) and Fitzgerald (2003). Strenski (2010) regards these as 'eliminationists' when it comes to the concept of religion, they see it as problematic and should be something that is eradicated and replaced by another concept.

In contrast functional definitions focus on the sociological effects of religion-what it does.

What is religions' contribution to social life? A functionalist perspective characterizes religion by its ability to perform certain functions for individuals or wider society, opening up the possibility that any socio-cultural system which serves the basic religious needs for community, identity and meaning could be defined as religious, even though it could fall outside the conventional canon of religions. Football could be considered to have religious connotations in this approach, with strong allegiance to a team binding people together, providing meaning and belonging through an identity as a certain club supporter. A functional perspective can be seen as a more flexible framework for taking the religious pulse of contemporary society if the religious landscape is deemed to be in transition.

There are the dangers of imposing religious categories onto other cultural phenomena by claiming "to know the true meaning of religious activity beyond the false consciousness of religious adherents" or suffering theoretical reductionism (Lynch 2007: 131-2). Beckford (1980) states that religion has a functional capacity at the personal level to help people overcome problems of personality imbalance, self-identity, meaning in life, moral reasoning , and at the communal level to provide direction and meaning in personal life as well as helpful points of reference in large scales societies. Religion will take different forms and perform different social functions in different contexts.

Phenomenological approaches place greater emphasis on “approaching the universal features of religion through empathic engagement of the lived experience and perceptions of people in relation to religion or the sacred” (Lynch, 2007:128). They provide an openness that can see forms of religion outside the boundaries of the traditional canon of religions. Understanding the conditions in which these definitions have been produced is critical to a more reflexive understanding.

The interpretive approach involves an iterative process of moving inside and outside the particular religious tradition drawing on previous knowledge of representation and interpretation. With regard to reflexivity, any students of religion bring their own questions and ideas into dialogue with the religious tradition under examination. In relation to interpretation they make comparisons and contrasts between their own worldview and those of the others being studied. This would be a comparison of unfamiliar terms used by adherents and one’s own familiar concepts. This critical approach is suspicious of representations which essentialise or stereotype. Understanding requires a back and forth between individuals in the context of their groups and the wider religious tradition. In acknowledging their complexity and internal diversity empathy is only possible once the terms and symbols of the others’ discourse have been grasped. The person starts from any position on the hermeneutical circle, such as reflecting on one’s own tradition, presuppositions and attitudes towards others. This approach sees religions as dynamic and changing, and as a series of relationships rather than a rigid and homogeneous system of beliefs (Jackson, 2004).

“Religions are not seen as belief systems with necessary and sufficient conditions for inclusion, but as broad religious traditions, reference points for individuals and groups,

whose shape and borders are often contested but with descriptive content” (Jackson, 2009:23).

Learners referring to people in general, are encouraged to review their understanding of their own way of life, and this re-assessment forms part of the learning process. Jobling (2010:10-11) provides one of the most inclusive definitions of spirituality in the literature, which can be expressed within or outside organized religious traditions and maybe be formative at the subconscious as well as conscious levels. She defines spirituality as “the actualization of the capacity for self-transcendence, operating within and towards the horizon of an explicitly or implicitly perceived ‘ultimate value’ (life itself, God, love, social justice , personal and social wellbeing, etc), which may not be reducible to one concept but comprise an intimately interrelated nexus of values which are mutually constitutive” (Jobling, 2010:10-11). It may be formative at the subconscious as well as conscious levels. They are discourses as sets of signifying practices. They may be collective or individual and are not wholly privatised because they are situated within a discursive field. This builds on the definition of Schneiders(2003:165):‘the experience of conscious involvement in the project of life integration through self-transcendence towards the ultimate value one perceives’. This is a conscious awareness of life as an ongoing enterprise, which brings all the different elements together.

Sheldrake(2012) warns about the dangers of making such a sharp contrast between spirituality and religion and pushes towards a worldview perspective as a broader framework to encompass religion, spirituality and secularity/non religion³ could also be

³ Religion and non-religion are ‘semantically parasitic categories’ where you ‘cannot understand what we mean by [one] unless it is placed in relation to the [other]’ (Fitzgerald, 2007:54). Non- religion is ‘necessarily defined in reference to religion’ (Lee, 2009). The boundary between these two categories is being continually

added. These can be seen as incorporating a set of beliefs and practices often applied as a way of life (Jawad, 2012). This fits with Ninian Smart's (1981) argument that both religions and secular ideologies should be studied as 'worldviews'. The boundaries between these concepts are not impermeable. Sheldrake(2012: 98) describes spirituality as possessing 'beliefs about life'-values that are not free floating but 'based on prior assumptions about the nature and purpose of human life' and reflecting a person's worldview. Historically spiritual relates to the Greek word for holy 'holos' or whole, where spirituality can be defined as the integrating factor of life as a whole and the quest for the sacred and underpins a desire for meaning (Sheldrake, 2013).

Hull (1999: np) has mapped the conceptual landscape for spirituality, faith and religion and views it as three concentric circles decreasing in size, starting with the most comprehensive category of spirituality, then faith and religion. Faith is 'a trustful response to the object of religious worship' but faith can also be a wider category of human response. Faith is a human potential for responding with trust, to whatever centres of power, meaning and purpose a person selects (Fowler 1981). It has to do with subjectivity and is an attitude or human response of trust, acceptance or faithfulness to whatever increases our spirituality. Spirituality refers to whatever motivates human transcendence as 'being lifted up beyond the biological '(Hull, 1999:np), such as with imagination we transcend the limits of space and time, in creativity we transcend the limits of our own particular experience.

'staked out, defended, deployed, attacked, smudged, re-defined or even dissolved' (Beckford 2003, 4). Non-religion as a category is not a unified monolith and so best fits within a worldview perspective as a wider frame of meaning.

Weber (1993) places his emphasis upon religion as a system of meaning rather than upon its social function, although he demonstrated how any system of belief can “engender forms of action that have an important impact in everyday life” (Davie, 2007: 29) like the Protestant work ethic in the economic sphere. For Durkheim (2008) religion performs a necessary function of binding people together; through which people form societies and maintain social order. The dialectical distinction between form and content, of religion and religiosity by the structuration of the spiritual aspirations of individuals is vital in understanding the contours of belief systems. Conventional religion includes some form of transcendent referent/s and institutional organisation comprising of “the principal religions of the world and their long established sub-divisions” (Towler, 1984:4).

Measures of Religiosity by Hill and Hood (1999) provides a compendium of religiosity measures which describe the various ways different dimensions of religiosity have been used in research, such as attendance at a place of worship, adherence refers to level and quality of a person’s attachment to their faith, affiliation denotes belonging to a religious institution, salience-as the importance of religion in a person’s life, knowledge of a religious faith, experience or practice refers to participation in religious activities such as prayer, referring to the degree to which one indicates that prayer is an active and/or meaningful part of one’s life or frequency of reading religious texts.

Glock and Stark (1965) identified five dimensions of religiosity: experiential, ritualistic, ideological, intellectual, and consequential. The experiential focuses on the personal faith experience or lived aspect of religious faith, perhaps with a transcendent encounter.

Ritualistic involves the worship experience of the faith community. The ideological and

intellectual are closely related where the ideological refers to the holding of certain beliefs. The intellectual dimension includes an expectation that the religious person will be informed and knowledgeable about the basic tenets of the faith tradition and its scriptures. The consequential refers to the impact of the other dimensions in the real world- an ethical dimension. Allport and Ross (1967) discovered two dimensions of religiosity which provides insight into how religiosity is utilised in a person's life. Extrinsic religiosity is where individuals are disposed to use religion for their own ends, such as status, self-justification or in the case of offenders for reinforcing delinquency or neutralising the effects of guilt and shame (Maruna and Copes, 2005). A person with intrinsic religiosity internalises their religious beliefs and lives in harmony with these beliefs. A distinction is made between using and living your religion, which is apposite for this study in establishing whether this operates in practice with the participants in this cohort. In particular, this research is assessing how religiosity contributes to positive change.

Dowling et al (2003) found the religiosity construct to have four first order factors: impact of religious beliefs on self, religious views, religious restrictions of God on people, and role of a faith institution in one's life. The intensity/centrality of religiosity in a person's life is vital (Zwingmann et al., 2011) for understanding how young people use religiosity in their everyday experience. Hemming and Madge (2012) provide a fourfold definition for religious identity which easily incorporates spirituality: 1) affiliation and belonging; 2) behaviours and practices; 3) beliefs and values; 4) religious and spiritual experiences. By investigating these elements and their relationship to each other will allow for a holistic and complex view of religious identity in young people's lives. It is the approach this thesis will follow, as it encapsulates the various dimensions we have previously examined.

Religion and spirituality have been defined as multi-dimensional constructs, with various dimensions that can be explored to enable some purchase on this complex phenomena. These have different levels of understanding and application. A number of ways were examined in which the properties and composition of religion and spirituality can be defined, such as the pragmatic approach referring to what individuals or communities say it is. These belief systems are important because they impact on people's behaviour, responses, and ways of understanding the world. A contrast was made between substantive (form and content) and functional (purpose) approaches to the composition of religion and spirituality, outlining the particular features of what it is and the form it takes, expressing what it does and the functions it performs. Religion as lived experience and performative belief were outlined, referring to how people actually practice and perform their faith in relation to others. This takes account of individual's levels/degrees of commitment within the 'fuzzy' nature of the object of study in the continuum between religious and not religious. Fuzzy denotes 'in-between', rather than confused or muddled. The relational aspects of R&S were underlined. In addition, an interpretive approach involves the recursive back and forth, comparison and contrast between our own worldview and those of the others being studied. It was argued that belief systems are equated as synonymous with worldviews, whether religious, spiritual or secular. This can be applied to the inclusive approach to examining the relationship between R&S and young people's offending behaviour in how these beliefs and values are appropriated as well as embodied by individual's. A number of studies have been undertaken exploring young people's religious or spiritual beliefs. These studies will be examined in the next section.

Studies of Children and Young Peoples' Religious Beliefs

These studies allow an understanding of the wider patterns and relationships of young people's religiosity to be considered, in order to situate this current research. They raise a number of issues regarding the orientation of this current research relating to definitional issues, interpretation, representation, and meanings of young people's religious identity.

There is the danger of researchers and practitioners imposing their own interpretation onto young people's religious and spiritual experiences, when stakeholders should take "young people's own priorities and concerns as starting points for social enquiry" (Hemming and Madge, 2012:39) and test their soundings with the young people themselves.

Rankin's (2005) study of young peoples' spirituality, employed a sensitive methodology of engaging young people in their own spaces and starting from where they are, allowing young people to define their own terms and understandings. He found that young people were willing to talk about spirituality but the opportunity to do this was often buried under the weight of modern living. Spirituality is not so much about personal convictions but about wrestling with the existential questions posed by life in late modernity.

A strong visible, salient or intentional faith is not operating in the foreground of most teenagers' lives, according to the longitudinal, mixed methods research project, the National Study of Youth and Religion conducted by Smith and Denton (2005) in America. The faith held and described by most adolescents was something researchers' identified as a Moralistic Therapeutic Deism consisting of the following beliefs: "1) a god exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth, 2) god wants people to be good, nice and fair to each other, as taught in the bible and by most world religions, 3)

the central goal of life is to be happy and feel good about oneself, 4) god does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when god is needed to resolve a problem, 5) good people go to heaven when they die" (Smith and Denton, 2005:162-163). Young people were considered to be inarticulate about their religious beliefs, although they were not inarticulate in other areas.

The 'happy midi-system' of Savage et al.'s (2006) study 'Making Sense of Generation Y' (those born after 1980) has resonance with Smith and Denton's (2005) project in young people viewing the world as ostensibly benign. They look for and believe in the possibility of happiness aligned with their familial relationships and friendships from which they find support in times of difficulty. They were found to possess a private, often unarticulated approach to life- a formative spirituality. However, this was not often transposed into spirituality that affected the public areas of life- transformative spirituality. The study sample was predominantly white and socially included and did not involve the more marginal, socially excluded and problematic young people, giving legitimacy to this current research amongst young offenders.

A major study of Australian Youth's spirituality *The Spirit of Generation Y* (Mason et al., 2007a, 2007b) confirmed a decline in traditional religion with a shift to a spiritual market place of picking and choosing their beliefs but only a small proportion turning to alternative spiritualities. Generation Y highly valued close relationships with both friends and family, they also have expectation of having an exciting and enjoyable life. Mason (2010) concludes that Generation Y's spirituality appears fragmented because they are largely uninterested in it and pay it little attention, displaying evidence of secularisation. These studies raise

questions about whether young offenders will show similar patterns of religiosity with other concerns outweighing the concerns to follow religion. How far will 'believing in belonging' (Day, 2011) be evident given the salience of relationships in these studies?

There appears to be some implicit judgement about how young people embody their religion and spirituality found in some of these studies where a deficit model of interpretation is applied in the analysis. There is something lacking that needs to be addressed through encouraging a more engaged intentionality about their spirituality, a more committed devotion, perhaps reflecting these researcher's own religious bias.

Beaudoin (2008:79-88) reviews Smith et al.'s (2005) study and observes how its interpretation misreads teen spirituality by framing it in a particular way that distorts and obscures the phenomena under analysis, privileging a Christian framework by emphasising various dualisms. The misreading operates through four strategies. First, teen faith is perceived as a problem for the power of religious leaders; second the authors accept Christian leaders' placing of boundaries between religious traditions; thirdly, they accept as unproblematic and self-evident many theological concepts, allowing them neither cultural context nor sociological-theological critique and lastly that their own critique of teenage articulacy and inconsistency becomes a characteristic form of moralising. *Soul Searching* fails to capture the richness and complexity of the rough ground of everyday lived faith.

This is a useful warning about how we can distort the actual representation of the research object, if we are not aware of our own bias and presuppositions.

There is a need to accommodate for a plurality of belief which takes the lived experience and reality of the nature of how faith gets lived in culture seriously and underlines the

features of the object of study. It also needs to provide a connection between these key elements and the core concerns of social work with young offenders.

Religion and Spirituality and Social Work Practice

One method that is helpful in overcoming the problematic nature of defining religion and spirituality(R&S) is to situate a definition that gives some consensus of meaning within a particular context, such as how it is used in a specific professional arena like Social Work.

The rationale for this selection is because Social Work is one of the main professions within Youth Justice who actually supervise young offenders and in order to limit the broad scope of this subject area.

The consensus in the Social Work literature suggests there is a special relationship between religion and spirituality-separate but related-where often spirituality is considered a broader category (Carroll, 1998; Canda and Furman 2009; Graham, 2006; Matthews, 2009; Gardner, 2011; Crisp, 2010). This is the line that Moss (2005) takes in providing the first UK primer on the subject of R&S for practitioners in health and social care. Moss (2005: 13) defines spirituality as "...what we do to give expression to our chosen world view". This worldview may be specifically religious or not. R&S share some related reference such as the belief that there is a spiritual realm beyond our own physical world, which exercises an influence on the affairs of this world. Shier and Graham (2012) position R&S in an international context and as closely intertwined with culture.

A comparative international analysis between United Kingdom and United States on the role of R&S in social work education and practice was undertaken by Furman et al. (2005) and the study was also replicated in New Zealand (Stirling, et al., 2009) and Norway (Zahl, et al., 2007). Twenty-nine per cent of social workers in the UK said it was appropriate to raise the issue of spirituality and nineteen per cent the issue of religion within criminal justice system, compared to twenty-seven per cent for spirituality and forty-six per cent for religion in New Zealand. There were concerns expressed around sectarianism and proselytising. Forty-two per cent of social workers felt cultural sensitive practice should include taking a religious history and thirty-two per cent a spiritual history, as part of a client's core assessment. R&S was operationalised as follows:

Religion was defined as 'an organized structured set of beliefs and practices shared by a community related to spirituality' (Canda, 1990a, 1990b). Spirituality, on the other hand, was defined as the 'search for meaning, purpose, and morally fulfilling relations with self, other people, the encompassing universe, and ultimate reality however a person understands it. Spirituality may be expressed through religious forms, but is not limited to them' (Canda, 1990a, 1990b)', (Furman et al, 2005:819).

These studies reflect Furman et al.'s (2004) earlier study in the United Kingdom. Holloway (2007) examines the relationship between R&S to the core business of social work—the assessment and meeting of need. Gilligan and Furness (2006; 2010a; 2010b) provide an empirically tested, culturally competent and sensitive framework for helping social work practitioners identify when religion and belief are significant in the lives and circumstances of their service users and how to take account of this in practice. It starts with the practitioner being self-aware and reflexive about their own beliefs and values and potential biases and then listening to and recognising the clients' expertise about their own beliefs and the needs which arise from them.

There is a growing body of social work evidence emphasising the importance of practitioners taking account of the religion and beliefs of those with whom they work, but there has been little work specifically related to religion, belief and youth justice. Al-Krenawi and Graham (2000) emphasise the need for practitioners to have basic understanding of the religious beliefs and values of the clients they are supervising such as the five pillars of Islam and the particular positive benefits of these practices. Devore and Schlesinger (1994) believe that since Islam is an all-embracing way of life, social work with Muslims needs to be adapted to Muslim values. It is an argument that could be made for other religious faiths. Dosanjh and Ghuman (1997: 300) argue that “for many Punjabi families religion is the key element upon which their identity is nurtured and formed”. Smith (2008) explains that practitioners need to start from where the client is, from within their frame of reference, with the primary determinant of their interests being the young people themselves. Littlechild (2012) highlights the importance of understanding the role of cultural values in child protection and youth justice, such as the place of faith and religion in informing one’s ethical stances.

Holloway and Moss (2010) endorse an inclusive spirituality as a broad concept that encompasses religion but is not reduced to it. They provide a conceptual framework for exploring the relationship between spirituality and the core business of social work, which they call the Fellow Traveller Model. This is the idea of everyone participating in personal journeys that we share with others, what the social work literature defines as life pathways, trajectories, or reaching developmental milestones. Their starting premise is that social work remains a secular activity and they view the role of the social worker in offering

spiritual care is “about facilitating spiritual understanding and connection with helping resources than about engaging directly in spiritual activity” (Ibid:121).

Matthews (2009) presents spirituality as separate from religion but related. Religion is seen as one way of expressing spirituality but explains that you don't have to be a member of a faith community to be spiritual. Drawing on Moss' (2005) work Matthews (2009) states spirituality is what gives meaning and purpose in life, it is what makes us tick, our view of the world and how we make sense of suffering and respond to existential questions. It is about our value base which guides our behaviour. It is personal and also has an outward dimension based on our interactions and relationships. Moss and Jones (2008) have produced an emerging paradigm of spirituality in diagrammatic form outlining key themes and issues for spirituality. Spirituality is clearly situated in interpersonal relationships and society, and is connected to certain social work themes such as social justice, anti-oppressive practice and anti-discriminatory practice; it has inward and outward dimensions and can be expressed in both healthy and harmful forms. Spirituality can be considered an aspect of the person, where a person is seen in bio-psycho-social aspects with the addition of spirituality.

Cheon (2010) views spirituality and religiosity as distinct but overlapping concepts and identifies a dearth in the professional literature related to social work interventions and young people's spirituality. He reviews the transpersonal literature that emphasises the importance of spiritual development for young people and believes this could have implications for an expanded view of Social Work. This challenges the literature that states

children and young people do not have the cognitive abilities to reflect on spiritual matters. The current challenge for practitioners, he asserts, is to incorporate insights gleaned from the wide range of developmental and experiential theories into helping practices that address spirituality. Cheon (2010:11) stresses that “for many young people, drugs, sex and gang violence may reflect a search for connection, mystery and meaning, as well as a response to the pain of not having a genuine source of spiritual fulfilment”. Better outcomes for young people can be achieved if young people are inspired to achieve a fuller realization of their humanness in solidarity with others, then growth is possible in compassion for others, to achieve goals and dreams. Cheon and Canda (2010) examine the meaning and engagement of spirituality for Positive Youth Development (PYD)⁴ in social work. Young people are either seen as problems to be managed or resources to be nurtured and it is the deficit model which is usually prominent. This is a strengths-based approach that focuses on young people’s positive development and capabilities. As Cheon and Canda state:

Youth spirituality is considered to be young people’s developmental search engine for connectedness, meaning and being in touch with what is most vital to one’s life, that opens youth to an adult life of personal meaningfulness and social responsibility (Cheon and Canda, 2010:123).

They believe spirituality has certain salutary and deleterious effects. Positively speaking it can help young people to thrive even in the midst of adversity where spirituality is a resource for identity formation and development. In contrast concerns are raised about

⁴ PYD is a specific youth work approach developed in the US “ which connotes a focus on supporting or promoting the positive development processes that advance the health and wellbeing of youths as well as the capacity of youths to make contributions to benefit family and society as they grow into adulthood.” (Lerner et al, 2008 cited in Cheon and Canda, 2010:121).

religiously rationalised abuse and neglect of children and youth; involving religious strictures that may violate a youth's human rights; forced marriage and religious conversion, teaching youth to hate or discriminate against others based on their differences from religious dictates; sexual exploitation of children and young people from religious clergy or spiritual mentors. Spirituality involves the search for meaning, purpose and morality which is about how people treat each other (Cheon and Canda, 2010:124).

A working definition of spirituality that was developed for inter-religious dialogues for understanding spirituality of children and adolescents growing up in diverse social-cultural environments has been adopted by Doe (2010):

Spirituality is the intrinsic human capacity for self-transcendence in which the individual participates in the sacred-something greater than the self. It propels the search for connectedness, meaning, purpose and ethical responsibility. It is experienced, formed and shaped and expressed through a wide range of religious narratives, beliefs and practices, and is shaped by many influences in family, community, society, culture, and nature (Yust et al., 2006:8).

This definition emphasises the self as situated in environmental contexts, which influences spiritual development. From a developmental perspective this is a universal human growth process that has multi-dimensional domains. This spiritual development occurs through interactions between the self and many environmental factors, where spirituality is expressed and developed in diverse family and community environments. Doe (2010) utilises a further useful generic definition for spiritual development:

Spiritual development is the process of growing the intrinsic human capacity for self-transcendence, in which the self is embedded in something greater than the self, including the sacred. It is the developmental 'engine' that propels the search for connectedness,

meaning, purpose and contribution. It is shaped both within and outside of religious traditions, beliefs and practices (Benson et al., 2003:205-206).

Benson et al. (2003) wanted to create a consensus based framework for understanding child and adolescent spiritual development as an integral part of human development. How spiritual development interacts with other domains across the lifespan remains unanswered at the moment because of a lack of empirical research. Scholars debate whether it is a subset of another domain, whether it is distinct but linked or the integrating domain that weaves the others together (Benson et al., 2008). Benson et al. (2008) have developed their definition to involve the dynamic interplay of at least three developmental processes: awareness or awakening; interconnecting and belonging; and a way of life. This fits well with the earlier definition we have adopted.

The need to understand R&S in its broadest possible context is underlined by these social work studies, which connects it to young people's everyday lived reality. The spiritual is seen as an integral part of what it means to be human and embraces the religious. Social Work provides a nuanced and complex understanding of R&S and how its harmful and healthy forms can impact on its clientele. One valuable approach to providing a spiritual framework applicable for Youth Justice is employed by Foucault (1983), to which we will now turn.

Spiritual Askesis

The word *askesis* comes from a Greek verb which means to exercise, to strive, or to contend with the dedication of an athlete. In the 1983 lectures at Berkley California, Foucault says that:

“... the ascetic practices of the Greco-Roman philosophies are generally concerned with endowing the individual with the preparation and the moral equipment that will permit him to fully confront the world in an ethical and rational manner” (Foucault, 1983).

In presenting the spiritual ‘askesis’ of Michel Foucault, Beaudoin (2007) introduces the ideas of Hadot (1995)-a historian of Ancient history, who demonstrates that the ancient study of philosophy was more about a way of life rather than merely abstract theorising, rationalistic, or an intellectual academic discipline. It involved schools of philosophy in training students in disciplined ‘askesis’, working to develop themselves through performing certain exercises like athletes undertake regimes of exercises designed to optimise their performance in athletic prowess.

Foucault is committed to renewing those practices of the self which allow us to be ethical, to becoming an ethical person. He is referring to the Aristotelean term *ethos* as an ethical form of life acquired through habit and extended by reflection. Spirituality for Foucault is “acceding to a certain mode of being and to the transformations which the subject must make of themselves in order to accede to this mode of being” (Bernauer and Carette, 2004:8). It incorporates a certain care of the self “...an ensemble of practices that create not the mere consciousness of the subject, but the very being of the subject and its paths of understanding” (Bernauer and Carette, 2004:8). These practices are then meant to lead to a critical immersion in the world and a refusal of its immutability.

Spiritual exercises are an intentional course of action towards a specified aim, which involves the transformation of the self. This can include a perspective shift in a young offender's worldview closely aligned with Bourdieu's (1977) acquisition of a habitus and Archer's (2003) reflexivity. It requires a different frame of reference and a new imagination. Spiritual exercises incorporates the idea of philosophy as a way of life that engages the whole of our existence and refers to daily practices in the art of living- in how to live well (Hadot, 1995; Evans, 2012). Spirituality as an integrating factor in life involves the capacity for self-transcendence or the transformation or development of the self over the life course, but does not confine itself only to this because it also has socio-political implications (Jobling, 2010). It can be expressed within or outside religious traditions.

Spirituality, religiosity and worldviews have a close affinity, because they are all reliant on some framework of belief (Sheldrake, 2013), as was established earlier in this chapter.

Spirituality relies on 'beliefs about life' and forms an aspect of a person's worldview, which in turn are "based on prior assumptions about the nature and purpose of human life".

Similarly, religiosity incorporates a belief system from a particular religious tradition. They refer to a particular orientation to the world or a way of life, which will also include a person's ethics or morality.

Spiritual exercise consists of practical training in the living of a particular way of life; a process of formation of an individual to be a certain sort of person. We are continually being shaped and influenced by discursive and cultural processes, the difference being

about how far we are intentional about what forms us and how resistant we are to these practices, whether it be consumer habits developed through powerful advertising or other influences of popular culture that impact on our perceptions, moral reasoning, belief and value systems. Beaudoin (2007) proposes that these spiritual exercises are moral and serve as technologies of self-transformation. This is about working on our relationship to ourselves and ultimately in our relations to others. He cites some examples such as: the examination of conscience; rehearsal of aphorisms; meditation on text; remembering and rehearsing death. These become practices that habituate a person to be a certain way, for example growing in compassion or empathy, which can be learned dispositions. Empathy in this context may be seen as the imaginative act of stepping into another person's shoes and viewing the world from their perspective (Krznaric, 2007).

Rituals and practices are the formative out working of a belief-system, a feature of a person's worldview and offer a lens into the contours of how a person perceives the world in which they are a part. Implicit within practices are encoded or 'carried' meanings about the way the world is construed and so we can gauge from what actions a young person takes their orientation to a particular vision of the good life (what we think life is ultimately about). Habits and desires are inscribed through bodily practices that train us to behave in certain ways, such as the watching of certain films or advertising that traffics in specific images and stories conveying certain meanings, which we imbibe almost unconsciously and shape us often without our realisation. We develop certain dispositions either intentionally or unintentionally because these practices form us into certain types of people. The move to intentional practices means a person is choosing to define the kind of person they wish to become and the practices they take up are identity forming aimed at certain ends.

Certain spiritual exercises will produce better habits and train a person's desire towards more adaptive rather than maladaptive forms of life. They serve as a counter formation to the effects of cultural forces.

'Askesis' is applicable to Youth Justice, I would contend, because a young person who wishes to desist from offending has in 'mind' to become a different type of person and this involves complex thinking processes behind any attempt to change, including changes in perceiving, thinking and acting(Haigh, 2009)in terms of a person changing their attitude towards offending. It will involve a shift in worldview in creating new habits of thinking, feeling and behaving. This involves an intentional form of 'askesis'/spiritual exercises (Gr=Άσκησις) that includes the embodied self in their environment; participating in a re-orientation and reconstruction of their lives. The practitioner can assist in this process through facilitating the implementation and review of these disciplines, for instance with a young person participating in a therapeutic group work process learning about moral reasoning. These are moral and secular disciplines although they could be specifically religious if the young person self identifies as religious that inculcates a certain attitude "...endowing the individual with the preparation and the moral equipment that will permit him to fully confront the world in an ethical and rational manner" (Foucault 1983 cited in Lightbody, 2008:7). It could involve the young person answering the question: what type of person do I want to be? There is a difference between "stating people should be more honest" to "I want to become a more honest person", which informs a level of commitment to truth telling in everyday life and a particular orientation to improving these qualities in a young person's interactions. This requires the realisation that the type of person they want

to be is dependent upon moral belief, which forms the basis of moral identity as one component of personal identity (Damon, 2004). We are interested in the constitution of the self as an ethical subject and producing an ethical sensibility towards the other that prevents conflict stemming into youth violence and the perpetration of other serious offences against the other. Racially motivated offences result in serious spiritual harm being caused because of the damage to the sense of self. This can also take place through acts of violence. Peltomaki (2008) describes the experience of domestic violence as a journey through suffering, where affliction is a pain which scars all dimensions of a person's life. It is the vision of a better life that assists in working through the adversity.

We are encouraged to develop an ethos, "...a mode of relating to contemporary reality that presents itself as task and life practice" (Lightbody, 2008:15). Foucault wants to trace out the practices that constitute subjects as subjects; these are historical practices of power/knowledge that go into the construction of oneself as a subject. For Beaudoin (2008:67):

these practices are the way we are governed and govern ourselves, because power circulates through how and what we can know about ourselves and our world and the power circulates through practices, producing the world of identity, relationship, responsibility and obedience.

Foucault wishes to create the opening up of space to provide an opportunity for ethical reflexivity through an aesthetic sensibility, which is not a moral nihilism of 'anything goes' with no ethical content. There is an acquisition of certain types of attitudes, through their relationship to the rights and wrongs within the context of society's conventions "... an

aesthetic which is educable in terms of techniques and sensibilities required to enact and mobilise it”;“a culturally grounded process of subjectivation”;“a socially located and ethical process of subjectivation” (Campbell, 2010: 4-5). This is not a simplistic imposition of some moral code but the exploration of the ethical permutations and implications within a specific context, of what can be said and done, what positions the subject can enact.

We are to change ourselves in order to form new relations to ourselves, others and to the wider community because the human self is ultimately relational rather than atomic. This involves both understanding the moral code, law and customs (nomoi) but also the proper training, exercises and attitude that necessarily go with it hand in hand. Thus, according to Foucault in the Use of Pleasure it is essential to “keep in mind the distinction between the code elements of morality and the elements of askesis, neglecting neither their co-existence, their interrelations, their relative autonomy, not their possible differences of emphasis” (Foucault, 1985:31). Therefore, what Foucault is underlining is that it is the subject that acts who undertakes both ethical thinking and ethical action, which is a self-reflexive activity. As Lightbody (2008) asserts, Foucault:

seems to be suggesting that an ethos that re-emphasizes the practices of the self that form the ethical subject cannot merely entail “rule following” a la the deontologist nor evaluating the end consequences of our actions pace the consequentialist. One cannot establish formal rules without changing the relationship one has with the rules.

In this context you have to practice for an ethics in order to be ethical and this involves an exercise on oneself by oneself.

It is however one thing to have a resolve to do what one thinks ought to be done but it is far from ethical. This has to be translated into practice. Foucault advocated 'Parrhesia' as a moral duty; meaning to be a truth speaker at least in the Greco-Roman world and "having the courage to speak the truth in the face of some danger" (Foucault, 1983:4). This particular relation to oneself can only be voluntaristic, but entails an openness to the Other; a concern to understand the Other; and to help the Other by respecting the Other's autonomy. We speak the truth with the other's independence and freedom in mind, even when we try to conduct and determine their behaviour, because we cannot escape the relations of power, but our speaking is based on our mode of relating.

Smith (2005;2009) suggests that the ethos and ethical responsibility of 'Askesis' should relate to the whole ecology of the organisation like Policing or Youth Justice, at all levels and domains. Spirituality should encompass both individuals, groups and the organisation as a whole, including clients, families, practitioners and other organisations. The spiritual dimension needs to form part of the primary purpose of the organisation (e.g. the Youth Justice System), if spirituality is to be nurtured effectively in the organisation and the organisation's major asset its people is invested in properly. Smith (2005; 2009) applied the exploration of the spiritual dimension to the operational task of the Police force, in particular to training the trainers of new recruit Police Officers. Smith and Rayment (2007: 221) defined spirituality in the workplace as:

about individuals and organisations seeing work as a spiritual path, as an opportunity to grow and to contribute to society in a meaningful way. It is about care, compassion, and support for others, about integrity and people being true to

themselves and others. It means individuals and organisations attempting to live their values more fully in the work they do.

The suitability of endorsing a particular kind of spirituality for the organisation is important, which involves its orientation in its more positive form in actualising the fullest potential of all the people in the organisation. Founded on Maslow's theory of personality development, self-actualisation results in the creation of certain characteristics. These occur as a result of human growth and fulfilment with young people's acquisition of new skills, attributes and wisdom. A new mode of relating to the self impacts on the way one chooses to relate to others and has benefits for the organisations and structures with which the individual is intertwined.

Spiritual Askesis could involve a young offender in practicing certain intentional spiritual exercises to become a certain kind of person, for example, learning to control their temper in times of provocation, developing care and compassion towards others. These relate to the establishment of primary goals as "states towards which people intentionally aspire and actively work to bring about (or avoid)" (Karoly, 1993:274 cited in McMurrin, 2010). It is the establishing of goals the young person wishes to work towards in a purposive way that is applicable to all offenders.

The exposition of how people practice in relation to the sacred and profane in their lives is an important element of their worldview, the types of rituals and practices they are engaged in. These are the 'ordinary' practices in the world to comprehend how they carry meanings and implicit values. Finding out about the 'actual praxis' of young offenders is what motivates this research because it is interested in how young offenders' performance of crime conveys certain meanings and understandings, which are indicative of their

worldview. A young person's behaviour signals more what they believe than necessarily what they say they believe. For example, a young person states they are less aggressive, but reports reveal they are continually getting into fights. This research will examine the way young offenders find 'fullness' in our secular age, the particular ways they " have learned of holding life together" given all the contingencies in life (Beaudoin, 2011:30). An understanding of spiritual exercises reveals how life is formative in the constitution of a moral self and through what gives life meaning and purpose. Individuals can be shaped either unintentionally by both cultural forces and their own actions in the world or intentionally through the application of sustained spiritual exercises to enable the movement away from offending.

Conclusion

The nature and contours of religion, religiosity, spirituality, faith is very much lived and experienced and not as static, dry propositions but 'belief' is performed in the everyday contingencies of life. Debates surrounding the relationship between R&S are whether they are separate, synonymous, overlapping, distinct but related concepts and incorporating both content and purpose. This chapter has shown that religion and spirituality are associated with an individual's worldview as a way of life and mode of being comprising of beliefs and values about life (Sheldrake, 2013). Faith is a relational term referring to trust at the existential level in both religions and secular forms. Religiosity is a multidimensional construct with different levels of meaning and application. The definitional complexity entailed in this brief review of the literature demonstrates how these main concepts can be

related to a way of life and mode of being or particular orientation to the world and therefore subsumed within the notion of a worldview. This was the approach adopted in the social work literature we have reviewed (Holloway and Moss, 2010), and provides a sensitive and critical modus operandi for working with young people. It allows for the variety of expressions in the unique life world (Lebenswelt) of each young person to be examined and serves as rationale and the focus for a theoretical lens for the phenomenon under investigation in this thesis.

Taking the young person's perspective on their religiosity or spirituality is important to avoid imposing meaning and preconceived categories onto informants, or attributing a particular deficit model of interpretation of their religious or spiritual experiences. It will involve an exploration of both the content, form and purpose that it has in their lives. The notion of 'lived religion' reflects religion's greater nuance, complexity and diversity, predicated more on what people do than on religious ideas or beliefs. A consensus of meaning regarding how to define R&S within a particular context like social work provides scope for how to operationalise these concepts in this study. R&S are seen as separate but related concepts, reflecting people's particular belief systems. These are equated as synonymous with worldviews, whether religious, spiritual or secular. It is what constitutes normative claims on the conduct of young people's lives that is most significant for youth justice practitioners. The particular dimensions of young people's belief systems can be interrogated, in order to assess how these moral frameworks are enacted and have traction in the lives of young people who commit crime.

This highlights the need to devise pedagogies that do not impose our own epistemological views on young people and takes an inclusive approach to exploring religious and spiritual ideas within the parameters of supervision, regarding the subject and its open exploration as available to all. The development of the ethical subject through the application of Askesis (spiritual exercises) is considered integral to life management and to forging a good way of life. Furthermore, it is suitable for good social work practice within the parameters of Youth Justice.

CHAPTER 3: THEORIES OF CRIME AND DESISTANCE

The aim of this PhD study involves an exploration of how the interplay between agency, beliefs and values in relation to young people's offending behaviour can produce possibilities for change, with particular reference to religious identity. It is therefore imperative to understand the current knowledge base in the extant literature regarding the relationship between religion and crime, drawing upon relevant criminological theories. These theories of how people become engaged in crime and cease offending are suffused with ethical concerns related to agency, as the object of our study. So, it justifies a review of the salient crime theories relating to the normative dimension and moral agency- the linkage between morality and crime. It will be shown how these are useful in improving our understanding of the change process in Youth Justice, through drawing upon pertinent aspects of the desistance literature. These criminological theories are not exhaustive of all criminological theories and reasons why people stop offending but illustrative of a wide variety of explanations of crime. This chapter is comprised of the following sections: the relationship between religiosity and deviance, desistance, primary and secondary desistance, the normative dimension respectively.

The Relationship between Religiosity and Deviance

As a point of departure it is purported that religion has a deterrent effect on deviant behaviour, although arguably there is inconsistent empirical support. Empirical studies have systematically varied in their estimation of the religion on crime effect and this is due to differences in conceptual and methodological approaches. Baier and Wright's (2001) meta-analysis of 60 studies examining the religiosity-deviancy relationship emphasises the statistically significant, moderately strong deterrent effect of religion. They argue that there is an inverse relationship between personal religiosity and self-reported delinquency. Sturgis (2008) found that 69 out of 74 studies that examined the relationship between religiosity and crime-deviance found an inverse relationship between these variables, revealing some inhibitory power of religiosity on deviance.

A more recent systematic review of the literature by Johnson (2011) analysed 273 studies between 1944-2010, across various disciplines. The review claims an inverse or beneficial relationship in 247 of these studies, between religion and some measure of crime and delinquency. Twenty four studies found no association and two studies found religion produced more crime. Johnson (2011) claims that religious commitment and faith-based approaches can be central in reducing crime. There is some doubt cast about the statistical controls not being available to properly evaluate these quasi-experimental studies (with random controlled trials set as the gold standard) but nevertheless the breadth of studies suggest faith has a part to play in reducing crime (Wilson,2011).

Hirschi and Stark's (1969) seminal paper testing the hellfire hypothesis from a social control theory perspective asserts that religiosity is not an inhibitor of deviance, although later replications of this study demonstrate a moderately strong inverse relationship between these two variables (Higgins and Albrecht, 1977; Jenson & Erickson, 1979). Burkett and White (1974) however supported Hirschi and Stark's original findings. Ross (1991) utilised questionnaire data with a more extensive measure of religiosity in order to test the same hypotheses that Hirschi and Stark had examined in 1969. He confirms the presence of an inverse relationship between religiosity and delinquency, as an inhibitor of deviance. Stark et al (1982) went on to examine how these variations could be accounted for, by the religious ecology or moral makeup of the individuals in the respective studies. In order to explain why religion is an inhibitor of deviance or to address the nature of the relationship between these two variables, a number of theories have been put forward.

Control theory argues that deviance occurs as a result of an individual's bond to society being either "weak or broken" (Hirschi, 1969: 16). Hirschi discussed four elements of the bond to society: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. Attachment relates to how integrated into society people feel through their relationships with significant people in their lives. Young people who are strongly attached to their parents will typically refrain from offending because of fear of disappointing their parents. Commitment refers to how much time and energy a person invests in certain activities. People would not consider stealing from an Off- Licence because of the risks involved, because they feel committed to conformity and this serves as a social control, in that they might feel they have too much to lose. This, however is linked to how committed they are to the rules and following societies' norms. Hirschi's concept of involvement implies that those who are heavily

involved in the routines of society such as involved in full time employment simply have less time to commit offences. Someone who has a weak bond with their own community, to conventional others and does not have social attachments is more likely to go against the norms and act deviant. Belief is the extent to which individual's recognize and respect the legitimacy of societal norms and laws. People who believe in the norms of society are more likely to live in accordance with these social norms and not engage in criminal behaviour. A variation exists in the extent to which individuals believe that they should follow societies' norms. The less an individual believes he should obey the rules, the more likely he is to violate and helps to explain how belief in the conventional norms of society leads to conformity. Religion is easily included in social bond mechanisms. If people are heavily involved in the routines of their faith communities then they have less time to commit deviant acts.

Free(1994) using a theoretical model drawn from control theory, determined that there was an inverse relationship between religiosity and several forms of delinquency such as minor delinquency alcohol, marijuana use and hard drug use. Some research drawing on social control as a theoretical framework to explain the religion-deviancy relationship focused on the impact of parental behaviour on delinquency of their children. Burkett (1977) determined that, although there was an inverse relationship between frequency of attendance at religious services and use of alcohol and marijuana among adolescents, the parental frequency of religious services attendance was unrelated to the adolescents' use of alcohol and marijuana. By combining measures of religiosity and parental communication in order to construct a latent variable social support, the results showed an inverse relationship between social support and the use of drugs by the adolescents in their

study. Litchfield et al. (1997) used longitudinal data from 992 adolescents who were members of the Church of the Latter Day Saints in order to examine the relationship between various factors related to parental style, religiosity and delinquency. They found a positive association between parental behaviours of connection and regulation and adolescent religiosity, which was inversely related to delinquency. Regenerus (2003) determined that adolescent religiosity was a product of parental religiosity and was inversely related to deviancy but there were differences between gender and age groups. The relationship between adolescent religiosity and delinquency was similarly affected by the religiosity of the adolescent's parents, particularly the mother in Pearce and Haynie's (2004) study. Caputo (2004) demonstrated that parental religiosity was inversely related to substance misuse but not general delinquency. Ross (1994) and Cretacci (2003) provide contrary evidence to the inverse relationship between these two variables, stating they are unrelated.

Two studies specifically using social learning theory as the primary theoretical framework have been conducted. Burkett (1993) administered questionnaires to school students in order to study the relationship between religiosity and the use of alcohol. He determined that the relationship was largely indirect through the selection of peers with similar patterns of drinking behaviour. Turner and Willis (1979) produced a study with a random sample of 379 college students in order to investigate the relationship between religiosity and drug use. They determined that there was an inverse relationship between religiosity and the use of different types of drugs, where the relationship was largely indirect and mediated by the influence of parents and peers.

Ellis and Thompson (1989) believe that the relationship between religiosity and delinquency is largely spurious, based on arousal theory wherein “people vary in the degree to which they are neurologically predisposed to criminality” (Ellis, 1987:220). Those with greater propensity for criminality become bored more easily and need to seek out more intense stimulation, including deviant and criminal acts, because they possess sub-optimal arousal tendencies under normal environmental conditions. These are people neurologically predisposed towards crime and are simultaneously directed away from religion. They are unlikely to voluntarily attend religious services and thus it explains the inverse relationship between religiosity and delinquency. Some argue (Cochran et al., 1994) that religion has no direct relationship with criminality, but its inhibitory influence is indirect and mediated by other proximate social controls, thus rendering the association spurious. The religious effect is masked by arousal and social control factors. Tittle and Welch (1983) report that only 10 out of 65 studies examined failed to show a significant negative relationship.

Gramsmick et al.'s (1991) study investigated belief as an element of the bond to society that prevents people from committing deviant behaviour. There was an inverse relationship between their religious salience and participation and an individual's propensity to cheat on tax returns. The relationship between salience and tax cheating was attributable to feelings of shame as a result of engaging in tax evasion. The research examining the type of crime hypothesis or anti-asceticism hypothesis is largely supportive of its central assertion, which argues that religiosity is more effective at deterring minor, victimless forms of crime like gambling, smoking and drinking, premarital sexual intercourse than it is at deterring more serious forms of crime that have a clear victim like theft and

fighting. Religiosity tends to be inversely related to both minor and serious forms of deviance but a stronger relationship exists between religiosity and minor forms of deviance than between religiosity and serious forms of deviance (Chadwick and Alcorn, 1977; Free, 1992; Fernquest, 1995). Baier and Wright's (2001) meta-analysis of sixty studies, examining the religiosity deviancy relationship buttresses these findings. It is generally asserted that more religiously active individuals would be more likely to commit less crime.

Stark et al. (1982) proposed the moral hypothesis theory (MHT) to account for the apparent contradiction between the early work, which argued there was no relationship between religiosity and deviance and later replications indicating a moderately strong inverse relationship between these two factors. This argues that you only find a relationship between religiosity and deviance in ecological areas in which religiosity pervades the cultural landscape (1982:5-7). Welch, Tittle and Petee (1991:160) stress that "Stark (1980; 1982) concluded that communities displaying high levels of religious integration are more effective at promoting conformity to the moral order". Under what conditions does religion inhibit deviant behaviour? Variations in community context should be taken in account when we study the relationship between religion and deviancy. The religious properties of community contexts can condition to some extent, or interact with the effects of one's personal religious values to inhibit deviant conduct.

Thirteen studies provide inconclusive results, with approximately half of these studies showing some support for MHT (Stark et al., 1982; Stark, 1996; Regnerus, 2003b; Baier and Wright, 2001; Richardson, et al., 2000; Stack and Kposowa, 2006) and the remaining studies

showing no support (Cochrane and Akers, 1989; Welch, et al., 1991; Chadwick and Top, 1993; Junger and Polder, 1993; Evans et al., 1996; Benda and Corwyn, 2001; Bjarnason et al., 2005). Aggregate level studies also suggest an inverse relationship between religiosity and deviance exists (Bainbridge, 1989; Petterson, 1991; Ellis and Peterson, 1996) with it being stronger in magnitude for minor offences like property offences than for serious offences like murder. Johnson et al. (2001) concluded that the relationship between religiosity and deviance was not spurious. There are denominational differences in the R-D relationship such as a stronger relationship in terms of alcohol. (Preston, 1969; Perkins, 1985; Free, 1992).

A recent study by Reisig et al. (2012) examines whether the effect of religiosity on criminal offending persists after accounting for low self-control. The religiosity-crime relationship is considered spurious and explained by self-control, although it was not able to establish the exact nature of this mechanism as to whether it is a confounding or mediating variable. The effect of religiosity on self-control is indirect, operating through self-control. Reisig et al. (2012) assert: "The effect of religiosity on offending varies by the scope and nature of the dependent variable (Middleton and Putney, 1962)"; that is, it influences ascetic (characterised by personal indulgence) but not secular offending. In sum it is a spurious result of not taking into account individual variations in self-control. Religiosity did however predict ascetic offences independent of low self-control. There are factors that prevent religiosity from inhibiting deviant behaviour, which can be accounted for by the interactive effects of other factors. The causal relationship is not uni-directional but bi-directional.

The entire body of the literature can be taken to indicate that a negative relationship does exist between crime and religion but the exact nature of the relationship including important contextual and mediating variables is still being debated. Inconsistencies in findings may stem from methodological issues such as improper specification of variables leading to the belief that the relationship is spurious, limitations in research design and measurements and operationalization of religion (Clear, 2002). Consideration of changes in behaviour across the life course must be taken into consideration when developing appropriate modelling, such as longitudinal path models (Johnson et al, 2000; Johnson et al , 2001) and using various indicators of religiosity.

Religiosity is a broad and complex construct comprised of several sub-components. There is no set standard used to measure religion, as argued in the last chapter. As a result researchers have used different elements of religiosity when operationalizing its impact on crime and deviance, with those using multiple indicators finding religiosity was inversely related to delinquency. The studies generating inconsistent results tended not to use multiple indicators or administer reliability tests (Johnson et al, 2000). Many studies only used one measure like church attendance which fails to measure true behavioural involvement (Davidson and Knudsen, 1977). Spirituality must also be considered as a separate but related construct to religiosity (Hodge et al., 2001). Religiosity is a multidimensional construct which requires multiple indicators to measure its constituent elements, including qualitative studies to supplement these quantitative approaches.

Desistance

Desistance is also relevant to religion's influence on criminal behaviour because developmental theorists assert that turning points can influence the life course of someone engaged in criminality. Religion can provide one of these turning points in helping an offender find a new way of life (Clear, 2002), but it is just one of the factors associated with desistance. Desistance should be seen as a gradual process of change over time, towards the cessation of crime, but it is not a straightforward linear trajectory, often likened to a zig zag path (Glaser, 1964:57, cited in Maruna 2001) subject to ambiguity and vacillation. Laub and Sampson (2001) separate the process of change from the actual termination of offending which they see as the outcome of desistance. Long term abstinence is the final destination of the journey of desistance, which requires an initial and necessary decision to change (Leibrich, 1993:56-7; Shover, 1983:213; Cromwell et al., 1991:83) but with setbacks seen as inevitable.

There are three broad theoretical positions within the desistance literature, each seeking to explain how desistance occurs (Maruna, 2001). Ontogenic or maturation theories are based on the long established relationship between age and crime. Sociogenic refers to the ties to family, education and employment which provide a stake in society and a reason to go straight, because where these are absent offenders feel they have less to lose from persisting with criminal behaviour. Narrative theories relate to transformation of the self and a new self-identity through re-storying one's life and a change in motivation, concern for others and future outlook. McNeil (2003) believes desistance is located in the interaction between these three dimensions. Barry (2011) presents three distinct

perspectives on desistance, which focus on different aspects of the structure-agency debate, either a structural or individual/subjective emphasis or an integration of both these factors. Two studies conducted in Scotland (Barry, 2006; Cruickshank and Barry, 2008) involving in depth interviews with 20 male and 20 female current and ex-offenders and other involving focus groups and interviews with 21 young men and 14 young women tends to support the integrative model. Individual attitudes, decision making and changes in values prompt the search for and promotion of new pro-social structures, which in turn assist in moulding new behaviours.

The dual distinction made by Moffitt (1993) between the adolescence limited and life course trajectories of criminal behaviour are linked to the age crime curve which shows a peak in offending in adolescence and a swift decline by half in the early twenties and the decline continues into later life (see Farrington, 1986 for discussion of age-crime curve). There is general agreement that crime declines with age at the macro level but not necessarily at the individual level. It demonstrates that the majority of offenders are teenagers with a small percentage who are life course persistent, where anti-social behaviour tends to be abandoned when pro-social styles become more rewarding. There is a general assumption that young people will grow out of offending (Rutherford, 1986; Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1983 cited in Graham and Bowling, 1999:253) but age is not the only influencing factor in the desistance process. Education benefited adolescence-limited delinquents in Moffitt's (1993) study in that it enabled them to secure well-paying jobs and maintain their relationships.

The Pathways to Desistance longitudinal study of 1,374 serious juvenile offenders aged 14-18 years in Phoenix and Philadelphia, USA; offers some support to Moffitt's adolescence limited strand, in the finding that "even adolescents who have committed serious offences are not necessarily on track for adult criminal careers" (Mulvey, 2011:3). It examined the relationship between moral disengagement (MD) - to avoid internal sanctions like shame, damage to self- concept, people create justifications for criminal behaviour that violate moral standards and offending among delinquent youth over time- and found MD was a strong indicator of change in anti-social conduct among adolescent offenders. Reduction in MD tends to occur over time and confirms adolescents recover from crime rather than becoming life course criminals (Schulman et al., 2011). Fagan et al. (2011) suggest that moral disengagement and offending are positively correlated and that changing attitudes towards antisocial behaviour contributes to desistance from offending.

Leibrich (1993;1994) investigated the motivation and methods for going straight in a random sample of 48 people in New Zealand and offers insight about the quality of the relationship and the potential for the role of supervision in the process of change with the supervisor (Probation staff) being someone: to talk things through with; a person they could get on with and respect; who genuinely cared; was clear about the expectations of supervision. Establishing the cause of offending and how it can be dealt with was considered integral to going straight but stressed people will only change if they want to. The role of supervision was linked to getting something out of the sentence. It raises the issue of legitimacy and the need to secure normative compliance: the buying into the idea of being law abiding without being compelled or coerced (Hough et al., 2013:17). She found

people reduced offending through revised personal values, having something of value in life.

One of the largest longitudinal studies of crime and desistance was produced by the Gluecks in the 1930s (Glueck and Glueck, 1940). Crime declined strongly with age in this maturational theory of reform. Employment and family relationships offered young people a stake in conformity. Family influences could also encourage delinquency. Laub and Sampson (2003) reanalysed this data on 500 delinquent boys and re-interviewed 52 of the original participants who were by then aged 70. It was structural factors like the strength and quality of the marriage or employment that facilitated desistance. It was an age graded theory of informal social control where deviance increases when an individual's bond to society is weak or broken, ties to family, school or work. Laub and Sampson (2001, 2003) emphasised employment and marriage as turning points that could interrupt a criminal career and cause the offender to re-evaluate the course of their lives. They argue that quality personal relationships increase stakes in conformity and engender close attachment, growing commitment, increased involvement, and strong belief in the moral validity of norms and laws. Human agency and choice also features strongly in this life course study. Social relations that reinforce religious and moral beliefs are included by these authors as among sources of informal social control and social capital (Coleman, 1990). The internalisation of moral beliefs potentially reduces the propensity to engage in crime. In morally rearing children self-controls are strengthened.

Giordano, Cernkovich and Rudolph (2002) view desistance as the results of a series of cognitive shifts and attitudinal change with people possessing a readiness to change and

availing themselves of 'hooks for change'. Emotions are also important (Giordano et al., 2007) in the change process. Giordano et al.'s (2008) longitudinal study suggests that despite the quantitative measures at the aggregate level showing no association between religiosity and self-reported crime, religion/spirituality was salient for a number of respondents in the life history interviews. It was a potential mechanism for change, where religious teaching provided a cognitive blueprint as to how to proceed as a changed individual. Religiosity also provided emotional benefits and access to relationships with pro-social others.

Other subjective changes associated with desistance include re-evaluation of life choices after a negative experience with a life of crime (Cusson and Pinsonneault, 1986), shifts in identity related to becoming a parent (Burnett, 1992). Shover (1996) asserts there is a need for legitimate opportunities, such as conventional relationships and employment to enable individual's to desist from criminal behaviour, but these can be confounded by lack of motivation and level of maturity.

Clarke and Cornish(1985) and Cornish and Clarke (1986) emphasise the centrality of individual decision making capacities of offenders in desisting from crime, whilst acknowledging structural forces can be influential in their supplementary role. Shover and Thompson (1992) highlight the rational choice element from the perspective of offenders themselves. Other factors related to desistance include: employment (Fletcher, 2001; Uggen, 1999); marriage (Warr, 1998; Shover, 1983) detachment from delinquent peer groups (Maruna and Roy, 2007; Osborn, 1980); motivation and confidence in the ability to desist Burnett, 1992; Farrall, 2002).

Paternoster and Bushway (2009) put forward an identity theory of criminal desistance of intentional self-change, wherein an offender's increasing dissatisfaction with their lives provides the initial impetus for change. In contrast to Maruna (2001) the self-change provides a distinct break with their past and acquisition of a new conventional identity as opposed to a modification of how they perceive the past in line with their current more favourable evaluation of themselves. This is based on the distinction between the current existing identity of an individual and the person they would like to be and not be in the future, based on the notion of possible selves (Markus and Nurius, 1986). The change process involves contemplation of a possible self as a non-offender as the initial impetus for change in contrasting a bleak future of further offending. A person's shift in their sense of self probably starts with this modification before it becomes

There is a sense of revised values, a shift in perspective and sense of self involved in the process of change, which underlines the importance of an examination of beliefs and values in the wider context of young people's lives. The distinction between primary and secondary desistance is pertinent to this dynamic process of change.

Primary and Secondary desistance

An innovative development in providing clarity to the concept of desistance as a process is the delineation of desistance into two separate categorical phases of primary and secondary desistance (Maruna et al., 2004). This draws on the work of Lemert (1951; 1967) who discerned two categorical phases in the transition towards deviance. The first was an

initial flirtation and experimentation with offending and the secondary phase is where deviance is incorporated as part of the individual's identity.

In a similar fashion, primary desistance refers to a lull or break in criminal behaviour while secondary desistance refers to 'the movement from the behaviour of non-offending to the assumption of the role or identity of a "changed person"' (Maruna et al., 2004:19). King (2010:73) has criticised the emphasis on secondary desistance and the neglect of primary desistance in recent research, arguing for the "reconceptualisation of primary desistance as a transitional phase between offending and crime cessation (as opposed to simply a lull in offending), which is necessary for secondary desistance". This is a fruitful expansion to an underexplored area in the desistance literature which is also relevant to Youth Justice. Most young offenders are found in this transitional phase and so it is pertinent to the current study to see how beliefs and values can influence the movement towards secondary desistance.

Understanding the strategies and intentions, factors that precede the decision to desist (Healy, 2010) , and how individuals respond once a decision has been made are important for Youth Justice to be able to assist the process of change. The relationship between these two distinct phases is essential for a better comprehension of desistance. Understanding the 'liminal' phase between crime and conformity (Healy and O'Donnell, 2008) can highlight the "mechanisms by which people leave the 'liminal' stage and either revert to offending or achieve long term desistance"(King, 2012:9). It has particular relevance for practitioners to be able to recognise the signals of desistance from young offenders and support the dynamic processes of change by legitimating these signals through confirming

the expectations of changed behaviour and thus impact positively on the young person's behaviour (Maruna, 2012).

The argument that there needs to be identity transformation from that of an offender to a non-offender for desistance to truly take place is contested by Bottoms et al.

(2004:371) where individuals are able to desist for long periods without significant cognitive transformation. This highlights the importance of a developmental understanding in the process of change over the life course. There is a need to be able to explain how offenders are able to move from criminal activity to conformity (and vice versa) and how offenders can switch from offending to non-offending and back again as in Matza's (1964) theory of delinquency and drift. Indeed, it will lead to greater insight into how offenders can sustain non-offending over a longer period of time. Moreover, it requires taking the interaction between these phases more seriously in elucidating the relationship between morality and crime.

A number of theories make claims about morality and crime like Hirschi's (1969) social bond theory and Gottfredson and Hirschi's self-control theory (1990) Sampson and Laub's life course perspective (1993) and Braithwaite's theory of reintegrative shaming (1989).

These and other criminological theories will be examined in the next section, along with their implications for this current study.

The normative dimension in relevant criminological theories

Braithwaite's theory of re-integrative shaming refers to shame as the social processes of expressing disapproval. He distinguishes between stigmatising and re-integrative shaming for acts labelled criminal. Re-integrative shaming involves denouncing and expressing disapproval of the act of crime with the intention to invoke remorse in the person being shamed, followed by efforts to bring the offender back into the community. This moralising should take place by the offender's social networks if successful reintegration is possible. Shame that is stigmatising occurs when the act and actor are denounced as unworthy of the community and pushing them away, producing deviant sub-cultures, anger and disaffection.

The classical school of thought asserts that criminals choose to engage in various forms of law breaking, grounded in the teachings of Jeremy Bentham and Cesare Beccaria where a person participates in a criminal act when the pleasure associated with the criminal act exceeds the anticipated pain. Behaviour tends to be governed by its consequences and if the behaviour is rewarded it will tend to be repeated. Yochelson and Samenow (1976;1977; 1986) provide a modern revision of this theory. They believe the criminal is free to choose his path in life, where thinking is the main vehicle through which these choices are expressed and for change to take place the criminal must assume greater responsibility for their actions. They propose that the criminal must give up criminal thinking and learn morality, because criminals are considered to have erroneous and distinct thinking

patterns. Crime is, however, not always a choice free of external constraints (Rutter, et al., 1998; Shover, 1996; Wyn and White, 1997).

Sellin (1938), drawing his ideas from Marx's classical conflict theory believed that criminal acts should be analysed as conflicts between norms because every person possesses differing behaviour codes, that is particular beliefs about right and wrong ways of acting in specific situations. In this way Sellin (1938) places the normative dimension centre stage. Crime is more than legal violations but extends to violations of moral and social codes. These conduct norms are defined by the group to which the individual belongs. For Sellin, the law embodied the normative structure of the dominant cultural/ethnic group, but not all standards are necessarily reflected in the law. It is the values and interests of the dominant group codified in the law which leads to increased conflict. Power is the principle determinant of the outcome of these conflicts. Primary conflict occurs when the norms of two cultures clash and secondary conflict takes place within the evolution of a single culture. From the perspective of the symbolic interactionist school crime is a consequence of social interaction, a result of a negotiated process involving the rule violator and other stake holders including the law who define a person's behaviour as criminal. It is not the criminal act itself that constitutes crime, but the behaviour is criminalized by a process of social perception and reaction as applied and interpreted by agents of the law. Crime exists only when the label and the law are successfully applied to an individual's behaviour. The process of rule creation must be understood and how these rules are enforced and the consequences of rule enforcement (Becker, 1963 in Muncie and McLaughlin, 2001). It is the reaction to the behaviour that is most significant. Crime is not just about norm violations

but also how plurality of individuals and groups interpret reality and react to various behaviours of others (Mead,1934).

People become criminals by learning the values of the groups to which they belong. These values either support or oppose criminal behaviour. Subculture theories are a sub division within dominant culture that has its own values, norms and belief systems. Wolfgang and Ferracuti's (1967) subculture of violence thesis expects violence in certain circumstances. An ethnographic understanding of witnessing research participants in their natural environment and capturing the particularities and nuances of their situated lives is presented by Ilan (2007;2010). It involves a youth work project seeking to divert young people away from offending, but located in class- cultural dynamics between the street variant of working class culture of a male youth peer group labelled 'the Crew' and the Youth Justice work ensconced in mainstream respectable culture of 'the Club'. This study hails from a sub-cultural criminological theoretical perspective. The Crew's adherence to particular values and behaviour is assessed from their own culturally mediated perspective as marginalized from mainstream society and their own principles, which is often at odds with the hegemonic norms and behavioural expectations of this Youth Work intervention/diversion programme. The programme requires them to aspire to the standards of behaviour they embody through youth worker's initiating a gradual process of transformative reflexivity. It is counterpoised with the transgressive thrill and aggressive defiance of the young people's cultural outlook, itself forged through exclusion and their unconscious strategies to subvert youth justice work. The Crew are conforming to a distinctive set of normative practices, to street values "norms of behaviour that facilitate survival in an environment which is harsh and violent... this value system places a premium

on the value of respect earned through suggesting strength and a willingness to use violence” (2007:24). Eschewing the formality and regulation of school and structured leisure (Willis, 1977;Corrigan,1979), life on the street and the presence of friends facilitates both leisure and financial gain through hanging out and ‘entrepreneurship’. Street culture becomes an essential mechanism to neutralise outside negative perceptions of the ‘Crew’ in providing an alternative perspective of peer validation, which fits with ideas around strain theory.

Strain theory emanates primarily from the work of Merton (1968). It asserts that crime is a result of frustrations (strain) felt by lower class individuals who are deprived of legitimate/ socially approved means to meet their goals. Merton (1968) views anomie as structural breakdown a disjunction between culturally prescribed goals (ends) and the socially prescribed means (norms) for attaining them. He devised five adaptations to the social order in terms of acceptance or rejection of cultural goals/mainstream norms and values. One either accepts both the goals and means (conformity); accepts the goals but rejects the means (innovation); accepts the means but reduces expectations about the goals (ritualism); relinquishes both goals and means (retreatism); or fight to change both goals and means through political and social action. Young offenders tend to operate through innovation, such as committing crime to relieve poverty.

Subcultures like working class street culture tend to possess norms and values at variance with majority culture often from which they are excluded. Ethnographic studies (see Liebow’s Tally’s Corner, 1968; Suttles, 1968) have highlighted how “alternative value systems sustain lifestyles that incorporate criminal behaviours as a means of surviving

endemic disadvantage and personal tragedy through facilitating the retention of dignity and autonomy” (Ilan, 2007: 212-213). Young deviant males are often seen as a threat to the social order (Bowden, 2006). Albert Cohen (1955) showed how working class delinquent sub-culture existed in opposition to dominant middle class values. The lower class youth strove to embrace the norms of values of mainstream culture but often lacked the opportunities to achieve success legitimately. They thus suffered from status frustration, because they were denied the status and means to achieve respectability but with the subculture producing an alternative means of achieving status.

Cloward and Ohlin (1960) argue that there are legitimate and illegitimate ways to achieve success based on the notion of differential opportunity structures with lower classes having greater access to the illegitimate opportunity structure. The greater the social disorganization the more likely the illegitimate opportunity structure will become dominant, especially with organized criminal gangs. This provides an alternative route for status and success for those who participate in the gang.

The criticisms of strain theory are regarding its inability to explain middle class delinquency and its predominance with lower social class and the disjunction between aspirations and expectations (Kornhauser, 1978). Agnew’s (1985) revision of Strain theory focuses on the more immediate goals of young people rather than just monetary success or middle-class status, such as popularity with peers, the avoidance of painful or aversive situations. A young person will experience frustration or anger if they are exposed to aversive stimuli like parental rejection or inconsistent discipline or exposure to an aversive environment and cannot escape these aversive situations.

Differential association theory is a social learning theory of crime developed by Sutherland (1939, revised in 1947) where crime is not innate and with which this thesis is largely in agreement. Rather, the techniques of committing crime are learnt like any other behaviour through social interaction with others, along with the motives, drives, attitudes, rationalisations favourable to violations of the law. This learning takes place within intimate social groups such as the family or peer groups and it is in such groups that individuals begin to define who they are. As a theory it has been used to explain juvenile delinquency and gang culture (Haynie and Osgood, 2005). Cunneen and White (2002) stress the group approval and subcultural sociability of this theory.

Walters (2002:198) asserts that “people's means of perceiving and construing the various aspects of their experience is what determines how they interact with their internal and external environments and how they construct their criminal belief systems”. This integrated and interactive model combines a number of criminological theories (strain theory, differential association and social learning theory, social control theory, neutralization/drift theory and the labelling perspective, Thornberry's (1987) interactional theory of delinquency development) in the evolution of criminal belief systems. These theories are mapped onto certain socio-cognitive foundations in human development: “evolution/genetics, early interaction/joint attention, attachment/social referencing, language/private speech, and theory of mind/perspective taking to form a sequence responsible for the development of belief systems and people's views of reality”. Six major schematic representations are outlined: attributions, outcome expectancies, efficacy expectancies, goals, values, and thinking styles. There are five major belief systems that comprise Walter's criminal lifestyle theory: self-view, world-view, present-view, past-view,

and future-view-and how these belief systems explain a person's progressive involvement in crime-congruent lifestyles. While these sets of belief systems are conceptually accurate, I believe they can be more usually subsumed into a broader category of a worldview perspective as the totality of individual's outlook on life.

Walters (1990) posits four behavioural characteristics underlining lifestyle criminality: irresponsibility, self-indulgence, interpersonal intrusiveness and social rule breaking. The model is a developmental theory of deviance. The lifestyle criminal who views crime as a way of life constructs belief systems grounded in their early conditions and associated choices that justify, support and rationalise their criminal activities (Walters 1990: 16). Criminal beliefs are attributed to a patterning of thought process, accounting for eight overlapping thinking patterns: mollification (justifying rationalising and making excuses), cutoff (ability to discount the suffering of victims), entitlement (the world owes them a living), power orientation (viewing the world in terms of weakness and strength, desire to control or manipulate others), sentimentality (presenting the self in a favourable light despite their interpersonally intrusive actions), superoptimism (the belief one can indefinitely avoid negative consequences of a criminal lifestyle), cognitive indolence (thinking in an uncritical fashion), discontinuity (lack of consistency in a person's thinking and actions, becoming distracted from goals) considered instrumental in protecting and maintaining a criminal lifestyle (Walters, 1990). Internal and external conditions set the context for behaviour and establish the limits to one's criminal vulnerability. The individual then makes a choice to offend and alters their cognitions to support the criminal lifestyle. Thinking styles are neutralisations that are perceived by Walters (2002) as primary

avenues of belief system defence. Thurman (1984) ascertained that neutralization and moral commitment were conceptually and empirically distinct.

Criminal thinking styles and global belief systems are meaningfully linked in Walters (2007) study of 141 medium security prison inmates. The psychological inventory of criminal thinking styles (PICTS) correlates with the mechanism, fatalism, inequity and malevolence poles of the worldview rating scale. It demonstrates that inmates who view the world as cold and unjust and other people as objects of manipulation display higher levels of criminal thinking. A young person's worldview influences their decision making, where "social cognitions are related to moral reasoning" (Palmer and Begum, 2006:448). Gibbs (2003) argues that distorted cognitions are associated with developmental delay, such as an egocentric bias reflects the pre-conventional level of moral reasoning centred on hedonistic needs. Gibbs suggests that a failure to move beyond the immature moral reasoning of childhood can lead to "a network of self-skewed schemas that guide one's perceptions and explanations of events and indeed one's basic approach to life, one's worldview" (p. 138). These relate to Walter's ideas about criminal thinking styles. However, "the point at which people believe their version of reality to be incorrect is the point at which they begin to change their view of reality" (Walters, 2002:44). This can lead to a shift in worldview.

According to attribution theories, the tendency to see the world in an habitual way can lead to habitual behavioural responses (Heider, 1958). If the world is believed to be dangerous and uncontrollable, one is more likely to perceive the intentions on the part of others as menacing and this could provoke a violent response (Goldberg, 2007). Goldberg

examined 34 juvenile high risk offender's perceptions of the social environment and their decision to shoot a gun in a fictional scenario. This allowed for their responses to be compared as they were all responding to the same stimulus. Half predicted they would shoot perceiving it to be a good thing in a world they believed was hostile. The other half of the sample perceived there to be a choice about shooting in this situation and believed in a world where there was a possibility of a different outcome. There is a debate about whether it is how offenders think (moral reasoning) or what offenders think (criminal sentiments) which constitutes risk factors for violent and criminal behaviours. Palmer (2003a;2003b) distinguishes between the structure and process of moral reasoning and the content of moral beliefs. It is not necessary to have such a strict dichotomy between these ideas as these notions can mutually inform each other. Over thirty years of moral reasoning studies confirms that offenders can be distinguished from non-offenders by their less mature capacity for moral reasoning. However, a developmental view of maturity needs to be endorsed because the causal relationship between moral reasoning and offending is not invariant: not all offenders will display immature moral reasoning and not all individuals with moral reasoning at immature levels will be offenders. In my submission, a complete theory of moral reasoning should link moral reasoning with moral knowledge and conduct as Bandura (2002) proposes.

Moral conduct is motivated and regulated by the on-going exercise of self-influence in line with our moral standards, grounded in a socio-cognitive theory of moral agency. Moral reasoning is linked to moral action through "affective self-regulatory mechanisms by which moral agency is exercised" (Bandura, 2002:101). This is not an invariant control system because moral principles can be overridden, even with strongly internalised values. As

Bandura et al. (1996:364) states “selective activation and disengagement of internal control permits different types of conduct with the same moral standards”. Human-beings possess a self-regulating system in which moral control can be disengaged from detrimental conduct. Moral disengagement occurs progressively from mildly harmful acts through repetition, which diminishes self-reproval to more serious acts without moral self-censure. Bandura (1990; 1999; 2002) presents various mechanisms of moral disengagement first from behaviour and the consequences of that behaviour and finally, from the victim. Young offenders perform a number of moral disengagement practices such as moral justification, euphemistic labelling (use of sanitising language like collateral damage), advantageous or exonerative comparison, displacement and diffusion of responsibility (blaming another, division of labour in a group involved in reprehensible activity that diffuses responsibility) seeking to render more benign the activities in which they were involved. Bandura et al.’s (1996) study found that disowning responsibility for harmful effects, and devaluing those who are maltreated were the most common exonerative disengagement practices. Moral disengagers are less pro-socially orientated, more readily anger and tend to ruminate on perceived grievances. There is no consistent relationship between MD and peer approval and more serious offences require greater moral disengagement. The power of humanisation can counteract human cruelty as the reverse process of dehumanisation where there is the removal of qualities that make others ‘human’.

Bandura (1996:372) explains “the major self-regulatory mechanism, which is mobilized in concert with situational factors, operates through three main sub-functions. These include self-monitoring of conduct, judgment of the culpability of conduct in relation to personal standards and environmental circumstances, and affective self-reaction”.

A strong relationship exists between strength of moral beliefs and offending, where offending is more likely for those willing to justify law-violations. Central to the idea of moral disengagement (Bandura, 1986; 1991) is that principles can be temporarily dropped and later brought back into play. Smith and McVie (2003) question whether moral flexibility is the same activity as found in the moral neutralization of rules proposed by Sykes and Matza (1957) wherein individuals justify certain criminal behaviour like fighting or stealing.

Sykes and Matza's (1957) neutralization theory emerged as a dismissal of the sub-cultural idea (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960) that offenders engage in crime because they adhere to an oppositional value structure of law breaking, violence and rebelliousness. By contrast they stress offenders are aware of conventional values because they are embedded in conventional culture, acknowledge that their criminal behaviour is wrong, and "engage in self-talk before they offend to mitigate the anticipated sense of guilt and shame associated with violating social norms" (Casey et al., 2013:17). The germane question in this thesis is how offenders can commit crime and overcome the experience of cognitive dissonance the reconciling of their self-concept with corresponding expectations. Higgins (1987) argues that human beings are motivated to align their actual self (the group of attributes a person believes they possess with their ideal self (how they would ultimately like to see themselves) and their ought self (the group of attributes one believes they should possess out of duty, obligation or responsibility). Offenders do not have separate and contrasting value systems because as Sykes and Matza (1957) argue, if they were true adherents to a deviant subculture they would not express regret for their actions or need to use

neutralization. Neutralization research is hindered by the inability to distinguish neutralizing beliefs from general acceptance of delinquent behaviour (Austin, 1977).

In Topalli's (2005) extenuation of neutralization theory, applying to all types of offenders regardless of their attachment to conventional or non-conventional values, there are a 'hardcore' of offenders, who are committed to their misdeeds- to the persistent and serious violation of the law. For example, in Wright and Decker's study (1994, 1997), eighty-three out of ninety-nine burglars gave no indication of needing to neutralize their behaviour or feeling guilty. Topalli (2005) found drug dealers, street robbers and car-jackers who had neither been caught nor found guilty used neutralization to protect their street oriented reputations. This is reminiscent of Andersen's (1999) code switching between the world of the 'street' and 'decent'⁵ is determined by the circumstances and the audience young people are being hailed by and are addressing, whereby individuals situationally choose which value system is important to them and vary in their responses. This was also confirmed in gang research conducted by Garot (2010). Cromwell and Thurman (2003) believe the more plausible causal ordering is delinquent acts come first before justifying beliefs.

Young people can engage in offending without relinquishing their image of themselves as good and those dedicated to street life can temporarily abandon the pressures of criminal life to allow for "conventional behaviour without sacrificing intrinsically valuable hardcore

⁵ This are the terms used by Andersen representing two poles of value orientation in his conceptual categories of 'decent' and 'street' comparing street life with decent families. The categories depict a contrast in moral outlook or attitudes between local residents in this seminal ethnographic study.

self-concepts” (Topalli, 2005:823) . This seems to underline Bandura’s theory of moral agency (1986).

Religion can also be used as part of the neutralisation process and in protecting the self-concept, something we will explore in this research study. Topalli et al. (2012) examined the role that religion plays in either deterring or encouraging criminality among serious street offenders. Religion is thought to constrain or control offending by strengthening the bonds between expected criminals and society by increasing their acceptance and loyalty to mainstream values (Akers, 2010). In contrast to this classic assumption about the buffering effects of religiosity, Topalli et al (2012) discovered that serious offenders “employ distorted and/or self-serving narratives to justify their offending behaviour and neutralize any negative and deterrent effect that fear of transcendental negative outcomes (fear of divine punishment after death) would normally have”(Ibid:6). These offenders employed a variety of neutralising techniques to support their continued criminal behaviour when their purported religiosity was juxtaposed with their offending. Topalli believes, however, these cannot be dismissed as mere discontinuity meaning criminals say one thing (‘I am giving up crime’) and do another as one of eight criminal thinking styles espoused by (Walters, 1990) or post hoc rationalisations of behaviour. The majority of Topalli’s African American offenders were Christian. Some displayed an incomplete or narrow understanding of their faith and others selectively chose to attend to certain religious precepts and not to others to justify their offending. This research highlights the co-existence of conventional religious beliefs and criminality. Religion is said to play a criminogenic role in their offending. The inhibiting effect of religious belief on crime appears to have been countermanded. Topalli, et al. (2012:15) conclude that offenders have a “propensity to co-opt religious doctrine to

either permit or encourage criminal behaviour". Religion can be used to suit an individual's behavioural motivations. Further social psychological theories provide support for a link between attitudes and behaviour (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980).

Ajzen and Fishbein's theory of reasoned action describes the influence of salient behavioural and normative beliefs on the formation of the intention to commit crime. It gives a central role to social norm formation and can deal with different levels of specificity of decisions. The behavioural intention is the result of two measurable variables. This involves a two sided equation comprising of the attitudinal (subjective attitude to behaviour or act) and normative. Whether a person intends to do something or not depends on whether the person likes the idea of doing it (or not) and whether he thinks he should do it based on the person's norms about the act. Thus attitudes are dependent upon beliefs about outcomes. Subjective norms refer to perceptions of what others think about whether the person should or should not engage in the act. The assessment of the salient beliefs concerning a particular offence, such as a burglary also requires measuring the strength of the belief and an evaluation of the intended outcome. Those who have strong normative others can form strong subjective norms. A person may know full well that a salient other disapproves of potential criminal behaviour but choose to ignore this. The importance of how choices are framed or presented is critical (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980).

Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) self-control theory (SCT) focuses on the absence of self-control within individuals and situations and the pursuit of immediate gratification. It is presented as a general theory of crime that can explain almost all forms of criminality, where low self-control increases the risk of offending and involvement in other imprudent

behaviours. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) present low self-control as the primary cause of crime, but despite its robust empirical base (Pratt and Cullen, 2000) the interaction effects with other risk factors are rarely mentioned.

A central premise of SCT is that people tend to differ in the likelihood that they will commit crimes and these traits are established early in childhood (the key age is around 8 years) and remain stable over the life course. The cause of low self-control is poor socialisation and ineffective child rearing with inconsistent monitoring of behaviour and absence of discipline. An underlying assumption is that people are motivated by self-interest and act in ways to maximise pleasure and to avoid pain and suffering. There needs to be opportunity as well as low self-control to lead to offending. This criminological theory has been criticised for its tendency to reduce crime to a single process, and self-control could be made up of different facets (Newburn, 2007). In contrast Smith and McVie (2003) posit that self-control is a product of socialization where expectations and values are internalised and becomes part of an individual's outlook resulting in the capacity for self-regulation by rules and precepts (Bandura, 1991). The link between self-control and offending involves a number of models, the strength of moral beliefs in conventional values; the capacity for self-regulation by rules and precepts (Hirschi, 1969). In the boundaries of this research these theories generate questions: Do young offenders bend or temporarily drop a moral principle in the commission of criminal acts? How far do young offenders in this study hold to oppositional and/or conventional values?

Another promising individual characteristic is moral attitudes and its moderating effects with regard to self-control, evidenced in the Peterborough Adolescent and Young Adult

Development study of 700 young people aged between twelve and sixteen years (Wikström, 2006). This study indicates that crime results from a combination of personal vulnerabilities and environmental inducements. The study reveals a link between young people's morality and the commission of crime and those who are crime prone tended to have weak morals and related to interactional effects with low self-control. (Wikström, 2006; Wikström and Treiber, 2007). Situational Action Theory (SAT) states "human action and offending is the outcome of how individuals perceive their alternatives for action and make their choices when confronted with different types of settings. This perception-choice process is seen as the *situational mechanism* that links individuals and environments to offending. In the theory, perception is regarded as more important than choice: if an individual does not see crime as an action alternative, the individual does not need to make a decision about it (Wikström, 2006)" (Svensson et al., 2010:733).

There are interaction effects between moral values and environmental factors. Morality warrants more criminological attention as it has been shown to play a more fundamental role in offending. Svensson, et al's(2010) study statistically confirms the interaction effects between morality and self-control with regard to adolescent offending, based on three independent samples in three countries, Belgium, Sweden and Holland. The relationship between self-control and offending is dependent on the level of morality. There is a weak interaction effect between self-control and offending with those with high morality.

Morality and self-control mediated the relationship between family and school variables and offending, suggesting these influence offending through determining young people's levels of morality and self-control.

Wikström and Treiber (2007) propose self-control as a situational concept or factor in the process of choice rather than as an individual trait, and it is only relevant when an offender decides to engage in an act of crime. It is something we do rather than something we are. They argue that people's choice to engage in crime is not a question of self-interest or their ability to exercise self-control but rather about a question of their morality as part of their executive ability. These are the individual traits influencing an individual's ability to exercise control and self-control is the individual's ability to successfully act in congruence with their morality when faced with temptations or provocations. It is here activated in the process of choice. Many people do not decide to commit crime whereas others commit crime out of habit and in each case the ability to exercise self-control is not the key factor.

Wikström and Treiber (2007:241) insist that:

“to explain acts of crime is fundamentally a question of explaining moral action (that is, action guided by rules about what it is right or wrong to do or not to do) and, particularly, why individuals come to breach moral rules defined in law”

Situational Action Theory places morality at the forefront of inquiry into the causes of crime. It challenges Felson and Clark's (1998) notion that 'opportunity makes the thief' as a theory of moral action. Human actions are an outcome of how individuals perceive their action alternatives and how they make their choices. A person is moved to engage in crime if they see it as a viable alternative and chose to act upon it. Their moral perceptions precede their moral choices, because in contrast to Felson and Clark (1998) people are not just enticed into criminal action through tempting opportunities in their environment, such as an unsupervised and unlocked motor vehicle with keys left in the ignition ready to

be stolen. Perception-choice is the principal causal mechanism of crime as an action outcome arising from the interaction between a person's criminal propensity and (criminogenic) exposure to a particular setting. A person's crime propensity is established by a person's morality (moral rules and moral emotions) and their ability to exercise self-control. Individuals act in particular settings and express their morality in making moral judgements or in the execution of moral habits in response to the particularities of a setting. A person's morality interacts with the moral context of a setting via a moral filter, whether they perceive rule breaking as an action alternative in response to a particular motivation (provocation/temptation).

Choice involves the formation of an intention to act in a certain way, such as whether to rob someone of their mobile phone. The person's morality and moral context serve as a moral filter, establishing what actions are appropriate in a situation, such as whether they believe violence-related rule breaking is appropriate in certain situations because of levels of provocation and monitoring. This crime propensity has to be activated by interacting with the moral context or "action relevant features of a setting" (Wikström et al., 2012:17), its moral norms and levels of enforcement (formal/informal monitoring and sanctions). The relevant features of a setting are its opportunities and frictions (obstacles and interferences) and the moral context in which these occur. A person's moral perceptions refer to: 'the identification of action alternatives and their moral qualities in response to particular motivations (readiness to act) in a particular setting' (Wikström et al., 2007:246). These perceptions are the intentions to abide by or breach a moral rule. Moreover, they depend upon the correspondence between an individual's morality and the moral rules of the setting and the strength of these moral beliefs or habits. Only when a person

deliberates do they make a rational choice, meaning they consider the best action alternative amongst those they perceive. Human beings either deliberate between a range of options or act out of habit. The difference between the law abiding and criminals is that the former have internalised moral constraints and do not or no longer see crime as a viable option.

In this section, the centrality of moral values in the commission of offending has been underlined across various criminological theories. The normative dimension in criminological theories emphasises the moral agency of individual's and suggests various mechanisms that operate to explain the behaviour and choices that young offenders make about whether to participate in criminal behaviour. Social control features prominently as the capacity for self-regulation, alongside the ability to switch between contrasting codes of values, disengage from moral precepts and young offenders' capabilities to neutralise their behaviour and guilt. The various processes of socialisation and social interaction and social learning contribute to people's moral stances, whether being a part of sub-cultures with their own distinct values in contrast to the surrounding culture or the 'strains' or frustrations felt in not having the legitimate means to meet their goals or having to face aversive situations, learning criminal behaviour from pro-offending peers. How offenders think and what they think about is important to moral decision-making, along with how values are internalised and appropriated, the strength of belief and levels of moral values. Ultimately it is a matter of whether young offenders see crime as an action alternative or are motivated by other pro-social considerations.

Conclusion

The causal factors that underpin offending behaviour and reasons why people stop offending have close parallels, echoing the dichotomy and tension between structure and agency. Some, like Leibrich (1993:17), doubt whether any correspondence is necessary: “Assumptions about why and how people go straight tend to be based on the related but not necessarily pertinent question of why and how they get into trouble (Leibrich, 1993:17)”. Barry (2004;2006) argues it enables a better understanding of the process of change if a common denominator between onset of offending and desistance can be found. She proposes social integration with young people’s need to fit in, achieve their aspirations, and be recognised by society. Some theories like social control theory promise to explain both the causation and ceasing of offending but are not so clear in articulating the process of change. .

This chapter has emphasised how religion can be a positive factor in young people’s lives, serving to buffer their involvement in criminal activities, but is clearly influenced by the operation of their moral agency. There is a general inverse relationship between religion and crime which can be argued, though results are equivocal and some still believe the relationship is spurious, being attributable to other factors. The impact of mediating variables is still a moot point, although methodological factors like how the variables are measured explains some of the inconsistencies in findings, where using various indicators of religiosity is essential because religion is a broad and complex construct. It has been shown that desistance is a process of change that requires a shift in values, a re-focusing of

priorities and shift in perspective and sense of self. The distinction between primary and secondary desistance is pertinent to this study because the transitional phase is the context in which young offenders are often found and provides the situational milieu where they can be encouraged and motivated to change. Understanding the factors, strategies and intentions preceding the decision to desist can enable greater understanding of the dynamics of transformation for practitioners. It will contribute to better explaining the relationship between morality and crime and how this can improve practice through comprehending how the normative dimension operates through young offenders' agency. The various mechanisms of moral agency were explored across a range of criminological theories to explain how this concept operates in the lives of individuals and their moral decision-making, whether or not to participate in criminal activities.

I contend that beliefs and values are important in influencing attitudes to offending and especially in the transition to desistance which involves some shift in identity or cognitive transformation. Beliefs and values provide the impetus for an individual's actions and are central in many criminological theories which explain how these operate. Values are tied to early socialisation as part of social learning and are central to whether young people will conform to social norms/conventional values or encourage maladaptive behaviours. The normative dimension is important because it looks at the relationship between fact and value, between is and ought, in terms of what matters and why what matters, matters, is tied to the core task of social work as a helping profession; by addressing the issues that matter to people and improving their circumstances as to how things ought to be.

Religion can be co-opted to justify all manner of atrocities and harm towards others, as evidenced in using distorted religious teaching to rationalise domestic violence through to religiously motivated terrorism(Barlow, 2007; Hamm, 2009) . Without understanding the negative aspects of religion or the shadow side of religious discourse, we cannot properly appreciate the role of religion in changing people's behaviour; such as informing and benefiting rehabilitative interventions to better comprehend how people distort and misinterpret religious teachings to justify and excuse their behaviour, and how to challenge and correct these distortions and misunderstandings. It requires some facility with religious literacy.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

This chapter establishes the research design and strategies that have been selected in this study and its underlying rationale: “the justification for their selection in terms of their appropriateness for the task” (Blaikie, 2000:26). The research questions are outlined and the nature of the qualitative methodology is enumerated, employing a narrative – biographical approach. Secondly, the interview process is examined alongside the use of photo –elicitation and interactive exercises and the use of case files as an additional, confirmatory source of information. The sampling frame and profile is explained. This is followed by consideration of the three ethical concerns when undertaking research with young people: confidentiality, minimization of harm, and informed consent. Next, an assessment of the way the data was analysed was conducted, predicated on processes of thematic analyses . Finally, alternative research strategies are explored.

The Construction of a Research Problem

The initial impetus for this research was discussed in the introduction, stemming from my practice experience as a Senior Practitioner in Youth Justice. It was the intersection between religion and offending behaviour that forged the current research project.

The criminological literature has tended to reflect the secular ethos within Youth Justice where religion is treated perfunctorily in the execution of assessments and risk management and not necessarily as significant in the lives of young people and this resonated with my practice experience (Spalek and Immoutal, 2008). I wanted to develop these reflections further to discover what contribution religion makes to young offenders’

subjectivities, to look at how young people perceived the world about them and their place within it. This led to the formulation of research questions for the initial research proposal with the main aim to explore the interplay between beliefs and values and young peoples' attitudes to offending with specific reference to religious faith identities. These initial research questions were subsequently developed and continuously reformulated as the research proceeded: an iterative relationship between the theoretical, empirical literature and critical reflection. Initial questions were informed by my practice experience and reading relevant literature and reflecting upon these findings shaped the focus of the research through the use of a research diary. In turn these were sharpened by discussions with practitioners in the field, which fed back into developing further investigation and exploration of ideas and questions.

The overriding purpose of this thesis is to examine the role of religious identities in shaping youth offending behaviours. More specifically, to explore the interplay between a young person's agency, beliefs and values and behaviour and to understand how the interrelationship of these three factors generates possibilities for change. From this aim flow the following research questions:

Research Questions

1) How do young people make sense of the interplay between their beliefs and values, and their attitudes to offending?

- 2) What do young offenders believe and what values do they hold?
- 3) What are the sources of the values and ideas that shape notions of identity and change?
- 4) To what extent are these values and ideas embodied in rituals, practices, activities, and how significant is this?
- 5) What are the specific factors identified by young people that can encourage and support change away from offending and the adoption of positive values?
- 6) What are the kinds of factors that are identified by young people to mitigate against positive change and how are these reconciled, or not, with religious/moral values?

Research Design

The research draws explicitly on qualitative traditions, which is not unusual in research with children and young people to explore the subjective experience of their lives (Scott, 2000). My research starts from an interpretivist perspective, that is it focuses on the meanings young offenders give to their lived experiences (McAdams, 1988) but informed by some principles of critical realism, which is interested in understanding causality and the generative mechanisms that give rise to the object of study (Bhaskar and Danermark, 2006; Danermark et al, 2002; Oliver, 2012; Blom and Morén, 2010). The case for using qualitative methods for investigating causality is made by Maxwell (2004).

McAdams (1988, 1993) maintains that people make sense of their lives in the form of *'life story'* or *'self-narrative'* and abstinence from criminal activity requires ex-offenders to make a shift in the construction of their personal identities, which validates the use of *'narrative'* as a tool for both understanding and theorizing notions of change, rehabilitation and desistance. Narrative is best used for capturing detailed stories and life experiences where rich data and understanding can be garnered from a life history approach, as demonstrated famously in the classic study *'The Jack Roller'* (Shaw, 1930). Maruna, Wilson and Curran (2006) used life story interviews with 75 individuals who claimed they had prison conversions. This study explored what changes when prisoners convert in regards to adjustments to their biography and self-identity in relation to this new experience. Bennet (1981) studied offenders' narratives for insights about the pathways of deviant behaviour. Hollway and Jefferson(2000) created the free-association in depth narrative interview in their work with offenders. Cusson and Pinsonneault (1986) used in-depth interviews with ex-robbers to document how some offenders grow tired of doing time in prison. Laub and Sampson (2003) pursued life history interviews with 52 participants from their original sample as they reached the age of 70. Presser (2009) advocates for the use of narratives in research with offenders having explored narratives of violence with prisoners. Calverley (2009; 2011) used in depth interviews with thirty three male probationers who were desisting or had desisted from crime drawn from London Probation area offices, consisting of three principal minority ethnic groups: eleven Bangladeshi, eight Indian and fourteen either black or dual heritage. The Teeside Studies (McDonald et al., 2011) were a series of longitudinal qualitative studies examining youth transitions to adulthood in contexts of multiple deprivation comprising of biographical interviews. These studies

confirm the relevance of qualitative approaches and more specifically the use of narrative within criminological research.

The literature review in chapter 3 demonstrated how various quantitative studies question whether religious belief correlates with engagement in criminality over the life course, often using crude measures of religiosity and criminality. They tend to miss the nuance and complexity of these intersections. A richer, more suitable methodology using qualitative methods is proposed to complement these studies for gauging the juncture between belief systems and criminal involvement.

It is acknowledged that a distinction can be drawn between in depth interviews and more specific narrative approaches but it is the deep exploration of individual biographies which is apposite and ultimately these will involve aspects of a person's life story. Life story and narrative will be treated synonymously in this study equated with the story a person chooses to tell about their life he or she has lived, related to the biographical impulse. It is how a person experiences and understands their life over time (Atkinson, 1998:8). Life history and life story are not so easily distinguished in practice, but Hatch and Wisniewski (1995) believe it is the role of context in relating an individual's life into the wider dimensions of the social, historical, political and economic that makes it a life history.

A person's uniqueness can best be communicated through their life stories, because a story ties different characteristics and attributes of an individual into one person. For as Matsuba and Walker explain: "the story weaves different temporal strands of a person's life into a continuous, coherent and unified whole" (Matsuba and Walker, 2005:278), capturing the different facets of the person and events they have experienced over time and space. The

tone of the life story emerges in the first years of life linked to the nature of the initial attachment between caregiver and child (Bowlby, 1997). Adolescence is the transitional period when young people are trying to work out their belief system, which is seen as the philosophical conditions for the life story. The adolescent shows fidelity to a particular arrangement of selfhood. This is an internalised and evolving story of the reconstructed past and imagined future that aims to provide life with unity, coherence and purpose, a story that explains how I came to be, who I am today and where I am going. With the advent of formal operational thought adolescents are able to take their own lives as objects of systematic reflection (McAdams, 2009).

Crossley (2000) advocates a middle position between realist and social constructivist positions in her narrative psychological approach, which formed the basis of her interview protocol, drawing on the work of McAdams (1993). A more traditional realist approach “assumes the interview can be seen as a tool which elicits information about the respondent’s beliefs, perceptions or accounts” whereas social constructivists see the interview as “a place where specific social and interactive functions are being performed” such as the presentation of themselves as a morally good person (Crossley, 2000:87). She contends that what people actually say has some significance and ‘reality’ for them beyond the boundaries of the specific interview context, forming part of their ‘ongoing story’, which represents a manifestation of their psychological and social world. This does not discount the fact that respondents may be performing particular social and interactional tasks in the interview situation, but this is not our sole interest. In the telling of their biographies there is some relationship to the reality they are experiencing in their

psychological and social world. These verbal accounts people produce in the interview hold the outline of an internalised personal narrative (McAdams, 1993:20). During adolescence, as the transitional period in which Youth Justice operates (aged 10-17 years), this is when the first draft or first efforts of narrative identity (McAdams, 2009) occurs, or what Elkind (1981) describes as the 'personal fable'. The life story becomes more complex and sophisticated as the young person progresses into emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000). Maturation processes also factor significantly into the fluency of the narrative.

Crossley's (2000, 2003) narrative psychological approach can be classified as broadly social constructionist, but also comprising of phenomenological and existential ideas. The narrative psychological approach recognizes "the central and constructive role played by language in the formation and structuring of self and identity and that, in order to understand ourselves and others, we need to explore the 'meaning systems' and 'structures' of meaning that makes up our minds and worlds (Polkinghorne 1998:1)" (Crossley, 2000:10). Narrative psychology is premised on the assumption that human experience and behaviour are meaningful and that we can understand ourselves through the medium of language. Crossley is concerned with maintaining a sense of a coherent self, as opposed to a personal psychology continuously in a state of flux because it is so overly determined by context, with the tendency to lose the subject. For Crossley, "narrative constitutes an organizing principle for human action and life" (2003:290) whereby human psychology has an essentially narrative structure. She asserts that human beings always seek to impose structure on the flow of experience. There is a greater order and coherence in terms of the way we orientate ourselves to time; towards the past and future in a more

integrated and unifying fashion. Any story of disorder or incoherence is an attempt to impose order and make sense of self and world. Crossley wants to retrieve the subjectivity by focusing on the lived experience of the individual, while “appreciating the linguistic and discursive structuring of human psychology” (2000:32).

The Interview Process

The template for the interview protocol comes from Crossley’s (2000; 2003) narrative psychological analysis based on McAdams (1993) *Life Story interview* protocol designed for exploring personal narratives and the Faith Development model of James Fowler (2004). These were adapted and developed to suit the specific purposes of this research project in terms of reflecting the age range of participants and to include a section on the nature and attitudes of offending. *The Life Story Interview* was not specifically developed for use with criminal offenders. However, the schedules have a credible pedigree of reliability having been used successfully with different reference groups (Adler and McAdams, 2007; McAdams et al., 2006) and in different contexts and types of research, which made it easily accessible and fit for purpose. For instance Maruna (2001) used a modified version of this instrument to examine the narrative identities of criminal offenders. Recently Laws and Ward (2011) similarly recommended the use of an adapted *Life Story interview* format drawing on McAdams (1995) for their work with sex offenders. McAdams and Fowler are critically sensitive to the religious/spiritual dimension of human lives, making it appropriate for uncovering these facets in a person’s life story. Fowler et al.’s (2004) faith development model is linked to a structured stage based model of faith that can be coded (having its own

coding manual) specifically for the purpose of fitting individuals into specific faith categories, but it was felt too prescriptive for the purposes of this research. It did not reflect the aims of the research and nature of the research questions and so specific questions were purposely selected from Fowler's 'life tapestry' interview to be included in the interview schedule. During interviews questions were intentionally left open and used explicitly because they elicit religious and spiritual themes from respondents. Categorising young people into stages of faith development was therefore deemed inappropriate.

Semi structured interviews were conducted between 2009-10 in two Youth Offending Team locations in the West Midlands and for reason of anonymity, both YOT's having specifically requested to remain under pseudonyms in order to protect the identities of the research participants. A period of acclimatisation was observed at each location before interviews proceeded, so that each team could become familiar with the researcher and in order for the researcher to adjust to the specific working ethos and practices of each YOT. This involved spending a number of days per week 'hanging – out' in each YOT, shadowing and talking to staff, and attending team meetings.

The interviews generally took place in the two YOT offices, because this was a space with which the young people were familiar and to ensure that YOT concerns surrounding health and safety and risk management were addressed. A number of interviews took place in the young people's place of residence, but accompanied by their YOT worker. One interview was conducted in a residential home in the presence of the young person's residential social worker. A home visiting protocol was followed in all these instances. The interviews that were conducted ranged in length from twenty minutes to two hours, with

many of these involving two interviews. Where ever possible arrangements were made to go through an initial transcript with each young person to ensure validity and reliability of the content of these interviews. An initial introduction to the young person was made through the YOT practitioners and the nature of research and expectations were explained and questions answered about any concerns relating to confidentiality, use and dissemination of information. A further appointment was scheduled with the young person, emphasising that the research interviews would not be additional to individual supervision sessions but forming part of the normal supervision process . This was a strategic approach to garner the support of YOT staff in the recruitment process for the research by showing how the research would provide work-load relief through ‘criminogenic’ targeted sessions from another qualified practitioner. The researcher was not under any obligation to feed back to the YOT worker although brief YOIS notes were logged about the generic nature of the research interviews. The sessions, on the whole, remained confidential except for where a young person was willing for the content of the interview to be shared with their supervising officer. In the event of any disclosure about potential harm being raised during the session, this would lead to the formal interview ending and to a discussion about any potential concerns with the young person and the Youth Offending Team. YOT protocols were followed about confidentiality, disclosure and risk at all times. For example one young person raised concerns about their involvement in far right extremism, which required further scrutiny to assess the actual level of risk and potential harm. This was brought to the young person’s attention and then referred back to the young person’s supervising officer. The researcher checked with each young person about whether they were willing for information to be shared with their YOT worker. The interview’s explored

the young people's biography, reasons for being at the YOT including their history of offending, family dynamics, and questions pertaining to their beliefs. Sessions incorporated the use of a montage of pictures for photographic elicitation and a ranking exercise about identity markers. The content of the interviews is outlined in the full protocol in Appendix 2 .

The semi- structured interview protocol serves as a guide rather than something that has to be strictly adhered to; with the aim to enter "the psychological and social world of the respondent" (Smith, 1995:12) through building up rapport. The interviewer is able to be flexible and follow up areas of interest as they arise within the interview and to ask questions that may not form part of the interview schedule, but also ensuring that certain topic areas can be covered. The 'thinking about your life as a book with different chapters' was not always readily engaged with by the research participants most probably because people may never have reflected on the narrative of their lives in such a focused way and so adjustments in the interview had to be made. It was obvious that this works better the longer a person had lived their life but certain life events were able to be covered, childhood, relationships, education, and nature of relationships with parents/ carers (see Appendix for Interview Schedule). Overcoming defensiveness and resistance during interview by attempting to put the interviewee at ease, does not suggest that they were 'willing to tell it like it is' (Hollway and Jefferson, 2001:105). The largely unchallenged assumption that respondents are willing and able to convey (Silverman, 2001) their authentic experiences needs to be put to rest. There is often a gap between word and deed (Bryman, 1984: 81). In many respects the narrative is a joint production between narrator

and listener (Mishler 1986). Presser (2004) calls this the situated construction of interview narratives in which identities take shape when individuals account for their behaviour.

Interactive Exercises

A ranking exercise was carried out with young people at the end of the interview to gauge the importance of different identity makers in their understanding of who they are, outlining the following elements: gender, class, education, employment, race, religion, spirituality, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation and relationships. A number of blank cards were provided so that young people could identify other important aspects. The self-selected cards were ranked in order of importance and a discussion ensued in order to find out about the young person's understanding of these terms and about the "processes of identification that the young people engage with in order to identify in particular ways or disidentify with others" (Hopkins, 2010:7). This allowed for insight into intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1993; Phoenix and Pattynama, 2006), the ways different identities interact and intersect in diverse ways. The young people were aware of the focus of the research and this in itself did not affect their take on this exercise or the positioning of their identity markers.

Photo-Elicitation

A montage of photographs was used in this research to facilitate discussion about the interaction between religion and offending. This portfolio was augmented by discussions about photographs young people already had taken on their own mobile phones. These

photographs portrayed key relationships, important objects and artefacts and made connections to young people's symbolic world, forming the basis of their worldview (Epstein et al., 2006).

Photographs were used as visual prompts that helped to elicit feeling, memory and reflection during the formal interview process. These conveyed religious activities and objects, places of worship such as a small child praying with his father in a Mosque and various aspects of offending, for instance a person breaking into a house. The researcher asked the research subjects to discuss the meaning of photographs they selected from the image bank that was created for the research. The juxtaposition of a range of religious and criminological pictures revealed whether there was any elision or relationship between faith and offending as the purview of our study. Every image embodies a way of seeing; "our perception of appreciation of an image depends also upon our way of seeing" (Berger 1972:10). We can so easily narrow the field of view or limit the viewfinder, but each young person was able to show the significance of the various photographs for themselves. One young person deconstructed the staged nature of the photographs, the locks being the wrong way around in the picture and the crowbar positioned incorrectly, thus revealing his underlying knowledge of breaking and entry in burglaries more readily than any direct question.

Photo elicitation is a unique way for young people to communicate dimensions of their lives and ease rapport between the interviewee and researcher, it can lessen the awkwardness of interviews as there is something else to focus on. Photographs enable a disruption of the usual power dynamics of interviews through empowering the interviewee

(Cooke and Hess, 2007). It can spur meaning that may not necessarily be revealed in the conventional interview process. Photographs are polysemic- capable of generating multiple meanings in the viewing process (Clark-Ibáñez, 2004).

Use of Case Files

A review of the two Youth Offending Service (YOS) databases [Youth Offending Information System (YOIS)] was undertaken to view each individual case file regarding problem areas and significant issues that were identified by practitioners about the young people, and this allowed for triangulation through a comparison with the issues raised in the narrative interviews. Forty case records were scrutinised with the permission of each YOS and under the supervision and guidance of Information System manager in each location. The file review was carried out following the interviews but preliminary discussions and some initial views of case files took place with YOS supervisors before each interview. This followed a similar format to that conducted by McNeil and Batchelor (2002). Offence history and pattern of offences were noted and ASSET assessments evaluated to highlight key issues and interventions, such as problems in family background, extent of Social Services involvement, response to education, substance misuse, mental health and emotional issues, aggression and violence. The social and relational context of offending was observed through the review process to substantiate and further explicate the meaning of crime provided by the research participants. It informed a clear idea of their background and clarified the stories told during interview.

Sampling

Youth Offending Teams/ Services (YOT/ YOS) are the main conduit for providing access to young offenders within the criminal justice system. Under the provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 1998, Youth Offending Teams have a statutory role to supervise young people who have committed a criminal offence and have been sentenced to a Court Order between the ages of 10-17 years in England and Wales. This can either be in the community or through custody. YOTs were therefore the main gateway to establish a viable research sample. Two Youth Offending Teams were identified in the West Midlands for the practical purpose of being located near to the University, where the researcher was based.

The nature of the research was presented at team meetings with each Youth Offending Team, prior to the commencement of any research. An allocated member of the team served as the main point of contact and gatekeeper in each location. The gatekeepers are those with “the power to grant or withhold access to people or situations for the purposes of the research” (Burgess, 1984:48). Each team meeting involved a presentation and question and answer session to establish the parameters of the research. Oversight was provided by the Training Manager in YOT A and Information Officer in YOT B. The main gatekeeper in each YOT area then over saw the implementation of the research. As a joint funder to this research the Youth Justice Board research manager suggested that a sample should comprise of all the main religious groups as far as possible, but a decision had to be made about how much it was possible for one researcher to undertake this task, in terms of

time constraints and number of possible locations this would involve and ethical and research governance procedures. New locations would have to be identified and research compliance followed in each new research area. In the end, in view of such ethical and governance procedures and in conjunction with the researcher's time/resource constraints, a decision was taken to just focus on the two YOTs and obtain as wide a variety of religious faiths as possible.

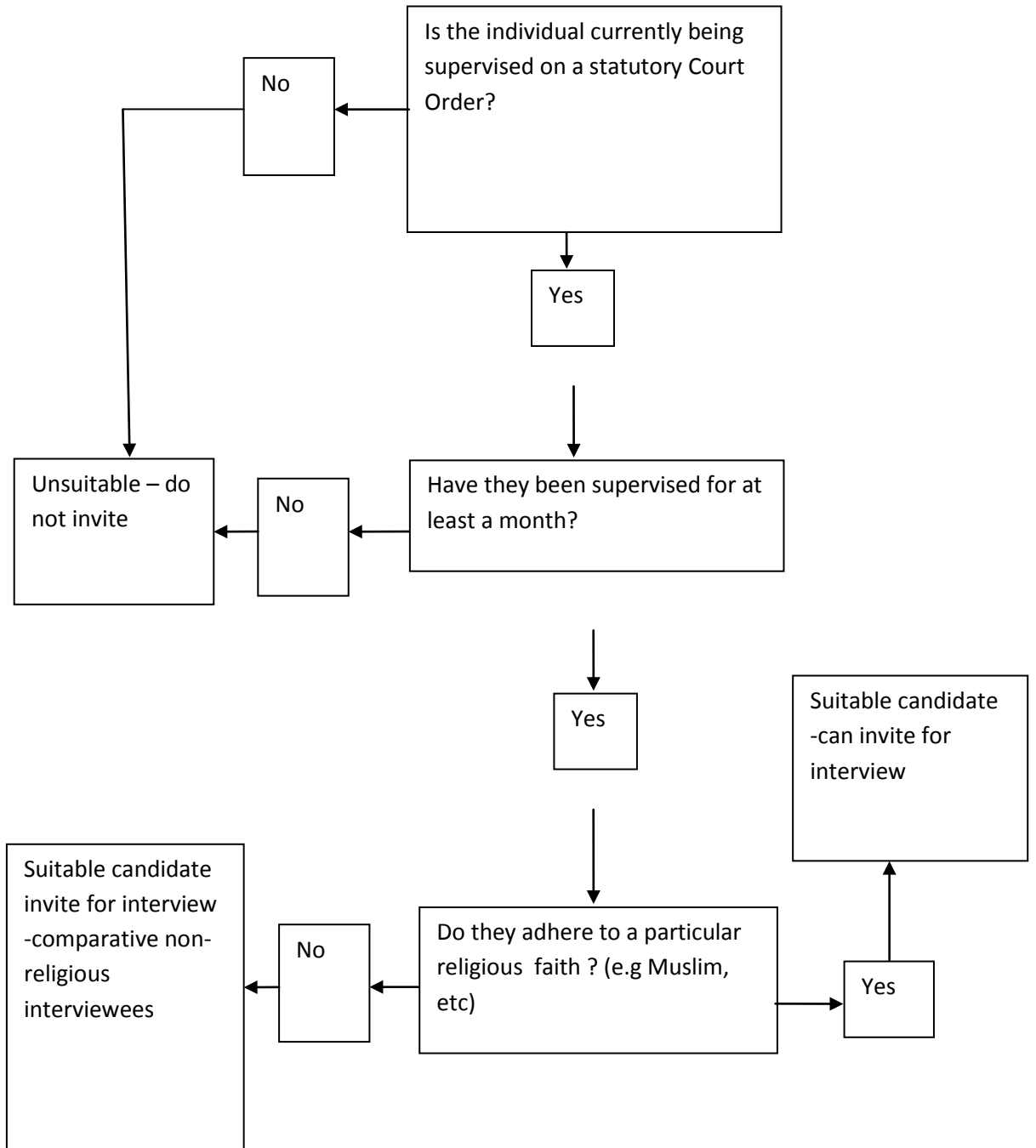
In order to ensure the broadest range of participants, the only requirement in terms of offending was that a young person had to have received a statutory Court Order that had been in place for at least one month. A balance was sought between those with one or two convictions and those with more entrenched patterns of offending, including custodial sentences. A pragmatic determination was made about not interviewing young people in custody because of the additional ethical requirements in needing to obtain permission from the Prison Service. Anybody due to be released could be identified through their respective case managers and a provisional interview could be arranged while they were on licence. Release dates could be checked against YOIS. The sample was selected through an initial search of the YOIS database by the Information Officer in each Youth Offending Team, selecting all currently open cases. All statutory Court Orders excluding Final Warnings were selected and then compared against the religion field in the YOIS database. This allowed a breakdown of potential cases in each Youth Offending team to be established and to ascertain if there was an appropriate number of cases by specific religion : Christian, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Jewish, Buddhist etc. This process is highlighted in figure 1 below. It was assumed that it was likely that minority faiths would be under represented in the case loads, leaving only a very small number to approach in some

instances. It proved difficult in the two identified YOS areas to interview cases from the Hindu and Jewish faith because of such low numbers of these cases occurring as entrants to the criminal justice system, having such a low prevalence in the general population of the area in the first place. High attrition rates were also assumed, given the nature of the client group making it likely that with a very small pool of people, there was more likelihood of young people not being willing to participate. Any potential cases could be identified by case worker from the Wizard search on the YOIS database and then the practitioners could be approached as to the suitability of the participants for interview, whether they felt the young people would engage and cooperate with the nature of the research. In many respects this is a variant of convenience sampling, “whatever is available to the interviewer by virtue of accessibility” (Bryman, 2004:100). The selected religious groups were to be contrasted with a similar size non-religious group in order for some comparisons to be drawn.

The Youth Justice Workers were the main gatekeepers who provided access to potential research participants and were able to legitimate the research and smooth the way by their endorsement to the young people that the research was credible and that they should at least give the researcher a chance. The process was different in each individual case, depending upon the worker and how they communicated the research to the young person. Nevertheless, the young person was not coerced by workers to attend any sessions and would not be penalised if they refused to participate, this was made abundantly clear at the start of each interview and reproduced in written form in an Information leaflet given to every participant before interview.

Figure 2. Sampling Criteria Algorithm

Figure 2 Sampling Algorithm



With the recruitment of research participants taking place through staff members at each YOT, a convenience and snowball sample tended to operate, although female participants were specifically encouraged by practitioners to respond in order to address the gender imbalance in case loads that often tends to be weighted towards males. A convenience sample is one that is readily available to the researcher by virtue of its availability. A snowball sample is a form of convenience sample where initial contacts with people are used to recommend further contacts (Bryman, 2004:100). Minority faiths were also encouraged to ensure a distribution of the main religious faiths. The larger numbers of Muslim and Christian adherents tends to reflect the larger demographics of these faiths in the wider population. A provisional target was for twenty cases at each Youth Offending Team, comprising a total of 40 participants. This would allow enough cases for a saturation point to occur in terms of the research convention that a point is reached where new information is no longer forthcoming from each new research participants, but is a repetition of already collected data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). At each introductory session with a potential research participant, the nature of the research was explained with the opportunity to ask any questions and clarify any concerns about confidentiality, process, etc.

Sample Profile

The sample was drawn from two Youth Offending Teams in two demographically equivalent geographical locations in the West Midlands. These locations are both metropolitan boroughs of similar population size and ethnic and religious diversity. They

were specifically chosen for their similar demographics to allow for as wide a sample of potential religious candidates. Both YOTs have requested that their anonymity be maintained in order to protect the confidentiality of the young people who agreed to participate in this research. The age range of the young people reflects the statutory age criteria of the Youth Justice Board, who have oversight of all Youth Offending Teams/ Services in England and Wales, from the age of criminal responsibility at 10 years old up to the age they are officially transferred to the National Probation Service around 17/18 year of age. The youngest candidate was 13 years old and the oldest was 19 years old. Parental consent was always obtained when required (see Informal consent section).

The self-reported religious designation of the research participants is as follows, although some of the young people did not consider the religious categories mutually exclusive:

Table 1 Sample by Religion

Religion	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	None
N=40	11	10	3	16

The total gender breakdown of the sample appears below:

Table 2 Sample by Gender

Gender	N=40
Female	8
Male	32

In total 40 young people agreed to participate in this research and their details are outlined in the table below:

Table 3: Sample Profile of Youth Offenders

	Respondent	Religion	Ethnicity	Age at interview	Court appearances	Age at Onset	No of Previous Convictions.	Type of Order	Current Offence
1	Danny	Christian background – agnostic	White	18	7	14	16	Section 91 Licence	Robbery Affray
2	Clyde	Christian	Mixed	17	2	14	4	DTO Licence	Assault, harassment
3	Joshua	Christian background – Assemblies of God	Black	17	6	14	8	Youth Rehabilitation Order	Possession of Imitation firearm
4	John	Catholic	Black	16	3	14	4	Youth Rehabilitation Order	Robbery
5	Finigan	Atheist	White	16	3	15	5	Youth Rehabilitation Order	Attempt Burglary
6	Fahran	Muslim	Asian Afghanistan	15?	1	15	N/K	Referral Order	Common Assault
7	Gordon	Christian background, agnostic	White	17	4	11	3	Supervision ISS	Wounding with intent
8	Faisel	Muslim	Asian UK	16	4	14	6	Supervision Order	Robbery
9	Warren	Agnostic	White	17	15	12	25	Community Punishment and Rehabilitation Order	Dwelling burglary

10	Kai	Christian background, Muslim	Mixed	17	9	11	12	YOI Licence	Robbery
11	Denzel	Christian background	Black	17	6	11	9	YOI Licence	Robbery , Drugs
12	Stefan	Christian background	Black	17	2	13	2	Supervision Order	Robbery Attempted robbery
13	Dave	Atheist	White	16	3	14	5	Supervision Order	Common Assault
14	Quasim	Muslim	Asian	13	4	12	5	Youth Rehabilitation Order	Robbery
15	Sarah	Convert to Christianity	White	16	1	16	none	Referral Order	Common Assault Possession of weapon
16	Keith	Atheist	White	16	5	16	1	Youth Rehabilitation Order	Threatening Behaviour
17	Saskia	Muslim background	Asian	16	5	12	5	Youth Rehabilitation Order	Theft
18	Jordon	Christian and Rastafarian background	Mixed	14	3	12	7	STC Licence	Assault, criminal damage, breach DTO
19	Tariq	Muslim	Asian	16	6	13	6	DTO Licence	Robbery
20	Farooq	Muslim	Asian	16	2	5	2	Supervision Order	Robbery
21	Curtis	Christian background, christian	Black	16	6		10	DTO Licence	Burglary Dwelling
22	Amir	Convert to Islam, Catholic background mother converted to Islam	Mixed	15	2	14	5	DTO Licence	Robbery and assault by beating
23	Matthew	Christian	White	14	3	13	6	Youth Rehabilitation Order	Theft and Assault
24	Sharon	Christian	White	17	1	17	none	Referral Order	GBH wounding with intent
25	Harry	Atheist	White	17	6	16	8	Supervision Order	Burglary non dwelling
26	Kate	Catholic	White	17	5	15	none	Community Rehabilitation Order	Possession of weapon, harassment and breaches
27	Sonia	Muslim and Christian background, Muslim	Mixed	17	15	12	17	DTO Licence	Obtaining Property by deception, Robbery
28	Samuel	Atheist	Black	17	1	17	none	Referral Order	Causing Affray

29	Linda	Catholic	White	17	1	17	none	Referral Order	Excess Alcohol, No Licence, No Insurance
30	Jane	Catholic	White	17	10	12	11	Community Rehabilitation Order	Causing Harrassment Alarm and Distress
31	Fahad	Muslim	Black African	16	2	16	N/K	Supervision Order	Robbery and Breach of Order
32	Rajdev	Sikh	Asian	17	1	15	1	DTO Licence	AOABH
33	Peter	Catholic Christian	Mixed	16	2	15	1	Referral Order	Robbery
34	Alan	Atheist	White	16	6	13	8	DTO Licence	AOABH
35	Asif	Muslim	Asian	16	2	15	2	Supervision ISSP	Robbery
36	Kenny	Atheist	Mixed	17	5	13	6	DTO Licence	AOABH, Drugs
37	Sean	Agnostic	White	17	10	14	17	Community Rehabilitation Order ISSP	Theft from shop, drunk and disorderly, breach
38	Hardeep	Sikh	Asian	17	2	15	3	Referral Order	Possession of controlled drugs
39	Affi	Mormon	Black African	16	1	16	N/K	Referral Order	Robbery
40	Harpreet	Sikh background converted to Islam Sikh-Muslim	Asian	17	1	16	none	Community Rehabilitation Order	GBH

Characteristics of the sample profile were compared to the national data and there is a broad consistency between the two, which suggests the sample was reasonably representative (see Table 4). There is no national data available for religious breakdown for a comparison to be made, although the case management system at YOT's can record religion it has not always been a mandatory field.

Table 4 Comparison of sample with National data

	Sample %	National 2010/11 %
Gender		
Male	80	78
Female	20	22
Age Group		
10-14	7.5	26
15-17	90	74
18+	2.5	
Ethnicity		
White	37.5	82
Black	20	4
Asian	25	8
Mixed / Other	17.5	6
Court Disposals		
Custodial	30	5.8
Community	70	65.2
Discharge/ Fines		29.0

Ethical Issues

This research raised a number of ethical issues which are common when conducting qualitative research, particularly with young offenders. The need to safeguard young people and protect them from harm means there are restrictions placed on researchers' freedom of access in the research process. Most organisations will therefore follow codes of ethics in social science research and various codes of ethics were consulted, in particular, the codes of research ethics from, the British Sociological Association and the General

Social Care Council codes of practice. Ethical approval was sought for this research through following the ethical approval processes of the University of Birmingham. Three specific issues were highlighted: confidentiality, minimization of harm and informed consent.

Confidentiality

Respondents were assured of their anonymity if they chose to participate in the research, with their identity anonymised, withheld in the final report or subsequent publications, through ascribing a pseudonym and number. Each YOS also remained anonymous and this also assured the young people that they would not be able to be identified by disclosure of the specific YOS location. Any identifying information was retained at the YOS or in a locked filing cabinet and password encryption was used on the computer where digital recordings and transcripts were stored.

Minimization of harm

The policy of the Youth Offending Team in each location was followed regarding the disclosure of offending behaviour. The young people were informed to talk about offending in general terms and not to divulge any planned offence or any undetected but identifiable previous offences, as this may have to be disclosed to the Youth Offending Service. An example was given to the research participants that they could tell me in confidence that they had stolen a CD from a shop but not give me details about which specific shop and when the offence took place. They were told they should not disclose about any intention to commit an offence or that they were going to harm a specifically named individual,

otherwise the researcher would be morally compelled to inform those potentially affected. This leaves the respondent in control about what they wish to disclose during interview. The young people were advised that the interview would be stopped if the researcher felt they were about to incriminate themselves.

Taking account of the potential harm to participants of talking about upsetting events in the past, the researcher ensured that advice was available for the young people involved in relation to qualified practitioners, counselling services and other agencies the young people could access for support and guidance. The usual Safeguarding Children's procedures were followed with regard to potential disclosure about abuse or trauma during the interview process. These set out how Local Authorities, organisations and individuals work together to protect and promote the welfare of children and young people. These procedures are consistent with Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfES, 2006) and other related legislation and guidance. My own background as a former Youth Justice Practitioner and qualified counsellor, meant that if a young person became upset during the interview process I was adequately able to deal with this situation. The procedures of each Youth Offending Service were followed in this regard with the young person being given the choice as to whom they wished to speak to, if sharing sensitive and upsetting issues became an issue during interview. These are contained in each Youth Offending Services' expectations and standard of behaviour, which all young people who work with the YOS have to sign up to.

Informed Consent

Participation in research should be based on obtaining informed consent from one's research candidates, as an on-going process. The thorny issue of the age at which young people can give consent to participate in research and parental consent becomes redundant are much debated. The Gillick case, affirmed the right of a 'competent' child to make decisions about their own medical treatment (Gillick v. West Norfolk and Wisbech AHA 3 AU ER 402,1985). A practical solution to the deliberation surrounding Gillick and informed consent was presented by the research falling under the aegis of the Youth Offending Service, therein to follow the practice of the agency in each location.

A written contract of consent was signed by the young person and researcher, before any research interviews were undertaken. Parental/Primary carer consent was also obtained for all young people who were under sixteen years of age. A preliminary meeting took place to explain the nature of the research, the methods to be used, and what was requested of them as research participants. A written information leaflet was provided for them covering these key ethical areas (see Appendix). This meeting allowed for an honest discussion about the research aims and for concerns about confidentiality, what would happen to the information, how quotations would be used, and the need for digital recording, to be clearly explored. Each respondent was told about the right to withdraw from the process at any time and they were given sufficient time to think about whether they wished to participate in the study, to ensure they did not feel pressurised. Only one young person chose to withdraw after the first interview. As previously explained, a number of interviews were conducted per research participant. Informed consent was treated as an

ongoing process, so that the young people continued to understand what the research is about and provided with any new information that may influence their decision to continue to participate.

Data Analysis

All forty interviews were fully transcribed, manually coded and analysed in relation to the aforementioned research design. Basit (2003) explores the nature of manual coding versus electronic coding in qualitative data analysis and believes it is determined by the size of the project, the inclination and expertise of the researcher and funds and time available as to which is more suitable. While Saldaña (2011) recommends manual coding as it provides a greater feel, control for and ownership of the data.

A rigorous and transparent approach needs to be taken to data analysis. The material under scrutiny has to be analysed in a methodical manner, such as taking account of Attride-Stirling's (2001:386) thematic analyses presented as thematic networks, "web-like illustrations that summarise the main themes constituting a piece of text". It shares the same features of any hermeneutical analysis, deriving themes from textual data, but provides a web-like network as an organising principle and representation means. There are three themes comprising the networks, the basic or lowest order theme, the middle order or organising theme and global order. It is a comparable data analysis process to the movement from unrestricted open coding, leading onto axial coding whereby each

category is scrutinised more intensely and the linkages found between categories and proceeding to selective coding (Strauss, 1987) with the search for a core category. The codes are compared and reorganised, prioritised and focused around axis categories and then synthesised. Fereday and Muir- Cochrane, (2006:82) maintain that thematic analysis “involves the identification of themes through “careful reading and re-reading of the data” (Rice and Ezzy, 1999:258). It is a form of pattern recognition within the data, where emerging themes become the categories for analysis”.

Researchers do not approach their research on the basis of a tabula rasa but can consider a set of sensitising concepts with a light touch at the early stages of inquiry (Houston and Mullan-Jensen, 2011). Miles and Huberman (1994) encourage the creation of a predetermined list of provisional codes prior to the fieldwork to harmonize with emerging conceptual framework or paradigm and to allow for analysis to be in line with the research questions. These provisional codes relate to previous knowledge and exploration of the literature. This is similar to Coffey and Atkinson (1996:32) in distinguishing a ‘start list of codes’ that pre-date the researcher’s reading of the data and is also derived from the reading of the research literature and research questions. Day (2011) outlined a ‘sociology of belief’ taxonomy of religiosity which formed part of my initial coding list: content, practices, resources, function, salience of individual belief and meaning systems. Structural and agency themes were also noted.

The method used for this study involved a hybrid approach of thematic analysis incorporating a data driven inductive approach (Strauss, 1987) with an a priori deductive template of codes as Miles and Huberman (1994) propose. Although presented below as a

step by step procedure, the research analysis was an iterative and reflexive process. The following steps were undertaken in the research analysis stage of this study:

- 1) Awareness of a priori coding (start list of codes) and setting aside a priori coding by bracketing.
- 2) Reading through every transcript and summarizing data and identifying initial themes and comparing and contrasting between transcripts.
- 3) Developing a coding template and testing the reliability of the codes.
- 4) Applying data driven coding and predetermined coding.
- 5) Connecting the codes and identifying themes. This is the process of discovering themes and patterns in the data (Crabtree and Miller, 1999).
- 6) Clustering of themes into higher order themes.

The research data was examined with pre-existing theoretical knowledge and 'hunches' borne in mind, but participants concerns were primary in the initial analysis of the emerging patterns in the data. However, it is not completely possible to detach one's conceptualisation from the analytical process. The analysis was started by categorising the data by the questions asked in the interview schedule, resulting in broad headings, relationships, future aspirations, present values and commitments, religious upbringing, beliefs about God and religion, offending behaviour. These form part of the start list of codes.

The linkage between predetermined codes and identified codes coming from the data was made through a process of integration by comparing the two sets of codes and merging

these when similarities were found between them. From comparing and combining lower order categories the higher order research themes were developed and then clustered together. The first stage involved a process of identifying the categories that emerged from reading through the transcripts and comparing between the different transcripts, bracketing as much as was possible any a priori categories at this stage. The predetermined categories were then introduced and used in a second examination of the transcripts. The two coding lists were then compared for similarities and differences and various themes were merged together to form the subsequent higher order themes. For example the 'Good Life' emerged as a theme from the data and Day's (2011) sociology of belief formed part of a template of codes.

The thematic analyses that were conducted allowed the themes to arise from the data in the first instance, through bracketing (Tufford and Newman, 2012) and setting aside both my own preconceptions through the use of reflective memos, and any pre-set codes or predefined categories that had initially been drawn from the literature and empirical studies. As Starks and Trinidad (2007) note in agreement with bracketing, the researcher 'must be honest and vigilant about their own perspective, pre-existing thoughts and beliefs, and developing hypotheses ... engage in the self-reflective process of "bracketing", whereby they recognize and set aside (but do not abandon) their a priori knowledge and assumptions, with the analytic goal of attending to the participants' accounts with an open mind' (Ibid: 1376). There is a continuous comparison of all themes created from a close scrutiny of each individual transcript and between the different transcripts. Coding is a 'mechanism for thinking about the data', a means of reducing and organising vast amounts

of data (Miles and Huberman, 1994) into what Lofland and Lofland (1984:71) call manageable 'units' for the purpose of scrutinising, thinking creatively and asking questions of the data to generate theories and frameworks and to present a coherent story about what the data reveals.

Consideration of Alternative Research Strategies

It is acknowledged that other approaches could have been employed in this research. For example, an ethnographic approach, which witnesses research participants in their natural environment and captures the particularities and nuances of their situated lives has been utilised in other criminological studies (e.g. Yates, 2006; Ilan, 2007). This was discounted on the basis that ethnography can be perceived as intrusive by young people, especially when young offenders are already suspicious of adults who are perceived as authority figures and agents of control. Furthermore, it did not appropriately fit with the aims of the current research to explore how the interplay of agency, beliefs and values and behaviour creates possibilities for change.

Focus groups are also a valid research method that was considered. My practice experience suggests young offenders in regards to group work tend to have high attrition rates and find group work daunting. Focus groups examine the processes that lead to interpretations based on group interactions and would have value in highlighting how group norms and reason making processes operate; how young people form perceptions about issues, but it would not reveal an individual's engagement and attitudes to social

norms within the context of their personal biography. Moreover, it does not allow personal values to be more readily surfaced with the interactive effects of group conformity and does not readily allow the views of specific individuals to be tracked across different issues. These are best served by biographical interviews that can bring out the interaction between an individual and their social context. The current study looks at more than 'meaning making', to giving voice to young people (Fine, 2002) and extends the social beyond interpretative action.

Quantitative approaches have specifically been used in statistically comparing the relationship between religiosity and deviance but they are not appropriate for engaging with the narrative material of people's complex lives and fail to adequately capture the subjective experience of the change process. More generally, quantitative approaches can be criticised for 'imposing a limited worldview on the subjects' (Marshall and Rossman, 2006: 54); the way in which the data collected can conceal individual's experiences, limiting the nuanced shape of their experience. They are useful for the study of the incidence of crime but of limited benefit in explaining its aetiology, where more contextualised understandings of youth crime are essential.

The way people make sense of their experiences, perceptions, ideas, understandings of meaning can only be explored with a qualitative approach, which "provides deeper insight into the mechanisms that drive behavioural change" (Kyvsgaard, 2003:241). Kyvsgaard points out that in relation to criminal careers "little attention has been paid to the subjective aspects of maturation in terms of personal philosophy or one's perception of one's place in the world and the potential connection that such changes might have to

changes in offending” (Ibid:241). Kyvsgaard (2003) effectively endorses an examination of young offender’s beliefs and values.

In a recent study assessing values and virtues in 3-25 year olds by Arthur et al. (2010) a variety of mixed methods was used. While it must be admitted, that this is a valid research strategy, it was considered beyond the scope and means of the existing study. For an exploratory study examining the processes and mechanisms of change with particular reference to how belief systems operate in regard to young peoples’ attitudes to offending, a mixed methods approach was deemed inappropriate.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a theoretical and methodological rationale for the research design. It has given an account of how the empirical and analytical stages of the research were conducted and considered the ethical implications of undertaking this research. A connection has been established between the aims of the study, research questions and the research methods used to obtain and interpret the data.

The thesis will now turn to examine the empirical findings in this research, taking account of the research questions we have outlined in this chapter. Overall, the findings chapters 5-7 will answer research questions 1 through to 6. The first two questions will be specifically covered by chapter 5 and questions 3 and 4 will be answered by chapter 6. The final two questions will be answered by chapter 7. There is some overlap amongst these empirical

chapters in terms of a response to these questions. Chapter 5 will explore the meaning of crime for these forty offenders and the following chapter 6 will elucidate their lived religiosity. Lastly, the young offenders' aspirations and vision of the good life is examined in chapter 7.

CHAPTER 5: WHAT IS THE MEANING OF CRIME? PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF CRIME

This chapter will first of all provide background information in order to understand the participants' attitudes and perceptions. Secondly, it will focus on the lived experience of crime and the role it plays in the lives of the young offenders who participated in this study. It will accentuate some of their operative beliefs and values within their view of crime and its associated meanings. The meaning of crime is the beliefs and values conveyed in the performance of criminal activities that express how a young person sees the world, which is grounded in their perceptions of these events and how crime forms part of their 'identity work' (Johnson, et al, 2004:265). The idea of crime as performance will be examined through how it is perceived and enacted by the young people, as it relates to how beliefs are embedded in practices. Crime is located as only one dimension of a young person's social being, taking account of Matza's (1964) argument about delinquency and drift in how young people move in and out of crime according to their social circumstances, as one of the choices they make about identity. The emphasis in this chapter will fall on the fluid nature of criminal identity and the reasons and explanations that young people give for their involvement in criminal activity, looking at the influences of the onset and continuance of deviant behaviour.

Crime as performance can be seen as a form of 'identity work' in which the development of the individual as a social being is paramount in the commission of the criminal action.

Identity involves a narrative told about the self, informed by how we are seen and described, continually made and remade in and as action, multiple in nature according to different contexts and discursively formed (Kamler and Thomson, 2010). Criminal behaviour is a particular social practice albeit causing social harms, with its specific meanings and serving specific functions for the individual, which need to be understood in its own terms if the behaviour is to be challenged by Youth Justice practitioners.

Participating in crime is one aspect of a person's whole identity and failure to recognise this will result in the continued stigmatisation and marginalisation of young offenders and the perpetuation of criminal behaviour through the internalising and reinforcement of the criminal label: a category that becomes established and fixed. Crime as performance refers to how beliefs are embedded in social practices: the enactment of violence, the acquisition of material goods through criminal means and each supporting the struggle for recognition as outlined by the lives of forty young offenders in this study. Criminal activities conventionally ignore others' rights to autonomy and non-interference but also provides recognition from one's peer group by participating in group endorsed behaviours. This chapter will tackle research questions 1) and 2) with regard to the meaning of crime:

1) How do young people make sense of the interplay between their beliefs and values, and their attitudes to offending?

2) What do young offenders believe and what values do they hold?

In this chapter the following themes that arose from the data, will be examined: the sacredness of the family, the centrality of the material advantage of crime and its relational dynamics in providing social identity including the use of violence to resolve conflict and seek and maintain approval from one's peers, the social recognition found in gangs.

Reasons for Offending

Monica Barry (2004) emphasises four main categories of reasons for offending put forward by her forty research participants, illustrating the young people's interpretation of their offending behaviour, which are supported by the current study: relational, monetary, personal, and practical. The relational includes interactions with others. Personal refers to the individual's own needs and feelings. Monetary reasons include the need for money for general or specific purposes, to purchase consumables, to survive. Practical pertains to structural or external factors.

Table 5 sets out the main factors influencing young people's decision to offend with many citing more than one factor. These do not exhaust all the possible reasons for offending.

The duality of relational and monetary aspects as the main reason for offending demonstrates that crime is a means for sociability, and endorses Barry's findings (2004;2006) whereby crime is the search for social recognition.

The most prominent reason and explanation for offending from the perspective of the forty young people in this thesis was relational, the influence of peers and family members implicated in offending. Loyalty to a cousin, for example, meant a young person could not withdraw when asked to become involved in criminal activities. This explanation was closely followed by committing crime for material benefit. Substance misuse featured significantly as a contributing factor to offending, predominately alcohol and cannabis. Boredom features prominently as encouraging criminal activities, as well as emotional

responses. Social interactions often led to conflict, which will be developed in a separate section of this chapter. The geographical location or area is important as to whether it is designated as a high crime area or 'crime hot spot' as it exerts a lot of pressure on young people, particularly in relation to gang involvement and policing their area.

A young person's identity is greatly influenced by recognition or the acknowledgement by others or its absence (Taylor, 1992:29). The way we understand and think of ourselves emerges from our dialogue and interactions with those around us. Our identity is formed or malformed by our contact with significant others which constitutes our dialogical selves (Hermans et al., 1992). The self and the other is always essentially in dialogue (Barresi, 2002). It is this validation that enables a young person to build a positive sense of self and feel empowered within their social world. On the other hand, negative recognition or feeling ignored leave a young person feeling disempowered and still in search of positive appreciation, such as to be found in other structures of recognition. If these cannot be found in conventional forms then they can be sought through deviant means. Street culture possesses an alternative and contestable view of respect and social recognition based on the use of violence which reinforces social status.

Table 5 Factors influencing the decision to offend

Reasons for Offending	Male	Female
Relational		
Influence of Peers	19	1
Gangs	8	

Influence of Family	9	
Influence of Partner		1
Loyalty to Cousin	1	
Family Problem/Loyalty	1	
Monetary		
Needing money	13	
Personal		
Lifestyle	1	
Boredom	7	
Fun/Excitement	1	
Revenge		1
Reputation	1	
Anger		1
Sexual Abuse		1
Anger and Violence	2	2
Paranoia and anger		1
Conflict with others	1	
Just me/trouble finds me	1	
Practical		
Being in care		1
Substance misuse	6	
Not know law in UK	1	
Fighting	1	1
Locality/Area	5	

Two factors cited by the research participants for continuing to offend is problems controlling their temper, and not being able to back down in an argument in order to maintain a reputation . The main advantage of continuing offending was that it gave them money. It had become a routine activity either necessitated or encouraged by the expectation of money. Finances were required to lubricate social relations.

The disadvantages of continuing to offend are synonymous with the feared possible selves or type of person an offender would not want to become or fears they might become , the feared outcome or consequences of maintaining offending, such as being caught, going to jail, losing relationships. This refers to Markus and Nurius' (1987:157) notion of possible selves as "conceptions of the self in future states". There was a strong aspiration to stop offending represented by this study's sample, people seemingly being on the verge of desisting following every incident of offending. The signalling of desistance indicates a growing understanding by the young person of the reasons for their offending thereby enabling them to take alternative steps and to refrain from crime.

Growing up

Some young people believe that crime is linked to age and maturity, with it being a part of growing up. Danny describes his perception of 'immaturity' where offending was a means to deal with the boredom of everyday life, to bring a sense of excitement and have fun with your peers through breaking into a car or becoming involved in a fight. He explains:

It was exciting when I was little. It's not really part of growing up, but I think it is for the young people between 12-16. I am not really young now, I am growing into a man now. I am 19 next week. When I was little the main reason, when I have robbed a car, robbed a house, robbed people been for nothing to do, so we go and rob someone , or go and get a car, if you know what I am saying. We go and batter those kids that go to that school, purely to keep ourselves busy and to have a laugh . But in my most recent offence that was just pure down to drink, drink and violence.(Danny, 18 , Agnostic).

Criminal activity becomes more serious for Danny with age when tied into problems with alcohol and violence. The process of human development that is depicted here encompasses some of the different categories of physical, intellectual, emotional and social development (Steinberg and Schwartz, 2000). Temperance as the ability to suppress aggression and contain impulse control, becomes deficient through the disinhibiting properties of substance misuse. Violence is a prevalent theme amongst the cohort of this study.

A new edge to the issue of maturity is offered by Saskia is a sixteen year old convicted for a series of shoplifting offences, who believes that morality is learnt behaviour; learning to know the difference between right and wrong. The way this is passed on is through the mechanisms of socialisation; a dual process of habituation and deliberation related to maturation. She thinks a young person may undertake actions that they do not know are wrong or believe are wrong and it is only in light of the repercussions that a child develops in their understanding, as Saskia explains in the excerpt below:

What is your understanding of right and wrong?

It depends how old you are and how wise you are, you do it but you don't always know it's wrong. If you're a child and you do something and think it doesn't matter and its wrong , then that's alright because you are just learning and growing up . What I think about right and wrong is that you pass it on to young people.(Saskia, 16,Muslim)

For Saskia, there is a change of attitude that comes with 'growing up', not only physically, intellectually but also emotionally and socially, where you appreciate certain behaviour is seen as going against the social norms. This sentiment is echoed by Stefan, a black male of sixteen years :

At the end of the day, every child growing up, it's like, you get me, I can speak but I cannot speak for everyone but I can speak for most people, growing up as a child you were doing stuff that you're not meant to, but as you get older, you start learning (Stefan, 17, Christian).

Stefan is talking about maturity of learning from your experience and the mistakes you've made and explains that you come to know what the difference is between right and wrong and begin to adjust your behaviour in the light of this experience.

Family background

It is imperative to be aware of the social contexts of young offenders, as they often come from negative circumstances from which their offending behaviour flows. These experiences of family socialisation shape and influence their interpretative schemes: the perceptual frames through which they view the world and make sense of their place within it (Mezirow, 2000), as confirmed in the following comment:

I think that offending is deep rooted, if damage is done by families then young people will do stuff in order to get attention, to act out in inappropriate ways. Offending relates to bad parenting, that is at least what I believe (Sarah, 16, Christian).

Sarah's problems stem from her troubled background of which she is patently aware, displaying real self-awareness of her own emotional instability that has resulted in conflict

between her and her partner and with difficulties parenting her newly born baby. She suffers from anxiety and is hyper-vigilant stemming from her experience of sexual abuse.

A recurrent pattern in this study is that young offenders come from families that have problematic backgrounds such as domestic violence , loss and bereavement, mental health problems and families involved in offending (Williams et al., 2012). The prevalence of these factors is highlighted in the table 6 below. The results in this table only reflect information that has been verified with supporting evidence. There are factors that have influenced individual development which have not been able to be corroborated through interview or authenticated information held on YOIS and have therefore not been included , such as suspicion by practitioners of sexual abuse in a young person's past.

Table 6 Common elements regarding family background related to offending

	N
Family Member(s) Involved in Offending	21
Domestic Violence	17
Mental Health	4
Significant Loss/ Bereavement	9
Social Services Involvement	9
Separation/ Divorce	15
In care	4
Asylum Seeker	3
Dependent on Benefits	21
Sexual Abuse	2
Single Parent Household (mothers)	14

There are seventeen cases of domestic violence, many associated with problems of alcoholism, which made the family home a site of insecurity for the young people as they were growing up. This experience shaped their own responses and attitudes to violence. The absence of the father in the family home is significant because of being in prison, or through separation stemming from the commission of domestic violence or separation due to bereavement through murder and suicide. This has resulted in relationships with fathers being non-existent, limited, strained and/or fragmented. Four young people had experience of being in care, either through fostering arrangements such as being placed with an Aunt because their mother was suffering from depression and was not properly able to parent or being placed in residential care for their own protection. Mental ill health can be a critical issue for mothers, because women are more likely to be diagnosed with mental health problems (Prior, 1999), as in the case of three mothers in my sample who suffered from severe depression and were admitted to psychiatric hospital. Social Services involvement involves regular and sustained contact because of concerns about

safeguarding. A family's economic base is important in assessing young peoples' attitudes towards money. A significant number in this sample came from single parent families struggling on state benefits. There is a link between economic deprivation and offending behaviour; although we must recognise that not everyone who is poor goes on to offend. The quality of relationships and parenting style is also significant, with the need for consistent boundaries, monitoring and support. The family structure is a fundamental factor in understanding the causation of offending behaviour.

The Family as Sacred

Blood is thicker than water, no matter what shit goes on in families, it's still your family isn't it? I would do anything for them.

Danny is a white male from a Catholic background who describes himself as "in between" in his beliefs about God. He has suffered significant loss, a father that was murdered, a brother in prison for armed robberies and a mother he blames for his siblings being taken into care because of neglect and fear of violence. He, more than anybody, has reason to complain about his family in the view of the substantive pain from emotional loss that has informed his life.

Clyde, a seventeen year old mixed race youth, claimed that family and money are his most important values, "*but family is more important than money.*" Samuel, a seventeen year old -black male, humanist stressed "*I believe in my family and what they do.*" Another mixed race person Kai, who experimented with Islam in prison, stated it was his family that gave life meaning.

These responses were made in answer to the question about current concerns, as to what mattered most to them in their lives at the moment, what areas of their lives were most significant to them. The family was the principal concern with thirty-out of forty mentioning family as their ultimate value in life and mothers being the central relationship.

Some young people felt the tangible absence of a father in their lives:

I ain't got a dad, I don't know nothing about my dad. That way of life, I don't know really. My mum usually doesn't want to tell me. It's too personal for her. I think he is still alive but I ain't 100% because I ain't heard from him. I seen him in a picture but that is all I know about him really. They didn't break up, I heard that he went to find a better life basically, in another country in Africa to do business. I don't know what country it was. I don't know what went wrong there. He never called my mother again, nothing. I was little I don't know nothing. Anyway, I was just a baby (Affi,16, Mormon).

Affi is originally from Africa and came over to the United Kingdom two years ago, after his mother had initially settled here four years ago. He described an absent father but did not really have any idea about who he is, his character, where he lives. It was evident that he misses having a father and his mother has not been willing to give him any information. The nature of his father's business is shrouded in mystery along with the fact his mother left him staying with close friends to go to the UK, but Affi assumes his father was pursuing a criminal career something his mother is not prepared to comment upon.

The family is considered to have a spiritual character and significance, according to my research participants. Spiritual here refers to how we create ultimate meaning for our life, what is most significant to us, in what Veikko-Anttonen (2000:280-281) expresses as the sacred as a category boundary that is not confined to the religious "to set things with non-negotiable value apart from things whose value is based on continuous transactions." It

binds together those inside the boundary, the family members whilst at the same time separating them from those outside it.

The types of adherent relationships do not just relate to blood ties, but people who are treated as important as family. Families are central to young offenders' reform, because the nature and quality of family relationships affects desistance. Young people believe strongly in family relationships and friendships; often in spite of the distressed, damaged and strained nature of these relationships they remain of pivotal significance in these research participants' lives. There was a strong reticence to disclose anything negative about one's family, because it was perceived as -being disloyal. As Vogelvang and vanAlphen (2010:263) state: "Children feel an obligation to show existential loyalty to their parents at all costs".

Parents are deeply implicated in the criminal activities of their offspring, through having to face the repercussions of attending the Police station and Court and visiting them in prison, and are the secondary victims of their children's crime. They often make monumental efforts to divert their offspring from crime. Some families in this study have moved geographically from a certain area to prevent their siblings being further involved with offending, moving from a council estate that was a crime hot spot to prevent further association with pro-offending peers, and relocating to avoid their sibling being beaten up or face reprisals for offending behaviour perpetrated by their brother. One young person moved in with his father, his parents were separated, so that he could provide closer scrutiny of his son and orchestrated his return to school after a few years absence. Some

parents will act out of misguided sense of loyalty to protect their children through colluding with their offending behaviour.

Crime may not have been actively encouraged in some families in this study, but neither was it whole heartedly disapproved of; in other families it was actively promoted through the socialisation of the criminal habitus within the family field. Criminal involvement of family members is a major contributor to adolescent offending. In this study, twenty-one out of forty of the young people were found to have immediate family members involved in crime. The majority of these had been in prison for serious offences such as drug dealing, armed robbery, violence, and murder.

Another participant, Warren said he grew up with a violent family and evident feelings of disempowerment and worthlessness and his offences for violence were a perpetuation of learnt habituated behaviour. His father was an alcoholic with a volatile temper and his mother was admitted to a psychiatric hospital. He comments:

I am following what I grew up with. The way I have been brought up, all my family are fighters. My dad beating me up when I was kid, something told me that I have to be violent (Warren, 17/Agnostic).

Crime is influenced and takes place not only in the family domain but also through experience of peer relationships and expressions of masculinity in the negotiation of street culture.

'On road'

Crime is also seen as a resource for some young people to accomplish masculinity, with regard to talking about male power, aggression and vulnerability. Gender is a situated action that allows for the recognition of the transformative potential of agency (Messerschmidt, 1993; Miller, 2002). The outworking of gender can also be seen in the way it operates within all the contextual domains in which young offenders find themselves as part of the performance of crime. As Stefan explained:

I always used to be on the road, I used to be hyped...[intensified, exaggerated attitude and behaviour, often associated with a form of masculinity] I used to be 'Oh, where are you from blood, where you from, I ain't seen you around here before, you've come around my area (Stefan, 17/Christian).

In this scenario, On Road refers to argot for street culture, where young people hang out, interact and where things happen. The street can become a domain of conflict, with the area being associated as bad and perpetuating violence. The hyper masculinity represented in challenging interlopers to your turf through a display of bravado is depicted in this account of street culture by Stefan. He went on to critique his own posturing as being 'immature' and related to age and level of maturity, describing this behaviour as "it's kids stuff asking people where they are from". He presented a marked contrast with daring to challenge perceived easy targets when you are in large group and whether in reality you would challenge a tough looking individual: 'I know if a big scary man was on a bus, are you really going to go up and ask him where he is from?' He recounted a story of a high level gang leader, wearing colours of a rival gang openly on a bus passing through another gang's territory and how some youths from the opposing gang decided against confronting him because they were intimidated by his stature, physique and reputation.

For Faisal, crime is associated with money making schemes; the influence of peer groups and asserting one's masculinity as being strong and tough as a common feature of street culture to earn status in your neighbourhood context :

How strongly have you been influenced by your peers to get involved in crime?

I would say strongly because I wouldn't usually say no, because when you are with them kind of people, you feel embarrassed to say no, they think you are scared and that.

It was more wanting to make money. In a big group yes, you cannot really say no, they would call you a pussy, if they tell you to do something [criminal activity, fighting] and you don't want to do it, when they plan on doing something. They would put you down a bit. It made me feel embarrassed as well- resulting in getting involved (Faisal, 16/Muslim).

Faisal felt that he was under a lot of pressure not to dissent from the wishes of his peer group , otherwise he would be seen as weak and effeminate and subject to verbal and physical abuse. He felt embarrassed and this exerted pressure on him to become involved in criminal behaviour. He described his first experience of robbing a young person of their mobile phone:

The first time I think we done summat wrong was Halloween. I think I was in year 10, and we were all just going trick or treating and saw two boys coming down and one of my friends goes argh let's see what they got, because we never got anything from trick or treating just sweets and that, not money and that. My friend goes argh, let's see if they have got any money for us and that. So a few of us went on up there. We just wanted to be the bad man and you don't want to like embarrass yourself, saying nah, so then we went up to them and we went what have you got. They had this bag. There was thirty pound in money, a phone and sweets and chocolate and that. So we took the phone and money and I think it was a week later that we got arrested for that. That was the first time that was.

The concept of badness depicted by Faisal is equated with having a certain reputation for committing acts of crime, such as street robberies, as illustrated by Gunter (2008) in his ethnographic study of Manor in East London. It reverberates with Harrington and

Mayhew's (2001:58) study in explaining why mobile phones are stolen . Apart from their commercial resale value with ready markets, phones are stolen because groups of offenders are exerting control and building a reputation by penalising others.

Street culture is an extension of 'play', described by Flynn (2010:131,136) as the process of the "blurring of crime and play, ...an everyday life experience common to all children....[which]suggests criminal behaviour is experienced unconsciously during childhood through social interaction and is passed on as a deeply internalised attitude (Bourdieu, 1977) ...committed mostly on a whim for fun and excitement in the company of friends". This is a spatial and early life transition from the family to the streets and forms part of the dynamic of growing up and infantile pranks and 'messing around' but that can exacerbate if the young people cannot integrate into main-stream society through legitimate means. As one young person explained:

It's the way it is these days, most people chill with their mates on street and it's the stuff around for them to do and they do it, out of boredom, especially shops get burnt down, the community centre got burnt down, pub got burnt down (Keith, 16/Atheist).

Keith was honest about the boredom and the nuisance behaviour of young people that easily escalates into something more serious. He went on to describe the terrorising of the estate he and his peers perpetrated, because they were bored and seduced by the need for excitement, a theme Katz (1988) explores as a motivation for offending. Keith continued:

We used to chill at the bus stop, see random people and beat them up for the fun of it, smash windows, put up road blocks, watch cars smash through them, broke into shops a few times, you'd get someone to get the shopkeeper to chase him and then we would rob his shop.

He explained his behaviour through “not having enough to do, boredom, acting like twats and being stupid, we were the only people in the area, the only peer group on the estate.. it was very stupid”. This criminal activity was seemingly perpetrated for the purpose of entertainment and amusement because the young person and his peers didn’t have any other constructive activities to perform. It is what Ilan(2010) describes as “the transgressive thrill of delinquent acts (Hayward, 2002;Katz 1988)”.

Another participant, Warren starting shoplifting when he was around nine years old and believes his offending has escalated in terms of the rate, seriousness and frequency:

I have got into more serious things. Prison made me tougher so like I could do more serious things. I used to shoplift before but now I have got into nicking cars and burglary... I'll nick something for myself – get it for self, if I like something I get it...I know it ain't a good thing but it's always what I have done since a kid. It pays money sometimes.

He puts his offending down to a number of factors: through prison reinforcing his attitudes to crime; a negative family background underlining his need for acceptance; needing to fit in with his peers; having fun ; making his way in the world and crime providing some pecuniary advantage. Warren explained:

I think I offend to impress people, like when I used to nick cars I would drive and have all my mates in the car and like try and impress them...I just do it for the buzz. (Warren, 17/Agnostic).

The excitement of stealing a car and driving it at speed to the affirmation of his peers, is indicative of a sense of needing to belong and keep in with his peers.

Matthew is a fourteen years old white male who attends Boy’s Brigade and admits that he drifts into offending because of boredom, messing around, mischief and nuisance. He is also heavily influenced by his peer group. He remarked:

I do stuff for excitement. It's the boredom, nothing to do. Think could go and do that, dumb stuff. Rob people, break houses, things like that.

When there is nothing to do, just go their [church –boys brigade] It didn't go their probably be knocking on peoples doors. Hang around mates, get in trouble, throw bricks at cars, knock doors and run off (Matthew, 14/Christian).

Matthew acknowledged that he can “be attracted to go along with the group and what they are doing” if he is not involved in constructive activities and this involves anti-social and criminal behaviour. The need for immediate gratification features in Keith, Warren and Matthew’s reason for offending, along with social conformity. There is a relationship between boredom, youth and offending; through having unstructured time from having been excluded from schools (Newberry and Duncan, 2001).

The Common Experiences of Crime

For some young people crime becomes a regular feature of their socially situated lives, that is difficult to escape. Kate viewed a portfolio of photographs, produced as part of a photo-elicitation exercise during interview, depicting various types of ‘offending’ and commented:

That is just an everyday thing, for me (crime). Every picture I know somebody doing that or has done that, and I have been there as well.

Which one's have you done?

Bullying , stealing, knife, stealing from mum, did that, pick pocketing, all my friends do that. Most of them are in or out of prison. My mates due in Court this month for street burglary. I am at the YOT for a possession of a knife. I was done for threatening

my step sister with a knife outside her house, because I was drunk and had lost my temper (Kate, 17, Catholic).

Crime has been a tangible feature of Kate's life since an early age with drinking, smoking weed and violence. She admits to not being able to back down in a fight and to always having to get the upper hand. She describes how becoming pregnant was her 'awakening' and she has started to make significant changes in her behaviour. The baby has also reportedly changed her relationship with her partner, which was a violent and abusive relationship, as it has "woken him up" and he realises Kate will not be around if he does not change his behaviour towards her. A lot of Protective Behaviour work has been undertaken by the YOT to ensure Kate's safety and that she understands the dynamics of an abusive relationship. This means she is able to identify factors likely to lead to abuse and to employ rehearsed strategies to diffuse situations and resist the emergence of potential abusive behaviour.

Giordano et al. (2010) have examined the conditions under which parenting is likely to lead to reductions in criminal behaviour, such as wanted pregnancies, and the quality of the relationship with a partner that resonates with Kate's experience, where the response to her pregnancy is starting to challenge some entrenched behaviour:

She [baby- being pregnant] has changed me now, not done half stuff used to do, in bed by 8. Not drinking, not out all time, running streets and causing fights. In house when meant to be, trying to get my life sorted. She has just changed me.

If you've got a reputation for violence and fighting you have to fight to maintain it, cannot just stand there and do nothing else your reputation will go straight down. If you back down you are showing that you are weak and if you back down, that is when you start getting all the shit off people. That is why I choose not to get into fights because I cannot afford to get into fights and go to prison. And that is why I try to stay out of trouble because I know that if I get into something I cannot back down from it. That is the thing that could trip me up, that is why I don't get into trouble no more, because I cannot lose my kid over it.

Kate is adamant that lifestyles are down to our personal choices, our moral agency, but they also involve 'critical moments' such as the pregnancy that galvanises reflection on the lifestyle choices that are being made. She has had to learn to moderate her habituated behaviour of using violence and begin to introduce new ways of acting. She was aware of the implications of her behaviour:

I regret what I did in the past with the knife and stuff, because that's bad and that and I cannot do much in the future because of my criminal record. Like I want to work with kids and that, but I cannot do that now. But you all make mistakes when you are younger, but it is only when you are older that you start to realise, but sometimes too late. Lucky enough, I've just started to realise now, because the baby has woke me up, because otherwise I would probably have been in prison by next year. The transition is hard, it is not easy for young people. I know half my mates, they are all pregnant and they have calmed down as well.

Change is possible but it is not an easy road, and the relationship between the individual and social aspects of behaviour so closely intertwine and interact that it is often difficult to distinguish them; it is however imperative to analyse the relations and interactions between structure and agency. (Connor, 2011) Kate articulates something of this sociological conundrum in terms of the interconnections between socialisation, moral ideas, and social actions:

Why do you think young people don't care?

The Government don't really care, not listen to what people say, don't give a crap what people say. They just think we are like teenagers, teenagers are corrupt, dangerous, where this, we are that, we are always bad and that. Where are we getting it from? That is what I mean, we are seeing it from around us, we have seen it growing up. If you have grown up around violence, so they are gonna grow up violent. Not all the time but most of the time. If you see your mum getting battered everyday, you grow up and think it's ok for me to get battered. You grow up around it, you are gonna be like it. We have learnt it from the adults. They are the generation before us, how else would we know, it's on the TV and everywhere. That is where we have got it

from, its parents giving us tips what to do. Just grow your weed in your bedroom. You have got parents telling you what to do and then the Government blame the kids for it.

How far are Kate's decisions a product of her socialisation, with 'a step father who used to batter her,' the conditions under which her ideas about violence were formed? It seems this is a clear example of 'beliefs as embedded practices' that is presented through Kate's narrative in describing her learnt behaviour. There is an openness to change, a realisation of the serious implications if she does not reform her behaviour and awareness that her past behaviour has already affected her aspiration to work with children. There is some regret, but also a sense that risk taking and making mistakes is part of the natural maturation process, which are common to young people's experiences in general. She is aware of the political significance of labels in how young people are represented as 'dangerous' and how these carry specific forms of knowledge that establish particular regimes of truth which render certain policy responses and interventions as more appropriate than others. She underlines the importance of the influence of family background in forging specific attitudes to criminal behaviour that can be perpetuated and reinforced by peer groups. This is the socialisation of the criminal habitus that reinforces the performance of criminal behaviour, but it is not fully determining and is subject to revision.

Fitting in with Peers

The need to fit in with peers is a common reason for young people being implicated in crime- the peer effect of offending (Warr, 2002). Curtis a black sixteen year old male from

a Christian background, described himself as not particularly religious, “I ain’t religious, religious but my family is”. He explained that he could not really blame his choice to offend on his peers, as it was his decision to choose to offend, although he tended to go along with whatever his peers tended to do. The approval of his peers is important and seems likely to influence his motivation to offend with street robberies and burglaries. He commented:

I really get in crime because of my friends, they don't peer pressure me, if gonna do something I just tend to go along with its ..,more about fitting in..I just do it .. go along with it , not really say noI've done street robberies, back in the day..robbed somebody mobile phone, went up to them give me what you got and they gave it to me. Used to do it to anybody, adults.. it wasn't just me, would be with a group of people, it wasn't a daily thing, one of them ones ...just happens(Curtis,16/Christian).

The influence of peers providing the necessary validation is a developmental milestone that young people have to negotiate during adolescence. Teenagers tend to be very concerned by what others think about them. Being accepted by their peers is very important to them. Often, peer acceptance is contingent upon a teenager’s willingness to conform to group norms, which in itself can be heavily influenced by Youth culture. Robert, however, was adamant that he was not coerced by his peers. He felt that he is responsible for the choices that he makes regarding his actions. He is, however, not some free floating individual detached from the inducement of the social and cultural milieu in which he lives :

I always make the wrong decision, not blaming anyone, it's my own fault...If I get in trouble it's my own fault, you get me nobody else, should have said nagh... but I don't , I don't really say no all the time ... To me it's not about reputation. No one tell me what to do it , if not want to do it, just me man I like to go along with it.

Curtis displayed an inability to trust himself regarding his future aspirations and decision making. He described how he has found it hard to adjust when coming out of prison to get his life back on track, but ended up committing a further offence that resulted in him once

again having to attend the YOT. This reflects a lack of confidence in his own ability to stay out of trouble, something he wants to do, but he keeps making mistakes. There appears to be a tension with needing to fit in with his peer group, seeking their approval and a desire to stay out of trouble. How he negotiates this tension will be significant, as it requires difficult deliberation in the exercise of imagination and judgment. In Farrall's (2002:101) typology of perception of desistance, Curtis would be considered to be a pessimist, having an almost fatalistic view of life. There is a distinction between wanting to desist and feeling able to desist and making use of the available support from the YOT and other social networks. He continued:

Everything I just keep to myself...think thought stuff in head... just say to self need to stop getting in trouble, but every time I say that I end up getting in trouble anyway...When I came out of prison, being in side was easy, I had all the problem of getting back into school and all that bull shit.. had to go to Connexions.. it was the hard bit for me , get everything back on track, I was doing good ... but got back in trouble and came back here like a fool.

Backing a Friend

Alan is a white male with no religious background or affiliation. He received a custodial sentence for a misguided sense of loyalty to his friend. He was asked if he would beat someone up as a favour to his friend. He saw the event as "backing a mate in a fight" and being prepared to "jump in", but in this instance using a knuckle duster, causing serious harm to the victim. The street convention is that you always support a friend in a fight,

even defending their reputation. This appears to have been a largely unreflective, taken for granted activity but still requiring effort and attention but lacking judgement:

I used a knuckle duster and beat him up. I wish I'd not done it now, got me sent down, it was wrong should have let mate deal with it , it was his problem, but you always back a mate if in a fight and loosing you have to back 'em.... Jump in and help them. ..I am always helping people out (Alan, 16/Atheist).

Alan has become involved in offending because of the influence of his peer group and again wanting to fit in, to be accepted:

Hanging around wrong people led me into trouble ...try and show off, just carries on and carries on...I wish I hadn't started it ... having money that is important.

It is the type of friends that young people spend time with and the associated activities that result in offending taking place. If a peer group is committing crime then young people risk becoming involved. There is an element of choice but peer groups can both enable or constrain a person's behaviour in either a positive or negative direction. The interplay of structure and agency is really important here, especially as the neighbourhood context conditions some of the lifestyle choices available to the young people.

Another research participant , Peter has begun to make some alternative choices about whom he spends his time with:

Doing crimes and getting brought into it....people stop themselves getting into trouble , if you are continually hanging with people that say crime is good, you're gonna continue doing it. I sometimes chill with mates that did do crime, but don't do it anymore, because they all go to church and sometimes I just go and see my girlfriend (Peter,16/Catholic).

The establishment of a social bond to the conventional world provides a place for Peter, a sixteen year old mixed race convert to the Christian faith, from which to begin to build a social identity as non-criminal, investing in a significant relationship , associating with

people who attend church regularly, rather than peers who are focused on committing criminal behaviour. There are competing forces at work between the push and pull of crime and normality. The need for money is a major criminal pull factor explained in the next section.

Need for money: “If you ain’t got no money, what can you do?”

Money was a major factor that was cited by respondents for why they started offending; money to buy consumables, like fashionable clothes and to be able to socialise with their peers. Generating income also forms a crucial aspect in the aetiology for gangs. If there is no legitimate way to obtain finances then it is often acquired through crime. As Bauman (2007) argues consumer society seduces people through creating consumer desires and high consumer demands but some are denied the means to satiate the created desires and these so called ‘flawed consumers’ have to seek recourse through illegitimate means. The need to earn sufficient money to feed, clothe and keep a roof over your family’s head is a strong cultural value (Hall et al., 2008) that drives ‘money- making’ behaviours. Moreover, material resources are a means of obtaining social recognition from one’s peer group. The innate desire for social recognition plays a part in a young person’s identity construction: the way we think of ourselves emerges from our dialogue and interactions with those around us. Money provides the means to foster relationships with one’s peers and participate in shared leisure activities, which are impossible without adequate funds. A lack of resources means that young people become socially excluded (Levitas, 2005).

Curtis, a seventeen year old black male emphasised that life revolves around money by- operating a cash based money management system, which provides for the necessities to support his needs. Money enables young people to purchase branded clothing and other consumer goods:

I think life is shit, if you ain't got no money blood, what can you do? That is what life is really about, it's about money. If you ain't got money you cannot do anything, if you ain't got money you cannot live in a house, if you ain't got money you can't get your food. Life is shit man. Nah man if you ain't got money in life you ain't got nothing (Curtis, 16/Christian).

Finances for Curtis are a raison d'être and operant value that gives life its meaning, provides social capital, enabling him to fit into the social world and receive recognition.

Money is also a prevalent concern for gangs where crime is the main source of income, but it is a risky course of action that is predicated on the assumption that the immediate gains outweigh the risks or the risks are worth taking:

That is what people in gangs say, you either go to prison or die. If you're making money, doing crime it pays but it's got its consequences innit, that crime brings. I'll tell you straight I don't worry about the consequences, when I do crime I just worry about the money. Get the money and the money is probably gone the same day. They get the money and all they get is clothes.

Another young person, Finigan, a seventeen year old white male, maintains that within his social network crime "is what everyone he knows does to earn money" and it provides the means to socialise and have social status:

I've done it [crime] to earn money, so that I can have a laugh with my friends, so you've got a bit a money and you need a bit of money. I could wake up in the morning and jump in one garden [commit a burglary] and get sixty or seventy pound. That would take me five minutes work. That's why people do it. Quick money and its easy.

It's just one of them things. No one's bothered about that [getting caught and having a criminal record]. (Finigan, 17/Atheist)

Crime is treated as a routine activity to acquire money because other legitimate means appear unavailable or out of reach. Committing an offence like a house burglary becomes a regular part of Finigan's life that he drifts in and out of, in order to fund his lifestyle and to assert his independence. The penalty of conviction is seemingly a cost worth paying.

Like Finigan, Clyde, a sixteen year old of dual heritage confirms that crime is primarily about making money when other legitimate means are not available to you, especially with the social stigma of being in a gang :

To get money, that's all what crimes about, its primarily about who can make the most money, because cannot get it legit because brought up in gangs. Robbing is about making dough.(Clyde, 16/Christian).

Monetary factors condition our lifestyle choices, having the necessary funds to pay for a certain way of life as Kai explains, where the priority each day was to make some money through criminal means:

Money, just money that was what was on my mind, everyday day. If I didn't have money I would go and do a burglary or do a street robbery. All it was for my life was robbery, money, if I got enough money off that robbery or whatever I did, I would go and buy some clothes. Yes, who has got the most clothes. I'll buy some cannabis, probably go to the pub, girls (Kai, 17/Muslim).

This money production allowed Kai some social standing, being able to purchase branded goods and fund his recreational pursuits. Indeed, the acquisition of money is necessary for participation in society; needing to look good In order to have influence with people requires finances and without it people are excluded, as Danny cogently observes.

However, it is the basis of the attainment of funds which is circumscribed by law and order.

You have got to look good, and you have got to have money because nobody wants nobody if they ain't got money. Everyone is on the paperchase, everyone wants money (Danny, 18/Agnostic).

By contrast, Affi , a black African and devout Mormon questions the value of money and peoples' quest for maximising profit and the creation of wealth at the detriment of the value of human lives. He understands the benefits of money and wants to be successful in his own right, but does not want the generation of riches to be his main purpose in life.

You have to make men understand that money don't give you life, money is not, what can I say, don't cost a human being's life. You know money don't cost it. Even if you put the whole money in the world, it don't cost one person's life that has died.

The world of materialism has grasped a hold of the consciousness of many of these young people and arguably has shaped the course of their actions; capitalism being the social milieu in which they exist. It is, however, the source and perhaps nature of their consumption which is problematic- the means of earning a living. Another concern in negotiating the social terrain is the means of dealing with conflict, to which we will now turn.

The Acceptance of Violence as means of Conflict Resolution

This is perhaps the most prevalent belief amongst young offenders when it relates to dealing with conflict and impulse control through a loss of temper, poor emotional regulation and dis-inhibition through substance misuse. It is seen as self-evident that violence is the most appropriate means to resolve conflict, because it is linked to reputation and status, especially as it regards gang affiliation. Barry (2006:1) confirms that often young people resort to crime as a means of "gaining valued reputation" or social recognition. It has also been called the quest for relevance and is implicated in gang culture:

I think it is just life, it's not as if I am going to kill somebody. Fighting is life, you get me. No one in the world can stop it. I don't believe in any of that killing sort of stuff. That's them, I am not mental. If I have to beat up somebody I would think argh, especially if I have beat up somebody really bad, I would think argh, you get me but I wouldn't kill somebody. There is a line. (Curtis, 16/Christian).

There is a moral boundary that is held by Curtis that would not be crossed, but violence is treated as part of the fabric of everyday life, something that is seen as ordinary:

Like I just used to be on the streets all the time, on buses and stuff you get me, but now I don't do that. That is the kind of stuff, a lot of fights, nothing else. Obviously, I think every young kid goes through that now, these days.

The occurrence of violence is as much a part of everyday life for all young people and having to negotiate violence is a significant feature of young people's lifestyles, ensuring that you do not become a victim. The fear associated with violence is the rise of the use of weapons, and the level of damage that is inflicted, where drawing a knife is considered easier to make a point than extending energy in a fist-fight, a mark perhaps of the instant gratification culture. The easy availability of guns also makes our judgement of violence more acute, with the associated belief in the lack of dignity regarding human life. The resulting harm caused by the perpetrator of violence is disproportionate to the maintenance of one's reputation. The visceral reality of bloodshed, evokes an abhorrence in wider society that judges violence as not permissible, but it characterises the street culture in which many of the young people in my study are familiar. In my submission, we have to understand this brutal aspect of their everyday lives, if we are able to make appropriate interventions. Even the language that we use about conflict is aggressive in nature and bellicose, it is about winning a battle, routing the enemy. Young people have become desensitised to violence and can appear dispassionate and to trivialise their

behaviour and the sanctity of human life, but the horror and carnage of violent behaviour is valorised in popular culture in video games and digital media.

Reputation is based on fear and intimidation, if you are known for being tough and your physical appearance can instil fear in others. Young people can obtain respect this way through a reputation as a fighter who can “back it”, if you have the skills and ability to win a fight and are able to absorb the punches. The challenge is that this can bring unwanted attention and you can never let your guard down. Reputation is hard to build and maintain but so easy to lose. You can acquire popularity through connections you have with people who already have status and social recognition- the tough gang member who has earned his reputation through extortion and brutality. Power can be accrued through already established gangs or young people.

Amir is a fifteen year old Muslim of Irish and Sri Lankan descent who stated that he specifically targeted people in committing robberies because he needed or wanted money. He provides a vivid description of violence in instrumental terms, used to intimidate the victim and procure the cash:

I would target men. If I see you walking and see you go to the cash point and pull out £200 I would just go up to you by myself and then I would say, say used to, I'd have said I'm taking your wallet off you and you'd have obviously said no and more time I would just like hit you to the face, kept on hitting you and brought you to the ground and I would have tried to take your wallet. If you were still like struggling to hold it I would have just made you like into pain, where you have to let go and then I would just run away with it or move off (Amir, 15/ Muslim).

This example of violence provided by Amir relates to the distinction Schinkel (2004) makes between the determinism and formalism of violence. The former refers to underlying causes or extrinsic factors as an explanation for violence- it fulfils certain functions in

society, it serves a means to a desired end, like in Amir's case it is a means of extorting finances. This is the external meaning or causes of which violence is a symptom. However, this determinism avoids its object and ignores the intrinsic meaning of violence in self-referential terms and reduces it to some underlying personal or social feature or deeper causes, whatever external goal violence may be a means to. For Schinkel (2004) the identified causes are never the actual triggering causes, but often the predisposing causes. Increased knowledge about the causes of violence will show how violence might be prevented, reduced or eliminated, if it also recognises the 'will to violence'- the meanings of violence for its own self and what its intrinsic attractiveness might be. As Schinkel (2004:17) states "violence may occur for the sake of itself".

Amir also explained that he regretted his actions and could understand what it would be like to have money forcefully removed from you, but violence was seen as a necessary means to a desired end. Amir has also been involved in some assaults and had some gang involvement: "*one assault that was just someone looking at me or said something to me and I just said nah*"; where the physicality was an expression of his manhood to defend a perceived slight to his reputation. He also stressed "*I would beat someone up if they were being racist to me*".

Violence is not always used to achieve a specific goal, not always as an instrumental practice to obtain material resources, or to assert manliness, or to promote justice. Also, violence involves normative and expressive ways of acting- the operation of power through the subjugation of a victim and the visceral pleasure felt in the 'event of violence' (Sutterlüty, 2009). Moreover, violent action can be an end in itself, what Schinkel (2004)

has called 'autotelic violence'—a love of violence for its own sake. A better understanding of violence requires a constellation of meanings, motives, causes and reasons both intrinsic, and extrinsic to be sought after. This is illustrated by the following example .

Harry is a seventeen year old white male with a history of alcoholism running in his family and his own problem with drinking and violence stems from his chaotic background, as he described it in interview, thinking about the title of his imagined autobiography as "emerging from chaos". Driven by an interpretive pattern or regime from Harry's own experience as a victim, having witnessed domestic violence and disrespectful and abusive treatment by his parents in his early socialisation while growing up, gives rise to his own use of violence(Sutterlüty, 2009). Harry will tend to perceive events through this interpretive regime. He not only perceives the event of violence as something from which he derives pleasure, but he also understands how decision making about violence involves choices about morality. As Schinkel (2004:19) asserts "there is always an autotelic aspect to these violent means" as well as a determinism in our explanations about violence. Harry disclosed:

I just know right and wrong, that you shouldn't just batter someone for no reason

I had a fight with a shop keeper. I had been drinking . I didn't even speak to him, I just started fighting. He was Asian. I just hit him with a bottle and kept hitting him. .. he was just standing there, he didn't ask for it... I shouldn't have done it.

I am always the one who gets into trouble because of drink. I drink to excess , drink until it's all gone..fights, criminal damage...just fights .. fighting is the reason I am at the YOT (Harry, 17/ Atheist).

Harry seriously assaulted the shop keeper when he was drunk and has broken into and caused criminal damage to his old school. He commented:

I used to be proper shy. It was getting into fights that made me confident. If someone is proper yelling at me or starting on me, I ain't confident at speaking back but will just hit 'em straight away. I ain't confident about having an argument...being male and fighting is important.. girls cannot fight.. it's something I like doing. It feels good. ... its gets you out of trouble....I like taking a punch and throwing a punch.

Fighting is a way of resolving conflicts, of asserting his masculine identity and of expressing himself, through the use of his body as a weapon, it makes him feel alive giving and receiving punches. He recognises the perils, the physical consequences of potential harm and injury with the pattern of violence leading to more violence, but it has become normalised behaviour:

A couple of weeks ago I had a fight with a KFC man and the other day I came out of the chippie and there were loads of them and all battered me. I cannot control it, it just happens. As soon as I had a fight with that KFC man, I knew it was gonna come back on me.

With the passage of time and sustained damage from brawling the less Harry is able and willing to perceive and acknowledge the dangers of physical violence . He dismisses any suggestion from his YOT workers that he has “got anger in him from when he was a kid” but acknowledges “I need to stop drinking basically and my life would be better”.

Young people like Harry can view anger as appropriate and justified and this can impact upon treatment readiness, such as attending and benefitting from an anger management programme. Young people speak about not being able to back down when confronted and needing to ‘save face’, where a code of honour could be seen to be connected to protecting oneself against unacknowledged shame.

Similarly for Gordon, a white male on licence for section 20 unlawful wounding, the use of violence is the customary means of dealing with confrontation. He broke the jaw of another male in a pique of anger, having been jilted by his girlfriend and seeing the

other male holding hands with her and claims he *“only hit him once...It takes a lot for me to lose my temper but he was taking the piss a bit and I punched him”*. This could be seen as Gordon tending to use his fists to achieve his ends, where Gordon also talked about routine fights with other peer groups: *“I was in a gang, a bunch of mates, would have fights with other areas, just come up, if came up would fight em...”* (Gordon, 17/Agnostic).

It would be easy to position violence as gender specific (Seymour, 2009), because violence is overwhelmingly a male activity. However, the female cohorts' perceptions in this study militates against this view. Violence is nevertheless gendered. Any interventions “targeting young women who have committed violent offences needs to take account of their gendered experiences of substance misuse, abuse, suicide, self –harm, family relationships and responsibilities. The worker must assist the young women to develop an understanding of their victimisation and should encouraged them to address the strong feelings of anger and frustration that contribute to offending behaviour” (Batchelor, 2005:371).

This advice is supported by the present study with my female cohort having suffered physical, sexual and emotional abuse, difficult family relationships and these factors contributing to their own use of violence, as in the case of Sharon , a seventeen year old, self-reported Catholic who was under supervision at the YOT for an offence of assault occasioning actual bodily harm:

I hit somebody when I was drunk, a stranger I had drunk a lot a lot...[hitting him in the face with a stiletto heel of her shoe]

Figure 3 Case Study of Jane

Jane provides another example of Sutterlüty's (2009) notion of interpretive regimes that condition how certain situations are defined through the prism of her past experiences. She is a seventeen year old Catholic with ten convictions over a five year period for an established pattern of aggressive behaviour. Her victims have been female peers previously known to her. Her father walked out on her when she was two years old and started another family: "he'd rather be there for them than us". There is an overwhelming sense of rejection that she carries with her. She believes that violence is an acceptable way of dealing with certain conflicts and has trouble controlling her anger. She was permanently excluded from school because of her temper:

I started to get in trouble, aged eleven. Been at Youth offenders since 11- 12-ain't stopped coming since, I know it's bad but I am doing good, I had this violence, it always used to be violence for me, that is how I sort my things out violence. Now trying to sort out my head, cut down on my weed. I know what I am doing but it is like, if people do my head In I will kick off and I will try and hit them and things like that.... I got kicked out of school towards end of yr 9 for violence, fighting, violence towards teachers and all that stuff. I wagged it all the time.

Jane views the whole of her life through the lens of violence, as it has marked all her life experience since early childhood and it has become an ingrained habit. She is, however, conscious that her violence has negative consequences, that people like her mother are fearful of challenging her.

There is just violence in my life, that is all there is just violence and I feel bad but if I am in a situation that is the way I will solve it because that is way I like solving it is violence and that is the way of calming it down. If someone has hurt me and as soon as I have hurt them back I will be fine and will be sound. I know it is wrong, but no one would wind me up anymore. My mum is like scared as well, I have never ever laid a finger on my mum and never will but I smash things up in my house for what I don't get. She gives me stuff because she is scared, scared of what I am going to do.

Jane is attempting to monitor and regulate her behaviour through persistent practice and the focus on achieving her goal of meaningful employment is a strong motivating factor- to attain a recognised qualification that could get her a job in a hotel in London. She is learning to cope with conflict without the threat of violence.

I want to get my life back on track...I am studying silver service waitressing at college- NVQ. I am concentrating on that... As soon as done course, got myself sorted, I'm hitting London and get a job down their. Silver service as well, be able to get in anywhere. Work down there and hopefully save up enough, some money and gradually be able to buy myself a one bedroom flat, own flat down there. I know there is something out there for me. There is something out there for everyone. It is just my violence that gets in the way and stopping me doing things. Smoking weed, stops me from doing things as well.

There is evidence from case records of unpredictable outbursts linked to poor emotional regulation. These are based on how Jane interprets events, her capacity for committing acts of instrumental aggression, and her considerable desire to maintain her status amongst her group of friends.

My mum thinks there is something wrong with me, but it's just my anger, inside of me I admit I cannot control my anger...all my record is to do with violence. These lot (YOT) are helping me...Protective behaviour, violent relationships, controlling my anger. I am doing good, but is it just like I have my moments where I kick off.

Sharon explained that the reason for the offence was paranoia and anger, coupled with own experiences of violence. She believed the stranger at the chip shop was laughing and mocking her:

I am just paranoid when people laugh at me all the time. I am thinking what does he think about me now. ..I think I have got something against men .it's from my dad. He is violent and an alcoholic. I witnessed him beating up my mother.. I was eight at the time and I was scared and angry and wanted to kill him... .I had a bad experience with a boyfriend and seeing my brothers being violent.

The circumstances preceding Sharon's violent action evoked "early experiences of powerlessness and disrespect ", making her vulnerable to interpreting the male's behaviour "as intending to humiliate or attack her" (Sutterlüty, 2009:51). This perception determined the way she defined the situation in the light of paradigmatic events in the past.

Violence is also associated with negative attitudes towards others, such as hate crime and involvement in far right extremism (Gadd and Dixon, 2011; Ray and Smith, 2001; Garland and Treadwell, 2010). Understanding the meaning of crime for practitioners involves exploring young offenders' attitudes towards others through moral conversations, in order to identify discriminatory attitudes and their potential ramifications for social harm.

Finigan claimed he was just protesting at the English Defence League march , but concerns were highlighted by the YOT about his involvement in violent clashes with Asian youths:

I wasn't fighting, just protesting about no more mosques getting built in this country, becausethey have got bigger mosques than we have churches. ...There shouldn't be a mosque in this country, if they want to build a mosque they should fuck off back to Pakistan, we don't need them around here.

He expresses clear anti-Muslim prejudice, showing disregard for Islamic religious observance and contesting their right to practice their faith in their own designated places of worship. The influence of gangs, their negative attitudes and the meanings of gang associated behaviours also needs to be explored with young people, if practitioners are to assist young people to break away from gang culture (HM Government, 2011; Goldson, 2011).

Social Recognition through Gangs

Gangs provide both material and relational goods as a way of achieving reputation and status (Cloward and Ohlin, 1961; Decker and Curry, 2000; Kintrea, et al., 2008). Terence, a seventeen year old black male, quietly spoken and self-assured, possessing a certain gravitas, describes his initiation and progression into gang life through associating with his brother's clique and informed by his father's criminality:

I have been in a gang since I was young. I am talking 8-9 years old, running with gangs, people older than me. I was rolling with my brothers crew... It was quite a poor area, grew up with that. Dad was in trouble. He was in prison (Denzel, 17/Atheist).

This led to Terence and some friends forming their own gang and seeking to build a reputation through the gang's activities. This often involved drug dealing and its associated use of violence to protect markets and defend territory from other encroaching gangs. The gang is defined as a commercial enterprise with clearly delineated roles, and a chain of command. The territory in which the gang operated was not coterminous with this young person's area of residence. He explained:

The reason I have been in trouble is because of gangs, different gangs and being involved in stabbings and different stuff. I made my own gang. I made my own team, you get me. You have to create your own team for when it kicks off and that. It's how it is.

Is that for protection?

I don't need protection for myself. It has to be done and that because of other gangs in the area, if you get me. For when there are situations and you have to do what you have to do.

Is the gang about making money?

Yes, Yes. Drug dealing, robbing cars, robbing houses, armed robberies, anything really. All with the purpose of making money.

The purpose of the gang is clearly expressed, to make money through criminal activities and the gang operates to maximise its profit and protect its investments. The gang provides various forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986) as Terrence describes in the following excerpt.

What did the gang give you?

It gives me everything. Reputation, money. I am seen as a big man, to be frightened of. It used to give me a boost but not any more. It used to make me feel good.

Selling drugs gives me money... It gets me anything I want. Clothes, watches, chains.

There is a display of street smart, intelligence and pragmatism in his attitude towards these criminal activities where he operates a few steps removed from the frontline, in order to avoid detection by the police :

I am selling drugs but I am not gonna be out there selling drugs myself. I am getting someone else doing that for me. I don't need to be doing that shit, getting myself caught up.

The vital need for social recognition is attained by young offenders like Terrence forming his own gang and fronting a commercial venture and boosts his self-esteem and through others like Clyde, a seventeen year old mixed race youth feeling empowered through joining a gang:

People join gangs basically to get a reputation. All gang stuff is about reputation. It's about getting the biggest rank, by fighting all the time and making money. Gangs make money by doing crime, robberies, burglaries, selling weed, coke etc. One you are in a gang you cannot walk out innit... You cannot be in a gang if you haven't got trust innit.

Clyde is talking about power, status and collective efficacy, the extent to which adolescents feel a sense of solidarity with their peers, in contributing to a common cause and at its foundation is group trust, that peers will do their part and support one another through mutual recognition. In gangs there is allegiance to a set of values or a street code as John explains:

We have a street code, don't snitch on your hommies⁶, it's not like written down, but in our little click we all know it. Every little 'crim 'has got their own like rules, whatever. Ours is don't snitch, always have your hommies back and always be prepared. Just stuff like that. Always be prepared for a beef if it comes (John, 16/Catholic).

The 'Code of the Street' (Anderson, 2000) is important as it reflects loyalty to the gang and has been called a soldier mentality. Membership of the gang is often sought for self-protection and entails backing up your friends and it is about gaining respect. The gang can also serve as a surrogate family providing a sense of belonging and recognition. In John's rendition of the code it is about the rules his particular group seek to follow, being prepared to use violence as a demonstration of your allegiance to your friends and not passing on any information.

In this way gangs can be understood with ElderVass' (2010; 2011:8-9) concept of a norm circle that "exerts an emergent causal power" influencing individual behaviour. The normative environment endorses, enforces and enacts specific group values, such as

⁶ This is street slang for friends.

violence as a legitimate means of conflict resolution, involvement in illegal activity in order to secure revenue, and the following of the street code. Members of the gang are aware that other members share their commitment and feel an obligation to endorse and enforce the norm and have an expectation that others will support them in this process. There is a shared collective intention with the exertion of certain amount of social pressure, whereby failure to comply in asserting the norm can lead to negative sanctions. Each individual acts as a representative of the norm circle or gang for that norm, with the norm circle “producing the tendency among individuals to conform” (ElderVass cited in Archer and ElderVass, 2011:8-9) There is a commitment towards conformity to the group norm. Contrasting group norms can either militate against the gangs influence or be *vitiated* by the power which the gang exercises but each is mediated by the level of an individual’s commitment to the gang.

Conclusion

This chapter illustrates the rationale for comprehending the reasons and meanings of young offender’s offending behaviour. This is underlined by Putnins, who observes that tapping into “youths’ perceptions about why they offend can assist [practitioners] to better understand their needs and to engage them in a manner that makes sense to how they view their behaviour” (Putnins, 2010:961). It is consonant with McMurrin and Ward’s (2004:297) suggestion that ‘by focussing on the reasons or goals that ground the actions of offenders, it makes their behaviour intelligible and can provide a more effective means of

motivating them to enter treatment'. Youth Justice workers obtain understanding about the operative value base of young people, procured from reflecting upon young people's lived experiences including their involvement in criminal activities in their social context and interactions with their street based peer groups. What they do indicates the type of interventions that are most appropriate and the necessity of moral dialogue to influence change. Those with the experience of offending know best how to resolve re-offending and the notion of co-production of knowledge is underlined.

Crime has a relational logic as a resource for the construction of identity and social recognition amongst young offenders through the performance of criminal behaviour that provides social currency funds for socialising with peers and the maintenance of a validated reputation. Young people 'perform identity' through the enactment of certain deviant behaviours, in expressing violence they are asserting their social position in a social hierarchy and defending an earned status. Crime has been viewed from the perspective of the young offenders and draws out their reasons and motivations for their criminal behaviour, reflecting the ways they make sense of the world. This can include understanding the context of their specific behaviour, including family background, such as experiencing trauma, which can inform their interpretive schemas. Verbal responses do not directly reflect behavioural tendencies (Deutscher,1973:12) because there can be a gap between what people say and what people do , which needs to be teased out through critical dialogue and scrutiny of their specific criminal behaviour, for example in their patterns of violence and property offences. The actual practices of young people inform both practitioners and researchers about the true extent of self-reported attitudes, sentiments and motives and the relations between these factors. The causal chain needs to

be mapped out in these moral conversations to establish motivations towards changing attitudes and behaviour in the pathway towards desistance and how a young person is representing themselves in their identity work. It is not just what people say but what they do that most express what they believe in the messages signalled in their behaviour.

The continuous interaction between the self and others provides the materials out of which individuals construct their dialogic self (Baressi, 2002) through feedback and validation from activities with peers. This can include criminal behaviour where the relational aspects of these interactions is often the key motivational impetus for the behaviour. How the person is perceived by others accounts for their sense of moral agency and culpability and the stakes they have invested in the behaviour and commitment to the relationship.

Individuals learn to modulate their behaviour according to the context and nature of relationships involved and the lessons they have learnt through experience. There are particular interpretive schemes or ways of viewing the world based in past events that continue to influence their decision making in the present moment, such as abuse, loss and bereavement., domestic violence These are developed through processes of socialisation and reflexivity. The quality and nature of family relationships continues to have a recurring influence on moral agency, shaped by the legitimacy of these relationships. The centrality of the family has been endorsed in this chapter as providing ultimate meaning in life, as espoused by the young people themselves. This evidences their strong belief in sociality and confirms Day's (2009) supposition of 'believing in belonging'. A young person is seeking something in the commission of criminal actions, to secure valued outcomes in their lives, valuing certain characteristics, to fulfil certain life values and priorities, to

achieve certain primary goods such as relatedness , community, spirituality referring to meaning and purpose in life (Ward and Stewart , 2003) but unfortunately offending is often a maladaptive attempt to secure these valued outcomes., because more legitimate options are not available or have not been countenanced or considered. Even violence is an illegitimate means of acquiring relational goods. Violence is often a habituated and learnt response to dealing with conflict and additionally with managing peer expectations. A distinction was made between a love of violence for its own sake and its underlying causes and how both should be considered in scrutinising a more rounded assessment of acts of violence. Understanding how violence is construed as purposeful from the young people's perspectives is key; often as "an attempt to produce an outcome they consider is desirable" (Hines, 2010: 171). Crime was associated as a part of the process of growing up in certain neighbourhoods, a feature of the research participants socially situated lives of conforming to group norms, a way for young people to accomplish masculinity in the presence of their peers, to achieve acceptance and status, to fit in and maintain their reputation. It was considered to be means of providing income for socialising and maintaining friendships. Gangs were similarly about power, status and collective efficacy and involved money-making behaviour. What appeared from the outside to be negative or self-destructive behaviour was shown to have a positive relational function.

The meanings and reasons young people attach to their criminal behaviour, garnered through moral conversations with practitioners, provides insight into what is likely to reduce offending through offering alternative pro-social and adaptive options and it provides young people with the opportunity to identify and build on their strengths.

CHAPTER 6: AN AUTHENTIC FAITH?

In the previous chapter it was established that the meaning of crime is predicated upon young offender's beliefs and values as conveyed in the practices that they perform. To better comprehend their meanings associated with crime we also need to explore the influences underpinning these beliefs and values. A young offender's beliefs and values are often resourced by particular religious traditions to which these young people have been exposed as they have grown up, having been socialised into particular faith communities. This makes it an important but often neglected dimension of their life which needs to be examined, as these beliefs and values shape and influence their attitudes to offending. Obtaining knowledge about a young offender's beliefs and values will inform and enable practitioner's to better understand, engage and target interventions to address a young person's offending behaviour and support the process of desistance. This involves examining the young person's beliefs and values, which are enacted and signalled in the activities they perform and what they do. This chapter provides further insight into participants' sources of values and ideas from which notions of identity and change arise and examines whether these are embodied in rituals, practices, activities. Moreover, it assesses how significant these are for the young people in this study and the process of rehabilitation in youth justice. This chapter effectively answers questions 3) and 4). A young person's agency is critical in this endeavour in particular in how young offenders interpret and make use of religion as a resource to define their sense of self and advance their own goals. Religion can help with a young person's propensity to act in ways that embody the

good in order for their lives to go well but it requires an appreciation of the personalised nature of religiosity. The key themes identified from the data in relation to authentic faith include the following: not being a properly religious person; the postponement of deeper religiosity until later life; variability in practising religiosity and the performance of rituals and practices; personalised faith; faith in the self. Practices relate to belief-behaviour congruence and the use of prayer and its importance for life management as a coping mechanism. Other themes include authenticity and being true to oneself; relatedness, the notion of religious identity; how young offenders can learn from religion about what constitutes good behaviour and how the transmission of religious faith to young people reflects their parent's attitude/stance towards faith. The chapter is focused on the types of practices that are important for young people and how religion is performed and serves a number of functions.

An Example of a Religious Ideal Type

The particular characteristics or attributes of a 'good religious person' are outlined in the rows and columns of the table 7 below, but the rows and columns are not specifically linked, but emphasise particular strengths and positive capacities that my research participants felt they possessed. These were the answers given by my research participants to the question of what is a religious person and taken from discussions about religion in general. There is a particularly outward looking, caring and respected individual being expressed, whom exemplifies a deeper commitment to the religious faith with greater

belief- behaviour congruence. These qualities allow the ‘good religious person’ to serve as a moral exemplar, but many of these attributes are not exclusive to a religious person.

Table 7 Characteristics for a religious ideal

Characteristics of a Good Religious Person		
Caring for People	Different or better person	Not harming anybody, thinking about what they do
Giving to Poor	Living a Good Life	Helping others
Following the Right Path	Follow the rules	High Religious Observance
Faith helps them to be a better person	Know about/ difference between Right & Wrong	Desire to learn more about religious faith
Have a Good & Bad side	Keeps away from trouble	Knows how to behave
Faith helps them to change their behaviour	Respectful and Respected	Believes life can be better and problems can be corrected
Encourages people to believe	Clean & pure	Faithful and committed to their religion
Have a different mindset	Trustworthy, doesn't lie	Doing Right
Teaching others to be better person's	Changed life	Doesn't want to commit sin, not committing crime
Stance of Character	Sticking to their religion	Strong belief in 'God'
Live up to expectations	Doing & being good	Moral Exemplar in terms of behaviour
Not perfect	Committed person	Forgiving
Non- judgemental	Possesses knowledge and understanding	Honest

The main distinction with a 'good person' would be the religious observance and the reliance on a transcendent referent in the development of the person. An antithesis could also be produced for each of these qualities. Although these reflect an ideal type, the religious person is not considered perfect and can 'easily be corrupted', 'commit sin', 'act overly zealously' such as in the examples given by a few participants of a 'terrorist blowing up innocent people' or 'paedophile priests'. Particular expectations about religious observance and behaviour from within specific religions, such as the 'Good Muslim' fulfilling the five prayers per day have been noted separately in Chapter 7.

The belief in the self that reflects a secular/non-religious perspective also provides a secular/anthropocentric alternative that parallels these attributes. Instead of following the right path, the person finds and follows their own right path and creates their own morals and makes their own destiny. The ideal type features as a moral template through which the young people evaluate their own religiosity, a standard for leading a good life. These high religious expectations tend to reflect the prevailing influence of religious discourse in wider society.

Not being a properly religious person

This authentic standard of a particular faith tradition is brought into play when young people discuss their religiosity. It sets up an ideal of how the faith is meant to be defined, represented and lived out, often grounded in an authoritative religious tradition against

which they compare their own religious experience. This can be observed in the following extract from Hardeep, a sixteen year old Sikh young person who has just come to the end of his community sentence for an offence of Robbery:

I believe in my religion, going to the Temple, although I know I am not particularly religious, that is something specific, you are involved in a ritual at the temple with the holy man, it's like a baptism, where they use holy water. I don't think I would be able to handle it, I like meat and alcohol too much. I was taken to the Gurdwara as a child and I still go once a week, if I manage that I think it's good.... I believe that so long as I go to the temple on a regular basis that I am doing my bit for my religion (Hardeep, 15/Sikh).

This young person's identity is bound up with his religion, although his offending lifestyle could be considered out of kilter with the practice of his faith but he makes a clear distinction between a person who is intently practising their faith in a committed way and someone who has a different level of commitment or where faith is none the less salient but not as integrated into their life. He cites the distinction of intensive devotion in his particular faith tradition of baptism and Khalsa, where people are initiated by taking amrit (holy water) in a ceremony called 'amrit sancar'. Baptised Sikhs are bound to wear the five articles of faith (five k's). Keeping these symbols is one way of signifying their commitment to the Sikh faith and identifying themselves publically as Sikh. They are to abstain from four misdeeds: removing hair, eating meat, adultery, and using tobacco. It is a lifestyle with external and visible demarcation, as someone who is 'pure'. It displays an outward sign of devotion to the faith with implications for how life ought to be lived. The creation of the order of Khalsa as an example of orthodoxy throws into relief other ways of being Sikh, for example those who follow the teachings of the Guru but do not observe the code of discipline, as this young person would claim. This establishes an authenticated boundary between those who are considered 'pure' and those perceived as doctrinally incorrect.

This young person could be categorised in this way or regarded as in the process of gradual development to Khalsa initiation and observance or as asserting his own religious authenticity. As Jhutti-Johal (2011:108) argues “a definition of a Sikh grounded in baptism is too narrow” because of the growing numbers of non- baptised Sikhs. It has a tendency to create a hierarchy, which could be conceived as elitist. Only those who have been initiated are the true Sikhs, according to the logic of this ordering.

Another Sikh young person Rajdev, a seventeen year old serving the remainder of his prison sentence in the community on Licence supervision for an offence of Actual Bodily Harm, is also contesting the boundaries of Sikh identity and observance through the everyday challenges and choices of his lifestyle:

When I went inside[prison] the priest said to me, if you're not religious, not gonna do it properly then there is no point wearing a turban and growing your hair....if you're not properly religious, going out clubbing, drinking and smoking whatever, no point in doing it. .. There is no point trying to act religious if you are not religious ...just break it really.. If enjoy life, but when you are ready to settle down and be religious then that's when you do it (Rajdev, 17/Sikh).

This second Sikh young person was under no illusions about the level of commitment involved in following his faith, if he were to take it more seriously. What was also significant was the level of understanding that this would involve. Alcohol is prohibited within the tenets of Sikhism, but going out on a Saturday night drinking is seen as normative behaviour for young people. There is a pragmatism displayed by this Chaplain in his advice to this young person that demonstrates he understands both youth culture and the requirements of his faith tradition. The young person needs to be ready to make a commitment to settle down and pursue their devotion. This distinction between being

properly religious and not is a distinction that others also make, from different faith traditions:

If I was going to be proper religious, I would do it like that (clicks his fingers)...boom done it, be straight away religious...(Asif, 17/Muslim)

Asif displays a strong confidence in his ability to make this substantive change, but in actuality the effort required is much harder than he asserts; where YOT records indicate that he was sent to Pakistan by his family in an attempt to bring some external constraints to his offending behaviour, and since his return to the UK he has also recently re-offended. He sees himself and his family as “proper religious...having to follow it” but knows he is negligent in his observance and behaviour with his father imploring him to attend the Mosque and read the Koran more regularly. He realises that repeatedly having ‘sessions’, where he gets drunk and smokes cannabis is haram (forbidden).

Recitation of the declaration of faith or ‘kalimah’ in the Islamic tradition is considered to be a pronouncement and enactment of radical change, the process of conversion in moving from a position of the impure to the pure and becoming a true Muslim who declares their devotion to Allah. For Asif it was often a form of protection and shield, a talisman that gave him a sign of confidence even when offending, but not as yet an inducement for transformation.

Another young person, Tariq, a 17 year old Muslim male, stated that he is not properly religious in view of his previous criminal behaviour but is beginning to change:

Why don't you go and talk to a properly religious person...I ain't properly religious but I try to be religious...I was proper bad doing robberies, beating the shit out of people, but I have changed...my religion would call what I did a sin but God can forgive me.

There is a confident assertion in the character of the divine to enable the young person to make amends, and motivate him to lead a different kind of life. There is redemption in the eyes of God, as Allah holds out the possibility of transformation after the commission of sin through offering forgiveness as a means of responding to this wrongdoing. This young person has an awareness of what constitutes the better life, but how far they are willing to implement this change is mediated by a number of factors-whether the losses outweigh the gains in terms of offending, the level of support a young person needs, their mindset and willingness to change, the opportunity of available alternatives. The necessity of forgiveness and its full implications of restoring the status of the individual in the wider community is a strongly shared belief in this small cohort (15/40). If the divine can forgive, the onus on humans is to act in consonance. Forgiveness is a moral concept that is considered to be a viable form of character education for youth (Lin et al., 2011). It has various definitions but relates to the transition from negative to positive thoughts, feelings, behaviours. If a young person learns to forgive: "they must cultivate virtues such as compassion, generosity and love" (Ibid:241). It is a process of moral education that requires perspective taking and self-awareness of the harm caused to others as enacted in programmes of victim awareness.

There is also a concern by the research participants to honour their religious background irrespective of how well it is practiced:

Whatever religion you are brought up to be, you should respect, because if you don't respect it and then what do you respect. I'd still stick to Catholic because I know what a Catholic is.

Jane respects her Catholic upbringing and is committed to this particular religious identity although she declares she is not a properly religious Catholic like her Nan, who is portrayed as a devout Roman Catholic. She occasionally attends Church but in particular circumstances, like out of respect for her friend, where the contrast is again made between an authentic believer and herself as not 'a proper Catholic' because of her current circumstances. Jane self represents as a Secular Catholic in Beaudoin's (2011) terms, someone with a Catholic heritage but does not see the faith as significantly defining her life. By her own admission later in the interview, it is the messiness of her life with its violence which obscures a more positive evaluation of herself. She makes sense of her friend's suffering from epilepsy and its increasingly debilitating effects on her life, through an altruistic act performed post mortem:

Deep down inside me, somewhere I do believe in God, somewhere I know there is a God up there somewhere. But it's just where I am at the moment, the person I am that I just don't believe in catholic or anything. I do go to church. Me and my mates go to church. We lost a close mate, not that long ago. My mate Katie. She had an epilepsy fit and all that. But she is still out there and all that because her organs got donated, she saved a one year old little boy from dying. She died of an epilepsy fit. She believed in God, was a proper catholic and went to the same school and that is reason why we used to go to church. Not like every Sunday but we do go to Church. It's mostly my nan who is religious (Jane, 17/Catholic).

A 15 year old Muslim, Faisal has started to take his faith more seriously since coming out of prison. Faisal was brought up in a Muslim family and remembers learning about the Koran, but his faith has tended to recede into the background, as he got older and he started to hang around with his peers.

He had started to reacquaint himself with the rudiments of his faith, things he had learned when a child but has since forgotten:

I am still learning about my faith, I've forgotten about this stuff (5 Pillars of Islam), I weren't proper religious when I was young, but only recently started taking it more seriously, my parents are Muslims but not strict ...I'm still learning...

Faisal sees his Muslim faith as 'slightly important...it is important to me', but believes he is still learning. He tends to have been influenced by the need to fit in with his peers and acknowledges his parents could have been more authoritative about his religious observance and general behaviour. This excerpt indicates the role of parents in young people developing religiosity.

Religion is something where there is a sense of always being a learner, always something more to discover about it. He kept a journal about what he was learning while in custody and thinks God put him in prison to make him realise about his behaviour, because it was in prison that he started to take his faith more seriously:

Things happen for a purpose. It's supposed to happen because God ordained it. I wrote it down in my book, the expression. I used to keep notes of what I had learnt when I was inside. I just wanted to write down my experiences and that, like keeping a diary but I didn't used to write in it everyday, but just when I learnt new stuff and that.

This is an example of Foucault's technologies of the self with his treatment of self-writing and hupomnēmata or use of notebooks that were filled with wise sayings and reflections that "constituted a material record of things heard, or thought" which could be used as an "accumulated treasure for subsequent rereading and meditation" (Foucault, 2001:208).

The notebook was not just an external memory aid, to have a reminder of his experiences, but a means of internalizing, a method for Faisal to absorb the principles and things he was learning (Nielsen, 2011). It is not certain how far he will "let his faith change his life" but if

he did he would be, as he states: “respecting God through following the rules” through more closely observing his faith. Faisal highlights the tensions inherent within growing up as a Muslim and the pressures of being a teenager. The regime in prison is more structured and directed than on the outside.

He began to reacquaint himself with religion while in prison, through attending Friday prayers through the chaplaincy:

At Friday prayers in prison, they would, tell us stories to teach us why you should do these things, the positive and negative—such as pictures (females) on your wall are a distraction bad, the positive how organised we are, respectful we are in coming down here—They told us in prison that doing crime is haram, its bad, shouldn't do it, you are disrespecting God, they used to talk about original things to us, look if you've got a proper job, you'd make the same money as you did committing robberies and it's the hallal (good) way as well, because you are stuck in here fall behind people who are earning money. It made me think, I think I am smart and made realise what I am wasting, that I should get on with education and get a nice job, nice money. I want to be an accountant because I am good with numbers, good at IT as well. I would like to go to University (Faisal, 16/Muslim).

This religious practice includes teaching that is applied to everyday life, it resonates with the lives the young people have been living, because It is relevant and tries to motivate them to think and act differently, distinguishing between right and wrong behaviour, such as earning a living through employment or by committing crime.

There are, however, constraints to achieving his goals, such as the influence of his criminal peers who have affected him quite strongly, and how strict and disciplined he is about learning about his faith and integrating this into his life, and achieving his education. The school may not welcome him back without the appropriate negotiation and support. The desistance literature talks about ‘supporting change’ with the right attitude coming from

Youth Justice workers (McNeill, 2009). This means working 'with' rather than 'on' offenders in ways that are perceived to be legitimate by the person being supervised. It means working with young people's concerns about how they will be perceived by the religious community, because of their criminal involvement:

Yes I go to the Mosque, but I didn't really want them to know about my doing my criminal offences.

So you have kept the criminal side separate from them?

Yes. There are two sides of me, the criminal side and the good side of me, get my education and that. I am not a bad person, just bad in doing crime and that (Faisal, 17/Muslim).

Faisal is concerned about being judged by the Mosque and that is why he does not want to disclose to them about his criminal background. On the whole he sees himself as a good person, but not necessarily a "good Muslim". He sees his learner status as something that gives him a lot of latitude in how he might be perceived and treated. He is insistent that he is not to be defined in the entirety of his person by his criminal behaviour, making a distinction between 'being' and 'doing'.

McGuire (2008) distinguishes between religion as lived and religion as defined by the prescribed teachings of a particular faith tradition with institutionally defined beliefs and practices. Beliefs and practices may not always be consonant in everyday embodied practice, as Quasim a fourteen year old Muslim stated:

Anyone can be religious. Anyone could say they are religious but don't do anything for their religion, but is it just words. Then there is other people who stick to their religion and do everything they can. They stick to the rules.

This comment speaks about the level of commitment to one's faith and how this should impact one's life, and makes a contrast between an authentic and inauthentic faith, the

integrity of living up to what we say we believe. He talks about offending as being wrong, but that God can forgive you, because “we are all human and make mistakes.” These elements are captured in the conceptual phrase belief- behaviour congruence, which is not always straightforward. Adolescence is a period of fluidity when religiosity can change as it intersects with contingencies in the life course (Pearce and Denton, 2011). Quasim continued:

It depends if people believe in a religion, if it will help them or not. If they believe in their religion, they should think before they do stuff[committing crime] I never and look where it put me, now, into this mess.

This disclosure informs us that Quasim believes he has “grown up” and has “reflected on things” since committing a robbery and being placed in care for the last year and half and having to attend the Youth Offending Team. There is, however, a tension in the young person’s own account of his moral universe that hindsight and case records underline. He was beginning to keep out of trouble, but was placed back with his mother and things deteriorated as she couldn’t control him and subsequently resulted in further offending and him being placed in custody for more serious robbery offences.

Prayer has helped him to come to terms with difficult circumstances, living in foster care, being separated from his mother. “It helps me when I pray, hoping that God/Allah hears me. I hope he does”. There is an honesty about his connection to God, venturing a doubt that he is not just verbalising words to an imaginary entity, and that his communication is not falling on ‘deaf ears’:

I don’t pray 5 times a day, don’t go to the Mosque, but I do pray at night before I go to sleep. Pray, what I know, the little of what I know of the Koran. I pray before meals,

burp, yawn...‘Astaghfirullâh’⁷burp sorry I am full because other people ain’t full, those don’t eat..

These are short set prayers that serve as reminders of the divine presence in everyday life, supplications that express devotion.

There are expectations about how faith is to be properly lived out that are institutionally defined, but also individuals have scope to interpret and apply these personally in different ways and to resist particular norms of behaviour. There is always a discrepancy between the ideal and reality. Denton and Pearce (2011:18) express it succinctly:

“The lived religion perspective argues that not everyone fully commits to or enacts an institutionally defined package of religious content, conduct and centrality.”

The extent of personalisation of faith varies between individuals and is mediated by levels of religious literacy, understanding and self-awareness. Some young people felt a deeper connection with their faith would occur when they were older, with their adolescent behaviour and lifestyle sometimes incompatible with religious faith.

The Postponement of ‘Deeper’ Religiosity until Later in Life

Some research participants felt a ‘deeper’ level of religiosity should be equated with a later stage in life that reflects the seriousness of maturity. Danny is an eighteen year old with an

⁷ Seeking forgiveness, saying sorry repeatedly for burping or yawning . There is some doubt about whether it is actually a legitimate part of the Sunnah or merely a cultural practice.

Irish Catholic heritage who has spent most of the last 6 years in prison .He is not actively practising the Christian faith that he was brought up with. He believes that it will perhaps become more salient and a priority when he is older:

I believe in god, I went to chapel about once or twice but I don't pray. I don't read my bible. When I get older I will probably do those things but at this point in life I don't bother with those things.

'When I am older...I will take my faith more seriously' and its associated variations was a common motif among my participants. It could be interpreted as an honest assessment of how faith is respected, but is not purposely prioritised amongst other competing concerns and activities, it does not always have significant traction in their lives. Faith tends to be equated with maturity and adulthood, where it is put off for a later stage in life so that life can be experienced and experimented with before the transition to adulthood. "*I am not bothered with those things*" could be seen as dismissive of talking about religion, it having limited traction in his life.

Sonia, a sixteen year old mixed race female with a Pakistani father and white mother informed me that she was following the requirements of her Islamic faith, when she was living with her father around the age of six years. She was learning about the Koran through regularly attending Koranic classes, which is a common mechanism for the transmission of the Islamic faith (Scourfield et al., 2011). This religious learning ceased as she got older, and her parents separated:

[...] if I had stayed with my dad and not went, but now I don't really know nothing about it [her faith] I think I will get into it more when I am older, but now that I am young and want to go out with my mates, I don't think I will now.

Sonia is sincere about her current choice to privilege spending time with her friends above the possibility of taking her faith more seriously, as this would impact substantially on her lifestyle, in having an intimate relationship with her boyfriend, which she explains would “get her into a lot of trouble” and would be frowned upon by her father and the Muslim community. Maturity-faith commitment congruence is a decision shared by another research participant. Fahad believes he is progressing in his faith as he gets older and sees it as more important to him as time goes on:

GM: How often do you go to the Mosque?

Fahad: Not a lot but I think I get better and better the older I get.

GM: Has your faith become more important to you as you have gotten older?

Fahad: Yes, definitely.

[...] as I get older I get more religious.(Fahad, 16/Muslim).

Another young person, Farooq a seventeen year old Muslim of Bangladeshi descent, felt he was not particularly religious:

I'm not so really religious. I would like to know more about my religion. During the month of Ramadan I'll be at mosque 5 times a day—I'd like to know more.

Farooq yearns to know more about his faith, but acknowledges that it is mostly during religious festivals that he is challenged to make a deeper level of commitment, where his practice of his faith is increased because there are greater expectations placed upon individuals at these times. The desire and intention have to be supported, if a level of commitment is to be sustained.

Kai, a seventeen year old mixed race young person with some Christian religious involvement while growing up, started to enquire about Islam in prison through the influence of his cousin who was serving a long custodial sentence for armed robbery and had recently converted to Islam. He was encouraged by the Imam to attend Koranic classes and shown how to pray. He was honest about the difficulty of being able to translate his interest in Islam into something more substantial when outside the regime of prison and away from the influence of his cousin and other Muslims because other priorities would take precedence:

God is not central in my life at the moment, but it may change when I am older because I will have children by then and I will have to set an example. I don't want my kids to be brought up the way I was brought up, if you know what I am trying to say (Kai, 17/Muslim).

He went on to describe his upbringing within an environment saturated by criminality:

I was brought up around crime. My dad was involved with drugs and guns. He was in gangs, involved with drugs and guns. Then my cousin's dad was involved with drugs and guns. It was the same with my other cousin's dad, the same. It's a vicious circle. Look at everyone in your family really.

These young people questioned their own qualifications for being authentic representatives of particular faiths, as they did not feel they practised in a normative way as prescribed in specific religious traditions. These young people see themselves as at varying degrees of distance from what they see as normative or prescribed religious faith, as 'learners' bound to make mistakes but open to be educated. A young person may prioritise other factors and not see religion as a central component in the project of their life, but something to be seriously considered at another time. It means accepting a sense of 'worldliness' into the comprehension of the praxis of a young person's faith and witnessing faith's evolution over time. There is a relativity, complexity and creativity in the

praxis of faith that deserves to be taken more seriously and this faith should not be seen as deficient religiosity or distortion from true religious faith (Beaudoin, 2011). Young people are trying to get through their lives as best they can.

The extent to which young people draw upon their religious upbringing and how they actually use it as a guide and resource for their moral agency is paramount in understanding the scope of its leverage in the movement away from offending and towards the good life. It may be something they wish to learn more about and this could encourage them to see the uptake of religiosity as a means of positive metamorphosis. In this study, young offenders see religion as “an irremediable aspect of their identity, existentially in play at some level that cannot be dispensed with, but [they] do not or cannot make of it a regular and central set of explicit and conscious practices” (Beaudoin, 2011: 24).

These young people have entered a time in their life where the direct embrace of religion is not immediately required, but is postponed until they get older and they are ready to face the reality of their finitude. Other young people are more ready to articulate a decision either way as to be practising or not practising their faith.

Degrees of Practising Religiosity and the Performance of Rituals and Practices

The forty interviewees have participated to varying degrees in different religious practices. These are outlined in the table 8 below and range from attendance at a place of worship, to prayer and practices that have existential meaning. The sheer extent and variety of

practices that might be deemed spiritual, highlighted here, is a significant finding in this research, because the practices are carried out by both the religious and non-religious alike.

Table 8 Practices

Case	Religion	Practices
1	Christian background – agnostic	prayer in times of need, chapel, spirit of father warning him
2	Christian	pray, read bible, go to church, forgiveness
3	Christian background – Assemblies of God	I pray to him once in a while. I pray whenever I need to. Sometimes goes to church not all time. Forgiveness
4	Catholic	prayer, communion, wearing a cross, questioning and doubt
5	Atheist	None identified
6	Muslim	prayer & attends mosque, reads Koran, forgiveness
7	Christian background Agnostic	None identified
8	Muslim	attend Mosque, prayer and fasting, use of diary
9	Agnostic	attend Christian church, knew street preacher and talked to church leader
10	Christian background, Muslim	Prayer beads, prayer, reading Koran
11	Christian background,	Sometimes pray if in trouble, in cell, before Court
12	Christian background	thinking and talking deeply about existential questions, giving thanks-gratitude – ‘living each day as if it is your last’
13	Atheist	prayer/ conversation letter to deceased aunt
14	Muslim	recite Koran before bed & pray
15	Convert to Christianity	rose tattoo / prayer to get through hard times
16	Atheist	regime – gym , self-talk- “helps weigh things up” , having a positive attitude. Prayer for family ? Superstition- touch wood
17	Muslim background	None identified
18	Christian & Rastafarian background	keeps bible open in house, recite Psalms, read bible attends church sometimes , Buddha in house- good luck
19	Muslim	Friday prayers at Mosque, forgiveness
20	Muslim	Ramadan, prayer, Mosque
21	Christian background Christian	prays and read bible sometimes, Sometimes pray if in trouble, in cell, before Court
22	Convert to Islam, Catholic background mother converted to Islam	Ghosts, haunted prison, Koran protection from evil spirits
23	Christian	Attends Boys Brigade, Church YG, prayer
24	Christian	Cross- feeling of safety / prayer / tattoos, reading bible
25	Atheist	None identified

26	Catholic	pray when in trouble, "it gets desperate", knows some bible stories, Catholic background
27	Muslim and Christian background Muslim	Pray, attended spiritualist church, Ramadan , influence of Aunt. Religious person
28	Atheist	"embracing the implacable grandeur of this life"
29	Catholic	Leader of Catholic young person's youth group, prayer, goes to church-mass
30	Catholic	Cousin, still with me- talk to him- grave, light candle in church 13-14 years, talk to priest, read bible, holy water, reminders of deceased relatives, prayer, saying grace at meal times
31	Muslim	attending Mosque, praying to Allah, worship, forgiveness, don't pray five times a day
32	Sikh	Gurdwara, prayer- father watching over him
33	Catholic Christian	attends church, prays, Hip Hop writes music and lyrics, a worship song, wears cross but lost it, prayer to help deal with difficult circumstances
34	Atheist	none identified
35	Muslim	- evil eye- Aya'tul Kursi – protection, prayer, attends Mosque
36	Atheist	superstition, touching wood, collecting of self, self talk
37	Agnostic	deep thinking/ contemplation, study
38	Sikh	attends Gurdwara
39	Mormon	prayer, reading the bible, attend Mormon church
40	Sikh background converted to Islam Sikh-Muslim	attend place of worship temple, mosque, church, pray, Ramadan, reads about religious education and holy texts

One of the most prominent practices was attendance at a place of worship for the performance of situated rituals. Attending either church, temple or mosque for worship, prayer, study of the holy text. Experiences ranged from Sunday school, Koranic classes, to using chaplaincy in prison. More aesthetic practices included the wearing of Tattoos as embodied symbolic representations of meaning and remembrance, such as a rose to mark the power of love in having overcome the trauma of sexual abuse or as a motto for the art of living (Back, 2000).

The rituals and activities that the young offenders participated in provide life with meaning and purpose and were either humanistic, religious or spiritually motivated. These included forms of prayer or meditation, practices of recollection of the thoughts as decompression to deal with anxiety and stress to produce a better relationship with the self. These practices can be powerful sources of transformation, such as with a learned practice of silence that imbues a deep capacity for attention through what Coakley (2002:23) has described as a “sort of searing confrontation with one’s own inner turmoil that the practice of silence engenders [...]”. Practices refer to the regularly repeated actions that serve a specific purpose for personal development and the formation of self. They are the disciplined forms, habits, rituals, methods, techniques with a desired intention and telos. For example , an individual who wants to learn to master a musical instrument is obliged to acquire certain skills and knowledge through dedicated practice, through performing specific actions like scales and playing set pieces of music in order to attain proficiency. These refer to ‘spiritual askesis’ or spiritual exercises (Foucault, 1983; Beaudoin, 2007;2008) that involve the constitution of the subject as an ethical being through repeated exercises, routines done over and over again that enable the governing of the self. These practices serve certain functions that develop the moral self. They both reflect and shape what matters to young people (see chapter 2).

Sylvia Collins-Mayo (2008:43) writes about the importance and meaning of prayer in young people’s lives, which is seen as beneficial and “as a way to make sense of their lives and cope with problems and difficulties...and can strengthen moral connectedness”. It is a practice that forms part of their identity formation. This research study would confirm these findings.

Prayer is usually a routine activity for young people who attend places of worship and is considered a required and regulated practice within certain faith traditions like Islam, where people are exhorted to pray five times a day at set times. There are other locations that provide opportunities for prayer, such as being locked up in the cold confines of a police cell, or banged-up behind the steel door in prison.

[Prayer] It's important but not that important ... pray anything man... say anything sometimes when I pray...pray not get locked up when in police station cell and next day put me on bail...probably my luck ...(Curtis, 16/ Christian)

It is a bit scary [in prison]...people turn to religion in prison to have someone to speak to, like when they feel down and out, so you go to someone to speak to and ask for forgiveness and them things but .. I cannot explain it...I see it as someone to speak to, someone always there, constantly there, so if you are behind your door you can still speak. You still can pray. (Kai, 17/Muslim)

These are examples of what Robert Orsi (2003:173) has called prayer as a switching point:

"...people at prayer are intimately engaged and implicated in their social worlds—prayer is a switching point between the social world and the imagination. In circumstances of great urgency, distress, anxiety, and pain, the taken-for-granted quality of reality is dissolved and humans encounter the fictive nature of what they call real, in the sense that they apprehend the radical contingency of their worlds...Prayer is often the language spoken in these ruptures and to these ruptures."

Prayer offers a reflexive management of the self as a method of dealing with the disorientation and humiliation of being arrested and imprisoned that makes a person startlingly aware of reality, the prospect of facing custody or having to deal with a long stretch of time in custody. It is a mechanism to process emotional and psychological energies, to deal with stress. Greer (2002) found that for female prisoners prayer forms part of a repertoire of strategies to manage their emotional lives, including diversion, spiritual pursuits, blocking exercises, self-reflection and humour. This was the same for some of the participants in this research.

Youth clubs can have structured prayer activities that young people can participate in either wholly or partially, as Linda a seventeen year old white first time entrant into the Youth Justice system and a practicing Catholic explains:

At the end of Youth group we have night prayer. We get people to write prayers themselves at the end of it, everyone holds a candle and go around and everyone says who and what they want to pray for. All the kids from the parish, come to the Youth club and we play games and stuff. (Linda, 17 /Catholic)

Prayer is an organised collective ritual requiring participation and in this instance delineating the sacred ethos of a Catholic youth group. The process of prayer has to be learnt as suggested by Meera who comes from a Sikh background but converted/reverted to Islam through her Muslim partner:

I know about prayer for the start of Ramadan...one of my family taught me how to do it. One of my in laws taught me how to do it, until I could do it myself. It's about watching what they do and stuff. I don't pray five times a day. I probably pray once a day after I have eaten (Meera 17/Sikh/Muslim)

This is an example of prayer being modelled, where learning to perform Salah, through learning about the form and content of the prayer act that provides a template for the young person to follow, because without socialisation young people are less likely to pray. For Helen prayer is like an on-going dialogue:

I pray If something bad is happening to me. I say a prayer asking for help. Talk to him(god) likes he's my mate- nattering on. Mainly family problems—believe in answered prayer. I've asked god to keep someone safe. Pray for help or something, if life's difficult. Nothing bad has happened and I think my prayers have been answered. Like when my mother was ill, I prayed to keep her safe (Helen, 17/ Catholic)

Prayer is a way of dealing with anxieties and concerns, a means of emotional regulation through regular communication with a transcendent being, who in this instance is more like a friend. As Aslama and Pantti states (2006:107) “an essential part of the strategies of

finding the authentic self is the confession of one's innermost feelings to another". Jason stated prayer helped him during a perturbing allegation of committing a sexual offence:

I pray sometimes, it helped me during the police interview [allegation of rape], yes a bit to take away the fear (Jason, 16/Catholic).

Prayer can also serve the purpose of extending existing relationships, as Rajdev describes:

I just pray when I go to the temple...I think about what he [deceased father] would think, its positive yes, he 's watching me, watching my back...I want my father to be proud of me (Rajdev, 17/Sikh).

A familial relationship sundered by the violence of suicide is reconstituted as an enduring positive presence; a profound connection with a deceased father as a form of prayer happening in sacred space. This is an example of what Day (2009) calls the relocation of the transcendent, more than an aid of remembering but the continuation of affective and adherent relationships beyond the temporal. Nadia a mixed heritage female, brought up a Muslim, explained about having attended a Spiritualist church:

They get the reading thing...The Spiritualist got my Nan, that she was in the room. She said she loves me very much and there is nothing to worry about, I started crying in front of everyone. My boyfriend goes all the time because of his mum's dead. She gets, not all the time she gets a reading, but most of the time. I love it there I have only been once but I really like it. Its mad like they know everything and it feels weird They'll get a thing like whose in the room, which dead people and they will say something and whoever that connects with then they will start reading to them. They are saying this, they are saying that. They will ask questions to see if they are actually telling the truth and they are actually are (Sonia, 17/Agnostic).

This event of mediumship or spirit communication was considered genuine; representative of belief in the continuation of life after physical death and communion with spirits of the departed. Nadia felt it was an uplifting experience that provided reassurance in helping her come to terms with the rupture of bereavement in her life, putting her existentially back in touch with her grandmother whom she cares about deeply. Day (2012) interprets this type

of belief as being more about sociality than facts or truth in terms of the function that belief performs. It is an experience of 'extraordinary relationality' as a more feasible term for the paranormal.

Kai, who had been initiated into Islam while in prison by his cousin, was wearing prayer beads and spoke about how this gave him a structure in which to pray and served to remind him about the need to practice regularly:

It gives you a structure in prayer. Some beads. You count round them and say a prayer every time you go around for every bead. 33 times Subhannallah (Glory to Allah) and 33 times Allah is the greatest and then 33 times Allah most graceful. I practice this. You are meant to do it three times a day, and when I get the chance I do it. I ain't gonna lie, I don't pray 5 times a day, not all the time. Sometimes I do. Not that much. Most of the time I did when I was inside. I haven't read the Koran since I have come out. You can get Koran in English, I cannot read Arabic no. I do know the prayers in Arabic, taught from other inmates, Muslim brothers innit. I know about prayers and wuzu.

The regular performance of these practises requires concerted effort and demonstrates it is difficult to sustain without the support of like-minded others and the right environment.

The regular regime of a prison enables habits to be formed more readily than when trying to practice alone.

Going to church and practising your faith can help you to be a better person, according to Linda, an active and dedicated Catholic female who has committed one offence of driving illegally under the influence of alcohol; an offence for which she received a Referral Order and describes being exceedingly embarrassed by her behaviour: "I won't be shouting out loud what I have done". Both her parents are Catholic but "are not really religious [because] they don't attend church." She said they provided structure and had certain expectations

and “ground rules” about her behaviour, such as having to be in by a certain time and not taking drugs. She stressed:

People are religious that don't go to church, but people who go to church are going to be better because they are receiving communion and actually praying. People who go to church, it gives them faith, strength, stuff like that.

Linda believes it is a tangible strength and support received from a personal deity that makes a difference in your life. She went to a Catholic school and attends church every Sunday morning and helps run a Youth Group at the church. Prayer is a means of asking for support whenever she needs it:

I don't ever doubt it [my faith], I just know it is there if I need it kind of thing. So say if I wanted to pray, I would just pray. I didn't want to, I wouldn't just think about it [...] I have been going to church with my friend, since last year and it was through Youth group that I got into it

Religion provides certain moral guidelines and prohibitions about wrong doing, but these are not always strictly adhered to. She gave the following example:

Sex before marriage is a sin. A lot of young people do it, but just don't care. Some people don't follow them anyway and if you were to say it's a sin, they would be like so what.

Young people's morality is influenced by “people they hang around with and your upbringing” and parents caring about them and their behaviour. Another white female, Sharon who was placed on a Referral Order for an offence of causing Actual Bodily Harm for hitting someone when she was drunk states: “*I don't think you have to go to Church to be religious, just try and do right*” (17/Catholic). She was brought up a Catholic and attended a Catholic school. “*I don't go to church, and I've not been baptised. I've got a catholic belief and once attended mass at school.*” She said she gets a sense of belonging from her faith. “*I just believe in God; if you take it more seriously you go to church, I was*

going to get baptised but it never happened last year”. Life has been quite busy with full time employment and attending college as part of her apprenticeship.

Another Muslim young person evidences the delineation between practicing and non-practicing, a dichotomous arrangement that is perhaps best viewed as a continuum than a clear separation, as along the lines of minimal and maximal impact on a person’s life.

I am a Muslim but I am not practising though. Say if you are Muslim and pray 5 times a day then you are practising and read Koran. I don’t do none of that. If you are Xian and go to church, you are practising. If you’re just named a Christian, but don’t do nothing, you are not practising (Amir, 15/Muslim).

Amir invoked this binary to establish a sense of integrity between his stated beliefs and their outworking in the fabric of his life world. He is aware that he does not live up to the established expectations of this faith tradition. He was a convert/revert to the faith through his mother’s conversion from Catholicism to Islam, although his father is from a Christian background. He shows how you can be culturally associated with a particular faith tradition but do not participate in its rituals. There is a difference between ascribed and enacted religious identity that is being made here.

GM: What does it mean to be religious?

I think of them as having a good relationship with their religion and having faith in God and then being happy with their religion and proud of being whatever they are.

Religiosity is more than assenting to a series of beliefs, faith is linked to performance and the regular practice of rituals, practices, activities that distinguish between people based on embodied comportment. This raises the issue about who or what sets the standard for what constitutes authentic as opposed to inauthentic practice. By way of contrast Fahren, a devout 16 year old Sunni Muslim, seeking Asylum and a ‘good life’ in the UK, having been

trafficked into the UK , escaping from the Taliban is concerned about what it means to be a good person: “ *it’s easy to go off the [right] path a little bit*”. He got in trouble at school following an argument with a female student, where in the heat of the argument she cursed his mother and he became angry and claims he just pushed her, although he was charged for common assault. He commented:

I am from Afghanistan, my family is Muslim and go to the Mosque [...]. I believe in God, do my prayers and believe I am a good person. Get away from trouble, don’t do anything wrong, don’t mess about. Follow the rules of your religion [...] I am someone who follows my religion.

He described attending Koranic classes back in Afghanistan, from when he was six years old, everyday for six days a week learning the Arabic language:

They would teach us the meaning of the Sura’s. They would teach us from the Pashta language, one sentence and explain what it does mean. Sometimes I read the Koran and pray. I pray on my own. 5 times a day. I am praying, in Arabic, that is what I am saying. God bless me, get away from me trouble and make me a good man. When I get worried I pray to God. Only you can clear the problems, that kind of prayer. It helps me. I didn’t here no one in my religion, kill someone, hurt someone, be bad, mess around, religion should be good.

This young person believes that religion should make you a better person if you follow its conventions and practices, and that it has nothing to do with violent extremism and killing people as many detractors claim (Nelson-Pallmeyer, 2006). Nevertheless, it is not always easy to be faithful with the pressures of everyday life. Fahran believes religion helps you to learn about good behaviour: “*God makes you, to teach me, know what wrong thing, good thing. God given us mind to learn and think*”. It is through the exercise of moral inquiry that the conscience is raised towards the ‘good’ and hopefully away from offending. It involves education in what it means to be good. Danny is another young person who offers an additional perspective in the following excerpt:

GM: What happens when you die?

Danny: I have been told yes, that all you have to do is show God that you believe and every time you do a sin, ask him to forgive you. I cannot remember who told me that, but it is what I have been told. Those are my thoughts and yes, you do that. Then you are supposed to go to heaven if you just believe in it. If it's not true and I believe in him, it's not a big cut out of my life because I have only believed, I haven't worshipped him. But if it is true and I have believed and that's all you need to do to get into heaven, he just wants people to believe in him, then I got in and that's good.

"I believe in God...but I don't worship him" is a distinction that Danny makes in talking about religiosity. He is an 18 year old white young person with a grandmother who was a devout Catholic, proposing that there is a level of differentiation in dedication or commitment to following one's faith. Danny appears to be 'hedging his bets' as he is not certain what happens after he dies, whether there is some afterlife, but he would like to go to heaven. He wants the benefits without necessarily the obligation through meeting the minimal entrance requirements. Religion does not take a "big cut out of his life", it does not take up a lot of time and effort, but nevertheless he will defend his 'belief in God' as he went on to report during interview. God is an entity who acts to pardon Danny's actions. A continuum of fidelity is proposed by Danny's comments that has different expectations at each stage. He believes "there is something there" that is designated as God but he would never force someone to believe something.

Young people are subject to parental influence regarding religious observance and instruction when growing up, as evidenced in a number of recent studies (see Horwarth and Lees, 2010) though it depends on the level of religious commitment of the parents and the quality of their relationship with their siblings as to how much sway they hold. Sometimes they can be "proper hardcore" or zealous and transmit these values to their offspring or be quite relaxed and liberal in their attitude, as Danny observes:

I think my mum never did it to me. [forcing me to believe in religion] I 've picked up myself what I know and know what I am saying. Some parents like, mainly the Muslims man. Because they get it drilled into them from an early age because I don't know the Xians, there is some of them are proper hardcore. Most of us go to feel safe man. [attending chapel in prison] The Muslims go because they actually, truly believe and that's why they drill it into their kids from an early age.

There is a difference to be struck between encouragement and coercion in testifying to what a person believes, but proselytization is discouraged. Keith, self-nominated as an atheist, describes being somewhat spiritual: 'not properly believing in the existence of ghosts'. He is sceptical and uncertain in his worldview when it comes to assessing his attitude towards religious faith and provides a good example of someone who could be considered a 'waverer', someone who is not yet definite or in an intermediate state (Kublitskaia, 2011) between belief/non-belief. His mother and sister are converts to Christianity and this has influenced his thinking to some extent. He believes people can be good and can turn their lives around and make something out of their lives.

I don't believe in any religion. You can never know completely and utterly (Keith, 16/Atheist).

There are degrees of divergence in the conduct of young people's religious faith, between those who merely assent to the label of religious identity and may have had some involvement in religious faith in the past and those who participate and engage more seriously in ritual practices. Profound dedication to religious observance centres on a scale of intensity of commitment and its significance in a person's life. The type and extent of practices a young person engages in has significance for understanding and evaluating a young person's moral agency in their movement towards or away from criminal behaviour. These practices can be formative in shifts in attitude and behaviour with an intentional focus of achieving the 'good life'. Practices convey meanings about a person's worldview

that enables practitioners to assess the direction of travel and ways of supporting rehabilitation.

Figure 4 A Case Study of Personalised Faith: Harpreet

Personalised faith is a specifically tailored interpretation, construction and application of available religious/spiritual resources into a unique belief system which a young person practices. One illustration of a personalised faith was provided by Harpreet. She was born a Sikh and then converted to Islam through the influence of her partner. She has a complex and tensive structure to her belief that appears contradictory, but for her the strands are weaved into a rich tapestry. There is a divine presence that influences her life.

I have taken different contents from the Sikh religion and the Muslim faith and the Christian faith and have combined it to enable me to see why people say this about God and what faith is and what religion is, what destiny and spiritual stuff is...there is a big board outside my temple that says 'God is One and all is God', so why does it matter that I am a Muslim and a Sikh and believe in Christianity.

Harpreet makes a distinction between “*religion is something that you follow and faith is something you believe in personally*”. It is the personal application and interpretation that is pivotal to her religious expression in combining elements of three different faith traditions. She is comfortable and familiar with her Sikh religio-cultural heritage: “*it’s what I have been taught and brought up to do and just what I think is normal to me*”. It’s familiar and not alien and she knows what she has to do when she enters the Gurdwara.

As mentioned earlier, Harpreet has learnt the tenets and practices of Islam from her partner and his family. She adapts these teachings as lived beliefs to suit her needs. “*There is a lot of difference between doing what you are told by your religion and doing what you believe is right*”. This is critical to Harpreet’s decision making about how she interprets the religious requirements in the faith tradition such as in wearing the head scarf. “*The Koran says that respectable women should cover up and dress respectfully but it doesn’t say you must wear it. It is more about what you feel is right.*” She went on to say; “*If you choose to wear it that is your choice but if you are being forced by your husband that is just wrong.*” Harpreet’s belief in God has evolved from what she was initially taught, “*I would say I do believe in God. I believe that somebody is looking over me rather than the God that I was taught to believe in*”.

'Faith in yourself'

McNeill (2012b:32) argue that "since desistance is about discovering agency, interventions need to encourage and respect self-determination, this means working with offenders not on them". The 'belief in self' is an important proposition, but how it is lived out is the crucial factor because it reflects ideas based on the discourse and ideal of authenticity as outlined by Guignon (2004). How are these young offenders being true to themselves?

Spirituality is about 'finding out who you are' and your place in the world, as one young philosopher-research participant Sean, surmised; thinking about what are the limits to human self-determination, and how far human beings can go in their actions. Sean believes that you follow your own path and make your decisions based on critical reflection and construct your own beliefs premised on thorough research and experience. This seventeen year old agnostic young person was reading philosopher AC Grayling and cogitating about morality, the morality of two friends who had been convicted for rape.

Sean: I think that you can give yourself a meaning to life but there is not a set one, life is what you make it.

GM: What gives life meaning?

Sean: The feelings that you feel. It's like, obviously everyone experiences fear, you never want to experience fear do you whereas happiness and things like that. I wouldn't want to do anything now that would make me unhappy, because it wouldn't feel good so, I would avoid things like that...I think you should do what makes you happy, so long as it doesn't hurt anyone.

This young person sees happiness as the summum bonum of life, a criteria adduced by philosopher JS Mill (2006), a life devoid of any divine authority with a shift of authority to

the self, with decisions predicated on sensibility and pleasure but in tandem with rational acuity:

I just need to find what my place is really in the world, because obviously people refer to it as a rat race, but I don't believe in that, I am not saying that everyone is, but I don't believe I am a part of that.

So what are you going to do different?

I don't know yet. That is like why I am trying to read up. First I need to know what I think, how I think, where it's come from, so then I can start to make big changes.

What do you feel you need to learn, to read up on?

My beliefs really because I have realised that I didn't used to have any. Only in the last two months have I started thinking about what I believe in...I want to help people, to make a contribution.

In this book AC Grayling it is like he says the only way, if you are born and when you die, if you are not remembered you are not really living are you. So I like want to do something that is going to like change people's lives.

Do you know what that would be?

Not yet.

Life is an exploration for this young person that involves having an open mind and how he can make sense of life and what he thinks about it. The self-determination relates to autonomy and competence, it is not purely individualistic, selfish and egotistical, it involves relatedness. He is learning about making connections, thinking about his peer group and what constitutes friendship. It is an opportunity for moral deliberation, where he is countenancing transformation. This is a time when his values and choices are being re-evaluated, the upheaval of the crisis moment in Marcia's (1966) theory of identity achievement. He is exploring his identity in various life domains and evaluating his commitment to a particular worldview, such as his relational and vocational choices.

Joshua a black young person from a Christian background, states that *"I believe in myself....I am the most important person in my life"*. He believes that you have to take care of yourself first and foremost, and then you can think about other priorities. He presents as being strongly independent and asserted *"I just do my own thing, you get me. It is time to grow up now"*. This has been interpreted as arrogance and being overly confident, but is an assertion of strong individualism. He presents a tough persona to the outside world, but he does demonstrate care and a keen mind. He has tended to fend for himself from about the age of fourteen, because his mother worked night shifts as a nurse and his father was absent from any early age, having spent time in prison. He takes care of a younger niece and sees this as just normative, part of his routine. He explained:

It's just normal, you have to do these kinds of things when your mums at work and that...everyone tends to go towards their mother, they won't disrespect their mother, so they won't say no"(Joshua, 17/Atheist).

He sees family life as an extension of self, but he remains the priority, the master of his own destiny:

I come first and I have to look after myself. Obviously when I am older I am obviously gonna have to look after myself and obviously have kids and that.

In a similar vein, Finigan is an 18 year old who is adamant that there definitely is no God and designates himself as an atheist with a strong belief in the self. He is critical of religious faith but coming from an Irish Catholic background:

I don't really believe in anything. I ain't really a Christian. I have got my own beliefs. Basically there ain't no God and that's it really. I believe in myself but I don't believe in a God or that. If someone in my family has a christening I would attend it.

Samuel is a black male who considers himself a humanist or what can be termed a rational pragmatist, where the here and now is all there is and who believes that *"life has to dealt with the best way you can"* by making rational and pragmatic choices about the best way to conduct oneself. Life is to be enjoyed, lived and experienced because there is no afterlife. Samuel's narrative conveys a secular version of 'Sheilaism', a term defined by female Sheila Larson, a research participant in the study *Habits of the Heart* conducted by Bellah and Madsen (1996:221). This is a highly individualised system of religious belief centred on the self's inner voice, whereas Samuel's is an individualised self-belief but embedded within a closely knit family unit. Samuel's mother suffered from mental illness and the family is very insular and protective, and he was strongly influenced by his older siblings. He reported:

I just see myself as my own kind of religion. I follow my own rules and they seem to work. Like I have my own rules, my own morals when I am with a girl, like when I am with my mates...I had an image of me [as opposed to an image of God] Like I have said, my religion is me. I follow my own things. People might think it is a bit mad by only believing in me but it's the way life goes, if you believe in other people they let you down...Life has just been up and down and I have coped with it well (Samuel,17/Atheist).

This is the consummate exemplar of 'faith in the self', but not someone egotistically self-absorbed. He is clear about his purpose and the direction of travel and is confident he will not be returning to the Youth Offending Team, an assessment shared by his case manager. The primary offence was related to loyalty to his family and 'keeping it within the family'.

Another young person commented about being in control of their fate:

I've heard it been said, but not really thought about it, whatever happens, happens... you're in control of your destiny...you make your own values.

John is a white male and self-confessed atheist with a serious alcohol problem. His raison d'être is consuming alcohol and fighting. Violence has become an everyday activity. He denies that his alcohol is masking his anger stemming from his disruptive childhood with two alcoholic parents. He laughed at this suggestion from two youth workers who stated: *"you've got anger in you from when you were a kid."* There is a visceral pleasure from fighting that makes him feel alive. Human beings take control over their lives and what they want to achieve through making choices and self-expression, however constrained they may feel, as outlined in the excerpt below:

So what gives life meaning and purpose?

The way someone uses it. If you don't use your life good then you don't have no purpose. I mean if you just sit in your house and have no friends, do nothing with your spare time, then you would have no purpose for life. That is why, you always get people who like to live on the edge and do some stuff where they remember that time where I done that, that's probably their purpose, so they can remember something when they are old. Do you want to have a boring life or someone might think argh when I was younger I didn't do nothing.

This is an example of authenticity, the understanding that "each one of us has his/her own way of realizing our humanity, and that it is important to find and live out one's own, as against surrendering conformity with a model imposed on us from outside by society, or the previous generation, or religion or political authority." (Taylor, 2007:475). For Samuel, life is what you make it and this is how one imbues it with meaning by answering what one really wants and needs. *"I truly am what I feel myself to be and we must decide for ourselves what most concerns us"*.

Conclusion

The young people seek to reconcile their beliefs and values often stemming from some experience of religious observance with their attitude to offending through a number of neutralisations, particularly if religiosity is salient for them: I am just learning or growing up, it's something I will take more seriously later in life, and is therefore something that can be postponed. The maintenance of a good sense of self is a prerequisite for these young people's identity formation and they acknowledge the standard of a religious ideal by which they compare their own behaviour but can clearly explain belief-behaviour incongruence. Religion is implicitly tolerated if not respected but is seen as either not relevant for some young people or for future consideration, something that comes with maturity. For others it is a uniquely tailored and personalised practice. It is how young people enact their beliefs and values in rituals, activities and behaviours that is significant for understanding their worldview. The 'carried' messages contained in the behaviours they undertake express more about how they see the world around them. Life is to be experienced in adolescence and so religion can change its salience according to an individual's priorities. Religion can be a potential blueprint for a better life and a motivation for change, if a young person chooses to take their faith more seriously. It is also determined by how they wish to prioritise their lives. We have argued that an authentic religious identity is not something that an individual possesses necessarily but is exercised in the dialogic interactions of the everyday world. Identity is negotiated by subjects and draws on two complementary and available resources, the repertoire of the self and faith traditions. Young people are more than deficits to be corrected but complex emerging individual's with real potential.

There is a sense of authenticity in the stances that are taken, in that the young people know their comportment is not always compatible with the 'religious ideal' but at least there is honesty in their religious position that is much more healthy. Faith in the self is also an expression of authenticity in coming to terms with what they believe in, and manifesting their identity formation. Faith is very much a relational term whatever its main referent and is articulated as a way of life and mode of being.

CHAPTER 7: FACING FORWARDS AND NOTIONS OF GOOD LIFE

We have explored in the previous chapters the ways in which young offenders use offending as a means of gaining social recognition and for expressing their social identity which is closely connected to their beliefs and values and which significantly influences their behaviour. Religiosity is downplayed by young offenders who employ a number of neutralising techniques to address the mismatch between their stated religious convictions and their offending behaviour, for failing to live up to a perceived religious ideal and for violating social norms in its interplay with attitudes to offending. Young offenders tend to justify their involvement in offending because they are not properly religious, are just learning and growing up, particularly if they hold salient religious beliefs.

In this chapter, young offenders' perceptions about their future orientation will be examined. Divided into three sections, this chapter will be addressing the following research questions 5) and 6): what are the specific factors identified by young people that can encourage and motivate change away from offending and the adoption of positive values? What are the kinds of factors that are identified by young people to mitigate against positive change, and how are these reconciled, or not with religious/moral values?

It is the contention of this chapter that an understanding and acceptance of what constitutes a 'good life' as a life worth living can provide a focus and motivation for change in attitudes and behaviour. The place of religion within notions of the good life will also be

examined. This relates to this thesis' core themes of identity, beliefs and values and behaviour and how the interrelationship of these three factors generates possibilities for change. Identity refers to the type of person a young offender perceives themselves to be and wishes to become and the kind of life they are leading and see themselves leading. A Good life relates to the concept of Possible Selves as representations of one's self in future states: how young offenders see themselves in the future. An examination of the influence of role models in the change process is explored including the part played by Youth Justice practitioners. This chapter will explain what my research participants thought constituted a good life and the implications for social work with offenders, outlining how young offenders can be assisted to achieve a good life.

Notions of the good life: a life worth living?

"Our values constitute our beliefs about the nature of the good life" (Talbot, 1998:157).

The notion of a good life addresses the ethical basis of behaviour and thus is related to criminality by approaching it as a moral issue (Day, 2011b: 6), or crime as moral action as Wikstrom (2010) argues. The good life is inextricably linked with the constitution of a person's character and the inculcation of virtues which require an examination and pursuit of the good. As Fowers (2008:630) states: "Virtues are conceptually dependent on a concept of what is good because virtues are defined as the character strengths that make it possible to seek particular goods". These equate to "what we believe is the best, the highest, most admirable and noble aims for humans" (Fowers, 2008). The identification and description of our 'ends' or the goals we wish to achieve are central to defining the character strengths we deem worth cultivating, which will vary for different ethical

positions. The overall good for Aristotle is eudaimonia or human flourishing. A contrast is often made between the hedonic (pleasure orientated) and eudaimonic (meaning and growth orientated) wellbeing, drawing on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics (Fowers, 2010). The pursuit of the best in human life is what makes life worth living, although what is good for humans is highly contested. Human beings acquire dispositions to act in certain ways through repeated practice, such as repeatedly acting generously towards others we can acquire the virtue of generosity, alternatively we can acquire the vice of selfishness by consistently acting horridly towards others (Sayer, 2011). In our social interactions the approval or disapproval of real or imagined others influences our responses.

In the following sections we will establish that according to the subjective views of this sample, the good life involves: living life with meaning and purpose; that it can be religiously motivated; is a conventional life contrasted with a criminal lifestyle; that it is about achievement and goal attainment and necessitates change.

Living Life with Meaning and Purpose

The good life is about living life with meaning and purpose:

I ain't got a motto, all I do is just live life, that is all I do, just live life... just live life how life is meant to be lived innit. Like gang members they are just ruining their life, they ain't got nothing to live for (Stefan, 17/Christian background).

So how is life meant to be lived? For Stefan, a black youth from a Christian background who described himself as gang affiliated during interview, you have to have something that gives life meaning and purpose, but it is not the criminal lifestyle found in a gang. Stefan is making an evaluative judgement about life, according to some idea of "what is good or

acceptable". He is not able to establish "...just what actually constitutes a good life as a whole [because this] is surely elusive" but he can identify some of the elements that contribute towards a good life, "distinguishing between better and worse experiences and situations" on a criteria that makes a distinction between flourishing and suffering (Sayer, 2011:112,143). He is talking about a better way to live life than some of the alternative pathways that are available through making a contrast with gang life. He went on in the interview to talk about growing up and maturing and learning from your mistakes, of "*always being on the road and hyped*" presenting oneself in hyper-masculine and confrontational manner and acquiring a new disposition as he grew up through acting differently via repeated practice. In keeping himself to himself he has begun to acquire new habits and virtues. This frames criminal behaviour as part of the maturational and developmental process, where it can be examined in a much more realistic and positive way in contrast to the discourse of young people being seen 'as risk' (Hughes, 2011). Keith explained about wanting to make something of his life, wanting life to have a purpose:

*GM: What do you want to do with your life?
Apprenticeship in warehousing or plumbing. Start doing the job, have own business...have a job, get some money and have a good life...My brother sits around and drinks on dole...I want to make something of my life...he drinks too much, it's his choice (Keith, 16/Atheist).*

A good life is something that provides a goal, a reason for being, and a focus to life that gives it some structure and enables a certain quality of existence. Keith, a 16 year old white young person with a mother and sister who are committed Christians, stresses that he wants to make something out of his life. He wants to be able to attain economic wellbeing that can sustain the life-style he wishes to have. He acknowledges that his father was sent

to prison for murder, where he killed someone in a pub brawl when he was drunk and Keith has felt let down by his parent ever since. This motivates his desire to improve the type of life he wishes to pursue, as well as the critical stance he takes about his brother's unstructured lifestyle.

Keith is making a clear distinction between better and worse forms of life, even an implicit contrast between a meaningful life within a religious discourse and a meaningful secular orientated way of life. Goal setting theory integrated with reputation enhancement theory (Carroll et al., 2001) suggests that young people like Keith tend to organise their behaviour according to the goals they wish to achieve and which are commensurate with their identity aspirations. Keith is in a transitional phase, he has grown tired of offending and wants to find personal fulfilment through work.

Religiously Motivated Good Life

The theme of the 'potential of a religiously motivated good life' serving as a moral template or possible self, was emphasised by my research participants. Within religions there is a concept of what constitutes the good life compared and contrasted with an 'errant life', the notion of 'hallal' and 'haram' within Islam for instance. This establishes certain standards that serve as a measure of what constitutes a better form of living. These standards are measures of how life should be lived, according to higher standards set by the lived tradition, but it is open to differing interpretations and what serves as the respected authority, as was noted in the previous chapter 6. One of the functions of a religious

worldview is to provide “an ultimate vision of what people should be striving for in their lives” (Pargament and Parks, 1995:15) and the strategies to reach those ends. Practicing one’s religion was promoted by some young people in this study as living a good life, as on the whole religion is seen to promote a morally good lifestyle, although it must be conceded that religion possesses a negative side and that an individual does not need to be religious to be a good person (Epstein, 2010). As this young person explained:

GM: What does it mean to be religious for you?

A religious person wouldn’t commit crime or would have a better or calmer life, go to Mosque, have a nice job, be polite to people, be nice to people rather than robbing them or something. Have a nice peaceful life, a good life (Fahad, 16/Muslim).

The good life for Fahad is religiously motivated and would require a change in the perception of self and the young person’s behaviour, as he is caught in a pattern of committing crime. Fahad felt that if he took his faith more seriously that he would possess increasing freedom from emotional turmoil and stress and would have a steady income through employment rather than having to acquire ‘monies’ by stealing. The place that religion takes in this exposition of the good life is to operate as a possible self that the young person could become (Markus and Nurius, 1986). With the adoption of an identity as a ‘good Muslim’, a person of religious piety who follows the strict observance of his faith, this subject position stands in stark contrast with his current circumstances identified by criminality. An alternative ‘decent’ lifestyle is presented that could be adopted but requires effort and self-discipline to make change. The appropriation of a new identity would help re-direct his life away from crime.

Religious faith has been shown to provide a blue print for behavioural adjustment and a moral compass (Calverley, 2009). It can provide a reference point for good behaviour and a

script (Rumgay, 2004) for how to conduct life, providing a structured environment where others can recognise the legitimacy of the individual's good intentions through regular attendance at a place of worship. The positive orientation that Islam provides is echoed by another research participant who endorses its benefits for leading a good life:

Joshua: See me, if I was to take up a religion, you know what religion I would take up? I would turn Muslim, that is a strong religion. Everyone just lives a good life in that religion.

GM: What is a good life?

Joshua A normal life, I dunno....People just have a nice life, no trouble innit. For some people, it's doing crime-gangsta life. Living smartly. My idea of a good life would be getting a good job. I want to get into construction or one of them things, have my own plumbing company or something, a van.

GM: Do you want to have a family?

Joshua: Them kind of things I don't really think about. I just make sure that I am alright at the moment. Until I am alright then I can start thinking about them other things. I have got to make sure I have money to look after myself, got somewhere to live, got somewhere to sleep, something to eat and if I can do that for myself, then I can aim for higher. I could provide for my kids, provide for my girlfriend. Provide for whom ever (Joshua, 17/Christian background).

Joshua is a 17 year old black male from a Christian background, who highlights the contradictions at the heart of the idea of a good life-what is the nature of the good that is being envisaged? Is a 'gangsta life' really a 'good'? On what basis do we make such judgements in a pluralistic context? A job as a plumber provides reputation and status, arguably as much as the reputation sought through a gang. Material gain is provided through both life styles, and this brings certain rewards, as well as downsides. This speaks

to us about legitimacy, quality of life and wellbeing, about reputational orientation. The good life is therefore something that makes us happy and provides meaning and purpose, as Seligman (2011) has demonstrated. Perception involves an evaluation of what counts as good, where different goods have to be prudentially weighed up and prioritised. There is in this commentary something about the normality of life and what we hold in common as human beings; offenders are persons just like the general public except they have committed acts of criminal behaviour. This young person shares conventional aspiration, but prioritises some personally defined goals. Joshua is beginning to examine his sphere of influence and responsibility, spanning out from meeting first his own needs and then the needs of others. This is the classic developmental move from being egoistic to more other-centric, where religion can offer a positive guide (Walsh, 1999).

Kenny is another young person who has begun to query the nature of the good life taking into account his own experience of the pleasures and pains of drug addiction:

GM: Should beliefs line up with actions?

Yes, absolutely. If you believe in God... Muslims are the only ones overcome that stance of character, are quiet people. Some of the Muslims I know, some of them don't drink, don't smoke and from what I know they have held a good life. I have seen some of them in prison, they haven't led a good life because they are in prison, but their soul, whatever you want to call it is clean. Religion though is bullshit (Kenny, 17/atheist).

There is an ambivalence about religion for Kenny as he is extremely dismissive of the indoctrination from his Catholic upbringing, yet at the same time he is attracted by some of the qualities he has seen with people practising their faith in prison and a change in attitude that it offers. He is enticed by the possibility of leading a quieter life, and having an inner sense of purification. It is a life counterpoised to his own past which was extremely

chaotic as someone addicted to cocaine, where he was offending to feed his habit and was also dealing drugs. He believes that he has “*wisened up*” and is “*maturer*”. A constructive regime is helping him to lead a better life and avoid offending, regularly attending the gym and being with his girlfriend and helping her with childcare:

If I was religious, I would be Muslim. I believe in first things that comes out. I used to half believe in God. Got in a taxi one night and the taxi driver told me about Islam, how the Koran was written before the bible. I thought switch on mate sort it out, if anything. Not let him know I was impressed with him, still stubborn minded. When I got out of taxi, it did hit me a bit. I used to listen to a lot of rap and one of the rappers talked about the same thing that the Koran was written before the bible.

Kenny is attracted to religion but at the same time repulsed, seeing it as for the weak minded but impressed by the taxi driver’s argument about the pre-eminence of Islam over other religions as the fulfilment of all Abrahamic faiths. The Islamic faith exemplifies some of the elements of a good life that are desirable to him.

A Good Life is a Conventional Life

Life is to be seized and lived to the full, by taking advantage of every opportunity that presents itself and living it according to one’s standard of the ‘good’, according to Sean, a sixteen year old Catholic male who comments:

I believe in the afterlife but then again I also believe that you have only got one life and its now to practice. You are meant to live it to the best of your advantage. Grab every chance you can and live it as good as you can.

*GM: So what is living it as good as you can?
Everyone has got their own perceptions of living life good. Nobody thinks the same. You might think on the same wavelength but you are not thinking the same. Some people want to be rich and famous and they think that is a good life. Some people just want to go to work and have a family, that’s a good life for them. Some people want to stay at home and that’s a good life for them...*

GM: So what is a good life for you? A good life for me is to get a job, start a family, have a nice house, nice car and just get on with it.

The young person aspires to achieve a normal or conventional life, to have an adequate income, to have a meaningful and fulfilling relationship, to nurture offspring, to make a home. These are not unrealistic goals; they are achievable within conventional parameters. He contrasts this with other people's ideas of the good life, staying at home, being rich and famous. Sometimes our aspirations can be out of reach, ideals we would like to achieve in our dreams, but really we can settle for a more moderate perspective. He has very realistic and grounded life goals in the way that he thinks life ought to be lived. It is clear that he is making an evaluation about what matters to him and not a judgement per se about other people who have a different view of the good life, although this is not a case of moral relativism where 'anything goes' or where there is "an indefinite number of ideas of the good life" (Christie, 1998:15) because there is at least a tacit recognition by my research participants that certain lifestyles are more appropriate than others. The research participants know the difference between right and wrong and possess an idealised sense of what constitutes the 'good' when they talk about their criminal behaviour.

Another participant, Hardeep, a sixteen year old Sikh illustrates the difference between the hedonic and eudaimonic sense of wellbeing. Hardeep has experienced the good life from a life of crime, describing a hedonistic lifestyle indulging his passion for cars, women, drinking and smoking cannabis, although he is aware he is on borrowed time, if he continues to offend, running the risk of going to prison because of class A drug dealing. He hopes for something more substantial as in Aristotle's 'eudaimonia' or human flourishing, something other than mere gratification like meaning and purpose, but it remains unclear as to

whether he is able to make this investment in trying on a different identity. He admits to having an economically privileged background, with both parents being self-employed. He regrets not taking his education more seriously:

I admit that I am lazy and never really had an idea what I wanted to do with my life, didn't bother with it and started hanging around with older young people and committing crime. I was dealing drugs, heroin, rolling in cars, smoking and drinking in hotel rooms. I was spending lots of money.

I have some regrets, but knew what I was doing, they were my choices and no one else's. I think now it's important to get a job, but I'm more influenced by life on the street.

People go into crime because it is easy to make money, I was probably greedy and didn't really need it, as my family are well off....for the last five or six years I have been lucky, close to going to prison....I should have made more of my education.

Hardeep believes the pull towards offending seems stronger than the push towards abstinence from crime and conformity, but he recognises the desire to obtain employment and avoiding the risk of custody. Another young person Matthew believes the good life is about avoiding crime, social harm and doing good:

Take out all bad things and that would be a good life. Take out like crime, drugs, just got to believe things can be better. If done something bad, you're not gonna start crying about it, you just gotta get on and fix what you have done wrong and make it correct.

It is also about self-improvement and putting things right by acknowledging and working to resolve what a person has done wrong. He also expresses hope that things can be improved.

The Good Life is about Achievement and Goal Attainment

Life has a purpose for Jane, a 17 year old female Catholic, because she is clear what she wants to achieve in life, but her aggression and substance misuse have continually caused problems for her, along with a number of abusive and controlling relationships. Having to

face the contingencies of life through the loss of significant relationships, like with her cousin, has made her question her faith. She is not certain about the existence of a loving divine being, but she seeks reminders of this possibility. Jane feels constrained by certain aspects of her behaviour that she knows need to change, if she is to achieve her ambitions:

Wherever I am I just think about my life and all the different things that I could do with my life. I want to travel the world as well.... I know what I want to do, I want to do this waitressing course and be a waitress...Life makes sense, in a way it don't, but it's just what is out there for you innit. I know there is something out there for me. There is something out there for everyone. It is just my violence that gets in the way and stopping me doing things. Smoking weed, stops me from doing things as well... I'm trying to get my life back on track (Jane, 17/Catholic).

Life is about establishing and achieving your goals in order to attain a good life and having determination to overcome barriers. Jane's aim is to complete her waitressing course and to get a job in the industry and this is helping her confront any barriers to attaining this goal.

The Good Life necessitates Change

Examining the notion of a good life also prompts ideas about the possibility of change and a shift in mindset. A principle of change is that only the individual can implement change, but its emergent properties can be encouraged and facilitated. As Keith explains:

You help yourself to change...just think do I want to be like this for the rest of my life. And just try and change. Stop what you're doing [crime]...People can try and influence change but if you don't want to do something, you just won't do it. You just won't do it. But, if you start to see life from a different perspective, you might then think different... you cannot change someone from what they are unless they want to do it themselves. If they don't want to change, they will not change (Keith, 16/Atheist).

The desire for change has to be nurtured, where it becomes owned by the young person themselves. Only the person themselves can establish whether they are ready and willing to take some action to begin the process of change. Opportunity relates to all the external factors that make the transformation possible or prompt it. The intention to stop will though be put to the test through having to negotiate temptation in everyday lived experience, which was the crux of the problem for Curtis:

...I want my life to be different, but I don't know how I am going to change it.

Your life is what you make it really, if you want your life to be shit, your life is going to be shit. If you want to lead a life of crime, you live a life of crime. If you want to live your life for good, you live your life for good. It depends how you want to live your life

I said last time I am going to go straight, I don't want to get in any more trouble, that is what I said last time and that is why I don't really say that any more. Everytime I say that I end up getting in trouble. I'll say that when I know it is the right time, when it's the right time, when I know I am going to stay out of trouble. The only thing that will probably get me to come out of trouble, I dunno man, probably when I get older and have a baby and that. I dunno man, probably having a kid, that would make me change (Curtis, 16/Atheist).

Curtis is a black youth who displays an ambivalence towards change. He is aware of the effort it will take to go straight and necessary adjustment in his behaviour if he makes a decision to stop offending but for now it does not appear to be 'the right time' for change. Maturity and having a child is cited as something that will perhaps galvanise change but for now he is uncertain about staying out of trouble. The prospect of being a parent is about wanting to leave a positive legacy and recognising responsibility. Curtis is signalling that he wishes to change but is not certain of his ability, motivation or goals, given the influence of his peers on his behaviour that we observed in an earlier chapter. He is suggesting that multiple attempts at change are necessary, having already experienced periodic setbacks and decreased motivation. Commitment to a crime-free life is gradual and cyclical in nature

incorporating various improving life adjustments. The internal motivations have to converge with structural contingencies if transitioning out of crime is to be successful. For example the type of support that is required to encourage the motivation to change, such as ensuring relationships are not antagonistic to this goal but assisting in a person's self-regulation.

One young person, Gordon, a 17 year old agnostic, possessing a network of peers in the process of transition in becoming more pro social, described helping his friend in his commitment to go straight. The friend had been to prison three times previously. The peer group supported his intention to change through enablement, by challenging him when he was tempted to waiver:

We have all helped him basically because if he goes to do summat [commit crime] we tell him no don't do that. You'll go back down [prison] and he won't do it (Gordon, 17/agnostic).

Enablement refers to increasing means and reducing barriers, such as providing the skills to tackle peer pressure. Handling peer pressure is crucial in how young people address change, how they negotiate the complex pressures of loyalty, needing to back-up friends and social status and confrontation. Helping a young person deal with their anger means recognising the conditions within which anger arises.

John, a sixteen year old Catholic, knows he has difficulty controlling his temper, "*if someone acts the big man and tries to cuss me, I just beat 'em up*" but knows it upsets his mother. He said, he is attending a YOT anger management course and is thinking about the implications of his own behaviour and demonstrates empathy for his family. Empathy is important because it is part of moral reasoning (Mayall, 2002). He said he would tell his own children

that: “you ain’t just hurting the person but also your family by beating someone up”. The sense of moral agency and beginning to recognise the negative impact of offending behaviour is important for motivation in the change process.

Gordon confirmed the need to realise the possibility and intention to change and also talked about equally needing support to change:

I believe every person has good in them, all bad people they have got the chance to be good ...everyone got the chance to change their life around, but it is down to the person if they want to change make that change, you’ve got to try.

GM: What will help people change?

Getting Support in it, it’s down to the person who wants to change asking for help, but it is hard, young people are not gonna do it on their own, even if decide to stop offending, what they gonna do sit around on arse all day need help to get a job, cannot do that on own (Gordon, 17/agnostic).

This young person seems ready to begin to think about making change and has begun to recognise that he needs help in making this change possible in providing support for him to find work. He is adamant that he does not want people “*who want to do shit [criminal behaviour], they can do what they want but they ain’t dragging me down with them*”.

Gordon acknowledges the difficulty young people have in asking for support. He talked about having to distance himself from pro-offending peers who were continuously in and out of prison for committing crime and having to resist the temptation to join in with criminal behaviour: “*they would go out and rob for stuff...see something like a bus window and just break it for fun...I walked off and left them to it*”.

Sean has begun to see the correlation between his own problematic use of alcohol and cannabis and his offending behaviour and how this mirrors his father’s descent into a serious criminal lifestyle with a combination of violence and alcohol abuse, as observed

through the reflection of his mother. This is the idea of the looking glass self, where “our social beings...are in large part a reflection of what other people perceive us to be”

(Maruna, 2012:80). This is explained in the following extract:

GM: Has your father being violent when using alcohol influenced your attitude to alcohol?

Yes. I could see it could happen. It was one of the main reasons why I stopped drinking really because my mum just said it, this is how your dad stated at 17 in jail, always pissed, smoking too much and it's not where I want to go...always intend to do what you want to do until you have had too much to drink and then it just escalates (Sean, 17/Agnostic).

There is fear that Sean will turn out like his father and he is aware of the potential given his own behaviour to date, but he is beginning to self-regulate assisted by the reflections from his mother and YOT worker who believe he has the potential to change but still view him as ‘high risk’. Sean explained:

I wouldn't put me down as a high risk of offending, but others would like my YOT worker and the Police officer who told me I am being watched and that its accurate, but they don't know my mind frame at the moment. Obviously, I explain that I am changing and that but they don't believe it. Obviously, they do believe it but it's seeing me follow it through (Sean, 17/Agnostic).

Sean is signalling that he is changing his behaviour, using Maruna's (2012) idea of ‘desistance signalling’ through his engagement at the YOT. However, Sean's previous offending behaviour with two pro-offending peers who are both serving jail sentences, gives his YOT worker some reason for being sceptical, especially as one of these two young offenders is due to be released from custody. Sean is appreciative of the positive reports he is getting but his intentions are about to be tested:

we were robbing innocent people on a daily basis, at least twice a day robbing people to make money over six months...and they [YOT] were trying to work out who was the leader and follower.....He gets out on Friday, I don't think he will have changed as

much. Before if he suggested something, I 'd be like I want to do it. He is like one of them ten times a day, shall we do this, do this, one of them people.

At least Sean is being honest about the temptation he will face when his friend comes out of custody and is fully aware that he has to translate his stated intention of 'going straight' into tangible pro-active behaviour.

The level and frequency of interactions with criminal and non-criminal peers is important in establishing the 'criminal self-view' of young offenders, as to whether they see themselves as criminal or not. This has implications for identity formation and behaviour change, as we have just witnessed with Sean. The reflected appraisals (views of others about the self) of significant others is highly important in this regard because their views can impact the changing self-views of offenders, their views having greater legitimacy (Ascensio, 2011). We receive information about how others see the self through interaction. A reflected appraisal is the interpretation of the actual appraisal of an Other about how one is seen in a given identity (Felson, 1985), as evidenced earlier by John in terms of his mother view about his use of violence. So the legitimacy of the relationship will determine how the offender views the self in terms of the quality of feedback they receive. These relations of legitimacy can come from either YOT workers or chaplains and other role models that the young people identify as significant in their lives but advocating a law-abiding lifestyle.

A change in worldview for young offenders often requires being surrounded by people whose views and lifestyle are different from their own that enables the challenging of assumptions and ideals and altering of beliefs through experience and conversation. It means stepping outside the cossetted circle of their peer group or social milieu of people who usually reinforce their existing perspective and to begin to entertain the possibility of

change. A person's identity and actions are linked, with an individual's decisions being "influenced by who a person thinks they are and who they want to become" (Bushway and Paternoster, 2013:853). For a young offender to begin to think about change is to begin to think about becoming a particular type of person as distinct from the working self as the sense of who one is at the present moment (Markus and Wurf, 1987). In the next section I will describe the characteristics of youth offenders' imagined future selves.

Possible Selves

One of the key themes emerging from my data refers to Possible Selves. This is a construct devised by Markus and Nurius (1986;1987) regarding the perceived potential of an individual. According to these authors the notion of: "possible selves represent individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming" (Markus and Nurius, 1987:157). It was used as part of the analysis in this thesis so as to be aware of how young people framed their motivation to change, indicating the kind of selves to be approached or avoided. The findings from my data regarding negative and positive possible selves are highlighted in the table 9.

Young people emphasised the fear of further offending, committing more violence and the attendant negative consequences of going to prison, fear about getting back on drugs alongside negative perceptions of themselves. There was real concern that they would not be able to find meaningful work because of having criminal records. Future aspirations were included as part of the interview process but negative self-concepts were not

specifically explored but were readily identifiable, being evident in the narratives that the young people presented. On the whole, young people in this study felt that it was possible to achieve success and make a change in their lives. The majority of the achievement related to acquiring meaningful employment or acquiring new skills, even when constrained by personal characteristics and environmental factors, such as having a criminal record.

Table 9 Young Offenders' Possible Selves:

Negative Possible Selves	N	Positive Possible Selves	N
Commit more offences	17	Achievement	18

Go back to jail	5	Change is possible	6
Betraying gang	2	Be successful	8
Might get killed	2	Devout Religion/ faithful to religion	11
Cannot get a job	5	Good mother	2
More violence	7	Good Father	2
Not be successful	1	Can stay out of trouble	5
Get bad criminal record	3	Not arguing with mother	1
Being a bad person	3	Giving something back	5
Get back on drugs	5	Having respect	4
Becoming a 'tramp'	2	Being 'legit'	10
Keep doing what I am doing	1	Good Muslim	3
Be judged	1	Responsible	3
Be left alone	1	Being a good person	3
Lose child	1	Good Catholic	2
Alcoholic	2	Good Sikh	1
Abuse	2	Purpose	2
		Meaning	2

Kai is a good example of an achiever, a seventeen year old young person of mixed race, who is adamant that he can be a success if he works hard and is, determined enough to attain his goals even with a criminal record. He became interested in Islam while in custody.

Kai noted:

GM: What is your vision for the future?

Kai: In five years time I want to be a property developer. Hopefully anyway.

GM: How you gonna get there?

Kai: Get all my qualifications in construction, stick it out at college, keep trying hard. The intention is to set up my own business. I already know bits and bobs but I just need the qualifications. There are obstacles in the way definitely, but you've got to stick it out.

Even though I have got a criminal record and that is the most obvious obstacle. But if I can stick it out and show it in play, can do the work, that I am a changed man, then I don't see why there is no way I cannot achieve my goal (Kai, 17/Muslim).

Kai has proven good to his word, having been given the opportunity of undertaking a lucrative apprenticeship as an engineer and he has worked hard, and got good reports from his employer, although he committed a further offence out of combination of greed and misplaced loyalty to his peers, which nearly jeopardised this opportunity. In a related manner, Danny, an 18 year old white male, believes hard work will make up for any deficits in experience and qualifications, having spent most of the last six years of his life incarcerated. *My thinking is that if you work hard enough you can achieve anything you want (Danny, 18/agnostic).* Sean, a seventeen year old white male is aware that achievement also requires the right opportunities, being given an option to succeed from the outset:

I just need that one chance, obviously everyone does whatever they can but I just need that one chance to jump onto something. If I got on the GCSE course that would be it. Unless do GCSE's I cannot do my A levels, which is what I need to go to University. That is like the first step and as soon as I make the first step I think I can make the others. I don't know what I want to do at University, I just know that I want to do further education and that (Sean, 17 years, Agnostic).

Eleven young people felt that it was possible to 'go legit' to become legitimate members of society and no longer be associated with crime, but it incorporates a personal decision, a desire and willingness to change, to lead a law abiding lifestyle but it also requires some level of support. As Matthew, 16 year old, agnostic maintains:

I believe every person has good in them, all bad people they have got chance to be good...everyone got the chance to change their life around , but it is down to the person if they want to change, make that change, you've got to try...

Another young person Keith, a seventeen year old white male felt you need some assistance if you are to achieve your goals:

GM:What will help people change?

Getting Support in it...it's down to person who wants to change...asking for help...but it is hard. Young people are not gonna do it on their own...even if they decide to stop offending, what gonna do sit around on arse all day, you need help to get a job you cannot do that on your own (Keith, 17/atheist).

The sense of giving something back in the choice of careers they wished to pursue, was more readily important for of the female participants in my cohort (6 out of 8). It was a desire to make a difference , as noted in the following example:

I do basic maths and english at college. I want to work with kids. I don't know, peer mentoring and stuff like that. I can offer what I have been through because it would be like kids in care. It's been shit in care.

Saskia, a sixteen year old mixed race, Muslim female, is making an evaluative statement about her own experience of care since the age of two, and articulates a desire to give something back, to use and draw on her own experiences to help other young people facing similar circumstances. This is an example of what McAdams (1993) refers to as 'generativity' and is evident in the aspiration for a particular kind of career, such as in social care. It is giving something back and making one's experience and difficulties become a

source of healing for others. (McAdams and de St Aubin, 1998; Skynner and Cleese, 1996). Identifying the worst life outcomes youths could foresee for themselves is a valuable way to assess their motivation to change, to assess in what ways as agents they feel “constrained or enabled by the social relations they find themselves in” (Connor, 2011:106).

For my research participants the feared self refers to the revolving door of returning to custody through having committed more offences, and involving the commission of violence through not being able to back down from a challenge. One young person out of forty young offenders boldly in this study expressed the desire that they would continue with their criminal aspirations:

I'm not gonna change. I'm not gonna stop selling drugs. I'm not gonna try looking for a job. I'm not gonna try any of that shit. I am just gonna keep on doing what I am doing (Denzel, 17/Agnostic).

In contrast, other young people like Finigan felt that it was highly likely that they would commit more crime in view of their current circumstances. It was almost an inevitable expectation. Finigan is dubious about the prospect of finding employment given the problematic labour market and has tended to scapegoat economic migrants whom he conflates with immigrants for “stealing all our jobs”. He projects a negative possible self who seems undeterred about further offending:

I couldn't get a job. I couldn't get into college man. It's what everyone I know does to earn money. We ain't got nothing around our estate, not one thing. And the only way

we can make money is if we rob...People only want to really work if it's a good job. It is harder to get a job (Finigan, 16 years, atheist).

The distinction that is being expressed by these two respondents is between an active decision to continue offending and a resignation that there are no alternatives available to them other than crime. With over one million (more than 1 in 5) young people unemployed it is hard to disagree with Finigan's pessimism (ONS Labour Market statistics, 2011).⁸ The current economic climate does indeed make it harder for those with no qualifications to get decent jobs and the alternative low paying work with no prospects is not really a convincing incentive to cease offending, as confirmed by Allen and Ainley (2011) who question whether young people like Finigan form part of the 'lost generation'(Allen and Ainley, 2010;2011) or part of the youthful precariat " which consists of millions of people relegated to a bits and pieces life, in and out of casual flexible jobs, without being able to build an occupational career or identity" (Standing, 2011: n.p). The Precariat are a new emerging class, a product of the uncertainty created by governments embracing globalisation and economic liberalisation-the neo-liberal project (Harvey, 2005).

⁸ "The number of unemployed people aged from 16 to 24 increased by 67,000 over the quarter to reach 1.02 million; this figure includes 286,000 people in full-time education who were looking for part-time work. The unemployment level and rate for people aged from 16 to 24 are the highest since directly comparable records began in 1992" (ONS Labour Market Statistics, 16 November 2011: summary statement).

Future Aspirations

Possible selves involves future aspirations that are tied to the conventional nature of aspirations that young offenders share with the larger population and to the barriers and incentives as to whether they can achieve these goals.

*GM: What is your goal for the future? What do you want to achieve?
I know it sounds mad, but I just want to be normal. I want to have my own car, nice house, nice job, kids, wife. It sounds bad, if you ask someone what they aspire to be, they say I aspire to be the President or something, but I just aspire to be normal (Danny, 18/Agnostic).*

This is the general response regarding future ambitions. It has been referred to by Bottoms et al. as 'the English Dream', suggesting that offenders aspire to a lifestyle involving a steady job with a reasonable income, possession of some material goods, a partner and possibly children (2004: 384).

The following table (Table 10) highlights the main aspirations of young people within this study. These young people want to live a normal life, have a family, settle down, have a comfortable home, have meaningful employment, a good job with a steady income, be a good person and lead a good life that provides economic and emotional wellbeing. These aspirations are conventional in nature and underscore what young offenders have in common with the rest of the population.

Table 10 Youth Offenders' Future Aspirations

	N	%
Job	13	32.5
Specific Employment	29	72.5
University	7	17.5
College	20	50
Apprenticeship	3	7.5
Family	16	40
Relationship	13	32.5
House	10	25
Car	5	12.5
Travel	2	5

A significant majority stated that they wanted to work in a specified employment area rather than vaguely mentioning 'I would like a job'. Construction, plumbing, painting and decorating, fitness instructors were the most frequently mentioned. Nine out of forty (22.5%) young offenders wanted to have their own business, either in a specific trade or in property development.

Education was very important for a majority of participants, where previous experiences with formal learning had been unconstructive and they had classed it as a failure rather than a success. There was a felt need to make up for this deficit in educational attainment. This reflects findings that people in the criminal justice system tend to have lower than average educational attainment (Hawkins, et al., 2000; Morgan and Kett, 2003; Muth, 2006). Interventions need to focus on increasing offenders' skills and they need to impact on their attitude to learning. The participants in this research show a strong motivation to learn as long as it is anchored in their needs, interests, desires and concerns. This includes the desire to attend university, with people wanting to become an accountant, engineer,

lawyer, photographer, sports physiotherapist, social worker and one young person is still undecided about his intended tertiary course. Others want to attend college and develop their vocational skills to improve their employment prospects. Learning a trade such as in construction, plumbing, painting and decorating, silver service and so forth is essential to widen their chances of meaningful employment. Building on vocational qualifications obtained in prison for example through attending a college course to become a qualified sports instructor, is a common trajectory for young offenders. YOT's tend to focus on accessing training and readiness for employment as part of the rehabilitation process. Presented below are a few examples from my research participants. Curtis, a sixteen year old black youth from a Christian background, makes the following comment:

I want to work for someone, get my own business not sure about that (laughs dismissively) I know I could do it...not reckon I will....

GM:What do you think will stop you achieving?

Not reckon could run my own business, wicked at painting and decorating...probably could do it , but probably not get far...I'm a bit lazy [...] I have to get to construction at 10 every morning and I get there for 10.10 every morning. I'm staying up late and go on computer and TV. Set alarm for half past seven, look at it go back to sleep and wake up at 9 (Curtis, 16/atheist).

Curtis displays a lack of confidence in his own ability to achieve his goals. He would like to have his own business in a specific trade like painting and decorating, in which he recognises some aptitude and achievement but he appears not to believe he is capable of becoming self-employed, stating his own lack of motivation as the limiting factor in his realizing this ambition. Perhaps, this is an example of ambivalence where there is a desire to change aspects of his behaviour but also not really being sure about wanting to change.

Motivation is a crucial aspect in whether young offenders can achieve (Miller and Rollnick, 1991). Quasim, a 13 year old, Muslim male currently in foster care, stated:

I want to work with animals, as a zoo keeper or something. There is no point doing a job if you don't like it. ...I am alright, (at school) not say I am the smartest but wouldn't say I am dumb either. GCSEs pick our options soon. Love to go to university. Not know yet. I really want to work with animals but if not I might pick law because my sister is doing law, she could help me out. Not really sure (Quasim, 13 years, Muslim).

This young person is not clear about his future prospects, but wants to finish his education and go onto university. YOT records indicate that he has been in care and his attendance at school improved while under closer monitoring in foster care but since moving back to live with his mother, he has become involved in more serious offending, starting to associate with gangs. Education was also an ultimate concern for Fahran, an Afghani Muslim who was seeking asylum and a better life in the UK, escaping violent recruitment by the Taliban following the disappearance of his father, a surgeon forcefully co-opted by the Taliban. He was initially 'trafficked' into the UK. Investigations into his identity by immigration officers has led to a legal dispute over whether he is actually of school age, which he continues to maintain. His education has subsequently been suspended. *"I want to finish my GCSEs and would like to go to university, to become a computer engineer"* (Fahran, 15/Muslim).

Sarah, a seventeen year old Christian, also believes in the value of education, something that was extremely problematic for her, having dropped out of education at 14 years old through a mental breakdown because of the trauma of sexual abuse: *"I suffered from anxiety and was unable to go out and mix with people"*. She is an advocate of self-directed learning through reading and accessing the internet and wants others to learn from her

experience and to have a better life. She appears to blame herself for being manipulated by an older male, which is common to survivors of sexual abuse. She commented:

Don't make the same mistakes I did, have a better life, stay in school get a good education, good job, not be stupid and have messed up stupid head, do not let people take the piss out of you (Sarah, 16/Christian).

Sarah does not believe in planning for the future, but is centred in the here and now with her focus on having a baby and her current relationship but sees the value in self-motivated continuous learning:

Live everyday like it's your last, don't plan for the future, you don't know what's gonna happen. Live life for now...partner and baby...love learning...[about other religions, etc] do it myself, if want to know about it.

A seventeen year old white male, Dave, does not believe he can be successful without first obtaining his qualifications through some further education. He recalls being “kicked out of school in Year 10 for fighting” and how this led to him getting into more trouble and thus effecting both his confidence and motivation to do anything:

My intention is to stay at college until I get sorted out and get my qualifications. Painting and decorating-do carpentry in the second year. I would like to be self-employed (Dave, 17/Atheist).

College is essential if Jane wishes to achieve her goal of living and working in London, although her schooling was disrupted through various suspensions for fighting and a permanent exclusion for violence towards teachers.

As soon as done course, got myself sorted, I am going down London, I'm hitting London and get a job down their. Silver service as well, be able to get in anywhere. Work down there and hopefully save up enough money and gradually be able to buy myself a one bedroom flat own flat down there. I know what I want to do, I want to do this waitressing course and be a waitress. If I can try different places, if I don't like one, I can go onto to the next one (Jane, 17/Catholic).

She enjoys the practical experience in college with its own restaurant that is open to the public, although it has not been without some difficulties.

For these young people a Good life equates to having a purpose in life, something to aim for that makes life fulfilling and worth living. It is highly correlated with the desire for economic wellbeing through the provision of suitable employment that provides the material necessities of life. It is about achieving life goals such as in education. There is a sense of wanting to give something back in terms of responsibility to the next generation that also emphasises the importance of the quality of significant and intimate relationships and of having a family. The sharp contrast that is often drawn between offenders and the rest of the population is dissolved when we emphasise the future aspirations of young offenders as being similar to a standard law-abiding lifestyle (Hough, 2011). These future aspirations are intimately linked to a desired better quality of existence, a notion that will be further explored in the next section, as we turn to look at a rich transformative resource, which centres on identifying and empathising with inspirational figures in young offender's lives. The emulation of these role models provides a means for developing adaptive character formation and acquiring the good life (Arthur, 2003).

The Necessity of Good Role Models

Rose states that "Young people can choose their role models from any and every context including their peers." (Rose, 2004:n.p.) in order to enable them to make their way in the world.

The need to make sense of our world and navigate through our existence requires reference points and an existential map: “an overlay of principles, values and priorities that allow us to make judgements concerning the direction that our lives should take” (Alsford, 2006:6). There is a necessity to find our place in the social scheme of things and certain role models can provide us with this type of orientation in life, helping us with the decisions we might face and values that could guide us. These come in many guises through our consumption of popular culture in the characters in books and visual media, our significant relationships with family and peers. Role models are a central means of helping young people to achieve the good life (Lockwood et al., 2002).

Many young people in my sample talked about certain people in their lives who they admired in some way, as depicting a lifestyle divergent from their own, with whom they had either a close relationship or had made a real connection. These were people who lived out a certain lifestyle that was inspirational in some way, reflecting a possible self they could become. They showed that they cared about the young people and believed in them and this was reciprocated by the young people. Sometimes this was a family member, a religious leader like an Imam, or even a YOT worker. These figures represent alternative lifestyles that are compelling in some way and could motivate change, but the alternative has to be attainable and not too idealistic, as with the likes of ‘stars’ in the firmament of celebrity, which young people often refer to as prospective role models (Ward, 2010).

There are a number of distinctions to be drawn in examining these relationships, resembling the four dimensions of mentoring relationships outlined by Hall (2003): origin,

nature, purpose, site of the relationship. Firstly, there is a need to establish the extent to which these relationships are naturally occurring mentoring type roles that arise from existing relationships in a young person's life or one's that are artificially promoted because of the nature of their professional position (eg Imam, YOT worker). There is a distinction regarding the purpose of the relationship, whether it is instrumental in seeking to achieve a specific goal that is either predetermined or shared with the mentee or whether it is expressive in guiding the undeveloped youth towards adulthood as opposed to inducting a young person into a craft or profession. Does mentoring take place in a statutorily based location such as a prison or YOT premises or more informally in the community? These relationships modelled certain values that if followed could result in a shift in perspective and significant behavioural change. Inspirational figures are important indicators of young people's attitudes. These relationships were driven by the needs and interests of the young people themselves and reveal that the quality of the relationship is the most important factor.

Kate is emphatic that behaviour is learned from your family and these are the role models that show you how to behave "*giving you 'tips' what to do. Parents telling us what to do [how to behave]*". She grew up around violence and this has been reproduced in her own criminal behaviour. Parenting matters and is the primary form of socialisation, as Kate noted:

My family ain't real good my uncle was a copper and went to prison for kidnap and torture of somebody. Another uncle went to prison for battering somebody, another went to prison for half killing somebody and was in and out of prison all his life...One aunties a drug dealer, another got done for smuggling drugs into prison for her son. My family are really not positive role models. There is nobody in this world that you can call a perfect role model, nobody at all. The people that are standing on TV claiming they are perfect role models are hiding behind their own smells. Everyone's

got secrets. There ain't a perfect role model. There is no perfect person in the world (Kate, 17/Catholic).

The family are young people's primary role models and form of socialisation. In this instance the template or script was skewed but it constrained rather than determined her life outcomes. Children grow up thinking initially that their parents are perfect but gradually their imperfections and foibles emerge, and then they witness the contradictions between what their parents/carers say and what they do. Overtime a more realistic appraisal emerges of our 'good enough' parents. The idealised images of parents occur during late childhood and adolescence is when the separation or second individualisation from these idealised figures of omniscience and benevolence begins (Blos, 1967). Steinberg and Silverberg (1986) postulated that adolescents go through a process of de-idealisation, establishing themselves as separate persons with their own viewpoint distinct from those of their primary care givers. This is not a radical severance but a bid for equal status and friendship, a change in the nature of the relationship. A conjoining of separation and reconnection is manifest in the concept of individuation. Jane is accurate in her assessment that role models are ideal types, that no human being is perfect, perfection is an idealistic goal. Even the best parent possesses blindspots, inconsistencies and distorted capacities for relations with others. The recognition of their weaknesses and needs is countenanced during the individualisation process, seeing them as "persons with [both] negative and positive characteristics" (Smoller and Youniss, 1989:80). In a similar fashion the extended family can also be important as a substitute for poor socialisation. There is also a difference that needs to be born in mind, between behaviour influenced by a reaction against 'bad' role models as Kate asserts and behaviour inspired by 'good' role models.

This can also be seen in Sonia's comparison between her father and aunt. There are gendered expectations that Sonia, a seventeen year old mixed race female with a Pakistani father and white mother, has rebelled against, finding Islam too restrictive for her current lifestyle. She cannot embrace some aspects of her religion because she feels "... *I haven't been brought up like that*" having been given a lot of freedom. She continued:

It is too strict [Islam], don't like it, I like it but it is just too strict. If I grew up then, I wouldn't care because I wouldn't know what I am missing out on, but because I know that if I go live with my dad, I have got lots to loose, if I go and follow my religion I wouldn't do it (Sonia, 17/Muslim background).

The fact that her own father does not set a good example for her to follow, makes it difficult for the instillation of the desire to take her faith more seriously. He is presented as a traditionalist regarding the different gender roles and as someone who would not approve of some of the lifestyle choices that Sonia has made:

He tries to tell us to follow it, but he don't follow it himself, you know what I mean like. He takes drugs, sells drugs. So he don't really do anything to show a good example (Sonia, 17/Muslim background). .

She is ambivalent about the role of women within Islam, where there is a conflict between the respect and high regard she holds for her aunt and her chosen lifestyle and the sense of duty and loyalty that Karen observes, which makes unfair demands upon her aunt. She commented:

I like the religion, but I just don't like what they do, the girls have to do everything, everything completely and the men just sit back and put their feet up. The women cook the meals for the men. Since an early age, from when you have your first period that is when they start treating you like a woman. So you have to cook, clean, pray, do everything basically (Sonia, 17/Muslim background). .

Sonia is, however, impressed by her auntie's devotion to her religion and the fact that it makes her a better person. She describes a loving and devoted wife and mother, who is generous and caring. These are qualities that she admires but is not yet able to emulate:

The only woman that does anything good on the Asian side and follows the religion completely is my Auntie. She prays five times a day, if she is walking down the street and sees a homeless person on the floor, she will give them everything she has got.

She will cook and clean and make sure that everyone has got everything they want. Then she comes to herself. She is a really good Muslim woman. She is calm and not too strict with me, because she knows I haven't been brought up the way them lot have. She is the only one out of all of them that says you're not allowed to do this, you're not allowed to do that. She lets me like do what I am doing and then she, I won't go too far with her anyway. I know she is good and I know she would look on it as really bad. I don't do things. She is more of an example to me by her behaviour rather than telling me what to do, she is just herself and she makes me look like...I start being good as well. She will sit there and tell me about the religion and I will start getting all well into it and start getting, like when I am up there I start thinking I am going to follow it, but when I come back home I just drop it all again (Sonia, 17/Muslim background).

The context in which support operates is critical to the change process along with the level of support that is available, in terms of whether it enables or constrains a young person's motivation. This young person lives in a different location that is some distance from the influence of her aunt. She cannot avail herself of this support on a regular basis because of this remoteness and so any notion of following her faith is hindered.

If a young person can have confidence and self-efficacy that they can change, then desistance becomes more likely because they have made a decision to actively participate in the change process, being more motivated. Agency is a precursor of desistance that will contribute to the actualisation of the good life he wishes to achieve but this requires a lot of support. Youth Justice practitioners can serve as role models for young people moving

away from crime. The role of the Youth Offending Service is usually framed in terms of reducing offending, managing risk, and making offenders responsible for their actions but this can tend to 'instrumentalise' the supervisory process, which also needs to support change and to create opportunities for redemption. The relational dynamics between a Youth justice worker and young person is pivotal to the process of change, as Kai explains:

YOTs are not bullshit, but it depends what worker you have got. It's as simple as that, its depends what worker you have got and what your mind set is, and what you want to achieve, what you want to get back out of life...someone on the level, knows how to speak to people and knows a bit about the society in this day and age and how what goes on in areas and what goes on with the young people and what they kinda do, [then] the young person and the professional has got more of a chance of making a little bit of a bond (Kai, 17/Muslim).

The point that Kai wishes to make is that the quality of the relationship and virtues that the worker possesses is what is most important combined with a certain type of mind set that wants to achieve change. This throws into sharp relief the need to identify a young offender's actual motivation to change, if constructive work is to be undertaken. A good relationship requires empathy, understanding about young peoples' lives and knowledge about youth culture in appreciating "what is going on with them and what they kinda do". Maintaining an optimism that young people can change, being honest and "not abusing their position of power" should also be perquisite qualities of a competent YOT worker. Practitioners also needs to know "how to talk to a young person", possessing the skills in how to engage them effectively in the process of transformation.

Having a long standing relationship with the Youth Offending Service over the last six years. Danny gets to the crux of the matter regarding the nature of the relationship with his Youth Justice practitioner and the attitude of the worker towards him. He makes a contrast between someone who genuinely cares about him and believes in him and

someone whom he feels displays some hostility towards him in their demeanour and actions:

I have a good relationship with my YOT worker. We talk properly to each other. He will tell me if I am talking shit and I will tell him if I am not happy...my last YOT worker was a right knob, they didn't like me. They didn't show me so much support. It seems like they wanted me to fail instead of wanting me to achieve. These lot want me to achieve and I can see that...I want to make them happy and prove to them that I can achieve (Danny, 18/agnostic).

As Danny explained, the belief-in a person and showing care and concern can instil hope and a desire for change. This is something that is really important in his attitude about offending and the process of 'going straight'. The relationship can be a catalyst for change in motivation and behaviour. It is the consistency of the relationship over time that is important and the honesty in the relationship that is very much a two-way street. These qualities in the worker supports Trotter's (1996, 1999, 2000) pro-social modelling principles. There should be an expectation that the supervisory relationship is a rewarding one and a presumption that activities will be meaningful to the young person. Echoing Farrall and Calverley's (2006:186) findings with Probation Supervision, Youth Justice practitioners "can raise the consciousness and knowledge of those they supervise" with the 'planting of seeds' that can bear fruit at a later stage. The supervision of offenders does not produce immediate results. This has been defined by McNeill (2009) as the difference between 'leaving an imprint' and 'having an immediate impact'. The process of supervision can stimulate different thinking about offending whereby young offenders entertain the possibility of an alternative lifestyle away from crime.

Figure 5 Case Study of Moral Exemplars

Adults and family members remain influential in youth and adolescent's lives, whether that is in a good or bad way (Tolan et al., 2003: 76).

Keith is a self-acclaimed agnostic with a Christian background. He speaks very fondly of his sister and how her life has changed because of her religious conversion, and is intrigued but yet sceptical of her talk about healing. She is a positive reference point in his life, holding out the idea of hope and the possibility of change, testament in her life. There is a marked contrast in the lives of his family between those who are more of a negative influence, like his father who is in prison for murder and his brother who he considers is wasting his life through drink and the positive influence of his sister and mother who are both practising Christians.

"My brother sits around and drinks on the dole... I want to make something of my life... he drinks too much, it's his choice. My sister used to be a gambler before she changed to Christianity, when she realised it was wrong. She won £300 and gave it to a homeless person, she became a Christian through my brother. My sister showed me videos like when she's been to Zambia and stuff, where paralysed people in wheelchairs get prayed for and got up, I don't think my sister would lie to me about it because I completely trust her, but I wouldn't believe it until I saw it myself (Keith, 17/atheist).

If the adults in the young person's life promote violence, betrayal, and instability, a youth may go looking for the constancy and comfort they are missing from their family in a gang. This is evident in the following extract:

First there was my teacher Trevor [...] who used to like...tell us, be good in school, you don't just want to end up under the streets because he was a big man and he'd seen all these gang members, these 25 year old gang members when he was like 35-40 these lot were like young in school and he used to be the one teaching these and he used to tell them the same stuff he used to tell us, you get me. I used to respect him because it used to be truth what he was saying, you see all these gang members, he used to teach them and tell them "Yo, be good and you will get somewhere in life" and he said "Yo, they never listened and look where they are now, half of them are dead, half of them are in prison, and you have got the next ones on the road trying to survive." I was like listening to him and thinking yeah, what he says is true, it is true (Stefan, 17/Christian background).

This teacher was attempting to instil a moral compass, trying to motivate young people to choose a path divergent from the influence of gangs. Stefan is more than likely gang affiliated but portrays himself as only knowing people in his area who are involved with gangs, although he is well aware of their sphere of influence. He was clear that being in a gang wasn't the way life should be lived with young people seeking to build a reputation and going around with an attitude of 'hype', an assertive intensification of masculine prowess by challenging and threatening people who dare to venture into a different gang territory. It was a way of life he had adopted himself, but acknowledging he had moved away from it as he has matured. Maturity is pertinent factor in identification with role models as outlined by this black youth.

A religious leader was put forward as a virtuous figure who was treated with positive regard- held in esteem. Tariq described a close bond he made with the prison chaplain and Imam while in prison that gave him an opportunity to reconnect with his faith, and this is in stark contrast to the lifestyle he had been leading prior to his prison sentence participating in violent offences as part of a gang. The young person in the interview data makes a comparison between himself and the Imam. This is between someone who is dedicated and following their faith, where it makes a real difference in the world and someone who does not see himself as properly Muslim. It shows faith is about both belief and identity and the tensions inherent in experiencing and living out this faith. He is attracted to the Imam's bravery, dedication, and his preference in caring for others:

Yes I was impressed by the Imam, he risked his life to take medical supplies to Gaza and is a good Muslim. He used to tell stories with jokes in them and would come to my cell and play Fifa football on my play station saying he could beat me on Xbox but not PS2. He used to tell stories about the messenger with jokes in, he was a good person and I liked him. He would say "make something out of your life", try and put you on the right path, "do the right things". He would put something positive in your head. He has given his life to working with people in prison (Tariq, 16/Muslim).

The 'good Muslim' is a repeated motif amongst the Muslim interviewees, mentioned in 6 out of 8 cases. Compulsory forms of worship within Islam are designed as exercises and training to enable people to acquire correct morals and habits and to live righteously. There is a continuous injunction in the Koran to acquire the qualities Allah has praised. The Imam attempted to cultivate a conscience to enable the young person to reflect on his criminal behaviour and to begin to think differently by offering a different schema proffered in the embodied habituation of virtue in his own life.

Harpreet is a seventeen year old currently placed in local authority care because of issues of domestic violence at home and has committed an offence of robbery. She is from a Sikh background but has converted to Islam through a partner with whom she committed this offence. She commented:

I feel strongly about working with people who need help and I feel strongly about people on drugs, they need someone they can speak to like an advocate. Like people like me they need someone like my manager [manager of the residential home] I want to be one of them type of people. If I believe I can do that and believe that within myself that I am that person to be like her then I am gonna do it. I know I believe in myself

She just listens and is here for the kids and not for the money. I have never met anybody like her. She is just amazing, everything she does, she has done so much for us. She can suss out when I am upset even if I don't cry or say anything. She can suss when I am really tired. She knows me really well and has only been here about three months. I think she knows me better than my mum (Harpreet, 17/Sikh-Muslim).

Here is a residential social worker who is embodying a positive lifestyle and attitude, representative of moral virtue in Aristotelean terms- a moral exemplar. The idea of a moral exemplar is to waken oneself to one's higher self, a higher ideal to which to aspire, to enable Harpreet "to arrive at an articulate conception of what [she] values and wants to strive towards and help [her] find realistic means to that end" (Kristjánsson, 2006:41). The manager possesses an ethic of care, empathy and an ability to engage with young people through building authentic relationships, someone who this young person desires to emulate rather than learning to merely imitate an ideal person. Sonia is expressing more than admiration. She articulates a desire to be like her manager in some way, but without enviously wishing to take anything away from her. The manager is somebody whose

qualities she wishes to instantiate in her own life. Sonia wants to find herself deserving of the goods she desires. She wants to 'be like her' in her ethic of care to become an advocate for other young people, but "not to be exactly like [her] but in the capacity to be provoked by [her] example...of how a fulfilling life can be lived and what it involves"(Kristjánsson, 2000:7). It is an example of generativity, a concern and commitment for promoting the development and well-being of others. Sonia fervently believes she can actualise the qualities she sees embodied in the life of the Manager of her residential home, but she cannot just do this without making an effort to acquire the admired qualities. This involves self-understanding and rational self-persuasion to move towards achieving these goods.

This is a distinction between admiration and emulation (Ben-Ze'ev, 2003) apropos Aristotle, where admiration does not require any effort but emulation does. Following Aristotle, the notion of emulation has connative, affective, cognitive and behavioural elements. Sonia is motivated and wants to improve her character (connative) to possess these particular qualities and traits or honoured goods that her manager possesses as ideals embodied in a person. She believes these qualities are to some extent already latent within herself, but need to be developed and thus she feels the discomfiture of lacking the desired traits (affective) which drives the desire to attain them. She also demonstrates that she understands why these qualities are worthy of being valued, and the possible paths needed to be taken to attain them (cognitive) and is striving towards the acquisition of the desired goods (behaviour). Empathy, care and compassion are deemed worthy of emulation and the way of getting to know these qualities is through following the example of the role model. Sonia learns to care through how she experiences the care displayed by her manager and practising this in her social interactions and how she treats others in the

residential home. There is a distinction to be drawn between identifying with and letting the role model influence one's moral identity and a need to understand why certain qualities to be emulated are morally commendable. Knowing the intrinsic value of the virtues is a prerequisite of this conception of emulation (Kristjánsson, 2006).

Another participant, Joshua talked about a friend he had grown up with, who had turned his life around from a life of crime and had ceased breaking the law. He was adamant that you can make your life whatever you want it to be and it is clear he admires his friend but is he motivated to change through emulation? Admiration has alerted him to an opportunity to learn new skills, acquire a different disposition:

My bredrin⁹ has got a dirty criminal record, the dirtiest criminal record you can have and he was with Tony Blair when he was president, whatever, in London. This boy turned his life around and did everything. I grew up with him. He used to be bad and that, he went back to school and got his qualifications and the Prime Minister, Tony Blair wanted to meet him and he had his photograph taken with him. He seen the light, that crime ain't the way innit. .

GM: What helped him?

His mother forever telling him not to get in trouble you get me. He thought about stuff. He is older than me, about 20 and he is working now. Is he someone you respect, look up to? Yehhh

I don't want to be like no one. I want to be like myself.

GM: What kind of person is that?

Me innit, how I turn out is how I turn out. If like I want to work, have a job and have the life I want to. (Joshua, 17/Christian background).

⁹ This is Jamaican street slang for a good friend, someone who is treated like a brother (see Urban Dictionary)

This young person possesses a self-assured autonomy that does not acknowledge the need for reliance on others. He admires his friend but is very much his own person and is self-motivated. He decries the need for a role model, although he has a tense relationship with the role of the 'bad man' that he continues to live out, following the example set by his father and brothers who have spent time in prison but which he perpetually denies. Yue and Cheung (2000:97) observe about the growth effect on the selection of role models that "as adolescents become older they become increasingly self-reliant and capable of inspiring themselves instead of being inspired by others. (Erickson, 1968; Marcia, 1980)". A distinction needs to be made between mere admiration and emulation (Ben Ze'ev, 2003) if transformation is to take place, as Kristjánsson (2006) has shown.

Conclusion

We have examined the importance of a future orientation for young offenders to encourage them to move away from crime and enable them to achieve their potential in working towards envisioning a promising future that develops their human flourishing. The nature of the Good Life was explored in relation to a more positive plan and outlook, that takes account of young offenders' social identity and reciprocal relations with others. It moves from a hedonistic to eudaimonic Good Life and has resonance with Ward's (2002) Good Lives Model of rehabilitation. The provision of the imaginative facility of Possible Selves, and leaving a legacy as demonstrated by my empirical data provides a resource for living a better life. Young people work towards the fulfillment of a law abiding self-concept

through a process of reflection and emulation, as distinct from the achieved identity of an offender. The goals that young offenders aspire to attain are more conventional in nature, the provision of stable work and a steady income, a settled existence, with a desire for a significant relationship and potential family. Patterns of pro-social behaviour are sourced from various inspirational role models, acting as a moral compass and blueprint, including the religious that demonstrates the possibility of an alternative lifestyle away from crime. It was noted that offenders share conventional aspirations with the general population and emphasize the possibility of achievement and making change.

Besides sharing similar aspirations, another key theme outlined in my empirical data included the contrast between the negative and positive possible selves with only one person out of forty advocating the continuance of a pro-criminal lifestyle where crime provides a good life. A distinction was made with others beginning to be suspicious about crime leading to a better life in the long term and entertaining the possibility of alternative lifestyles; possessing an ambivalence about a desire for change and not being certain about wanting to change. The barriers and incentives to achieving these aspirations were highlighted, such as violence and overcoming adverse and chaotic backgrounds as constraining factors and the legacy they wish to leave as an incentive. These refer to young offenders' sense of resilience, motivations and sense of agency.

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION: SOCIAL WORK WITH OFFENDERS

This chapter brings together the empirical findings of this thesis in conversation with the theoretical perspectives in the wider literature, with an emphasis on the implications for social work practice with young offenders. The aim of this chapter is show how an exploration of young offenders' beliefs and values and more specifically their religious identities, offers possibilities for change towards the cessation of offending. In doing so, this chapter will incorporate a discussion about the nature of rehabilitation and its connection to living a good life. It will outline the criminological concept of redemption and how Youth Justice practitioners can support the change process by utilising a strengths based approach and exploring the notion of the good life through moral conversations with young people. The role of religion for my participants is explored with its potential as a moral template. Furthermore the relational dynamic of the nature and context of offending is underlined as part of an exploration of a young person's worldview. It will conclude by presenting the worldview perspective as a thorough examination of a young person's basic assumptions about life-their beliefs and values-as a resource for practitioners.

The Opportunity for Redemption

Desistance as the process by which offenders come to stop offending is ultimately good for society because it decreases social harms and seeks to make amends through the changed lives of reformed ex-offenders. More specifically, it has a direct impact in reducing the human cost of offending measured in monetary terms, where youth crime was £23 million per week or £ 1.2 billion per year in 2010 (Prince's Trust, 2010). The challenge is whether society is willing to embrace transformed subjects or continues to dismiss them with its exclusionary processes. Couldry (2010:130) argues "people need first to be visible before they can be recognized as having voice; they must first be regarded as part of the landscape in which struggles for voice go on". Creating the conditions for the articulation of 'voice' is essential when efforts to devalue 'voice' are endemic in society, to offer counter narratives, which seek to be recognized and heard. This also requires new forms of organisation which gives value to 'voice', such as new acts of social cooperation in seeing ex-offenders as collaborative partners in transformative processes of criminal justice.

By 'voice' Couldry (2010) means our embodied reflexive agency and orientation to social exchange and cooperation as a form of life. The giving account of ourselves to others involves "the capacity to make, and be recognized as making narratives about one's life" (Couldry, 2010:7). In other words: the reflecting back and forth between one's actions, experiences and thoughts. For some people the materials out of which they must build their account of themselves are not theirs to adapt and control. This mirrors the relational sociology of Donati (2011) and his theory of relational reflexivity building on the work of

Archer (2003;2007). Donati (2011) maintains it is the social relation which is key to understanding social change, how people exercise agency to reproduce or transform their circumstances through the mediation of reflexivity. He is interested in our reciprocal orientations towards each other and mutual obligations. A desistance centred Youth Justice Service needs to undertake “a realistic analysis of the obstructions to recognition” (Couldry, 2010:132), that is an assessment of both the structural and individual barriers to social inclusion, identifying the blocks to offenders’ narratives being heard.

Society often excludes young offenders from the possibility of living a fully human life because of popular punitivism (Ryan, 2005) that seeks to continually remind them of the wrong they have done, rather than to encourage them to reintegrate back into society. The impact of criminal records inhibits the chances of employment and realising full citizenship (Travis, 2002). Blumstein and Nakamura (2012) stress the point at which offenders eventually look like and are treated like non-offenders is supposed to be the point at which redemption has occurred. Redemption is defined by Blumstein and Nakamura (2012:328) as “the process of going straight and being released from bearing the mark of crime” having overcome the stigma of being labelled and identified as an offender. It is “the moral quest to become a good [better] person” (Nellis, 2009:143), incorporating growth and development over the life course. This involves growth in human capacities that can be trained and nurtured, proceeding through levels of development. Redemption denotes: “finding a way to make good on a troubled or troubling past by making a positive contribution to families or communities now (Maruna, 2001)” (McNeill et al., 2013:12). It is a way or means of being redeemed.

This reflects Bazemore's (1998) concept of earned redemption where offenders have to make amends to those they have harmed through their criminal behaviour in order to earn the trust of the community and be formally accepted back into the heart of the community with a restored reputation. A relational rehabilitation is proposed that repairs the young person's social bonds with wider society, often requiring some form of legitimising ritual like formal recognition of an individual's rehabilitation (Maruna, 2011). The performance of reform means young offenders have started signalling their desistance: have begun to do the things that gain them a second chance and proving they have begun to change (Maruna, 2012).

A key message from this thesis is that Youth Justice must provide opportunities for redemption, the ability and provision for a young person to turn their life around and cease offending and to be reintegrated back into society. This can only be achieved through an adequate understanding of their beliefs and values or worldview as a 'process of change', or rehabilitation, how offenders make sense of their criminal behaviour, their motivations, intentions, reasons, causes for offending and how they can change their lives and behaviour. Young offenders' underlying beliefs and values, and their social backgrounds shape their outlooks and this provides insight into the types of interventions needed to facilitate change. For as Barry attests: "One cannot reduce offending from an interventionist perspective without first understanding what young people themselves think about offending, the desistance process and what the alternatives to offending are" (Barry, 2009:79). Both individual characteristics and structural factors have to be addressed simultaneously to support the transition to desistance.

The YOT needs to support the (re)credentialising process, firstly by instilling in the young person the belief in the possibility of change, supporting their shift in behaviour by providing 'hooks for change' and helping them solve problems, overcome obstacles to desistance, such as providing opportunities for employment training with organisations sensitive to people with criminal records. This is grounded in evidence from the research participants like in the case of Kai (see Chapter 7). Youth Justice must enshrine a value based legitimacy, which offers offenders the provision to rethink their identity, their goals and who they want to be. In this way desistance is a relational enterprise comprising the moral rehabilitation of a person embedded in the moral order. All cultures are constituted by and are expressive of moral order (Wuthnow,1987), that is, "cultural traditions are grounded upon and promote particular normative ideas about what is good and bad, right and wrong, higher and lower, worthy and unworthy, just and unjust... which orientate human consciousness and motivate human action" (Smith, 2003:20). The clarification of young offender's values and internalising of moral directives and orders takes place in the interplay between the subjective and objective worlds of identity formation.

The clarification of values in adolescence is an important aspect of human development (Young, 2006) and by extension the dynamics of rehabilitation necessitates young people being intentional about the type of values that will form their character. Young people have to decide whether pro-criminal values will continue to feature in their lives or new values will be allowed to take precedent. These are important decisions that they have to make, requiring the right context and support for them to appraise their values and begin to live out their values in a consistent way. Youth Justice needs to carve out a space for young

people to critically reflect on their beliefs and values and which allows them to “improve or restore their capacity for pro-social involvement” (Raynor and Robinson, 2009:174). This reappraisal of their values may include taking up alternative practices towards shaping their new identity, such as wanting to give something back to others in the choice of vocation they choose. Youth Justice is not a value neutral context but one in which best practice behoves practitioners to be open with young offenders about the types of values that are being sought in rehabilitation. As Ilan (2007) argues, the ethos of Youth Justice is about imposing a set of idealised values downwards through the expectation of certain behavioural norms. Youth Justice is seeking to inculcate certain values in order to produce self-regulating and responsible individuals who are leading a law abiding lifestyle (Rose, 1989). This involves a candid exchange about moral discourse within the supervisory relationship and includes taking the young person’s worldview seriously, scrutinising “how the world looks and feels to them” (Raynor and Robinson, 2009:176). Rehabilitation is understood as having behavioural and symbolic dimensions implying a change in the way a young offender behaves and a return to a former status as a law abiding citizen accepted back into the community (Robinson and Crow, 2009).

Rehabilitation is a contested term but one useful definition in a recent review defines it as that which is “aimed at motivating , guiding and supporting constructive change in whatever characteristics or circumstances engender [young offenders’] criminal behaviour or subvert their pro-social behaviour” (Lipsey and Cullen, 2007:302). The notions of motivating, guiding and supporting chime with McNeil’s (2009) roles for practitioners as counsellors, advocates and educators, helping to develop and deploy motivation, capacities and opportunities (McNeil and Weaver, 2010: 36) as three strands of a strong rope to pull

them towards change. The role should also involve the promotion of ethical being and concern, because moral agency is integral to criminal involvement.

From a rights based perspective Rotman (1990) believes that attempts to inculcate moral values in offenders contradicts their basic freedom, but rehabilitation in the criminal justice system is already value saturated. Whilst Rotman's arguments about avoiding the imposition of values is important, it ignores the fact that value neutrality is already an impossibility, because young offenders already operate with certain beliefs and values. Some of these values can be socially harmful. Current Youth Justice practice also operates with assumptions about the nature of human beings and why people offend. To fail to explore these values within the supervisory process, this thesis argues, is tantamount to poor practice. Rotman's argument already presupposes a certain value base, which needs to be critically examined. Moral education is not about "infantilising offenders" or "calling into question their culpability for their crimes" (McNeill, 2012:n.p) but the honest engagement of crime as an ethical concern.

As part of the empirical findings in this research, a Good Life is an imaginative envisioning of a better future, that engenders hopefulness that life can change and be different, a number of possible selves that a person could become is identified, along with moral exemplars who challenge existing pro-offending modes of existence, and can trigger personal growth, maturity and social responsibility. The nature of sacred and profane is investigated relating to what a young person believes is most important in their life, what they care about most. Beliefs and values about violence, negatively framed attitudes towards others, and beliefs about material possessions were evident in the data. Learning

to understand what young offenders care about most informs practitioners about areas of work that need to be addressed during supervision.

There is some debate about whether role models should have shared experience and background with those with whom they are working, because young offenders may tend to measure themselves against these people in some way (see Schinkel and Whyte, 2012; Tolan et al., 2008; Devilly et al., 2005). Peer mentoring seems to enhance rapport between mentor and mentee because they have been through the same experience (Johnson, 2011). Maruna (2001:120) cites Lofland's (1969) assertion that it may be unrealistic to expect young offenders to be induced to desist by others who have not had a deviant career. This may be true in regard to authority figures but this current research suggests this is determined more by the young people themselves, as they are the ones who actually identify and assess the role models and the extent to which they influence their lives. It seems to reflect the desire for a pro-social identity and instantiating different qualities from those whom they emulate. The literature on what actually makes a difference in these mentoring/peer relationships remains quite limited at the moment and requires further research. Co-production as an approach to working collaboratively with young offenders in the provision of criminal justice services has become more imperative in recent times (Hunter and Ritchie, 2007) as young people know well what will support change and social integration as 'experts in their own life-world' (Voglevang, 2008 cited in Schinkel and Whyte, 2012). Role models are a source of support and normative clarification and reinforcement.

A Strengths-Based Approach

According to Rap, Saleebey and Sullivan (2008:5) , a strengths-based approach applied to social work with offenders should contain six elements, 1) goal orientation, 2) strengths assessment, 3) resources from the environment, 4) explicit methods used to identify client and environmental strengths for goal attainment, 5) a relationship that is hope inducing, 6) meaningful choice. This does not mean that Rap, Saleebey and Sullivan (2008) are advocating a polarised practice by ignoring risk assessment, but merely re-dressing an imbalance.

“One of the aims of strengths-based practice is to enable people to look beyond their immediate and real problems and dare to conceive a future that inspires them, providing hope that things can improve” (Pattoni, 2012:9). This is the essence of the exploration of a good life, of imaginatively envisioning a better future. In this PhD study the notion of the good life was seen to contain a number of elements that cohere around goal attainment that leads to fulfillment, meaning and purpose in life. Young offenders share similar aspirations or life goals with non-offenders because of their normative status as human beings; they possess the same needs and nature as the rest of us (Laws and Ward, 2012:10-11). The extent to which people set goals they would like to achieve in their lives, impacts upon the likelihood of success. After all, as Kymlicka (1990:203) states, a course of action or activity must be affirmed from the inside because “no life goes better by being led from the outside according to values the person does not endorse”. It must be according to the

person's own judgments about the value of these options. Fashioning a way of life that is personally endorsed is bound to produce a fuller range of human goods necessary for reduced offending and longer term desistance from criminal behaviour.

Graybeal (2001:234) explains, 'the identification of strengths is not the antithesis of the identification of problems. Instead, it is a large part of the solution' and forms part of the moral conversation and assertion of moral agency, but the emphasis is not primarily on deficits but recognising inherent resources. There is a moral dimension to all of life that cannot be ignored. Some of the choices young people make are limited by their experience and it is only in reflecting on one's life experience that the young person learns to grow and develop their latent capacities.

Resources from the environment refers to improving the quality of relationships within a young offender's social network. The inspirational role models are possible selves young offenders can emulate, instantiating the qualities and values they admire into their own lives. Moreover, these are a means of achieving a good life through the mentoring role that they could play, such as can be found within Youth Justice and chaplaincy within the prison. McMurrin (2010:193) states, "engagement with a coherent set of valued goals is what gives life meaning, which is associated with happiness and wellbeing" (Emmons and King, 1998). The focus is about improving the hopefulness of the young person and enabling them to trust their own judgement and make informed choices as experts in their own lives.

The Good Life

What is really important is that young people set goals that they wish to achieve in their own lives, goals based on the type of person they would like to become and the life they wish to lead through an exploration of what constitutes a good life and possible selves.

Although the good life is contested and some young people see a criminal lifestyle as affording them a pleasurable life, this should not lead to a relativism about 'anything goes' or is acceptable because we can discern the lineaments of 'lives worth living' from those that are 'not worth living' (Sayer, 2011). Crime is associated with social harms and does not promote wellbeing and leads to suffering and a breakdown in the fabric of social relations (Hall, 2012). Through this lens, crime has an ontological structure that can be evaluated and this means 'crime as a good life' can be resisted and challenged as a distorted worldview.

The young offenders in this study on the whole reject this position and believe the good life involves abstinence from crime that has a stake in conformity.

The good life as 'what it means to live well' is said to exist, independent of our own subjective desires and which can be known according to Skidelsky and Skidelsky (2012:2). They propose seven basic goods as a criterion of sufficiency that we need to realize, "those whose lack constitutes a serious loss or harm": health, security, respect, personality, harmony with nature, friendship and leisure. These are said to be universal, final (for its own sake) and indispensable. They are contrasted with Rawl's (1971) primary goods and Nussbaum (2000) and Sen's (2009) capabilities. The contention is "whether they are basic enough to merit being embedded into the foundations of society" (Spencer,

2012:np) as these authors propose. It is the notion of a good life centred on subjective desires alone which has to be argued against. The fundamental question raised by my study is what are young people who have offended able to do and be? The state's role is to create the material conditions for all its citizens to lead a good life and thus for young people to have the opportunities to find secure employment. The pervasive role of the market as Bauman (2005:88) attests " has penetrated areas of life which had stayed outside the realm of monetary exchange" in which everything now becomes seen as a commodity. Young offenders cannot fully participate in life without adequate means to meet their needs (see Chapter 5), but the prospect of job tenure has been replaced with temporary contracts and short term work and the brutalisation of working relations: " a precarious existence in an unstable economy and revived competitive-individualist culture(Hall and Winlow, 2005)" (Hall, 2012:198). Health is an assumed state of being by my sample of young offenders, without which it would be impossible to sustain employment. Practical reason or autonomy equates to personality, which is "the ability to frame and execute a plan of life reflective of one's tastes, temperament and conception of the good" (Hall, 2012:160). Autonomy detached from any broader background of ethical concern can degenerate into the liberty of indifference wherein nothing matters. It is this sense of nihilism that needs to be confronted particularly if compounded with hyper masculinity and the perpetration of violence instituted in gangs, as expressed by some young offender's in this study. Personality or agency as the ability to have control over one's life is highly valued, but constrained by structural factors. Young offenders view security in financial terms, firstly for themselves and then in the obligations that a family brings and in keeping oneself

safe from harm. Respect is highly prized and defended along with friendship and relationships in general. Harmony with nature was not a pressing concern.

The Search Institute has identified forty core development assets that young people need to grow into healthy, caring and responsible adults. These are the relationships, resources, opportunities and qualities they need in order to thrive. Positive Youth Development sees youth as a resource to be developed, with particular reference to the young person's ethical being (Sayer, 2011). Thriving is considered the basis of personhood and civil society (Lerner et al., 2003) and attests that "there are capacities in all human beings that need development if a properly human life is to be lived and understood" (Williams, 2012:108). This reflects the application of 'spiritual askesis' outlined in chapter 2.

The expediting of the good life requires the identification of characteristics to be acquired, capabilities to achieve things and outcomes that are personally meaningful to young offenders and the satisfying of life values through adaptive pro-social means. Eleven primary goods are recognised as what human beings seek out, as defined in the table 1 below (Deci and Ryan, 2000; Emmons, 1999; Nussbaum 2000). The young people in this research are committed to learning, to achieving their goals and wish to participate in meaningful work and express clear self-determination. Relatedness is an ultimate concern especially with family and loyalty to peers. In these ways life has meaning and purpose.

Table 11 Primary Human Goods & Developmental Assets

Primary Goods	Description	Developmental Assets
Life	Healthy living and functioning	Social competencies
Knowledge	Curiosity and the desire to understand	Commitment to Learning
Excellence in Play	Leisure and fun activities for the purpose of enjoyment	Constructive use of leisure
Excellence in work	Engaging in activities to achieve mastery	
Excellence in Agency	Autonomy and self- determination	Positive Identity/ Empowerment
Inner Peace	Emotional self –regulation, empathy	Positive Values/ Positive Identity
Relatedness	Including Intimate, romantic and familial relationships, warm affectionate bonds with other people	Support/ Social competencies Boundaries and expectations
Community	Connection to wider social groups	Social Competencies / Support Boundaries and expectations

Spirituality	Finding meaning and purpose in life	Positive identity
Pleasure	State of Happiness, feeling good in here and now	
Creativity	Expressing oneself through alternative forms	Constructive use of time -creative activities

Laws and Ward (2011:177) describe “how human dignity is ultimately grounded in the capacity of human beings to act in pursuit of their own freely chosen goals in ways that reflect their status as human agents” but within the wider context of mutual responsibility. For the underlying problem in crime is the breakage in relationship and the attendant loss of being answerable for others. Human beings have similar aspirations and needs but individuals can lack the internal and external resources necessary to satisfy their life values in ways that do not harm others. In this study, the application by young offenders of ‘spiritual exercises’ in order to acquire the tools needed to make their way in the world forms part of the dynamic of growth and development. The repeated exercise of certain practices ensures the acquisition of new abilities and habits conducive to the achievement of the good life. A person learning to address conflict without resorting to violence through the enactment of non-violent means; developing strategies to navigate the expectations of an intimate relationship and remain safe are examples of acquiring virtues, and developmental capacities.

Young people should be encouraged to take responsibility for their own rehabilitation by YOTs respecting and fostering offenders’ agency (Hough, 2010), motivating them to be

actively involved in supporting them to make pro-social decisions, with supervision adapted to the individual's personal priorities.

The Role of Religion

An impression gained from the research data suggests that it might be the specificity and particular nature of religiosity that alters or modifies the trajectory of desistance as opposed to the type of religion adopted. However, the data as it stands cannot arbitrate as to whether it is the type of religion per se that is the relevant factor, or it is the quality of the religious observance and belief and its application in the lived reality of an offender's life that makes the difference. Religion can be a positive source of transformation, but how it is applied in terms of the moral agency of the person is what matters most. The research participants indicate that those who come closest to the perceived religious ideal will have begun to make significant shifts in their identity with the attendant realignment of their values. Human being will, however, always fall short of an ideal.

The comparison made by the research participants between an authentic ideal of a properly religious person and the young person's own lived experience as difficult, challenging and chaotic with faith being one facet among many, underlines the tension inherent in the social world involving identity formation. We are often not who we say we are, who we wish to be or who we present ourselves to be. Moreover, human beings often are not able to live up to the standards that have been set, such as the norms and official codes articulated by religious bodies. The young people in this study illustrate this fact and demonstrate the personalised nature of faith. The way that people live their actual lives is

often very different and open to various interpretations. Being Muslim, Catholic or Sikh intersects with, and relates to, other identities. For these young offenders there are different forms of religiosity or religious expression that do not necessarily subscribe to a prototypical form, if indeed one exists. This involves taking account of how people make sense of their faith in their own terms, which is not necessarily the same as privatised or an individualised religion nor separate from notions of institutionalized settings (MacGuire, 2008).

Religion can provide a moral template (Walsh, 2000; Holloway and Moss, 2010) that helps to guide human behavior, and the formation of character but it is not making a claim that perfection is necessarily achievable other than potentially (in potentia) in a person's lifetime. It forms part of the developmental perspective and involves adopting a culture of systematic improvement.

Ethical behaviour can be taught but reason alone is not sufficient to make a person morally good, intentional action is also required. There are healthier and better ways to live life when comparing the various modes of leading a good life, but in a rehabilitative process this means moving away from a criminal lifestyle towards a more pro-social orientation. In this mode, certain spiritual disciplines can catalyse a person's development and growth and these can enable individuals to cultivate certain qualities of character.

Walsh's *Essential Spirituality: The Seven Central Practices* (2000) provides a contemporary rendition that is applicable to the rehabilitation process:

1. Transforming motivation
2. Living ethically
3. Strengthening concentration
4. Fostering emotional maturity
5. Refining awareness
6. Cultivating wisdom
7. Offering service

The young people in this study have shown how certain rituals and practices can enable them to facilitate change in their lives (see chapter 6) towards more adaptive outcomes. There is differentiation in the young people's religiosity in terms of the content of their religious beliefs, the conduct of religious practices and the centrality of their religious faith in their lives. A religious upbringing has a bearing on young people's ethical being and attitudes to offending but is mediated by family criminality and pro-offending peer pressure. Religious salience is high but does not correspond to elevated stakes in practicing the religious faith, although change in religiosity is a dynamic factor across the life course and especially during the transition to adulthood (Pearce and Denton, 2011).

The empirical data in this study reveals that there is both diversity and complexity within and amongst religions which needs to be recognised by practitioners working with young offenders, alongside the fact of divergence in definitions and contestation surrounding the boundaries and constructions of religious orthodoxy. Chapter 6 highlights that different

representations of each religion are possible and idealized and that romanticized expressions need to be challenged by practitioners, along with “negative stereotypes of other religions as idolatrous and violent” (Ramey, 2006:211). If these factors can be acknowledged then we can avoid privileging one definition of a religion and thereby facilitate a fairer analysis in the supervisory process. We are nevertheless seeking to prioritise the young offenders’ determination of their religiosity to enable better insight when comparisons are made, in understanding how they may confirm or resist other people’s ascriptions. Some definitions and practices are dismissed by agents in their individual or collective form as not conforming to the dominant view and it is here that critical thinking can assist in moving beyond such ideological assertions (Ramey, 2007). The subjective nature of the authenticity of faith is therefore routinely acknowledged, contested and problematised by my research participants, who recognize some standard form of their religion of which they appear to fall short. They have, however, the ability to exercise their agency “to develop their own definition of what is included and excluded in each religious tradition.” (Ibid:5). A picture of a better or higher mode of life is the moral ideal of authenticity to which people are still encouraged to ascribe, according to differing representatives of their particular faith tradition.

There is a problem, of authentication, eloquently posed by Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1994:459) as the question of “who has the power to determine what will count as authentic?” Indeed, who should decide the content and meaning of what is means to be Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Hindu etc? The young people in this PhD research were striving for authenticity- to be true to themselves but also in relation to acknowledging an authentically prescribed religious ideal.

As Sacks (1993) contends, authenticity in the modern existential sense is about determining one's own values out of a commitment to being true to oneself, rather than accepting the external authority of a specific faith tradition. Concurring Rossiter (2011:11) believes that young people envisage the self as “ the ultimate touchstone for the source of authenticity in beliefs and values (Hughes, 2007)”; the historic turning inwards and the authenticity of religious experience. Religious scholars Chryssides and Geaves (2011) confirm that we have moved from a position of neutrality regarding religion to one of authenticity: the need for authentication and the nature of grounds of justification, such as with divine revelation and sacred texts, and the authority of religious experts with their levels of authenticity.

A major distinction in religious identity is the difference in levels of commitment and questions about apostasy, about who establishes and polices the borders of orthodoxy, termed as right belief and practice. The nature of observance is seemingly what matters and tensions between the extent to which it is the community or individual which constitutes the legitimacy of this identity. The question of which authority legitimises the identity position is crucial, as emphasised in my research findings. Overlaps between religion, ethnicity and culture are also significant in the identity debate. There are various understandings of identity such as ethnic, theological, legal, racial and what constitutes proper Sikh, Muslim and Christian identity is highly contentious.

Charme (2000) posits three approaches to the concept of authenticity: namely, essentialistic, existential and postmodern or decentred. He warns “that we must use authenticity in a particular way that preserves the dynamic instability of identity” (Ibid:148) as opposed to something fixed, located and acquired. It is not about finding one's ‘true self’

or 'real tradition'; instead the postmodern or decentred authenticity is an inevitable process of deconstructing and reconstructing all cultural identities. He is seeking to reposition the idea of authenticity within the purview of cross cultural hybridity. We have observed some of these different positions within the narratives of some of the young offenders in this study. Faith in the self clearly equates to the 'existential' in Charmé's taxonomy and the 'essentialistic' is to some extent implicit within the comparisons that young people make about not adhering to this supposed standard of authentic faith as established in an original tradition or 'authentic core', with echoes of autonomous self-expression in more individualised forms of the religious idiom, like with the personalised faith of Meera (see chapter 6).

According to Rossiter (2011:12) "acquiring and maintaining some sense of authentic personal identity is seen as an ongoing developmental task" of which religiosity as an identity marker tends to play its part. In this thesis faith is proposed as an admixture of authenticity based on the self and drawing on and interpreting the resources of religious faith traditions .Every human being is embedded within culture and history that shapes their thought and identity and in turn the nature and meaning of that history and culture is determined in different ways by each agent.

The participants appear to be estranged from their religion by virtue of prescribed distinctions made by various religious authorities where there is limited organisational involvement, lack of teaching and irregular ritual practice, leading to a more individualized form of faith that tends to be outside the restrictions of what is considered legitimate for them to believe (Smith et al., 2005). A return to an original form that religion once took is

an impossible ideal that fails to see that traditions continue to evolve over time, with each religion demonstrating its subsequently developed expressions in the multiple ways in which faith is lived out in the mundanities of everyday life. Young people reject easy identification with labels imposed upon them and are dismissive of religious expectations they do not choose to endorse, as my research participants have shown.

In this study there is an ideal picture of a better or higher mode of life that each young person has in mind, which serves as a plumb line to compare their own religiosity and behaviour against; it is the moral ideal of authenticity to which people are still encouraged to aspire. It is an ongoing quest aimed at improving the self, distinguishing between what our actual condition is at any moment in time and what one ought to be. Identity is a continually evolving process of becoming (Lawler, 2008).

'Faith in the self' reflects Gardner's (2011b:24) augmented definition of faith. Gardner seeks to bridge the divide between more anthropocentric and theocentric orientated ideas of 'faith', and by so doing he extends this moral ideal. An inclusive language of faith is introduced by Gardner to criminal justice discourse with the notion of relational faith as a social practice that is seen as a force for positive change for incarcerated youth. This can be extended to young offenders in the community. Relational faith is distinguished from its religious roots but not necessarily de-coupled; it is a broader conception of faith that talks about "the fundamental potential of people to do good and change their lives, often including the belief in self and belief in a better future" (Gardner, 2011b:24). It shares an affinity with Maruna's (2009, 2011) talk of redemption and is a key component of rehabilitation. The lexicon of religion is used but with differentiated meanings. Faith talk

promotes the sense of hope, and the potential goodness and possibility of change through the use of faith inflected discourses of meaning.

Maruna (2009) is seeking to redeem 'redemption' as a criminological concept, grounded in attribution theory that privileges the belief in offender's ability to change and supported empirically as the more socially constructive outcome. A socially determined belief in moral essentialism that offenders cannot change provides no incentive for criminals to lead a pro-social lifestyle, serving negatively as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Redemption is an ideal towards which it is hoped all offenders would strive, not necessarily for Maruna (2009) in its narrowly religious connotations but an improvement in the deserved evaluation of the wrong doer who has made amends for their wrong doing, where there is a restoration of status, standing or values. This is a redemption that involves the pardon of society to be welcomed back as active citizens through the attribution of a new identity, able to fully cooperate in society without the debilitating effects of stigmatisation (Radzik, 2009).

The negative side of individualism "where people have a right to choose for themselves their own pattern of life, to decide in conscience what convictions to espouse, to determine the shape of their lives" is the narrowing and flattening of our lives as it becomes self-absorbed so that it fails to take account of how the individual should live with others (Taylor, 1991:2). The only response is to revitalise this drive to fulfilment and authenticity as Guignon (2004) argues, reframing authenticity as a social virtue to enable us to conduct ourselves properly in our relations to others, and providing a person with a role in society.

We can advocate that authenticity rests in the rich interplay between sources in the self and differentiated religious traditions, with various interpretations needing to be accommodated.

The Moral Conversation and Worldview Perspective

Moral conversations are proposed in this research as a means of purposeful engagement with young people in eliciting their attitudes and views about various moral issues, particularly related to their attitudes to offending, in order to prevent crime and social harm. Current policy and practice has been more about punishing and controlling behaviour as opposed to the exploration of underlying beliefs and values that contribute to deviant behaviour. An examination of a young offender's beliefs and values equates to an assessment of the young person's worldview because these provide their particular orientation to the world. After all, we have argued a worldview comprises a person's 'beliefs about life' (Sheldrake, 2012).

This is the contribution this study seeks to make in encouraging this kind of worldview exploration of the actual belief structures of young people. Young people require an open space to air concerns, fears and anxieties about the 'other' and be involved in activities under carefully managed conditions, where they can "positively engage with others and so rethink their assumptions and values"(Thomas and Henri, 2011). The intersectional

understandings of youth identity and its formation are necessitated by this work in order to prevent the essentialising or reifying of particular identities (Young, 1999).

It is proposed in this thesis that moral conversations in the supervisory process allow young people to think for themselves, to challenge and debate, equipping them with knowledge and skills. It provides them with the opportunity to learn about different cultures and faiths. Religious literacy can be developed in conjunction with other partners, such as faith leaders and the chaplaincy team in prisons. The interest is in the personal, social and moral development of young people as social beings in the social world “in terms of the development of the person-their sense of self, identity and values that underpin their actions in the world” (Young, 1999:3). Young people are learning about becoming a specific kind of person in particular the type of person they wish to become and life they wish to lead.

The moral conversation is about engaging a young person in a meaningful dialogue about sensitive and often emotive issues that are pertinent to their offending behavior, such as eliciting their perceptions about the causes of crime, violent extremism and hate crime, identifying whether they have any prejudiced or discriminatory attitudes that could be acted upon and lead to threats and acts of violence. This is akin to Dignan’s (2005) ‘normative or moralizing dialogue’ where the evolving conscience is a powerful weapon against future offending. These conversations need to be open and fluid, and not limited but forming part of the natural relationship that is built up between Youth Justice practitioners and young people under statutory supervision and not confined to specific supervisory appointments but also opportunistic conversations while in transit or involved

in other activities. Ferguson(2009) has talked about the value of YOT practitioners taking advantage of the serendipitous and mundane conversations, such as travelling in the car together, learning to turn these into opportunities for moral reflection.

The process involves improving moral reasoning through discussions about realistic examples forming part of young peoples' lived experience and these have to be both relevant and applicable to the young person entering into the conversation. The use of 'talking tools' or exercises can be used to facilitate reflection such as was devised and used during the field work of this thesis: 'Who Am I?', photo- elicitation. Reflexivity and reflection tend to be used interchangeably in the literature possessing many similarities but denoting "the ability of individual's to process information to create knowledge to guide life actions"(D'Cruz et al., 2007:75). It is about encouraging the informal learning processes as opportunities for introspection and reflection. The ability to question our received assumptions is essential.

One of the most important opportunities for moral discourse relates to young people's attitudes towards other people and groups and especially in regard to attitudes towards victims of offences. Farrell (2001:296) states that: "social circumstances and relationships with others are both the object of an intervention and the medium through which change can be achieved". In this way, it is imperative to scrutinize young offenders' attitudes to other people as it can reveal intentions about prospective behavior.

Young offenders share conventional values with the rest of the general population, in terms of their aspirations and valuing of significant relationships and they are not totally in

possession of oppositional values even if they are participating in subcultures like gangs, which are still embedded in mainstream society.

Young people's welfare tends to be side lined in assessments because they are perceived as a 'threat' to society in view of the punitive response to criminal behaviour. The ASSET has been severely criticised for its labelling of children and young people with its actuarial focus on the prediction of risk and deficit model of criminal (Almond, 2012). An alternative perspective is needed that does not "dispense[s] with concerns about meaning or motives behind offending and replaces these with an emphasis on 'technologies' of 'risk minimization' and the elimination of potential threats to the social order" (Muncie and Goldson, 2006:93). ASSET is used to assess the risks and dangers young people might exhibit (Baker, 2007). The tool tends to see the worst in young people in contrast to treating them with "respect, dignity and understanding" in order "to maximise both the potential and capacity for positive change" (Almond, 2012:147). A focus on strengths, resilience and "developmental processes and turning points in young people's lives" (Ibid:145) is advocated by this PhD study. Recent research has shown the problematizing nature of the assessment process tending to reflect how these are conducted, where young people do not really understand assessment and are uncertain about the role of assessment in helping them deal with the problems in their lives (Ellis and France, 2012). Young people can resist the assessment process through being selective about what information they choose to divulge, through displays of the 'involuntary' client (Trotter, 2006).

The shift to the risk paradigm in protecting the public has meant the young person is considered less of an active participant in the process of rehabilitation than an object to be assessed, controlled and corrected (McNeil, 2012). This would be counteracted by the addition of the Good Lives Model (Ward and Maruna, 2007) within a worldview perspective. A worldview perspective is not being proposed by this thesis as a replacement but as a corrective paradigm to some of the more negative aspects of the existing Youth Justice assessment procedure and as a reframing of current practice. The existing system of ASSET and the Scaled approach is currently under review.

Young People's Perceptions of the Nature, Causes and Context of Crime

Crime involves a form of identity work, in that it performs particular relational tasks in terms of young people's social identity, where the relational factors are the main reasons given by the research participants for involvement in crime. Even the practical need to make money through crime is to fund socialising within young people's social networks. There is a need to understand young offenders in the entirety of their social context, to comprehend their motivations for offending and to understand the causes and conditions which give rise to criminality and the context in which offences are committed. A distinction needs to be made between pro-offending beliefs that could lead to further offending and "rationalizations post offence, which may actually help an offender distance themselves from their involvement in socially unacceptable behaviour" (Eadie et al., 2013:17). The role of narrative is important in relation to understanding offending

behaviour in distinguishing between what young offenders say they did and what they actually did and requires looking at their entire convictions rather than just the index offence. The practices of crime reveal some of the belief structures of young offenders and so conversations about the meaning of crime will assist practitioners in their interpretative analysis.

The relational is interchangeable with the sacred as the most significant aspect of a young person's lives, particularly their families. The sacred can be treated as a thing, a person, a place that is set apart and inviolable, which 'presents normative claims over the meanings and conduct of social life' (Lynch, 2012:29). It is not an exclusively religious category, but refers to what is ultimately most important in a person's life. In contrast, the profane is defined as 'the evil that threatens this sacred form and pollutes whatever it comes into contact with' (2012:26). A young person's offending behavior could be viewed as polluting the sacredness of family relations, constraining the leverage/power the sacred may have to change a young person's life. A parallax or alternate viewpoint regarding the meaning of everyday relationships brings into sharper focus the density of these relationships and how imperative they are in the social world. Religion's central focus in this sense is about human beings, with the emphasis on 'believing in belonging' (Day, 2011).

Families are a definitive factor in the development of criminality but it can also be a strong resource for desistance. Practitioners need to understand family dynamics and networks if they are to have a comprehensive understanding of a young offender's worldview and support the desistance process. McNeill's (2003) argument is that criminal justice

interventions that wish to be "desistance focused" should concentrate on building positive relationships between offenders and their families: "like everyone else, offenders are most influenced to change (and not to change) by those closest to them and those whose advice they respect and whose support they value" (Weaver and McNeill, 2007:1). Family should be considered in its broadest sense as including traditional and non-traditional members, friends and important people in one's social network. A girlfriend or partner is often equated with family.

A recent report by ex-offenders charity User Voice, confirms my own research findings, where the research participants "revealed their family relationships as highly significant in shaping their behaviour: what is touching is how little young people tend to lay blame on parents or dysfunctional home life. They save most of their anger for themselves and for the agencies which have failed them" (User Voice, 2011:30).

It can also be argued that crime is about the performance of gender with young people's need and sense of belonging to peers and peer groups. This involves the condoning of acts of violence in needing to back up friends and to confer status and maintain street reputations. Social recognition is sought in the performance of crime and is observed most notably in gang involvement.

The conditions for change

Norrie (2000) asserts that the individual should not be abstracted from the concrete contexts, which give rise to their crimes. There is a dialectical relationship between the personal and the social realms that is internally and necessarily related. These elements are intrinsically linked to one another (distinct but inseparable), such that 'the existence of one necessarily presupposes the other' (Sayer, 1992:89).

Our identity is constituted and permeated by relations with others. Norrie establishes that the moral form or whether the young person had free control over their actions and moral content or the substantive quality of reasons for which the person acted should not be separated. This echoes the empirical findings in this thesis. The social background of young offenders and the context of the criminal behaviour and the reasons, motivations, influences, intentions given by the young people for their behaviour are essential for understanding the process of rehabilitation. A shared understanding of a young person's offending needs to be developed between the young person and YOT worker, where the young person's understanding of crime is central in the supervisory relationship. A young person's understanding of their behaviour and a YOT worker's explanation may not be the same, but a young person needs to be "an active subject in their own rehabilitation" (McNeil, 2012:np). In this respect, influences on behaviour can only influence an actor if they are recognized by an actor and incorporated into their framework of actions (Lukes, 2005).

Young offenders choose to perform acts of law breaking apropos Judith Butler's 'doing gender' through which they become identified as criminal, but it should not be seen as an essentialising 'essence', as a fixed and given matter. The doing of crime is related to

obtaining affirmation, validation and recognition from one's peers or acquiring symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1977). Certain behaviour forms the everyday practices of young offenders making their way in the world and asserting their social identities and seeking to establish themselves as human beings in relations to others because young people are social beings. From the Good Lives Model perspective crime is conceptualised as a maladaptive coping strategy for obtaining personal goods (Ward and Maruna, 2007). The association with criminal peers in involvement with gangs provides for the need for community- the desire to fit in and be part of a social group. Alternatives provide pro-social normative reinforcement as found in an individual's religious participation (Barrett, 2010). Crime is socially harmful and maladaptive and establishing an awareness of the reasons for offending means identifying the underlying needs which are being inappropriately fulfilled by the enactment of criminal behaviour so that more pro-social options can be considered with increased personal contemplation (Hughes, 1998).

The exercise of reflexivity has practical implications for the kinds of agents that our 'young offenders' are in society as to whether they are able to exert some control over their lives and are not just passive recipients of what life throws at them. Reflexivity can be defined as deliberation about themselves in relation to their environment. Embirmayer and Mische (1998:964) state that young people are "critically evaluating and reconstructing the conditions of their own lives and transforming their relationships to their structural context". Different modes of reflexivity enable them to pursue purposive "life projects designed to attain at least something of what they care about; establishing practices that help them realise their concerns and elaborating these into modus vivendi" (Archer, 2003:301-2). Archer presents the mode of fractured reflexives as people "disorientated

about their concerns and about how best to realise their priorities” (Archer, 2003: 302). Their inner dialogue does not operate as a guide to action because they are impeded in their ability to exercise their mode of reflexivity purposively. The change in either the context or the individual constitutes transformation because each mode of reflexivity is an emergent property that is dependent upon the relationship between the individual and their social context.

Understanding the reasons and motivations for offending informs practitioners about the decision making process of young people and how they can effectively work with young people by taking a problem-solving approach. This involves interventions that provide solutions to problems associated with offending. The ability to enable them to move on requires a change in their decision making processes, which is” achieved by altering how young persons perceive their situation and circumstances” through an understanding of their worldview (Sampson and Themelis, 2009:130). There is an acknowledgement that crime is in part a social construct but which has real world effects.

There is a difference between a young person being judged and challenged in the supervisory relationship. A practitioner needs to view the motivation to change amongst young people as fluid and not fixed and entirely determined by the young people themselves. The young person needs to own the change process and the role of Youth Justice is to support the natural process of reform through working in collaboration; treating young offenders as “subjects of their own activities and intentions” in contrast to “imposing programmes on people as objects” (Faulkner and Burnett, 2012:135).

An engagement with the moral subject demands an understanding of moral agency as reflecting the relationship between what we are (skills, virtues and character of actors) and what we do in the context of our well-being. The narrow remit of what the Kantian agent willed and controlled is contrasted with an Aristotlean focus on the relationship between will, action, person and outcome. Norrie asserts that moral responsibility (form) and moral agency (content) should not be isolated. MacIntyre (1999) asserts a biological grounding related to our human interdependence as social beings and our shared story telling in which we are implicated in each other's stories. Actively engaged listening to young people talk about the reasons they get into trouble and some of their identified solutions to prevent them re-offending might create the conditions for change and induce feelings of hope that change is possible.

Youth Justice interventions with offenders can 'create the environments and conditions in which change can occur' but 'only offenders can accomplish the changes necessary to become productive members of society' (Veysey, et al., 2009:5). There has to be negotiation between young people and workers in order for the experience of YOS supervision to be considered by the young people themselves as rewarding and worthy of engagement with the prospect of a different future.

User Voice (2012) 'What's my story 2011?' research confirms the findings in this current study about the triggers for offending and lack of role models and troubled family backgrounds and experiences of youth offending services. The User Voice report endorse the 'good life' with the future aspiration of a job, a family a steady income and strikingly these are similar to the most likely deterrents of work, money , a family, and comparable to

my own results. YOS are encouraged to provide more singularly tailored provision and seek to employ ex-offenders to work with young people. Fifty-five percent did not have any role model and many found these in their family, with the primary influence being mothers but were reluctant to talk to them about their problems because they did not want to bother them. These offer some solutions to improve understanding as to what works to reduce re-offending, for example through fostering better relations with significant others.

This thesis also extends some of these findings in exploring further with young people about the influences in their lives and identifying certain qualities which they value in other people and can instantiate in their own lives. From this perspective young offenders distinguish between mere admiration and actually embodying these qualities through 'spiritual askesis' or training that actually forms the subject as capable of enacting these characteristics- initially recognised as latent possibilities in their own lives. The acknowledgement of a strong work ethic or a caring and empathetic attitude, are attributes that can be cultivated with the regular practice over time and the acquisition of new habits. Community reparation can be an opportunity for "young offenders to be actively engaged... in roles that allow them to obtain valuable skills and practice being competent"; begin to think of themselves and be seen by others as valuable resources with something to offer (Bazemore, 1996 cited in Raynor and Robinson, 2009: 150). These positive exercises are an intentional form of practice like mindfulness that inculcates a heightened attentiveness to the self and others, leading to increased self-management - an "ability to regulate physical mental and emotional response" (Himmelstein et al, 2012: 151; Kabat-Zinn, 1990). Being able to tackle impulsivity, handle emotions and reduce stress are essential components of anger management. This is not to impose a regime on young people rather an approach to

working with them to identify their own goals and empowering them to be better able to deal with obstacles and constraints to achieving these goals.

Raynor (2004) distinguishes between an opportunity deficit and opportunity responsibility model which makes implicit assumptions about why people offend as ideal types that bear some resemblance to real world practice. The first sees young people offending because they are deprived of resources and lack of opportunities but can tend to make offenders victims of circumstances who had little alternative than to offend. The second instils the message that people can choose to stop offending and can succeed and is more focused on future orientation. This chimes with my empirical findings of focusing on the type of person young offenders wish to be, their possible selves and the goals they wish to attain, as well as how to deal with the challenges they may face. It acknowledges their troubled backgrounds and resilience while also viewing them as active participants in their own rehabilitation. Raynor and Robinson (2009:174) are clear that the primary aim of rehabilitation should be for young offenders to “improve or restore their own capacity for their pro-social involvement in the community” with the criminal justice system and wider society including the state in providing the opportunities for redemption. Standing in contrast to more punitive and eliminative approaches (Rutherford, 1994), rehabilitation as empowerment of moral agents redresses the stigmatising imbalance in our current system, emphasising the value and rights of all persons and the potential for change. A social democratic or welfarist model of criminology is proposed (Reiner, 2007;2012) with a rehabilitative ideal whereby a criminal is not the excluded outcast typical of the current retributive system (Garland, 2001) and discourse but resembles ‘one of us’ a product of our shared humanity. Punishment and rehabilitation are not logically opposed as McNeill

(2012) has recently argued, but punishment has been overly emphasised and tends to reinforce recidivism.

McNeil (2012: n.p) has argued that rehabilitation combines two objectives; the change in the offender and a change in their status in their relationship with and status in society, which clearly connects the personal and social realm, the psychological and sociological. There are both individual and social causes for crime, which need to be addressed. McNeil (Ibid) attempts to untangle the relationship between the two concepts of punishment and rehabilitation whereby “punishment is said to be rehabilitative in settling the putative debt that offending created”. Four elements of rehabilitation must be combined and are mutually dependent upon each other: judicial, social, psychological and moral.

Rehabilitation demands the requalification of an offender as citizen by tackling the ‘collateral consequences of conviction’ and ‘its exclusionary and stigmatising effects’ as well as advocating a change in the offender . It must also address the moral and social harms that crime represents through ‘making good’ and repairing the breach in relationships between the offender, victim and community and insisting upon the social recognition and acceptance of the reformed ex-offender (Ibid).

Young offenders are first and foremost human beings who are exploring ideas, developing a sense of identity and forming views as a natural part of growing up. The role of Youth Justice is to assist them in this process. Crime should be seen as only one aspect of a young offender’s social identity that serves a relational function as a resource for identity construction and conferring social recognition (Barry, 2006). Identity-work is a negotiated

process where individuals have agency and control, in which they invest considerable effort in creating and maintaining their various identities (Johnson, et al., 2004).

The troubled backgrounds of these forty young offenders underline their resilience, the ability to function well in spite of overwhelming challenges and stresses. Glueck and Glueck (1940) identified various elements that contribute to adolescent delinquency that this study confirms including family delinquency, father absence, monetary factors, educational deficiencies. A meaningful and stable relationship with a reference person (Losel and Bliesner, 1990) is pivotal for change.

The hook for learning and achievement is also vitally important if young people are to be encouraged to desist from offending. Sport for instance is an activity which can contribute to desistance through engaging young people in constructive activities, providing access to positive role models, providing an alternative social network, developing a pro-social identity (Meek et al., 2012). It provides an opportunity to improve knowledge and skills through obtaining a qualification for the potential uptake of a career in sports and fitness industry, something considered meaningful, fulfilling and enjoyable. This was reflected in the current study with many young people wanting to pursue sports and fitness coaching, building on the qualifications they had obtained while in custody.

Limitations and Areas for Further Research

The qualitative data in this thesis is exceedingly rich and in depth and exploratory in nature, but it is a limited sample that can only be illustrative in its suggestions and not representative to the wider youth offending population. A broader quantitative study would allow for generalisations to be made and this current research could provide the foundation for a broader mixed methods study about the worldview of young offenders to look at the commonalities and differences of the larger group in contrast to individualised outlooks. This study has identified the various components that would need to be delineated as part of this further study.

With this thesis's theoretical exploration of worldviews in relation to young offender's belief structures, I believe the subject would warrant further elaboration as further insights might be gained in specifically addressing class inequalities and intersections with other multiple identities.

Taking into account the time constraints, governance procedures and limitations of only one principal researcher in the current study, an extended sample would have improved the results. By including more religious groups and additional female participants it would have deepened the validity of the claims being made and allow for greater comparisons to be made between religious groups and across gender.

Furthermore, this research project would lend itself to a qualitative longitudinal study (QLS) in terms of tracking the development of young offender's religiosity in relation to their offending behaviour over a longer period of time. To follow a young offender from the start of their supervision to the end of formal supervision and extending this beyond formal monitoring would enable a greater level of insight in terms of testing young people's

intentions, expectations and motivations to change and highlighting the opportunities and barriers to change. QLS would extend the life history of the research participants with a number of waves of data to examine: identity construction and formation, change and process, processes of change, developmental processes, trends in changes of attitudes and values and the influence of religion across time and the evolution of a young person's worldview. Prospective motivations could be tested and examined in the durations between waves, and throughout the journey towards abstinence from crime. Further research would lead to the better targeting of individuals over the life course, allowing for changes in religiosity to be monitored to see how the development of religious beliefs effects young offenders' criminal behaviour in the light of contingent life events. In particular, it could allow for a definitive assessment as to whether it is the type of religion per se that effects desistance or it is the nature and quality of the religion practised which makes the difference.

Furthermore, QLS would reveal shifts of process in social contexts, and show how people negotiate the changes in their lives. QLS is particularly conducive for examining process through its attention to context and particularities. It would allow for the subtle interaction of factors shaping processes such as social exclusion, resilience and risk; adding to the depth, quality and variety of understandings achieved. Social practices could be examined in greater detail over time, thus providing a better understanding of causality. The movement through different phases of life, provides wider patterns and trends to be observed. It provides an opportunity for individuals to recast their life experiences in the ensuing 'retellings' of their biographical narratives. This would deepen the level of

comprehension of the research from the perspective and understandings of the young people themselves.

Conclusion

This study provides evidence of how young offenders beliefs and values may either hinder or nurture possibilities for change. This research positions itself within the recent turn in Social Work practice towards emphasising service user's worldview orientation as taking account of their beliefs and values.

This thesis extends and supports the strengths based Good Lives model of rehabilitation, endorsing the view that it should be applied to the mainstream population of youth offenders, which is an identified gap in the research literature because there have been limited studies to date. Further research is needed along the lines recommended in this thesis that would evaluate the application of this dynamic model of transformation to the generic Youth Justice population, taking account of what constitutes a good life; the impact of moral exemplars as possible selves; a robust understanding of the moral agency of young offenders as regards what matters most to them; a coherent analysis of their worldview; a nuanced appreciation of young offenders' motives in their performance of crime. An emphasis on ethical being and concern is paramount through the advocacy of moral conversations and a comprehensive assessment of a young offender's beliefs and values by identifying what has weight, authority or worth for each young person and the young people expressing their priorities and expectations. The acquisition of primary goods through the exercise of a routine of practices to off-set and rectify their maladaptive coping

strategies should be nurtured. The cultivation of virtues is connected to the type of person a young offender desires to become and encourages movement towards a conventional lifestyle.

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APPENDICES



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Title of Research Project

Young Peoples' Beliefs and Values and how they affect offending behavior

Name of Researcher

Gary Manders

Address and Telephone Number of Researcher

Institute of Applied Social Studies

University of Birmingham

Edgbaston

Birmingham B15 2TT



- 1) I confirm that I have read and understood the 'Essential Information for Participants' Leaflet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. YES/NO
- 2) I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason. YES/NO
- 3) I agree to take part in the above study . YES/NO
- 4) I agree that the interviews can be digitally recorded. YES/NO
- 5) I agree that the photographs produced in this study can be used publicly for reports and publications. YES/NO

Please ensure that your Parent/ Carer also reads and signs below .

- 6) I have read the terms above and agree with them in full. YES/NO
- 7) I give permission for my son/daughter to take part in this stage of the research, and any further stages as set out in the 'Essential Information for Participants' Leaflet. YES/NO

----- ---/---/----- ----- -----
 Name of Young Person Date of Birth Signature Date

----- ----- -----
 Name of Parent/ Guardian Signature

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Life Tapestry/ Life Review

- Begin by thinking of your life as if it were a book. Each part of your life forms a chapter in the book. Identify its major chapters. Give each chapter a name and describe the overall contents of each chapter.
- What key events stand out for you in your life? Let's look at some of these:
- Peak Experience- high point in your life story; the most wonderful moment of your life, moments of intense joy that have affirmed or changed your sense of life's meaning?
- Nadir Experience- low point in your life story; worst moment in your life
- Turning Point- an episode where you underwent a significant change in your understanding of yourself
- Earliest memory – scene, setting, characters, feelings and thoughts
- Important childhood memory- any memory from you childhood that stands out
- Other important memory – particular events positive or negative

- Are there past relationships that have had a significant impact on your life or your way of thinking about things?

Relationships

- How would you describe your parents and your relationship to them? Have there been any changes in your perceptions of your parents over the years? If so, what caused the change?
- Are there any other current relationships that seem important to you?
- What groups, institutions, or causes, do you identify with? Why do you think these are important to you?
- Do you have any heroes or heroines?

Future Script

- Do you have any plans or dreams for the future?
- What are your short term ambitions?
- What is your outlook for the future?
-

Stresses and problems

- Describe two areas in your life in which you are experiencing a major conflict, a difficult problem, a challenge that must be addressed.
- Have you experienced times of crisis or suffering in your life, or times when you felt profound disillusionment or that life had no meaning? What happened to you at these times? How have these experiences affected you?

Present Values and Commitments

- Do you feel that your life has meaning at present? What makes life meaningful to you?
- If you could change one thing about your self or life, what would you most want to change?

- Are there any beliefs, values or commitments that seem important to your life right now?
- What is the most important value in human living?
- When or where do you find yourself most in communion or harmony with God or the universe?
- What is your image or model (an idea or a person) of mature faith?
- When you have an important decision to make, how do you generally go about making it? Can you give me an example? If you have a very difficult problem to solve, to whom or what would you look for guidance?
- Do you think that actions can be right or wrong? If so, what makes an action right in your opinion?
- Are there certain actions or types of actions that always right under any circumstances? Are there certain moral opinions that you think everyone should agree on?
- Do you have a particular political orientation?

Religion

- Describe in a nutshell what do you believe ?
- In what ways. If any, are your beliefs different from those of most people you know?
- Have your beliefs changed over time?
- Do you believe in the existence of some kind of god or deity, or force that reigns over or in some way organizes and influences the universe? Explain
- Do you think that human life has a purpose? If so, what do you think it is? Is there a plan for our lives, or are we affected by a power or powers beyond our control?
- What does death mean to you? What happens to you when you die?
- Do you consider yourself a religious person? What does this mean to you?
- Are there any religious ideas, symbols or rituals that are important to you, or have been important to you? If so, what are these and why are they important?
- Do you pray, meditate, or perform any other spiritual discipline?
- What is sin, to you understanding?
- How do you explain the presence of evil in our world?
- If people disagree about a religious issue, how can such religious conflicts be resolved?
- How has your image of God and relation to God changed across your life or your way of thinking about things? Who or what is God to you now?

Life theme

- What is the major theme of your life?

Offending Behaviour

Please tell me about your Offending. Unless you talking about offences you have been convicted for, I don't want to know specific details but please talk in general terms eg- Don't tell me you stole a CD from Woolworths last week, otherwise I may have to report this, but generally I have stolen CD's from shops.

- Type of Order on currently and for what offence(s)
- Previous convictions
- Please tell me what you understand offending to mean?
- How did you get involved in offending?
- What do you get out of offending? E.g money etc
- What do you think will stop you offending?
- Do your beliefs and values have anything to do with your offending?
- Choose five pictures out of the following. Which pictures do you most relate to?
- What is it about these pictures that you like/ don't like?
- Who are the people, since childhood that have had an impact on your behaviour or attitudes ?
- What are the events, since childhood that have had an impact on your behaviour or attitudes?
- What is the level of involvement in offending at each stage of your life?

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Young People's Beliefs & Values & How They Affect Offending Behaviour



Essential Information for Participants

❖ What is the Study about?

The study is looking at young people's beliefs and values and whether they have any effect on their behavior, especially their offending behavior.

❖ What will I Have to Do?

To take part in a number of activities looking at what is meant by offending, religion and spirituality and will include you taking and choosing photographs to discuss your beliefs and values. You will

create an autobiography, a story about your life with the researcher and be involved in a number of interviews with the researcher using both the photographs and your autobiography.

❖ What are the Benefits of Participating in the Study?

This study aims to help staff working with Young People attending Youth Offending Teams to understand better how beliefs and values shape behavior and how this information can play a part in stopping offending. It should allow better policies and practices for you as a participant, and for other young people in general.

❖ Will The Study Cost Anything?

The study will not cost you anything and is designed to fit in with your normal supervision sessions. You will receive a music voucher for taking part in the research. This will be discussed in more detail at a later date.

❖ What if I Do Not Want to Take Part?

You are free to choose whether or not to take part in the research and there will be no negative consequences.

❖ What Happens to the Information?

The data you provide will be stored electronically with password and encoded where possible, and any written documents used in the research process will be stored in locked storage at the Youth Offending Team or at the University.

The results will definitely be published as part of a PhD thesis, and may be published elsewhere in future.

❖ Will Any of This Research Affect My Care or Receipt of Services by the YOS?

The research will not affect the services you receive from the YOS, as it is an independent study.

❖ What Happens if I don't want to Carry On with the Study?

At any point during the study you can withdraw without having to give a reason.

❖ What if I Have Any Questions or do not Understand Something?

Questions will help you to understand the research better, so feel free to ask at any time. Remember, if you do not understand something, it may be because it hasn't been explained properly.

❖ What Happens at the End of the Study?

At the end of the study, there will be a group discussion of the findings. This will be an opportunity for you to comment on the research and its findings.

❖ What if I have any Concerns or wish to make a Complaint?

If you have a problem or complaint you can speak independently to the Research Review group at the Youth Offending Team or your Supervising Officer. They can, if you wish, put you in contact with the researchers' supervisors.

❖ Who is Organising and Funding the Research?

The research is funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council along with the Youth Justice Board, the government organisation that

