

**EXPERIENCES OF GANGSTERISM BY NON-  
GANG AFFILIATED HIGH SCHOOL  
LEARNERS IN HANOVER PARK-WESTERN  
CAPE**

by

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**A Full Master's Thesis for the fulfillment of the requirements for  
the Degree of  
Masters in Social Work**

**UNIVERSITY of the  
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01 September 2014



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A **BIG** thank you to Professor Catherina Schenck, may you stay sweet. You are a powerbase of knowledge.

Many thanks to the Western Cape Department of Education and all participants that contributed to the study.

To my family namely Stanislaus Magidi, Fungai Magidi, James Magidi and Rutendo Magidi; thank you for your unfailing faith, support and enthusiasm.

To Bridgetti Mashabane, who stayed up when things were down and has taught me to be better man. THANK YOU!!! Dedication of this paper from me to you.

Finally to coffee and sugar, my great companions through many long nights of typing.



## ABSTRACT

Despite the vast research on drugs, gang violence and gangsterism in South Africa and specifically in the Western Cape, little is known about the experiences of school-going adolescents who reside in the areas ravaged by these gangs. The general image that emerges from the literature is negative and apathetic about the plight of adolescents residing in gang-infested communities as they are usually seen and referred to as part of the problem. Previous studies and literature have therefore omitted the actual experiences of non-gang related adolescents as a result of the existence of gangs and gangsterism in their communities. This research explored these experiences in detail focusing specifically on school-going adolescents between the ages of 16 to 18 and mostly targeting Grade 11 in Hanover Park-Western Cape. The population of the study was therefore all adolescents within the area of Hanover Park with the specific sample of study targeting mainly the school-going non-gang affiliated adolescents of Hanover Park, preferably those doing Grade 11 and registered at a Hanover Park school. The researcher also explored and looked at the experiences of the school-going adolescents through use of focus groups with at least eighteen (18) learners from each of the two selected high schools in Hanover Park. These 18 participants from each school were divided into three different groups implying that the researcher ran three separate focus groups at each of the schools. This was also supported by the use of qualitative semi-structured interviews that were conducted with at least 6 participants from the focus group sessions with 1 participant being selected from each group. This ultimately gave perspective on the unexplored views and experiences of school-going learners in Hanover Park that are assumed to be non-gang affiliated but experience the pressures and existence of gangs in their communities.



## KEY TERMS

- **Experiences:** a particular instance of personally encountering or undergoing something through exposure or involvement.
- **Non-gangs:** person/persons who voluntarily opt out and chose not to affiliate with any known gang or gang practises.
- **Gangsterism:** the culture of gangs. It is the use of tactics associated with gangsters as intimidation or violence in order to achieve something.
- **High school learners:** an individual registered at a known high school and enrolled for learning activities within the stipulated times.
- **Hanover Park-Western Cape:** community of study within the Western Cape South Africa.



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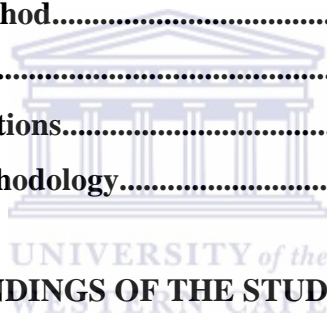
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## CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

"Once found principally in large cities, violent street gangs now affect public safety, community image, and quality of life in communities of all sizes in urban, suburban, and rural areas. No region of the United States is untouched by gangs. Gangs affect society at all levels, causing heightened fears for safety, violence, and economic costs (National Gang Threat Assessment, 2005: 139).

"Every city in the world always has a gang, a street gang, or the so-called outcasts" (Gary Bauer, 2010).

"People don't understand that where I come from, everyone is either a convict, been in jail, been in a gang, is a hooligan of some sorts, but those are my brothers, my family and the people that I travel with. Those are the people that I roll with" (Lupe Fiasco, 2013).

"You know in my own area of Waltham Forest, we've had many murders as a result of the gang violence and often innocent bystanders get caught up in it" (Iain Duncan Smith, 2011).

"The fact is that in too many communities in cities in Britain gangs now have become completely rooted into these communities and they destroy them around them" (Ben Mac, 2009).

"They poison our streets with drugs, violence and all manners of crime" (Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), 2011).

These assertions depict an overall picture of the current state of gangs and gangsterism in contemporary societies. Looking at the history of many countries, amongst them South Africa, Cuba and the United States of America (USA), the history portrays a picture of gangs being central within political spheres, economic circles and social spheres (Brunker, 2013). Wah Ching, a Chinese gang based in Los Angeles, USA and Eastern Asia can be taken as one such gang that has played a dominant role in the social, political and economic sphere of Eastern Asia (Brunker, 2013). The gang is said to be fixated on money laundering and financial crimes in Los Angeles and Eastern Asia (Brunker, 2013). Brunker, (2013) labelled

the gang as having changed the economy of America and further described the gang as “they are really good at making money and politicians love that about them”.

With the ever-growing numbers of gangs, communities and the entire world in general is experiencing an unprecedented increase of gang related crimes and illegal activities. The USA alone reported a record of forty-eight (48) per-cent of violent crimes being attributed to gangs and up to ninety (90) percent in other sophisticated and well organized crimes aimed to control neighbourhoods and boost gangs’ illegal money-making activities (National Gang Threat Assessment, 2005). These crimes include robbery, drug and gun trafficking, fraud, extortion and prostitution rings (National Gang Threat Assessment, 2005). With reference to the South African context, crime and violence are an evident reality of urban life and culture and have been worsened by the presence of gangs (South African History Online, 2011). Poverty, misery, violence and lawlessness of the city have led to the growth of many gangs particularly the numerous youth gangs or tsotsis (urban criminal) which reflects the instability of the urban African family (South African History Online, 2011).

The culture of gang violence has become deeply entrenched in South Africa and even worse in the Western Cape Province in areas such as Manenberg, Hanover Park and the Cape Flats (South African History Online, 2011). This can be noted in an increase in televised and newsprint articles where a number of children and innocent community members are shot and injured and in some cases killed by the unprecedented gang violence. Again with specific reference to South Africa, there are currently about 18 million people under the age of twenty (20) years and these young people account for approximately forty-four (44) per-cent of the total population (Dickson-Tetteh & Ladha, 2000). Twenty one (21) per-cent (8.8 million) of young South Africans are adolescents between the ages of ten (10) and nineteen (19) years and it is between these age groups that people are prone to acts of violence by gangs and gangsterism (South African History Online, 2011). This basically translates to say that at least 8.8 million of the South African population is more at risk to experience the wrath of gang activities in communities where gangs are rife. The next section will briefly discuss the rationale for the study.

## 1.2 Rationale for study

Most studies if not all conducted on gangsterism within the Western Cape and South Africa have dealt mostly with the felonious aspects of gangs. The people who experience and endure



the effects of gangs have therefore for far too long been overlooked by both the media and researchers as there is more focus on who the gangs are and how they operate with little attention paid to “what are the experiences of those directly or indirectly affected by gangs”. This study will therefore look at the experiences of those people that experience gang and gangsterism activities. Of specific interest to the researcher as a social worker working in gang infested areas, will be to identify the experiences of adolescent learners in Hanover Park and the effect gangs have on this unique developmental group. An interest in adolescents came after noting views by Vigil (2010) who states that gang activity increases mainly from the ages of sixteen (16) to twenty-four (24) years old which to the researcher raised a deeper question of the earlier experiences young adolescents experience in relation to gangs.

The specific interest in Hanover Park arose after the researcher’s observations in the community where on several occasions one noticed gang-on-gang wars where gangs would openly engage in gun wars during day time with no regard for innocent pedestrians. This is supported by views of Superintendent Chris Bauermeester of Cape Town's metro police special operations unit who reported that in June 2013, there were an average of about four to five shootings a week and in July, it spiked to twenty-four (24) with one week showing at least thirty-one (31) shootings (Kiewit, 2013). The researcher had also on occasion witnessed children as young as twelve (12) years with gang tattoos on their arms which either symbolised gang affiliation or an admiration for a gang. All this intrigued the researcher into attempting to record the specific experiences of learners that are not gang-affiliated. Among other observations noted by the researcher while working in Hanover Park as a child protection social worker, included gang affiliated children in schools, gun shootings between gangs and excessive substance use by alleged gang members. One also noticed gang tattoos on alleged gang members and gang graffiti randomly painted on buildings including houses, walls and shops. There were also regular reports of physical assaults on community members by gang members. The pictorial collage in Figure 1.1 depicts some of the observation noticed by the researcher with regards to the community of Hanover Park.

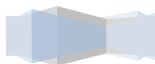




Figure 1.1: Gangland in Western Cape (Cendon, 2011)

These different images depict the different activities undertaken by gangs with the worst impending outcome being death of either gang members or at times non-gang members.

Reading the newspapers published within the Western Cape, such as the New Age and Cape Times amongst others, not a week passes without reports of gang activity and innocent bystanders being affected. Meyer (2013) published that non gang members had been injured in a gun fight amongst gang members in Belhar in the Western Cape. This to a greater extent depicts the extreme gang-on-gang violence currently rife in the Western Cape that is also affecting innocent community members. Having identified the rationale for the study, the researcher will in the next section briefly discuss the research question, aim and objectives of the study. A point to note however is that these factors are briefly discussed in the chapter and will be further developed in Chapter Three (3) of this paper.

### 1.3 Research question

This research will be based on the following research question:

What are the experiences of the non- gang adolescents regarding gangs and gangsterism in Hanover Park?

### 1.4 Aim & objectives

The aim of the study will be to explore and describe the experiences of non-gang adolescents regarding gangs and gangsterism in Hanover Park, Western Cape.

The objectives of the study will be to:

- Explore and describe how non-gang school-going learners experience gangs and gangsterism in Hanover Park, Western Cape.
- Explore and describe the effect gang-related activities have on the school-going learners in Hanover Park, Western Cape.
- Identify protective factors that promote non-gang involvement by school-going adolescent learners.

Having identified these aims and objectives, the next section will briefly indicate the population of study and sample selected. Just like the aim and objective of the study, the researcher will only briefly discuss the population and sampling that will be used in the study as these are fully discussed in Chapter Three of this paper.

#### 1.5 Population and sampling

The population of this study will all be high school learners in Hanover Park which by and large encompass all the school-going adolescent learners. This population consists predominantly of a population historically labelled in South Africa as “Coloured”. The sample of the study will include adolescent learners registered at the only high schools in Hanover Park that is Crystal High School and Mountview High School. This sample will consist of eighteen (18) participants per school giving a total of thirty-six (36) participants who all participated in focus groups with each group consisting of at least six (6) learners that were selected using purposive sampling and snowball sampling methods. The rationale for the selected numbers will be discussed in full in Chapter Three of this paper. The researcher will in the next section discuss the significance of the study.

#### 1.6 Significance of the study

Numerous scholars and journalists such as Marcovitz (2010), Kemp (2007), Lindsay (2012) and Kelly (2008) have previously studied gangs with a focus on gang violence, gang initiation processes and risks of being in a gang, amongst others. Attention has therefore been more on the gang members and their activities with little focus on the context and how it influences the people around them. This study therefore becomes one of the first studies to present a voice of a population affected by gangs. This marks the study as highly significant

as it presents new information that is lacking in a South African context especially in the Western Cape which has the highest number of gang activity in South Africa. In general very little literature exists on gangs and gang-related activities and no studies have been done on the effect of the gang-related activities on the school-going learners. The scarcity in the literature might reflect the fact that people may be scared to conduct research on the people who instill fear in communities or may simply be a reflection of the assumption that the issue of gangs is not regarded as a high priority compared to other issues such as substance use and HIV/AIDS amongst others which have been thoroughly researched in the past.

By highlighting the experiences of learners in relation to gangs and gangsterism, experiences such as fear and the learners' perceptions of law enforcement and their experience of bullying indicate a greater need for intervention by different role players and service providers such as the South African Police Services, the Department of Education and Non-Governmental Organisations towards alleviating some of the experiences that may affect the learners' developmental experiences. The study will therefore to a greater extent raise awareness amongst the service providers to attempt to ease the effects of gangs and gangsterism on school-going adolescents in Hanover Park.

In the next section, the researcher will briefly acknowledge the use and maintenance of ethical parameters in the study.

### 1.7 Ethical issues

Like any other social science, this research will also be in line with ethical parameters set by both the social work profession and parameters of conducting social science research. Such ethical parameters will include the most crucial ethical guides as stated by Hammersley & Atkinson (2007) who advocate that researchers should maintain and respect client confidentiality, obtain consent from the research participants and non-judgemental attitudes towards the different views of the participants amongst other factors. In the next section, key concepts pertaining to the study will be discussed.

### 1.8 Clarification of concepts

Within this section, the researcher will clarify the major terms in relation to the study which are adolescents and gangs. Relevance to adolescents is given due to the fact the research participants will comprise of only high school learners in their adolescence stage. It therefore





becomes relevant to explore the concept of adolescents and developmental characteristics common within the age group.

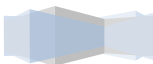
### 1.8.1 Adolescents

Adolescence defines the teenage years between the ages of thirteen (13) and nineteen (19) and can be considered as the transitional stage from childhood to adulthood (Kliegman, Behrman, Jenson & Stanton, 2007). Cheetham & Klindera (2004) describes adolescence as a transitory stage between childhood and adulthood and an influential period during which many life patterns are learned and established. Cheetham et al., (2004) defines adolescence as a time that is both crucial and dynamic for young people as they begin to develop their capacity for empathy, abstract thinking and future-time perspective; a time when the close and dependent relationships with parents and older family members begin to give way to more intense relationships with peers and other adults. With reference to the South African context, adolescents are defined as those persons between the ages of ten (10) and nineteen (19) years (Dickson-Tetteh & Ladha, 2000).

During adolescence, young people go through many changes as they move from childhood into physical maturity (Kliegman et al., 2007). Early pre-pubescent changes occur when the secondary sexual characteristics appear. Adolescents become stronger and more independent before they have developed good decision-making skills (Kliegman et al., 2007). A strong need for peer approval may entice a young person to try dangerous feats, or take part in risk-taking behaviours (Kliegman et al., 2007). The adolescent's quest to become independent is a normal part of development. Common within this stage of development is also a rapid growth in physical changes which can at times make the adolescent very self-conscious, sensitive and worried about their own body changes (Kirsh, 2006). The physical and psychological changes that occur in adolescence can start earlier, during the preteen or "tween" years at times nine (9) to twelve (12) years old (Kirsh, 2006).

During adolescence, children according to Kirsh (2006) develop the ability to:

- Understand abstract ideas, such as higher math concepts, and develop moral philosophies, including rights and privileges.
- Establish and maintain satisfying relationships by learning to share intimacy without feeling worried or inhibited.





- Move towards a more mature sense of themselves and their purpose.
- Question old values without losing their identity.

Kazdin & Weisz (2010) state that adolescence can be a time of both disorientation and discovery which can bring issues of independence and self-identity. In this quest for self-identity, adolescents may experiment with drugs, alcohol or sexuality (Kazdin et al., 2010). During this time, peer groups and external appearance tend to increase in importance (Kazdin et al., 2010).

### 1.8.2 Gangs

The definition of what is a gang is a matter of controversy and confusion among law enforcement officials and researchers. Defining gangs has therefore been based on characteristics that define gangs such as gang names and recognisable symbols, geographic territory, regular meeting patterns or even ordered and continuous course of criminality (Non-profit Risk Management Centre, 2004). Gangs are defined in many ways, and most definitions have similar components. One common definition of a gang is a group of three (3) or more individuals who engage in criminal activity and identify themselves with a common name or sign (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2012). Miller & Klein (1999) on the other hand identify a gang as an organized group with a recognized leader whose activities are either criminal or at the very least threatening to the community. Unity, identity, loyalty and reward are normal characteristics that are admired, but when associated with gangs they become distorted (Miller & Klein, 1999). These are the traits shared by most gangs in order to survive.

Common facts across many gangs as suggested by Miller & Klein (1999) are:

- Gangs are a grouping.
- Gangs can be organized around race or ethnic group, money-making activities or territories.
- Gangs usually claim a particular area of town which they call their "turf." They spend much of their time fighting rival gangs to keep them out of this territory.
- Most gang members are males ranging in age from eight (8) to twenty-two (22) years old.

- Females are moving away from the traditional role of being merely girlfriends of gang members and are forming their own gangs.
- Gangs wear particular items, styles, brands or colours of clothing. Some gangs wear bandannas of a certain colour or baseball caps of a specific team.
- Some gangs mark their bodies with tattoos of their gang name or symbol.
- Gangs often use a certain hand sign or handshake to tell others what gang they belong to.
- Violence, abuse of women, disrespect for authority are usually daily activities for gangs.

With such mind-sets, gang members can at times present a rather grave danger to communities because of their lack of remorse, their lack of respect towards law and authority and their relentless loyalty to the groups that spawned their vicious behaviour (Pinizzott, 2007). This introduces another element of the study as the researcher attempts to identify specific experiences of learners in Hanover Park in relation to gangs and gangsterism. The National Crime Prevention Council (2008) and White (2009) wrote that the proliferation of gangs can bring fear and violence to every block of a city. In addition to suffering unacceptably high numbers of deaths and injuries, gang-besieged neighbourhoods are plagued by intimidation, economic and physical decay, and withdrawal from civic engagement. As these neighbourhoods decline, the bonds that hold communities together weakens: children fear going to school; parks become unusable; shopping and taking a bus to work become dangerous ventures (White, 2009:97). This facet introduces substantial experiences shared by community members as a result of gangs.

Scholars like White (2009) and National Crime Prevention Council (2008) have focused on a broader spectrum of the community experiences as a result of gangs. The researcher within this paper attempted to highlight experiences of school-going learners as a result of gangs in Hanover Park Western Cape-South Africa where it is estimated that there are tens of thousands of gang members in Cape Town where rites of passage often include ritual killings and rapes (Department of Correctional Services, 2006).

In the next section, the researcher will give an overview of the research paper by giving a summary of each chapter.



## 1.9 Chapter organisation & thesis overview

Chapter One gives the reader an overall picture of the study and acts as an introductory piece to the entire research. The chapter begins with relevant quotes from different scholars and schools of thoughts that depict the overall picture of gang activity. The researcher also within this chapter indicates the rationale and significance of the study by highlighting the potential outcome of the study and how that information can be better used. The aim and objectives of the study are briefly discussed and the chapter concludes with a brief exploration of key concepts namely gangs and adolescents.

In Chapter Two which is the literature review paper, the concept of gangs and gangsterism is clearly and elaborately discussed as the researcher attempts to identify gang patterns that lead to experiences of individuals as a result of gangs. There is also an exploration of the school going learner and adolescents both on an international level and South African context. The chapter also focuses on previously recorded experiences of society; school learners; adolescents as a result of gangs by reviewing literature newspaper articles and papers by scholars such as Wacquant (2008) & Kemp (2007) & The Department of Justice Canada (2013).

Chapter Three provides a comprehensive description of the methodological framework and methods applied in this study. The research methods and research design is fully explained with a look at how this methodology, namely qualitative, is most relevant to the study. Further description of the research designs namely explorative and contextual designs are given. The chapter also depicts the population of the study and how the selected study is most suitable in presenting a justifiable view of the entire population of the study. In addition, a step-by-step explanation of how the data was collected as well as how the data was analysed is specified. Ethical practises upheld in the study are also discussed within Chapter Three of the study.

Chapter Four encompasses the core of the study. Within this chapter, findings of the interviews conducted are interpreted and discussed. The data collected throughout the research process is transformed into meaningful information. All the categories that were coded are presented and the main themes selected from these coded categories were analysed using thematic analysis. Where necessary, discrepancies between current literatures are given. Pictorial evidence is also given to substantiate some of the findings within the study.

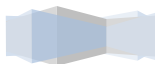
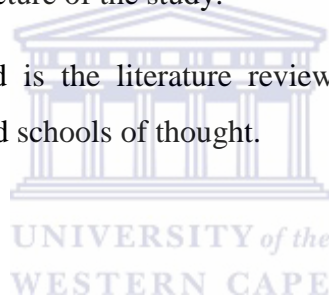


Chapter Five marks the conclusion and final piece to this thesis. The researcher gives a summary of the entire study and also gives a collective description of the overall findings of the research. The chapter also depicts recommendations for future researchers exploring the topic and further recommendations in addressing some of the challenges and experiences that emanated as negative connotations experienced by learners in Hanover Park as a result of gangs in their community. These recommendations were aimed at law enforcement, teachers and other service providers within the area. Limitations of the study were also identified in the study.

#### 1.10 Summary of Chapter one

This is an introductory chapter to the research and also provides a brief into the rationale and significance of the study. An introduction into the aim and objectives of the study were also discussed briefly. The chapter concludes with a summary of the each chapter of the study therefore presenting an overall picture of the study.

The following chapter presented is the literature review section which reviews relevant literature by previous scholars and schools of thought.



## 2.1 Introduction

Gangs are a common phenomenon in almost every country and these groups are no longer restricted to the disadvantaged communities or trailer parks (Triplett, 2004a). This is supported by Egley & Howell (2011) who write that gangs are no longer confined to inner-city domains, as gang activity has been documented in suburban and rural areas. Gang membership also is no longer limited to people of a minority but has evolved into accommodating other races and social circles as well. Gangs now cut across all psychosocial structures such as race, socio-economic status, ethnicity and culture (Egley & Howell, 2011). With this has also come a shift in the nature of gangs worldwide. In the past, gangs were viewed as groups of young men that are more or less defending their territory and were more known for settling their disputes through fist fights and knives (World Bank Institute, 2000). Solving the disputes between gangs, according to World Bank Institute (2000) has evolved to gangs now resorting to use sophisticated weaponry such as guns. More firearms are now noticeable in places where one used to see a lot more of just your regular, traditional street fight (Odzer, 20011).

The evolution of gangs has also brought in different views about the nature and context of gangs and gang activity as gangs now tend to hold different roles and spheres within their respective communities. For instance; Bunker (2008) perceives gangs as a voice of those marginalized by processes of globalization. Yablonsky (2005) on the other hand views gangs as a relevant entity that provides attention, affirmation and protection to many young people who may feel a lack of support at home. The Capital Fax Blog (2013) on the other hand identifies gangs as playing the role of eliciting drugs and having financial rewards from drug dealings and organized criminal activities which inevitably attracts young males to join gangs. These juxtaposition views on the roles of contemporary gangs indicate the different roles played by gangs both the perceived positives and negatives. The opposing views on the roles of gangs makes the need to understand gangs and their social functioning not only at community level but is also essential in fashioning both political and economic tools that alleviate communities affected by these gangs whether in a positive or negative way (Hagedorn & Davies, 2011).

It is important to note that in communities where gangs are prevalent, one cannot overlook the experiences of the community members as a result of gangs and also the effects of gangs in such communities as gangs appear to bear both negative and positive effects on societies they inhabit. Hagedorn (2013) writes that gangs like all of us have a bearing on society which can be harmful or good for the community. These effects and experiences that gangs pose on communities have been studied vaguely by previous scholars such as Marcovitz (2010); Kemp (2007); Lindsay (2012) and Kelly (2008) who all acknowledged that gangs bear effects on societies which inevitably lead to different experiences by members of society such as fear, vulnerability, crime and drugs amongst others. Points to note however are that although scholars such as Marcovitz (2010), Kemp (2007), Lindsay (2012) and Kelly (2008) have identified the different roles, effects and experiences communities and individuals have as a result of gangs; they to a greater extent fail to specifically target adolescents who may be affected more as shown by Howell & Gleason (2000) who wrote that despite the lack of trending accurate data about the effects of gangs on adolescents, one may safely assume that adolescents are more vulnerable and at risk of experiencing trauma as a result of gangs compared to any other age group. This statement does not go to say that other age groups are less vulnerable in the presence of gangs, but only highlights that the adolescent stage is a stage of high turmoil and can be worsened by other social factors that may add to the challenges faced by the adolescent (Shaffer, 2009; Branch, 1997). The lack and gap in literature in identifying specific experiences common to adolescents makes it paramount to note and record the nature of gangs and the effects they pose on societies especially with regards to adolescents as focused on in this research.

In this chapter, the researcher will attempt to uncover literature on gangs and gangsterism specifically noting the nature of gangs and how they affect communities at large. Specific interest will be on uncovering the experiences of school-going learners in relation to the presence of gangs and gangsterism activity in their communities. In trying to understand the experiences, the researcher will also seek to understand the risk factors that predispose school learners to joining gangs and also protective factors that keep them from joining the gangs. Understanding these factors is essential as it may assist in addressing and tabling solutions to the issue of gangs and gangsterism as suggested by Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte, Smith & Tobin (2003) who writes that one must never overlook the protective factors of why certain people do not join gangs as these protective factors are also central to understanding the

different experiences held by research participants. From this point of view, one would assume that negative experiences as a result of gangs may act as a protective factor of not joining gangs or vice-versa. Key to the literature reviewed will be a look at the “experiences” of the school-going learner as a result of the gangs and gangsterism in their communities both locally and internationally.

## 2.2 Gangs & gangsterism

One of the greatest impediments to the collection of accurate gang-related data is the lack of a national uniform definition of a gang (National Gang Threat Survey, 2009). There is no single generally accepted definition of a gang or gangsterism. The definitions have varied amongst different scholars such as Felson (2005) who defines gangs as local groups of youths who intimidate others with very overt displays of affiliation while Standing (2006) defines gangs as principally, but not necessarily exclusively individuals under the age of twenty-five (25) that display a measure of institutional continuity that is independent of its membership and routinely engages in violent behavior patterns that are considered illegal and/or illicit by the dominant authorities and/or mainstream society. This definition suggests that gangs are organized around age, levels of ritualization and criminality and is countered by Petersilia (2003) who argues that defining gangs on the principal of age overlooks other factors such as the nature and context of the gang activity by focusing only on the birth age. State, law enforcement agencies and the political sector in the United States of America define gangs as organized social systems that are both quasi-private and quasi-secretive and whose size and goals require that social interactions be governed by a leadership structure that has defined roles (National Gang Center, 2009).

Felson (2005) and Standing (2006) stated that a gang functions by providing members with the tools to intimidate those whom they believe are inferior or owe the gang something. Such “tools” include clothing, symbols, attitude, graffiti, location, retaliation, and a sense of family that demands loyalty from its members already there (Felson, 2005; Standing, 2006).

According to Christiansen, Utas & Vigh (2006) gangs are often peer-groups that tend to begin as youth groups. A view which is further developed by Klein & Maxson (2006) state that gangs can be identified as durable street-oriented youth groups whose involvement in



illegal activity is part of its group identity. This definition however focuses on the youth gangs and peers and does not take cognizance of gangs that may have formed during early adulthood or any other age group such as The Piru in Los Angeles-USA is a gang which was formed by adult males mostly of the same families around the year 1960's with little criminal activity, designed to perpetrate a "tough guy" image and to provide an easy means of obtaining money (Klein et al., 2006). A common denominator across all definitions given of gangs is the use of the term "group" which to a greater extent highlights the view that despite the overlapping activities, gangs generally operate on the principle of a group. Common to all the different definitions and views given on the identification of gangs is the view that gangs thrive in high-crime, socially disadvantaged communities and they are able to ground themselves or become established within the community's core such as schools, churches, political and economic venues (Moore, 1991).

For the purposes of this study, the researcher will adopt the definition provide by Egley, Howell, & Major (2006) that gangs are organisations of two or more individuals who form an alliance for a common purpose; the gang identifies with and claims territory in the community and engages individually or collectively in violence and other criminal activities. Key to the adopted definition is that gangs are territorial and thrive on intimidation and criminal activities. This definition supports the observations of the researcher of the area of Hanover Park where the researcher has witnessed undocumented alliances amongst individuals who band together to perpetrate violence and other unlawful acts.

In trying to understand the experiences of communities as a result of gangs, one also needs to fully understand the background and history of gangs as the background guides gang practise and gives a picture of the nature of activities undertaken by gangs. Understanding all these factors is essential in identifying experiences of communities in relation to gangs. In the next section, the researcher will therefore discuss the origins and functioning of gangs

### 2.3 Origins of gangs

The information on the origins of gangs is vague and just like with the definition of gangs, different scholars such as Rubel (1965); Morenoff, Sampson & Raudenbush (2001); Katz & Webb, Armstrong (2006) and Klein (1996) have given rather contrasting origins of gangs. Trump (2003) states that pinpointing the origins of gangs is a never-ending trace through





history given the different definitions of what a gang is. This view indicates that because of the different variations given in respect of what is a gang, it becomes difficult to pinpoint what constituted a gang within the different eras. For instance, Rubel (1965) argues that of the oldest gangs are people of the stone-age given the fact that they lived in groups with similar body markings and shared certain signs of communication that would distinct one grouping from the next. Morenoff, Sampson & Raudenbush (2001) traced the history and origins of gangs to the first documented criminal activities committed by two or more people as a band and with this view presume that gangs can be traced as far back as the era of BC (Before Christ) in biblical stories such as The Parable of the Good Samaritan (New King James Version, Luke 10 vs 25-37) where a group of robbers attacked an innocent traveller. This view therefore identifies the earliest recorded criminal activities committed by two or more people as the origins of gangs. Humphreys (2011) even provides a more controversial view suggesting that Jesus Christ and a group of his twelve (12) disciples were the first ever recorded gang in the history of mankind. Humphreys (2011) suggest his view by stating that disciples would at times carry knives for protection which the author describes as lethal weapons. A commonality factor across these different views of what encompasses a gang is that gangs are a collectivist activity or rather a group of individuals who band together for different reasons amongst them profit making and protection (Humphreys, 2011). Being a group is therefore a commonality and can be taken as a basis of what is a gang although one has to further identify activities of the group as these were relevant in defining the gang.

According to Klein (1996), youth gangs may have first appeared in Europe while Redfield (1941) and Rubel (1965) suggest Mexico. Sante (1991) on the other hand states that youth gangs may have originated in USA with the earliest record being the year 1783 when the American Revolution ended and the gangs were formed as a form of banditry and also because of the increased poverty at the time. Wilcox & Land (1996) on the other hand suggested that gangs first emerged following the Mexican migration to the Southwest after the Mexican Revolution in 1813. Finestone (1981); Sante (1991); Spergel (1995) are of the view that gangs may have originated in England in the early 1800's as the Industrial Revolution gained momentum in the first large cities. According to Esbensen (2000), the formation of gangs after the revolutionary periods may have emerged spontaneously from adolescent play groups or as a collective response to rapid urbanisation which leads to vulnerable groups of people feeling more marginalised or in greater poverty and in response



altered to form gangs. These contrasting views clearly suggest that the origins of gangs is a superficial fact that differs from scholar to scholar and this can mainly be because of the contrasting views and a lack of a constant definition of what constitutes a gang.

With these rather overlapping views definitions of what a gang is or identifying the origins therefore depends on the definition one chooses to adopt.

Gangs have a long history in South Africa, beginning around the time of the Second World War after a huge migration of black people from the rural areas into the city (Covey, 2010). Morenoff, Sampson, & Raudenbush (2001) further developed this view by suggesting that thousands of impoverished rural residents migrated to the city from around the turn of the century. Major cities, such as Cape Town and Johannesburg were ideally located and migrants mostly came from farms around the city and were either impoverished white farmers or Coloured farm-workers and ended up in the urban sprawl of city without jobs or stable sources of income (Morenoff et al., 2001). Taking these two views into consideration, one may assume that gangs in South Africa originated as a result of impoverished White and Coloured farm-workers who migrated to the major cities namely Cape Town and Johannesburg in search of work and as a result started forming cliques that later developed into gangs. Covey (2010) noting these views however states that the history of gang origins in South Africa is limited to stories without highlighting actual facts as there seems to be limited documented factual data about gangs in South Africa.

Despite the critic by Covey (2010), one has to acknowledge that as Whites and Non-whites were equally impoverished, they all ended up in the poorer sections of the city bringing in the dangers of miscegenation and dilution of ‘white blood’ and the precarious white right to rule (Morenoff et al., 2001). It is from around this period that issues of separation of races and racially-based betterment schemes became a prominent political question. In 1948 Apartheid started which eventually resulted in the passing of apartheid’s spatial segregatory laws and separate development (Morenoff et al., 2001). This view therefore suggests that gangs in South Africa emerged as results of urbanization and the political economy of the specific city. They were often responses to real social and political pressures but often they became part of the problem for an already struggling Non-white population (Weisel, 2002).

Haysom (1981) focuses specifically on the development of gangs in Cape Town and the Western Cape area stating that gangs emerged to confront the “skollie” menace and ended up incarnating that very menace. Davids (2005) further writes that gangs in Cape Town specifically developed in two essential phases that were firstly in the inner city by roaming the intensely overpopulated districts with equal amount of swagger and danger and became part and parcel of the popular culture. After the forced removals to the sprawling suburban Cape Flats, gangs took a knock and only re-emerged a decade later in a new form and shape that was distinctly of the Cape Flats (Gear & Ngubeni, 2002).

Pinnock (2007) expands this view by writing that gangs in South Africa came about as a result of poverty and Apartheid’s massive social divide. With this view, just like after the great depression on an international level, gangs in South Africa can be said to have formed as a result of increased poverty and in South African context specifically Apartheid. One may then say that poverty and apartheid changed the order of society. This view sees gangs in South Africa as a response to the stresses of poverty. This can be supported by views by Chandler, Chapman, Rand, & Taylor (1998) which suggested that gangs sometimes form as a coping mechanism and response to social ills within the community. Given the segregation laws that were formerly imposed in South Africa which lead to high poverty in certain ethnic groups mainly Black, Coloured and Indian’ it therefore becomes relevant to consider the social ills and racial divide as relevant tools that contributed towards the formation of gangs in South Africa (Pinnock, 2007). Understanding the history of gangs also requires an understanding of the theories that guide the formation of gangs as discussed in the next section.

#### 2.4 Theories and assumptions of gang formation

Thrasher (2000) studied the development and formation of gangs from psychological, sociological and criminological perspectives. The author states that the formation of gangs is a complex process and cannot be limited to the mentioned factors. Cloward & Ohlin (2003) on the other hand support a very popular assumption that gangs usually form and grow out of conflicts among young adolescents. The researcher will therefore discuss some of the theories and views that have been adopted to rationalise the formation and existence of gangs as worldwide phenomena. Understanding the different theories in line with the formation of gangs indicates the complexity of gangs and also gives a hint into the different gangs and



nature of gangs. Understanding all these factors can be used as a basis for also understanding the different effects of gangs and the experiences of communities that live with gangs daily.

#### 2.4.1 Sub-cultural theory

One of the most adopted theories in explaining formation of gangs is the sub-culture theory which holds the view that all individuals generally hold the same aspirations in respect of financial autonomy (Bernburg, Krohn & Rivera, 2006). Some cultural groups on the basis of class, social status, racial group and ethnicity may have a better advantage in attaining their goals and financial aspirations. This as stated in the Correctional Services of Canada Research Report, (2004) creates a strain on the other sub-cultural groups that may end up forming their own sub-cultural group in the form of gangs.

#### 2.4.2 Social learning theory

Corvo (2006) gives a different theory as formulated by Bandura (1977). Social learning theory holds the premise that observing behaviour of significant or influential others can be used in explaining how people learn new behaviours. With this view; criminality, gang behaviour and acceptance by a gang can be easily repeated behaviour if one observes gangs as an outlet with little consequences (Akers, 1985).

#### 2.4.3 Differential association theory

Another theoretical explanation is of differential association theory which as identified by Shoemaker, (2009) is the simplest and most plausible explanation for gangs; the theory simply maintains that criminal activity is a learned behaviour and occurs better in small informal group's formed by people with collectively similar experiences.

#### 2.4.4 Power

Another theory of interest which may explain the formation of gangs is the concept of power which maintains that men in many societies are groomed to exercise and exhibit their power by exercising their dominance and influence on other people without consent of those involved (O'Donnell, 2004). With the pursuit of this power comes a need to engage in violence and form gangs that have a domineering behaviour over society (Rideau & Wikberg, 2004). Although this view gives a fair explanation of how people engage in criminal

activities, it to a greater extent does not go further to explain the formation of gangs or why they form.

#### 2.4.5 Social disorganisation theory

Other theoretical premises include the social disorganisation theory suggested by Thabit (2005) cited by the Correctional Services of Canada Research Report (2006) which states social disorganisation and a lack of social connectedness with the community and its institutions drives people into considering gangs as an alternative avenue.

Discrepancy between having high economic aspirations and a lack of means drives one to engage in criminal activities and join gangs (Wallace, Patchin & May, 2005). Gangs are therefore seen as a means to achieve those aspirations collectively which people cannot attain on their own because of a lack of access to financial incentives while Geen (2001) maintains that aggressive or violent behaviour is a response to conditions in the situation that provoke the person. Even when an individual is naturally aggressive and capable of behaving aggressively, a specific situation must elicit the act.

These different theories are all essential to understanding gangs and different scholars may choose to view gangs from different perspectives. One may however consider a collective outlook on gangs that pays attention to integrating a rather holistic approach for the formation of gangs. In the next section, the researcher will discuss the different types of gangs. This is highly important as the nature of experiences shared by communities in respect of gang activity greatly relies on the type of gang. Assumably, people who reside in a community infested with street gangs will not necessarily hold the same experiences with those in hate gangs.

#### 2.5 Types of gangs

Defining the nature and types of gangs is central to answering the research question of “What are the experiences of gangsterism by non-gang affiliated high school learners in Hanover Park, Western Cape?” as one can safely assume that the experiences of learners will be specific, depending on the type of the gang and its context in society. It therefore became

paramount for the researcher to understand the different types of gangs with a special interest in local South African gangs.

Thornberry (2004) state that the type of gang can be documented and streamlined based on the nature of activities and motive of formation. Thornberry (2004); Wood & Alleyne (2010) therefore demarcate gangs into what they term “universal groupings” of gangs which they maintain every known gang can be demarcated into. Wood & Alleyne (2010) however warn that these classifications could potentially exclude or include groups that are not necessarily gangs. Having said this, the following are various types of gangs as given by Thornberry (2004); Wood & Alleyne (2010).

#### 2.5.1 Business / Profit gangs

These gangs are formed solely for financial gain and thrive on illegal businesses such as drugs merchants, prostitution, and human and or weapons trafficking among others (Wood and Alleyne, 2010). Drug gangs may fall within this category according to Wood and Alleyne, (2010) only when they simply exist to generate an income by selling drugs. Morrison & Skiba (2001) mention that these gangs often run seemingly legitimate business as fronts for their illegal trades and when more sophisticated will penetrate the political sector as funders or suppliers of weaponry to smaller states. Morrison & Skiba (2001) gives an example of how drug cartels supplied weaponry to the Cuban government during the revolutionary struggle in Cuba.

#### 2.5.1 Drug gangs

These forms of gangs pose a similar resemblance to the business gangs. They focus mainly on drug trafficking and are found mostly in the most populated cities where their business can thrive (Prince, 2005). Hill, Lui & Hawkins (2001) further write that these gangs are formed by a rather small but very cohesive group of individuals that are well connected internationally. They focus on the business of selling drugs and have sales market territories. The members of these gangs are older on average but with a narrower age range and are extremely violent. They have defined roles, abide by a code of loyalty and are controlled by market competition. The difficulties encountered in working with youth gang members within a drug gang setting tends to create a more difficult and less safe environment especially for those who engage clients in a home-based setting. Petersilia (2003) offers an



interesting view about drug gangs arguing that drug gangs do counter the supply of drugs by doing well in the form of job creation. Petersilia (2003) also suggests that drug gangs are more present in the inner cities where jobs may be difficult to find and therefore creating income and employment.

### 2.5.3 Hate groups-gangs

According to Wood & Alleyne (2010) hate groups form to target a specific group of people. A typical example is of the Skinheads formed in the United States of America which is an all-white group that believes in white supremacy (McVeigh, 2009). The group intentionally seeks to intimidate any non-white citizens. In Kampala, Uganda, a gang identified as Bweyogerere formed with the intention of torturing any known or suspected homosexuals (Paice, 2012). These gangs therefore have no financial motive but simply form banditry against a known group of people, usually a minority group. Another well documented gang in this regard is the Ku Klux Klan commonly known as the KKK or the Hooded Order which advocated on white supremacy and anti-communism with at least 5000 to 8000 members across the United States of America (McVeigh, 2009). Understanding the context of such gangs will help highlight the context of the nature of experiences shared by learners as a result of the gang.

### 2.5.4 Copycat and delinquent social gangs

These two types of gangs do not have strong foundations and may pop up one day and cease to exist the next (Thabit, 2005). Steinberg (2005) records a group identified as the “Pain Boys” which was simply dismantled by intimidation and arresting its founding members in the Western Cape-South Africa.

### 2.5.5 Street gangs

Identified as the most common type of gang in residential areas, street gangs are more visible in highly poverty-stricken areas by groups that turn to crime under the influence of adults (Siann, 1985). Siann (1985) further reports that often street gangs are rehabilitated through recreational leadership and guidance in community centers. These gangs seemingly form out of boredom and a need to identify and are known to do a little bit of everything (Vogelman 1993 cited by Klein, 2002). These street gangs have no clearly defined line of criminal activity but can engage in smaller crimes such as selling of drugs and robberies without any

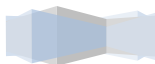
formal or organizational planning (Klein, 2002). Street gangs seem less unified as an organization but function more on the level of group of individuals banding together and engaging in criminal and unlawful activities. A point to note according Klein (2002) is that street gangs have a code of loyalty, but generally ill-defined roles for its members, who are usually younger on average, but with a wide age range.

#### 2.5.6 Third generation gangs

According to Lewis (2006), third generation gangs are at the intersection between crime and war. Lewis (2006) mentioned that these gangs are a by-product of the significant changes in societal organization that result from the confluence of globalization and technological advances that alter the nature of conflict and crime, favor small agile groups and fuel the privatization of violence. They are to some extent identified as terrorists on the basis that they have gone beyond the everyday criminal activities and have gone to influence political aims (Kissner & Pyrooz, 2009). They are the most complex gangs and operate at the global end of the spectrum, using their sophistication to garner power, aid financial acquisition and engage in mercenary type activities (Kissner & Pyrooz, 2009). A proponent of these gangs, Kennedy (2009) writes that at times these type of gangs form out of necessity to address a certain political situation. Reference can be given were vigilante groups formed in Zimbabwe to challenge the political sphere through violence. These vigilante groups through their criminal activities were to a greater extent challenging the autocratic government and raising the concerns of the nation at large Bell (2011).

#### 2.5.7 Hybrid gangs

These according to Klein (2002) are a new type of gang that often mimics traditional street gangs in their way of dressing, their tattoos, hairstyles and attitudes and in their graffiti but may or may not follow expected rules and contain a mix of self-developed activities and behaviors. Kinnear (2009) further writes that this form of gang is at times mocked as “clown gangs” as they lack originality and in most cases pose no great threat to society. Such gangs would therefore have a different bearing on the nature and context of experiences and effects of gangs on communities and in particular reference to this study, high school learners.





### 2.5.8 Prison gangs

During a survey conducted in 2006 by Jacobs (2007), the Department of Correctional Services reported that it had a capacity of 100 000 prisoners but was actually over 160 000 inmates with a greater majority being charged for violent crimes. With the overcrowding of these prisons, came the elevation of prison gangs that strive on intimidation and daily recruitment of inmates. In the South African context, prison gangs are well known and have the most fearsome reputations (Dissel, 2006). They are believed to have as a protective measure from more dominant prisoners and authorities. According to Dissel (2006) they are well-known to operate from Pollsmoor prison but have spread into other prisons in South Africa. According to Skarbek (2010) prison gangs are so popular that some people would even intentionally commit felonies so that they are introduced to prison gangs. They are therefore viewed by some as the ultimate gang (Skarbek, 2010). Prison gangs have a direct influence on street gangs and their activities and this can be noted for instance in the Number Gang which is known for controlling most of the drug trafficking coming to the Western Cape, South Africa and controlling and functioning of the gang is all done from the prison cell (Skarbek, 2010).

Noticeably, this section has highlighted the different nature of gangs on an international level. The researcher will on the next section attempt to identify the common gang types within South Africa with specific reference to the Western Cape.

### 2.6 Common gang types and trends within the Western Cape-South Africa

The traditional view of gangs in South Africa includes the so-called 'skollies' who function within the Coloured communities on the Cape Flats as noted by Broidy & Agnew (1997). This definition has however changed considerably with recent events on the Cape Flats, Western Cape where street and prison gangs have become much more organized, specifically prison gangs that traditionally operated inside prisons started to recruit outside members, especially those who belonged to street gangs (Fong & Buentello, 1991). The differentiation between street gangs and prison gangs has therefore been bridged. These trends are also witnessed and experienced within Hanover Park which is the focus of the study where one has observed alleged street gang members acting on behalf of prison gang members.

A documented gang within the Western Cape that operated in areas such as Maneneberg and Hanover Park is the “Hard Livings” which is one of the largest gangs in the Western Cape (Bernburg, Krohn & Rivera, 2006). Until 1994, “Hard Livings” was one of the biggest gangs on the Cape Flats with an estimated membership of between 3 000 and 10 000. This number is estimated to have grown to be over 30 000 members in the year 2005 (Bernburg, Krohn & Rivera, 2006). This growth has been attributed to political transition and social controls being invariably relaxed in South Africa post 1994 (Bernburg, Krohn & Rivera, 2006). The relaxation of social controls, coupled with social disorganization and political uncertainty, provides ample opportunities for the growth in crime. With the growth of such gangs has also come a change in the context of gangs that have shifted from being mere street gangs to drug and profit gangs due to the growth of the illegitimate opportunity structures that have been strengthened by the relaxation of social controls while enabling the growth of the gangs (Kissner & Pyrooz, 2009). Kissner & Pyrooz (2009) noted the strength of and evolution of the gang by stating that it now has stakes of foreign syndicates with better resources to bring drugs into the country. Street gangs such as the Hard Livings and Laughing Boys are therefore no longer characterized by youngsters who hang around the streets of local communities to ‘defend’ the community from rival gangsters but have rather developed into organized criminal empires (National Gang Threat Assessment Centre, 2005). A point to note is that the Western Cape gangs act mainly as drug gangs supplying the province with methamphetamine a common drug also known as “tik” which according to the National Gang Threat Assessment Centre (2005) is the drug of choice in Hanover Park and the Western Cape in general because it is cheap to buy and easily made from home products such as bicarbonate of soda. With that the gangs fight for territory and respect leading to the gang-on-gang violence scourging the community.

Another common type of gang noticed within the Western Cape is the prison gangs that are common mainly at Pollsmoor Prison. Common prison gangs within the Western Cape include Number gangs also dubbed the 28’s and 27’s. The relationship between 28’s and 27’s is described as an unholy union where the 28’s are identified as “muscle” while the 27’s run errands for the 28’s in and out of prison (Katz & Jackson-Jacobs, 2004). The 27’s would even offer sexual favours to the 28’s for protection (Katz & Jackson-Jacobs, 2004). These gangs as stated by Katz & Jackson-Jacobs (2004) thrive on recruitment of new prisoners through intimidation. Despite being confined to prison cells, these gangs are known for directing drug



sales on the outside because of their well solidified structure and hierarchy as noted by the Correctional Services of Canada Research Report (2004) which reported that number gangs have a “lord”, generals and lieutenants running the organisation.

According to Davids (2005) the number gangs of South Africa are not directly involved in extreme violence like street gangs but maintain that punishment is enforced through rape for both males and females. Davids (2005) further states that the worst punishment they enforce on any person posing a threat to their organisation whether in prison or in the community is dubbed the “*slow puncture*” which is when HIV/Aids positive gang members rape the victim and leaves them under the assumption that they have infected the victim with HIV; hence the phrase slow puncture meaning he will die slowly from HIV/AIDS. Another phenomenon of prison gangs across the Western Cape according to Gear & Ngubeni (2002) is of gang members that have served their prison sentence and are released from prison. Gear & Ngubeni (2002) explain that leaving prison does not mean the member must have left the gang but presents the gang with more opportunities as they continue to carry on gang duties in their respective communities. Forms of punishment such as the “*slow puncture*” also continue which presents different experiences and effects on community members.

An emerging type of gang in the Western Cape, although not as prominent, is female gangs. There is however virtually no literature on these gangs apart from newspaper publications as the aspect of female gangs has not been researched which could be because these are an emerging concept within the Western Cape or could be because of a biased view that gangs are limited to males only. Kiva (2013) reported that female gangsters were being accused of brutal stabbings in attacks on community members. Kiva (2013) further reports that the most common female gangs within the Cape Flats are “Voora” and “Vatos” babes. Both names according to the Urban Dictionary (2013) are Spanish words used by Mexicans for homeboy or two subjects respectfully.

Identifying these gang trends and types within the Western Cape to a greater extent gives a picture of the different experiences community members have as a result of gangs within their communities. This is relevant towards answering the research topic with a focus on high school learners of which the majorities are adolescents. The researcher will in the next section explore the stage of adolescents with a focus on trying to describe this developmental age.

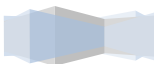


## 2.7 School-going adolescent learners

The study focuses on school-going learners, mainly the age of sixteen (16) which is identified as the adolescent stage of development; it becomes of paramount importance to indicate and highlight what adolescent learners experience being within this age group in a gang-infested community.

Adolescence is simply identified as a period of psychological social transition between childhood and adulthood (Richman & Frazer, 2011). During this period of development, great physical and mental changes occur; hence the stage of development described by Richman & Frazer (2011) as a period of uncertainty when everything is in ferment. Welsh & Farrington (2007) defined adolescence as a period of great strain, stress and storm and strife. It simply means to grow to maturity. According to Welsh, & Farrington (2007) adolescents also represents a time period when a juvenile matures into adulthood and the specific age group varies from scholar to scholar and from culture to culture. The World Health Organisation (2009) for instance, views this age group as between the age of 10 and 19 years of age in contrast to the United States of America Health Department which considers this period to be generally between the age of 12 and 14 to 19 and 20 (World Health Organisation, 2009). For the purposes of this study, the researcher will adopt the notion that adolescence is between the ages of 12 to 18 years old where one experiences physical and psychological changes within an individual's life as suggested by Richman & Frazer (2011). This stage of development is characterized by many facets of development among them rapid growth; increase in modern activities; sex-consciousness; self-consciousness; imaginative activity; development of special intellectual interests; contrasting mental moods and revolt to authority amongst others (Richman & Frazer, 2011).

Krohn & Thornberry (2008) suggest that joining a gang acts as a “snare,” disrupting adolescent development. Not all scholars however share the same opinion that gang membership during adolescence “matters” in the life-course. Huff (1998a); Klein & Maxson (2006) all suggest that the presence or absence of gangs does not in any way disrupt or influence the developmental process during the adolescent stage. Klein & Maxson (2006) add to their arguments stated that gang involvement is high during the adolescent stage and this trajectory peaked in early adolescence around 12 to 13 years in age and typically lasts fewer than three years.



Acknowledging the challenges and experiences of school-going adolescents is necessary in understanding the added challenges that can be presented by the presence of gangs in the community. The USA Juvenile Justice System (2008); Stiles (2005) state that the process of being an adolescent is challenging on its own without added pressure of gangs and adolescences unlike most of the other age groups are wired to be destructive which makes the challenges even more serious. The first notable point posing a challenge to learners and adolescents is that they directly and sharply respond to the culture they belong to faster than other age groups (Stiles, 2005). Because of this, as the culture changes due to development and urbanization among other factors, the nature of the challenges also changes.

According to Delaney (2005), the one challenge facing the schooling adolescent is that of attaining maximum educational development. In the contemporary industrial economy with high competition and competitive business, more and more adolescents are left with the task of performing above-average academically to secure a better future. No longer can an adolescent drop out of school with surety and a sense of security that he will be able to fend for himself (Curry, Decker & Egley 2002). This challenge on its own recognizes the fact that not only do adolescents now face the pressure of attaining educational development but also earning a living. . A great number of adolescents are left to discover and attain this on their own, the great divide between private and public schools is an indication to this fact that governments come short of their responsibility to assist all adolescents in reaching their maximum developmental development (Curry, Decker & Egley 2002).

Another challenge for the adolescent is of developing competence in citizenship which Welsh & Farrington (2007) identifies as one of the greatest challenges faced by learning adolescents. The attainment of citizenship refers to the attainment of full responsibility as a citizen of a country. Such responsibility includes preparing for the field of work, economic independence and taking part in the political spectrum of society, for example through voting. It demands discipline, self-direction, individual initiation and voluntary cooperation among other things. Adolescents in their respective schools need to master this and it is perhaps impossible for some to attain all this; hence it becomes an on-going process.



Maintaining wholesome and personal adjustment is viewed as another common challenge faced by the school-going adolescent by Wyrick (2006) who maintains that adolescents these days are more familiarized to adult behaviour that is not consistent, parental skills that are unstable and adults that are facing pressures they cannot handle. All these factors come into play in a negative way that affects the adolescent's development and attainment of his/her self and achieving 'wholesome'.

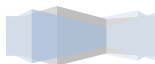
Among other challenges in the school environment is the use of drugs and alcohol. Lassiter & Perry (2009) write that adolescents in schools get pressured to engage in alcohol and drug use and whether the individual chooses to engage or not still affects their image within the school arena. This is again closely related to other lasting effects such as health problems, regretful decisions, legal problems and dependency among others where the adolescent succumbs to pressure from fellow learners (Lassiter, & Perry, 2009).

Richman & Frazer (2011) stated that while the levels may vary from school to school, almost all adolescents in schools face certain sexual pressure. With the contemporary media portraying a carefree attitude rarely showing the consequences of sex, it also impacts the schooling adolescent's sexual behaviour (Miller, 2001). With this comes the challenge towards male school-going adolescents were they are pressured by their peers into having sex which normally leads to them using girls. Girls on the other hand end up facing the pressure of being labeled "immoral" which may cause low self-esteem. Sex in the school-going adolescent is therefore viewed as a desirable thing with fewer consequences which the adolescent usually gets to deal with alone in the form of pregnancy (Miller, 2001).

These challenges to a certain extent give an indication of the added pressure which can be added by the presence of gangs in a society. Noting this, it is also important to acknowledge some of the risk factors that predispose certain schooling adolescents to join some/certain gangs compared to others.

## 2.8 Risk factors pre-disposing adolescents/high school learners to joining gangs

Most people do not join gangs, but the appeal of ganging crosses demographic and geographical lines. Statistics in the United States of America suggest that seven percent of whites and twelve percent of the blacks report current or past gang involvement (Snyder &





Sickmund, 1995). Despite this alarming number it is mentioned that seven to eight out of ten youths, even in high risk populations do not join gangs or report any interest in gang membership (Snyder & Sickmund, 1995). Some adolescents join gangs and others do not despite them being within the same community. It is therefore important to identify the specific risk factors that predispose adolescents to join gangs as the more risk factors to which youth are exposed, the greater their risk of joining a gang in adolescence (Elliot, 1994). According to the Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, (Author not named: undated) Children who experience seven or more risk factors at ages ten to twelve are thirteen times more likely to join a gang during adolescence than children who experience only one risk factor or none at those early ages. It is therefore clearly indicated that the reason to either join a gang or not can be linked to one's experience of gangs. Understanding the risk factors will therefore help in understanding the experiences of adolescent learners in relation to gangs.

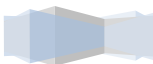
Increased number of identified individual risk factors increases the likelihood of gang membership (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996). Early drug use, sexual promiscuity, low self-esteem, feelings of alienation, the need for recognition, status, power and excitement all increase the likelihood that an at-risk youth will join a gang and become mired in the gang lifestyle (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996). Baccaglini (1993) further states that gang membership can enhance prestige or status among friends, especially girls for boys and provide opportunities to be with them. Gangs provide other attractive opportunities such as the chance for excitement and opportunity may come in the form of selling drugs and in return making money (Baccaglini, 1993). Many youths thus see themselves as making a rationale choice in deciding to join a gang. They see personal advantages to gang membership (Sanchez-Jankowski, 1991). From this view point, a young person may experience gangs positively as a source of income. Another factor is that youth gangs often come from disadvantaged homes (FBI, 2008). Poverty, child abuse and neglect, poor parental supervision, uninvolved parents, parental attitudes supportive of violence, as well as gang involvement by family members are all predictive of gang membership (Wyrick & Howell, 2004). Gangs as an alternative would then provide emotional support, protection and a sense of belonging that adolescents may not be getting from their family system. Gangs can therefore be experienced as an alternative to the traditional family setting. Closely linked to the element of family are also views by Gordon (1994) who wrote that gang membership is at times an inherited factor. This point notes that when a family member who is a role model

such as a father or older sibling is a gang member, this seemingly poses as a risk factor for the younger siblings.

Ratele, Shefer & Clowes (2012) also present a rather critical view in relation to the parent's role as a risk factor. Ratele et al., (2012:561) report that "the legacy of apartheid, unemployment, poverty and inequality in post-apartheid South Africa, gender inequality and the burden of HIV/AIDS and violence-related mortality may have negatively affected family and parental practices with a significant number of children growing up without biological fathers either through premature death or abandonment". Although Ratele et al., (2012) does not directly identify the correlation between the absent parents and gang prevalence, other studies such as those by Boyce, Essex, Alkon, Hill-Goldsmith, Kraemer & Kupfer (2006); Bronte-Tinkew, Moore, Capps & Zaff (2006) romanticise the impact of a present father as a powerful tool that leads to better school performance, reduced psychological stress, positive intellectual development and less anti-social behaviour. The assumption would therefore be that the absent parent, especially fathers would inevitably lead to increased anti-social behaviour which in this regard may be joining gangs, increased psychological stress and poor intellectual development which all fuels one to join gangs. Garbarino, Bradshaw & Vorrasi (2002) further mentions that the lack of role models such as a father may also act as a risk factor. There are a growing number of single parents in South Africa with an even higher number of missing fathers (Monama, 2011). Monama (2011) alleged that around nine million children in South Africa grow up without fathers; children raised in these fatherless homes may seek the authority and guidance of a male figure from elderly male gang members who may act as a steady source of support.

Nyindo (2005) indicates that sex, drugs and gangs can act as recreational activities for the poor. This statement maintained that where communities lack in recreational activities and resources, people especially the vulnerable adolescents will make up for through formation or joining of gangs and engaging in sexually activities. The experience of limited resources may therefore predispose some people to join gangs.

Another community factor as stated by Howell & Egley (2005) is the experience of being marginalised. People may join gangs for social relationships that give them a sense of identity and belonging. For instance the MS13 which consists of approximately 20000 to 50000





members from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala formed on the basis of “brother’s support” but had later turned into unlawful groups with political ties in both Central America and the United States of America (Howell & Egley, 2005).

In summary, Wyrick & Howell (2004) note that gang membership is strongly associated with problems across multiple domains of existence and is directly related to one’s experiences with gangs. This makes the need to understand the experiences of learners in relation to gangs even more warranted. In the next section, the researcher will review the different experiences shared by society in relation to the presence of gangs in their communities.

## 2.9 Experiences of society in gang-infested communities

Gangs and gang culture now occupy central positions in mainstream society within communities they have inhabited (Wacquant, 2008). This may result in affecting the community members. Wacquant (2008) describes this stating that for better or for worse, the everyday lives of countless urban dwellers are affected and altered by the presence of gangs within the community. Identifying these experiences through use of literature is difficult as previous scholars and agencies such as Kemp (2011) & the Department of Justice in Canada (2013) have focused more on identifying risk factors and effects of gangs on families of gang members without acknowledging other sub-groups of the society such as high school learners. Noted below are some of the experiences of individuals and communities as a result of gangs.

### 2.9.1 Gangs thrive on intimidation

Felson (2005) stated that gang members thrive on intimidation in and fear with a purpose of scaring off enemies, to get victims to comply with their wishes or to discourage bystanders from interfering in their business and to discourage witnesses from speaking out against them later. This intimidation as noted by Bryant (1989) may take the form of verbal threats or may even resort to violence. John Mongrel, leader of the 28’s gang in a documentary titled *The Heart of a Killer* (2008) stated that he would anally rape new prisoners in order to intimidate them and to prevent further uprising from any other prison members. This is a typical example of how gangs intimidate people into submitting to the code of the gang. Community

members therefore experience intimidation on a regular basis which according to Bryant (1989) is one of the most prominent reasons why people never report gangs to the authorities.

### 2.9.2 Fear

Communities also experience fear as a result of gang presence and this fear vary from fear of crime to fear of victimisation and in some cases can be a fear of being raped amongst other factors (Chappell, Monk-Turner & Payne 2011). Chappell et al., (2011) notes this fear as an indirect threat to physical health by noting that when people are afraid to leave their houses, this will inevitably contribute to health risks such as obesity, diabetes and heart diseases due to a lack of exercise and stress. In addition to health, Chappell et al., (2011) states that living in fear prevents people from socialising and could invariably affect one's longevity and relationships with the community. With such fear and hopelessness usually comes a reduced desire to carry on with life (Chappell et al., 2011). In summary, people end up being afraid to go outside because they might become the next victim either deliberately or accidentally. The United States Department of Homeland Security (2009) issued a statement that too frequently we hear about innocent victims who are killed in the crossfire of rival gangs and street level drug traffickers. People also hold this fear of being caught between fights as noted in a publication by Raubeinheimer (2012) where an eight year old boy was shot by a stray bullet during a gang fight in the Cape Flats area. It therefore becomes paramount to acknowledge that communities and societies experience fear as a result of gangs.

Craig, Vitaro, Gagnon & Tremblay (2002) bring in another element of fear in gangster-ridden societies by suggesting that people may live with a constant fear of seeing or witnessing something happen and questioned about the incident by law enforcement. For this reason, people fear not only being implicated by law enforcement but also fear of retaliation of gangs should people report incidents. People for this reason chose to omit themselves from the equation by staying inside and out of so-called harm's way or by not reporting the incidents (Lane & Meeker, 2003). Weiler (2000) also stated that when a gang activity, criminal or deviant activity occurs and the victim or bystander does not report it or validate that the incident happened, it affects many things, one being the statistical representation of the community and its surrounding area. The quantity of police patrolling the streets and specialized gang units are estimated based on these statistics. Based on these examples, the individuals' actions show that fear and intimidation have strong effects on the community. In



such situations the particular individual's sense of survival and security are of utmost importance.

Emerging from a study by Weiler (2000) is also the fact that fear experienced in communities where gangs are present is gender specific given the fact that the violence experienced by young women and men as a result of gangs, also differs. While there is no discernible difference between the levels of violence experienced or feared by young men and women, the nature of fear and violence did vary according to gender, as did the spatial and temporal occurrence of this violence (National Gang Threat Survey, 2009). Women experience a fear of being robbed or being sexually and physically attacked by gangs while men experience fear of physical assaults by gang members (National Gang Threat Survey, 2009). To sum up, fear according to Lane & Meeker (2003) is one of the prominent experiences shared by societies as a result of gangs. This fear is described as a daily lived experience (Lane & Meeker, 2003).

### 2.9.3 Economic effects

The criminal economy has been estimated by the United Nations as grossing more than \$400 billion annually which makes it one of the largest markets in the world next to oil (Vigil, 2010). Reuter (2006) estimates the criminal economy in the lower \$150 billion with annual drug sales. The United States gang literature often describes drug dealing as unorganized and low-paying but the sale of drugs in the United States is tied to an international network of drug suppliers, cartels, and mafias that exercise enormous influence in communities and nations on a global scale (Castells, 2008). One can therefore note that gangs now play a critical role in the global economy as the noted \$400 billion is untaxed and unaccounted for by the state (Vigil, 2010). The direct costs and experiences of communities resulting from the economic crimes are amongst others, higher insurance as people try more to protect their properties, higher health care costs, decline in property values and increased legal expenses (Vigil, 2010). The economical implication on society because of gangs is that an increase in gangs and gangsterism brings an increase in expenditure to curb the problem (Castells, 2008). This can also be noted in South Africa where the premier of the Western Cape, Ms Hellen Zille was advocating for an increase in the budget towards addressing the gang problem in the province (Cape Times-author unknown, 2012). The economic effects of gangs can therefore be clearly noted in government spending to address the problem.



Hobsbawm (2002) notes a positive economic experience presented by gangs stating that the underground economy has survived in urban areas where the formal economy disappears and in doing that has provided goods and services that are needed by the society. The Minister of Security in Mexico during an interview recorded in 2010 stated that “It is sad to say, but while the drug cartels are here, the economy is strong. This money activates the economy, injects new money” (New York Times-author unknown, 2010). This view suggests that when the formal economy falters, the informal steps in and presents jobs to members of society.

#### 2.9.4 Criminogenic effect

Criminogenic effect is a catalyst to producing or enabling criminal activity (Glaser, 2000). Non-gang related criminal activities may increase in the community due to the gang activities. The abuse of drugs and alcohol may therefore be noted as a criminogenic in the sense that people may get violent after drinking alcohol (Glaser, 2000). This view holds the notion that when adolescents witness and experience gangs and gang activity, they are more likely to engage in delinquent activities themselves (Krohn & Thornberry, 2008). The most tangible criminogenic influence of gangs can be noted in communities where a growing number of criminal activities may not be directly attributed to gangs as the perpetrators but rather to other common criminals (Katz, 2001; Katz & Webb, 2006; Pyrooz, Wolfe & Spohn, 2011). For instance, there may be an increase in adolescent fights, child abuse cases, increased substance use and increased robberies, all of which may be perpetrated by non-gang members. Katz (2001) and Katz & Webb (2006) notes this as a serious experience by stating that the growth in gangs recorded is directly proportional to the growth in criminality not perpetrated by gangs or gang members. One can therefore assume that communities will experience an increase in crime that is not directly caused by gangs but is a result of gangs in the community.

#### 2.9.5 Global effects

Countries and governments have retreated in rendering necessary service in the face of rapid economic meltdowns which has promoted the marginalisation of certain communities and has left gangs and other groups of armed young men to occupy the vacuum created by the retreat of governments (Glaser, 2000). Where governments no longer have the ability nor the capacity to render social services to the satisfaction of the citizens, gangs therefore become institutionalised as vacuum fillers providing the financial support needed by community



members. According to Glaser (2000) some of these gangs such as the United Bamboo which operates across Asia and the USA have become institutionalized as permanent social actors in communities, cities and nations. Although this may be interpreted as a benefit to societies as gangs provide a means were the government has failed, Goldstone (2002) mentions that one of the greatest threats on a global scale is the loss of social control as the state retreats and the gangs take over. With this comes a further loss of economic control (Goldstone, 2002).

#### 2.9.6 Political effects

According to Davies (2013), political movements often rely on the underground economy and many state security forces have been corrupted by massive profits derived from selling drugs and guns. Davies (2013) clearly portrays that where the state or law enforcement benefits from the existence of gangs, the state will refrain from issuing policies against the vindication of gangs. Another experience and effect presented by gangs is that the ever-growing number of gangs and their political and economic influence undermine the political strengths of the state (Davies, 2013). With an estimated economy of \$400 billion annually as recorded by the Vigil (2010), this inevitably makes gangs an influential aspect leading to people experiencing financial and political influence by gangs. Where political strength is lost by the state, citizens experience a loss in their political will. A typical example of this can be noted in Central America where journalist Silla Boccanero reported “Until recently, a rebellious youth from Central America would go into the mountains and join the guerrillas. Today, he leaves the countryside for the city and joins one of the street gangs engaged in common crime without political objectives” (Children in Organized Armed Violence, 2002).

Dowdney (2003) postulate that gang existence may also threaten political stability, inhibit social development and discourage foreign investment. On a political front as noted in South Africa, Ms Hellen Zillen advocated for an increase in funding and man-power to address the scourge of gang violence while the then Minister of the Police asserted that unless the root causes of gang existence which include poverty, joblessness and social exclusion of “at-risk” youth are addressed in a holistic manner, the problem will continue to escalate. These conflicting views created political tension between the African National Congress (ANC) and Democratic Alliance (DA) in South Africa as both parties advocated against gang violence but from a different point of view. Leading political analyst Daniel Silke also suggested that illicit gang activities may accelerate illegal immigration, drug smuggling and trafficking in



persons and weapons which may also alter the internal political sphere of the country (Katz & Webb, 2006). These views suggests that people also experience a shift in their political circles as gangs develop which leads to the development of new policies to address gang phenomenon.

### 2.9.7 Crime

Gangs have evolved into highly organized structures and in some cases even focus on influencing younger children to join their gang. In some communities in the USA, gangs are responsible for a staggering eighty percent (80%) of recorded crimes (FBI, 2009). To avoid generalization of crimes, the researcher will discuss specific crimes common amongst the different gangs. The researcher has already identified rape by Number gangs as one of the serious crimes committed by the gang members which directly has an effect on society (FBI, 2008). The act of rape on members of society is more on young females but is no longer just limited to heterosexual gang members raping females but also heterosexual male gang members raping other heterosexual males (FBI, 2008). This however does not define their sexuality as the rape is performed as a way of exercising dominance and usually embarrassing the victim. Reports of female rape by gangs are however still rife in South Africa and the gang members usually do not commit the rape alone but does it as a group. Reference can be given to an article published by the Curnow (2013) of CNN when a 17-year-old South African girl was gang-raped, then mutilated to death in Bredasdorp, a tiny, rural town about two hours southeast of Cape Town by suspected gang members. A provincial official then reported that violence against females is systemic and about 71% of women in South Africa having reported to being victims of sexual abuse (Curnow, 2013). The reported incident concurs with literature by Van Heller & Stevenson (2004) who write that rape practised by criminals and gang members is more for intimidation and embarrassment more than it is sexual. This view suggests that community members in societies ravaged by gangs experience the reality of sexual assault as a daily reality as many of the individuals are susceptible to rape.

Trafficking is another serious crime with direct consequences on the community that is being carried out by gang members and usually ranges with region and geography of the gang (Regoli, Hewitt & DeLisi, 2009). The consensus among the most experienced gang researchers such as Moore (1991); Klein (1996); McCabe & Manian (2010 is that the



organizational structure of the typical gang is particularly suited to the trafficking business and that trafficking may include drugs, weapons and even human trafficking. This, as stated by Waldorf (1993) predisposes a majority of the gangs to being involved in trafficking both within their respective states and internationally. Although a limited number of gangs fully develop into trafficking empires, Regoli, et al., (2009) note that this poses one of the greatest risk to society. The United Nations Human Settlement Programme (2007) further states that drug use is strongly associated with drug trafficking which is strongly associated with gun carrying and other serious and violent crimes. Regoli et al., (2009) further explain that drug trafficking is a direct cause of more violent offenses among youth and adults. With the growth of trafficking, communities experience the presence of illegal firearms usually in the wrong hands and also the threat of human trafficking especially for young females (Kyle & Koslowski, 2011). In February 2013 in California (USA), 38 members of the Crips gang, their alleged associates and two hotel owners were arrested for engaging in a sex trafficking enterprise that involved the prostitution of minors and adult females (FBI, 2008). The gang members sold the girls online. The girls were trapped in a hotel for twelve hours a day, as men who had purchased their bodies from the gang members had sex with them (FBI, 2008). Though these commercial sex acts brought in between \$1,000 to \$3,000 dollars a day per woman, the women never saw a penny of the money. Their only payment was food, avoiding beatings, and staying alive as reported by the FBI (2008).

Human Rights Watch (2012) indicates in its World Report that Guatemala has one of the highest rates of violent crime in the world and 70 percent of those violent crimes are attributed to gangs within the region. The report indicates that gangs such as the Mexican drug cartels and Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) and Mara (18) use violence to further political objectives and illicit economic interests (Human Rights Watch, 2012). The severity of these violent crimes perpetrated by gangs are also shown by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights who in her 2012 report on the activities of her office in Guatemala, reports that from 1 January to 31 August 2011, there were 3,806 violent deaths and 4,162 persons injured in violent attacks by gangs (United Nations, 2012). In another article, the United Nations also reported during the year 2011, Mexican drug cartels and criminal gangs were responsible for 122 "massacres" in Guatemala leaving 466 dead and 152 wounded (United Nations, 2012). In communities where gangs are prevalent, violent crimes are also prevalent because of tension and fighting for political and financial gain. The



Amnesty International (2011) indicates in its annual report that violent crime by gangs is widespread affecting most communities with some gangs even having the equivalent amount of power that terrorist groups have in other countries (Amnesty International, 2011). In a study conducted in New Mexico by Hing (2006), victims believed the offenders were gang members in about 12% of all aggravated assaults that occurred between 1993 and 2003. Offenders were identified as gang members in about 4% of rapes, 10% of robberies, and 6% of simple assaults. With regards to the South African context, Shaw (2002) reports that violent crime is a prominent issue in South Africa with a very high rate of murders, assaults, rapes and other crimes compared to most countries with an estimated 50 people murdered on a daily basis. Of those 50 estimated murders, 54% are believed to be perpetrated by gang members.

These views clearly illuminate the crimes and violence experienced by community members as a result of gangs. There is however limited literature to suggest specific crimes common within the Western Cape; South Africa which again gives cause for this particular study. One also has to note that the presence of gangs has by some scholars such as Steinberg (2004) come as beneficial factor to communities. In the next section, the researcher will therefore look at some of the beneficial positive experiences on societies infested by gangs.

#### 2.10 Positive experiences in relation to gang existence

It is important to note that despite the high numbers of negative implications and experiences associated with gangs, other scholars such as Mackay (2005) and Steinberg (2004) have identified positive experiences shared by communities in relation to the existence of gangs. Mackay (2005) interviewed Aboriginal youths and adults in Saskatoon-Canada to examine their sense of home and belonging. In response to the question of how gangs had affected them, four respondents stated that there was no impact on them while three male participants believed gangs had affected them in positive ways, such as providing them with someone to depend on or by connecting them with other people or by adding to their native identity (Mackay, 2005). People may therefore experience warmth and protection offered by gangs in return for their loyalty and obedience to the gang.

Gangs in Cape Town participated in the struggle against apartheid especially prison gangs that were at the forefront of the struggle fighting institutionalized apartheid every day in the





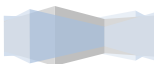
cell blocks (Steinberg, 2004). These gangs as noted by (Steinberg, 2004) participated as informants to the liberation fighters and because of their propensity for violence, gangs would stage violent protests on behalf of the community fighting together with the rest of society against a common enemy which during those days was apartheid.

People Against Gangsterism and Drugs commonly known as PAGAD is a vigilante group/gang/organisation formed in 1996 in the Cape Flats area of Cape Town, South Africa (Botha, 2001). Because of the varying definitions of gangs and gangsterism, Botha (2001) questions whether PAGAD is an organisation or a gang in itself. PAGAD was always strongest in Muslim middle-class areas such as Surrey Estate, but the organization/gang could initially field considerable support in the townships too. PAGAD embarked on an aggressive terrorist campaign detonating hundreds of bombs throughout Cape Town between 1996 and 2000 all in its fight against gangs and gangsterism within the Western Cape with special interest in combating drug use. PAGAD has noted success stories where they managed to get rid of drug loads such as Rashaad Staggie and also managed to get the State endorsement up until late 1999 (Botha, 2001). This organisation/gang, despite its strong acts of violence managed to rid the society of drug lords and gangs. The intention of the gang to some extent influences whether the gang poses positive or negative effects on society.

Portes, Castells & Benton (2008) explain how globalization has transformed illegal markets run by gangs into an integral part of the world system by stating that it would be ignorant to not acknowledge the fact. These illegal markets according to Portes et al., (2008) activate the economy and inevitably release stress on the state in terms of economic functioning. These views suggest that communities to a greater extent also experience positive implications in respect of gangs. These vary from economic injection to gangs offering protection to community members. These experiences are however generalized and are not specific to the school-going learners (focus of the study). In the next section, the researcher will therefore try to look at some of the experiences specific to the school-going learners.

## 2.11 Experiences of school going learners in gang infested areas

Researchers such as Thompkins (2000) and Bangstad (2007) believe that gang presence has both short-term and long-term consequences for the youths especially school going learners. Examples include risks of injury and/or a violent death, non-transition to normal adult life-



style, a drop in academic achievement and competence, early introduction to drug use, sex and excessive drinking.

Marcovitz (2010) writes that because gangs are by definition organized groups and are often actively involved in drug and weapons trafficking; their mere presence in schools can increase tautness there. It can also increase the level of violence in schools even though gang members themselves may not be directly responsible for all of it as non-gang members may arm themselves as a protective measure (Marcovitz, 2010). This is supported by Trump (2003) who writes that students in schools with a gang present are twice more likely to report that they fear becoming victims of violence than their peers at schools without gangs. Fear is therefore an overlapping factor which also affects schooling adolescents both at schools and in their respective communities.

One of the most prominent experiences is the exposure to violence within the school environment by school-going gang members (Gifford, 2010). Whether one is a gang member or not at school, consequences to the learner at school may include exposure to drugs and alcohol, age-inappropriate sexual behavior, difficulty finding a job because of lack of education and work skills, removal from one's family, imprisonment and even death (Gifford, 2010).

Another noted experience is the development of the culture of violence which is a term often used in South Africa to give perspective to the escalating violence and reported incidence of violent crime committed on a daily basis (Harris & Van Niekerk, 2002). Where gangs are present in schools or in communities, they usually resolve issues through violence in defense of their gang's honour. This can be taken back to the days of tribalism where violence played a significant role in solving issues. As violence continues as a way of solving issues and achieving certain goals, this may be adopted by the school in their family circles, peer groups, work relationships and may even go further into their sexual relationships (Harris & Van Niekerk, 2002).

The presence of gangs may disrupt adolescent development as noted by Gottfredson & Hirschi (2000) who write that adolescents may be exposed at school to gang-related acts that are not in line with their developmental stage. This could be in the form of early introduction



to sex or drug use which Gottfredson & Hirschi (2000) identify as contributors to the increasing rate of teenage pregnancies and HIV/AIDS.

The presence of gangs is directly linked with serious delinquency problems in schools in the United States (Chandler, Chapman, Rand, & Taylor, 1998). This study of data gathered in the School Crime Supplement to the 1995 National Crime Victim Survey documented several examples. First, there is a strong correlation between gang presence in schools and both guns in schools and availability of drugs in schools. Second, higher percentages of students report knowing a student who brought a gun to school when students report gang presence, than when gangs were not present. In addition, gang presence at a student's school is related to seeing a student with a gun at school: twelve percent (12%) report having seen a student with a gun in school when gangs are present versus three per-cent (3%) when gangs are not present. Third, students who report that any drugs (marijuana, cocaine, crack, or uppers/downers) are readily available at school are much more likely to report gangs at their school (35%) than those who say that no drugs are available (14%). Fourth, the presence of gangs more than doubles the likelihood of violent victimization at school (nearly 8% vs. 3%).

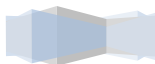
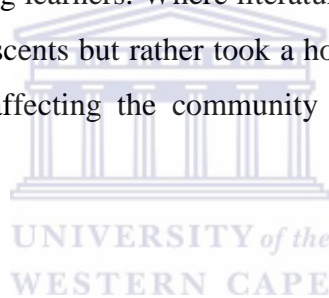
The presence of street gangs at school also can be very disruptive to the school environment because they may not only create fear among students but also increase the level of violence in schools (Laub & Lauritsen, 1998). Gang presence is also an important contributor to overall levels of student victimization at school (Howell & Lynch, 2000). In the School Crime Supplement to the 2003 National Crime Victimization Survey, students aged twelve to eighteen (12–18), were asked if street gangs were present at their schools during the previous six months. In 2003, twenty-one per-cent (21%) of students reported that there were gangs at their schools (National Center for Education Statistics and the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2005: 46). However, no difference was detected between 2001 and 2003 in percentages of students who reported the presence of street gangs, regardless of school location. Of all the students surveyed, students in urban schools were the most likely to report the presence of street gangs at their school followed by suburban students and rural students, who were the least likely to do so.

A point of interest is that not all scholars share the opinion that gang membership “matters” in the life-course nor are the experiences of school-going learners in relation to gangs worth noting. Sullivan (2005) and others such as Hallsworth & Young (2008); Katz & Jackson-

Jacobs (2007), Kennedy (2009) contend that studying gangs and their effects in schools obscures the larger problem of youth violence. Sullivan (2005) argued against the study of gangs in schools on policy grounds stating that studying violent acts is more important than studying groups involved in violent acts on learners. Because of this, literature specific to the experiences of the school going adolescent is minimal; hence need for further studying.

## 2.12 Summary on literature review

This literature review has in detail given the history of gangs and the formation and nature of activities undertaken by gangs. During this review, one then established based on current literature that gangs are an ever-present phenomenon now entrenched within the mainstream society. The researcher then focused on the effects of gangs on communities and also paid special attention to the effects on schools and learners. It was also established that the current literature on gangs is minimal in describing effects of gangs on school learners especially in relation to adolescent school going learners. Where literature to this effect has been provided, it negated the focus on the adolescents but rather took a holistic and general approach where attention was given to effects affecting the community at large and not specifically the adolescents.



### 3.1 Introduction

Research methodology simply put is a systematic way of addressing the research phenomenon (Kumar, 2005). Rajasekar, Philominathan & Chinnathambi (2006) gives another simpler definition of research methodology as the various procedures, schemes and algorithms used in research. May (2008) states that research methodology may also be understood as a science of studying how research is done.

In this chapter the researcher will identify and give details of the various steps, principles and techniques that were adopted in this research process. These steps, principles and techniques include the use of focus groups as the main tool for data collection, use of qualitative methods over quantitative and the use of snowballing as the main sampling method. Identifying all these various steps, principles and techniques required the researcher to know the underlying principles governing each of the tools selected and considering the submitted literature as suggested by Winerman (2013) who wrote that researchers should be guided by their literature to select the most suitable tools to obtain near perfect findings in their study.

Morse & Field (1995) maintains that “when we talk of research methodology we do not only talk of the research methods but also consider the logic behind the methods we use in the context of our research study and explain why we are using a particular method or technique”. Attention will therefore be given to how the researcher conducted and implemented most of the techniques. Of interest also will be the justification of the research framework and methods of data collection that were used during the study. This justification of the methods used borders on criteria like validity of the methodology, whether it measures and addresses the identified question thoroughly and whether it is a reliable method of data collection or research framework. These are some of the criteria that governed the selection of the different methods used during this study. To sum it all up, focus of this sections will be on the “How” part of the study.

The next section of the paper discusses the research questions which mark the focal point of the study.



### 3.2 Research question

The research question according to Santiago (2009) is an organizing element for the topic under study. It focuses the investigation into a narrow topic area and guides every aspect of the research project including the literature search, the design of the study, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of results, and even the direction of the discussion (Santiago, 2009). The Institute of International Studies (2001) further identifies the research question as the most critical part of the research as it guides arguments and inquiry and also provokes the interests of the reviewer. Boeije (2002) also define the research question as the central question which the researcher wants to answer by doing the research project.

In respect with this specific study, the researcher identified the following as the core research question:

“What are the experiences of the non- gang adolescents regarding gangs and gangsterism in Hanover Park”.

### 3.3 Aim of the study

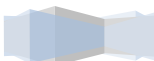
The aim of research according to Bryman (2004: 46) is a broad statement of desired outcomes or the general intentions of the research that “paints a picture” of the research project. McInnes (2006) cited by Haynes (2006) further simply describes the research aim as what it is that the researcher wants to find out by conducting the research. With specific reference to this study, the aim of the research was to:

“Explore and describe the experiences of non-gang adolescents regarding gangs and gangsterism in Hanover Park, Western Cape”.

From the aim the objectives developed as discussed in the next section.

### 3.4 Research objectives

Goldblatt (2011) summarizes research objectives as a specification of the ultimate reason for carrying out research in the first place. Wheeldon & Ahlberg (2012) emphasise that carrying



out of a research objective should be closely related to the statement of the problem and summarize what the researcher hopes to achieve. Ultimately Goldblatt (2011) identifies research objectives as a relevant tool that defines the specific outcomes of the study. With specific reference to this study, the objectives are:

- Explore and describe how non-gang school-going learners experience gangs and gangsterism in Hanover Park, Western Cape
- Explore and describe the effect gang-related activities have on the school-going learners in Hanover Park, Western Cape
- Identify protective factors that promote non-gang involvement by school-going adolescent learners

Having identified the aim and specific objectives relating to the study, the next section will describe the research design of the study.

### 3.5 Research approach

Research approach as described by Teddlie & Tashakkori (2005) is a method of producing new knowledge or deepening an understanding of a topic or issue. Teddlie & Tashakkori (2005) further state that the research approach works from different strategies which include logical, experimental and qualitative research approaches such as exploratory and contextual. Denscombe (2003) describes the research approach as a critical strategy of every research as it helps to establish or confirm facts and to develop a new view. This point is further developed by Creswell (2007) who asserted the importance of the research approach as an effective strategy to increasing the validity of social research. This goes to highlight the view that a research approach is undeniably a critical and relevant part of the research which the researcher had to clearly and unambiguously define.

With specific reference to this study, the researcher made use of qualitative research which as stated by Bourgeault, Dingwall & De Vries (2010) is concerned with studying a phenomenon by providing non-numerical descriptions of data with an aim of highlighting feelings, meaning and describing the situation. Burns & Grove (2003) and Crotty (1998) describe qualitative approach as a systematic subjective approach used to describe life experiences and situations to give them meaning. It focuses more on the experiences of people as well as stressing uniqueness of the individual (Parahoo, 2006). Holloway & Wheeler (2002) further



developed this point by referring to qualitative research as a form of social enquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experience and the world in which they live. The researcher used the qualitative approach to explore the experiences and perspectives of learners from Hanover Park in respect of gangs and gangsterism in the area. This was mainly motivated by views of Munhall (2001) and Polit & Beck (2004) who stated that the richness and depth of the description gained from a qualitative approach provides a unique appreciation of the reality of the experience as it emphasizes the dynamic, holistic and individual aspects of the human experience and attempts to capture those experiences in their entirety within their natural context. These views made qualitative approach more applicable as the researcher intended to capture the experiences of learners in respect of gangs within their community.

Advantages of qualitative research for this specific study are:

- Qualitative research is a means to understanding human emotions such as rejection, pain, caring, powerlessness, anger and effort (Burns & Grove, 2003; Brink & Wood, 1998). This allowed the researcher to explore intimate experiences of the learners in line with the study phenomenon.
- Because experiences and emotions are difficult to quantify in a qualitative study, qualitative research appeared to be a more effective method of investigating the experiences and effects of gangs on learners as a result of gangs within their community.
- In addition, qualitative research focuses on understanding the whole (Preece, Rogers & Sharp, 2002; Beyer, 1994). This is consistent with the researcher's ideas of exploring holistic experiences of learners in Hanover Park in relation to gangs and gangsterism.

In trying to understand the research approach, the researcher will in the next section describe the research design used in the study and also the research strategies namely exploratory and contextual as discussed below:





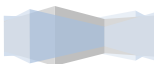
### 3.5.1 Research design

Burns & Grove (2001) give a rather simplified definition describing the research design as the clearly defined structures within which the study is implemented. Research design is the overall plan for connecting the conceptual research problems to the pertinent achievable empirical research (Yin, 2009). Yin (2009) goes further to state that the research design articulates what data is required, what methods are going to be used to collect and analyse this data and how all of this is going to answer the research question. Perry (2005) further explores this view by stating that the function of a research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables us to answer the initial question as unambiguously as possible. Simply put, the research design is therefore a plan for a study used as a guide in collecting and analysing data.

The specific strategies used in the study namely exploratory and contextual design are described in the next section.

### 3.5.2 Exploratory & contextual study

Exploratory research is defined by Burns & Groove (2001) as research conducted to gain new insights, discover new ideas and for increasing knowledge of the phenomenon. Exploratory research begins with some phenomenon of interest with an aim of not only describing it but fully investigating the nature of the study phenomenon (Burns & Grove, 2003). Since no evidence was found in the literature which may suggest the experiences or effects of gangs and gangsterism on school going learners in Hanover Park, the researcher therefore attempted to investigate and explore this study phenomenon from an exploratory perspective guided by Polit & Beck (2004:50) who wrote that exploratory study is not designed to come up with final answers or decisions but to rather produce premises about what is going on in a situation. The researcher with the use of exploratory research therefore hoped to gain new insights, discover knowledge and provide significant insight into the experiences of learners in Hanover Park in respect of gangs within their community. This was again done guided by Burns & Grove (2003) and Creswell(1994) who stated that researchers should enter the field of study with curiosity from the point of not knowing and to provide new data regarding the study phenomena.



The study also made use of contextual design which according to Kuniavsky (2003) and (Mouton 1996) is when the study phenomenon is studied for its intrinsic and immediate contextual significance. Burns & Grove (2003) point out that contextual studies focus on specific events in “naturalistic settings”. Naturalistic settings are uncontrolled real-life situations sometimes referred to as field settings where an enquiry is conducted in a setting free from manipulation (Speziale, Streubert & Carpenter 2003). This made contextual design applicable to the study as the researcher aimed to identify the experiences of the learners within their natural setting of Hanover Park without altering or influencing the community or the schools of the respective participants. According to Silverman (2011), contextual design is vital in qualitative study as it holds the premise that context, the environment and conditions in which the study takes place as well as the culture of the participants should be natural. The use of contextual design within this research also allowed the researcher to integrate field observations of the community of Hanover Park as hinted by Notess (2005) who wrote that focused field observations are essential to the successful implementation of contextual design. Having discussed the research design, the researcher will in the next section discuss the population and sampling methods implored in the study.

### 3.6 Population and sample of study

Dodgen & Shea (2000) defines population as the total number of units from which data can be collected such as individuals, artifacts, events or organizations. Burns & Grove (2003) describe population as the elements that meet the criteria for inclusion in a study. Polit & Hungler (1999) further state that a research population is a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of query. With specific reference to this study, the populations of interest were the high school-going learners in Hanover Park-Western Cape. This population consisted predominantly of a populace historically labelled in South Africa as “Coloured”. The population and community at large have seen an increase in gang activity which to a greater extent motivated the study.

#### 3.6.1 Sample and sample size

Buckingham & Saunders (2008) defines a sample as a proportion of a population. To obtain findings that are in line with the objectives and aims of the study, the researcher had to observe strict measures of selecting the sample of the study. This was done bearing in mind



views by Davies (2007) who postulated that a researcher must carefully select the sample so that it may provide data representing the population from which it is drawn fairly. Noting these views, the sample of the study therefore included adolescent learners registered at the two high schools in Hanover Park that is Crystal High School and Mountview High School. The sample consisted of eighteen (18) participants per school giving a total of thirty-six (36) participants who all contributed in focus groups with each group consisting of at least six learners. The researcher chose to limit the number to six participants per group as suggested by Denzin & Lincol (2008) who wrote that focus groups should be small enough to give everyone the opportunity to express an opinion but large enough to provide diversity of opinions. It therefore became reasonable to limit the number to six participants noting views by Denzin & Lincol (2008) who stated a reasonable number for focus groups is six to ten (10) participants.

With respect to the sample number of thirty-six (36) learners, Holloway & Wheeler (2002); Denzin & Lincol (2008) all asserted that sample size does not influence the importance or quality of the study. This to a greater extent was taken by the researcher as a hint to focus more on gaining concrete reasonable rich and quality data rather than having extremely high groups of participants. Năstase (2004) further states that typical quantitative research seeks to infer from a sample to a population and one should therefore aim to rather choose participants that represent the population than focusing on the sample number. A greater influence as to why the researcher chose thirty-six (36) participants was guided by Năstase (2004) who wrote that a well-conceived interview protocol of ten to twenty (10-20) hour databases should provide enough data to support a solid qualitative dissertation. The researcher therefore took this into consideration with a plan to have the interviews running at one hour per focus group interview. Noting all these views, the researcher focused more on attaining data saturation rather than satisfying a research sample number or going through the unnecessary strain of too many participants as suggested by Miles & Huberman (1994); Dellinger & Leech (2007) who defines data saturation as a point at which data collection can confidently cease when the information that is being shared with the researcher becomes repetitive and contains no new ideas.

In respect of the sampling methods, the participating schools put together had an average of two-hundred (200) participants that could have partaken in the study and the researcher had to streamline the sample of study using two methods of sampling that is purposive sampling



and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling as mentioned by De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, & Delpont (2005) and Dellinger & Leech (2007) is one that is selected based on the knowledge of a population and the purpose of the study. According to Dellinger & Leech (2007), this is mainly applicable when research participants are selected because of some characteristic while Parahoo (1997) describes purposive sampling as a method of sampling where the researcher deliberately chooses who to include in the study based on their ability to provide necessary data. This made purposive sampling more applicable to the study as the researcher had already set specific requirements for the research participants which included being a resident and learner in Hanover Park among other factors which are further discussed below. To adequately make use of purposive sampling in the research, one had to request from Grade 11 educators at both schools of interest namely Crystal High School and Mountview High School to identify learners that fit the following criteria set by the researcher:

- School-going adolescents registered at either Mountview High School or Crystal High School
- Resident of Hanover Park
- Preferably doing Grade 11 with a few exceptions where a learner may be in a lower or higher school grade but meets the age group requirement. The use of Grade 11 learners was done as suggested by Vigil (2010) who reported that gang activity increases mainly from the ages of sixteen (16) to twenty-four (24) years old which to the researcher raised a deeper question of the earlier experiences of sixteen (16) year olds in relation to gangs
- Between the ages of sixteen (16) and eighteen (18) with exception where the school teachers referred the researcher to learners that have been affected by gang existence in their areas
- Should not have a history of gang relations to the knowledge of the school educators. This was difficult to prove as the teachers could only select from their observations of the learners at school. This again to a greater extent reveals that the use of purposive sampling in this particular study rested mainly on the assistance of the educators
- The learner had to also identify themselves as non-gang members
- At least eighteen (18) girls and eighteen (18) boys from each school were selected. This number was mainly influenced by Năstase (2004) who wrote that a well-



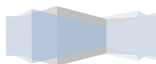
conceived interview of ten to twenty (10-20) hours may be enough to critically support a well conducted qualitative study

- The learner had to be willing to participate as set in research ethics that advocate that research participants should freely be willing to participate or decline involvement in any study (Miller, 2001).

In this respect, only learners that were eligible and met the above-mentioned criterion participated in the study with the exception of one participant who was referred on his experiences with gangs and did not meet the age and grade criteria. The learner in question was a grade 8 learner aged 14 who had in the past experienced direct effects of gangs and gangsterism within his household.

Snowball sampling which works on the basis of identifying cases of interest from people who know people that are information-rich and would be a good interview participant (Babbie, 2001) was also used by the researcher as a secondary sampling method. Camic, Rhodes & Yardley (2003) identify snowball sampling as a non-probability sampling technique that is used by researchers to identify potential subjects in studies where subjects are hard to locate. Camic et al., (2003) further states that it relies generally on a process of participants being recommended to the researcher based on their possible valuable input in the study. This was implemented by one of the educators who referred one Grade ten learner whom the educator felt would contribute immensely to the study despite the learner not being a grade eleven learner as required by the researcher. The specific learner was recommended by the educator after the researcher enquired about which learners know about the effects of gangs and have personal experiences to share in respect of gangs in Hanover Park. Noting views by Babbie (2001) that snowballing sampling can be implemented in different ways and enquiries, the researcher also asked the participating learners to identify any learners whom they thought may contribute to the study. No suggestions were however given by the learners. All methods of sampling were implemented in conjunction with the educators as they were more familiar with the learners.

With this identified sample, the following sampling procedures were enforced by the researcher:

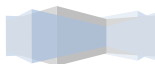


### 3.6.2 Sampling procedure

Sampling of the participants was done as follows:

- The researcher initially identified the two high schools in Hanover Park-Western Cape namely Crystal High School and Mountview High School.
- A formal request to conduct a study within the schools was sent to the Directorate of Research of the Western Cape Education Department. Authorization to conduct the study was granted once all the relevant paper work was submitted (See Appendix 5).
- The researcher then met with the principals of the respective schools and requested their permission to conduct the study with learners from their schools. Permission was again granted and because the researcher focused mainly on Grade eleven learners, the researcher was immediately referred to the heads of the Grade eleven classes in both schools where the researcher was then subsequently referred to the specific educators of Grade eleven classes.
- The researcher sought the assistance of the educators of the respective schools where the study was held in identifying learners whom they thought would contribute to the study and may have personal or familiar experiences to share in respect of gangs within the community.
- Possible participants were selected using the criteria under section (See 3.6.1). With each school having three grade classes, the researcher requested that each of the Grade eleven classes identify at least six learners with groups of three boys and three girls per class.
- Once the participants were selected, the research project was explained to the prospective participants who were on the short list and they were asked personally if they wanted to take part in the research.
- In the event of a problem with identifying participants who met the criteria for selection for the study, the educators were asked to refer learners or colleagues that may know learners with experiences in line with the study.

With these steps and the assistance of the educators, the researcher was able to identify the most suitable participants for the study. Critical to the study was also choosing the most





appropriate site of study that would best promote the attainment of good interviews. The next section discusses how the researcher selected the site of study.

### 3.7 RESEARCH SITE SELECTION

The process of selecting a site for the research was guided by different factors amongst them the research participants, relevant literature, aims of the research, safety of the participants and objectives of the study as suggested by Denzin & Lincoln (2000). Notably all participants that contributed in the study were school-going and from Hanover Park, Western Cape. For this purpose, it was convenient that the site of study be in the area easily accessible to learners that contributed in the study. The study was therefore conducted at the two respective schools where the learners study that is Crystal High School and Mountview High School that are both located in Hanover Park. This not only assured the researcher of the learner's safety but also gave an opportunity for the researcher to interview the learners in their natural setting and classrooms as stated by Bickman & Rog (2009); Flick (2007); Batchelor & Briggs (1994) who all wrote that qualitative researchers should strive to conduct their studies in the participant's natural setting without altering the environment.

The community hall which was a second alternative for the researcher, posed security threats for the participants as the community is ravaged by gangs and gangsterism. Opting to use the schools as sites for the study was therefore done as a measure of security and also convenience where the researcher could conduct the study without disrupting the classes of the participating learners. This inevitably made the study more manageable as the participants were readily available for the researcher.

In the next section, the researcher will discuss the instrumentation employed in the study.

### 3.8 Instrumentation

A research instrument is a survey, questionnaire, test, scale, rating or tool designed to measure the variable, characteristics or information of interest, often a behavioural or psychological characteristic (Pierce, 2009). Research instruments can be helpful tools to your research study as they save time and increase the study's credibility. Examples of instrumentation tools include surveys, physiologic measures or interview guides (Pierce, 2009). With specific reference to the study, the main instrumentation tool was therefore the

interview guides which are clearly described in the data collection section (see 3.9) of this study.

### 3.9 Data collection

Data collection simply stated is how information is gathered Sapsford & Jupp (2006). Whitney, Lind & Wahl (1998) stated that data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes. The data collection component of research is common to all fields of study including physical and social sciences, humanities, business, amongst others (Whitney et al., 1998). While methods vary by discipline, the emphasis on ensuring accurate and honest collection remains the same.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher implored the use of focus groups which simply put are groups of ten or more people, led by a facilitator in a group interview format brought together to discuss a particular topic or issue (Dixon, 2005). Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook (2007); Krueger (1994) gives another simplified definition of focus groups stating that these are group interviews that capitalize on communication between research participants in order to generate data as participants are encouraged to talk to one another, ask questions, exchange anecdotes and comment on each other's experiences and points of view. A focus group is also identified as a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas & Robson, 2001).

In implementing the focus group, the researcher basically implored the use of the basic strategies as suggested by Krueger (1994):

- Carefully plan the focus group
- Write the script and practice
- Identify and recruit the participants
- Conduct the focus group sessions
- Develop the coding scheme
- Segment and code the data
- Analyse the data





- Interpret and publish the findings

Semi-structured interview guidelines were also used as a complimentary data collection technique for the focus groups. Semi-structured interviews are defined as verbal interchanges where the interviewer attempts to elicit information from another person by asking questions (Kruger & Casey, 2000). Both methods of data collection were guided by the use of semi-structured interview guideline which allowed the in-depth exploration of beliefs, experiences, views and perceptions of the participants.

Some of the rationales for choosing focus groups as the main method for data gathering were:

- The researcher could obtain different perspectives on the phenomenon under investigation by engaging with different learners/participants in one interview as the discussion would allow respondents to build on each other's responses as suggested by Dixon (2005).
- Clarify unclear questions because dialogue was used.
- Observe non-verbal communication from the different participating learners.

With both, the focus group interview guide was used as a measure of monitoring the study and also ensuring uniformity in the study were similar questions were asked across the platform to the different participants. Critical to these questions as suggested by Mouton, (2001) was the fact that the questions were non-threatening and mostly open-ended which encouraged in-depth discussion of the study phenomenon which in the case was the learners' experiences in line with gangs and gangsterism in their community. This was highly important noting the sensitivity of the study topic.

The researcher however, instead of conducting two group sessions with each of the six (6) focus groups only managed to conduct one interview per group and one individual semi-structured interview with selected members from each group. This was mainly because of the learners' availability which prevented the researcher from meeting the learners repeatedly without impacting on their schooling hours. This however did not compromise the data quality as the researcher paid attention to the need to reach data saturation.



### 3.9.1 Role of the researcher

The researcher's participation in the study added to the uniqueness of data collection and analysis as maintained by (Speziale et al, 2003); (Holloway & Wheeler 2002) who argued that objectivity is impossible in qualitative research as one has to acknowledge that the researcher and participants are human beings and sometimes do not always act logically and predictably. This illustrates the importance of the researcher in the study and noting all these views, the researcher had to therefore acknowledge his influence on the outcome of the study.

The researcher introduced himself to the participants to establish rapport. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study and clarity was given in respect of the researchers expectations. The researcher during that stage also encouraged contributions from all participants. Other roles fulfilled by the researcher during the process of the study included overseeing the signing of the focus group binding forms especially within the focus group setting as stated by Morgan (2008) who wrote that in focus groups, handling of sensitive material and confidentiality is critically essential as there is more than one participant. Within this role, the researcher had to also be honest and keep participants informed about the expectations of the group and topic whilst not pressurizing participants as recommended by Morgan (2008) who views this as a crucial role performed by the researcher.

Once the discussion had begun, the researcher played another critical role of promoting the discussion as stated by Dixon (2005) who wrote that researchers need to challenge participants, especially to draw out people's differences, and bring out a diverse range of meanings on the topic under discussion. This was achieved by the researcher through use of interview techniques, mainly open-ended questions and probing.

The researcher had to also direct the flow of the discussion as the discussion would at times steer of the topic of interest and the researcher had to steer it back to the topic of discussion. This was however done with an avoidance of steering the discussion from a personal opinion as Dixon (2005) hints that in trying to monitor the flow of discussion; researchers at times end up putting their views at the forefront. The monitoring and control of the discussion flow was therefore done bearing in mind the goals and objectives of the study and mainly the research topic.



The researcher was the facilitator of the focus group discussion and a tape recorder was used during the session with the permission of the participants. The researcher maintained open-mindedness and skills in eliciting information. The climate was non-threatening; all the participants were introduced to one another. The participants sat in a circle for better communication to ensure productivity as well as comfort in disclosing information.

Questions were asked inductively, proceeding from general to specific using a semi-structured interview guide prepared before the session (see Appendix 1). In respect of ethical parameters, all participants were strongly urged to keep all conversations and information obtained confidential.

A challenging role which the researcher had to fulfil was maintaining consistency with the different focus groups so as to attain adequate and equivalent data from all participants across the different focus groups. This was however made easy by careful preparation and the use of semi-structured questions which were used across all the different focus groups. Other roles included note-taking and monitoring the use of the audio recording devices to ensure ultimate fluent recording.

### 3.9.2 Interview techniques

The researcher used the following techniques for group discussion:

- The researcher conducted the focus group interview with the participants using an interview guide with semi-structured questions.
- The researcher maintained eye contact to encourage participants to continue speaking.
- The researcher used open-ended questions which according to Gillham (2005) and Dixon (2005) are questions that require more than one word answers. The answers could come in the form of a list, a few sentences or something longer such as a speech, paragraph or essay. These questions were used by the researcher to elicit more data from participants. An example of an open-ended question used by the researcher was “What is your opinion about the current status of gangs and gangsterism within your community of Hanover Park?” The researcher also used closed-ended questions such as “What programs are currently underway to address the issue of gangs in Hanover Park?”. Closed-ended questions according to Gillham (2005) and Dixon (2005) require one word or very short phrase answers. The researcher had to however

make use of the closed-ended questions carefully as they have the potential to end the conversation.

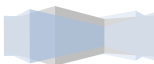
- The interview technique of probing was used in the study which according to Gillham (2005) and Dixon (2005) refers to a question that follows a primary question and tries to discover more information. The researcher used phrases such as “Could you elaborate more on that point?”
- The researcher summarized the last statements of the participants and encouraged more talk (Holloway & Wheeler 2002).
- The researcher used a semi-structured interview guide, but in the line of questioning and responses from participants maintained flexibility and consistency.
- The researcher asked if there were more questions or comments. This assisted in closure of the interview. The researcher summarized the interview proceedings by restating in his own words the ideas and opinions of the participants, to ensure understanding. The participants were told of the need for follow-up interviews should there be any aspects that were not clear.

Having discussed the interview techniques and role of the researcher in the study, the next section will highlight the data analysis process followed by the researcher within the study.

### 3.10 Data analysis method

This is a process of organizing, providing structure and attempting to make sense of the data collected. Creswell (2003) describes this process as an on-going interactive process. Noting this, the process of analysing the data therefore commences at the onset of the initial data-gathering interview. Mouton (2001) goes further to describe data analysis as the inspecting, cleaning, transforming and modelling of data with the goal of highlighting useful information, suggesting conclusions and supporting decision making processes. For the purposes of this paper, the researcher therefore used thematic data analysis method which as defined by Creswell (2002) refers to an approach of dealing with data that involves the creation and application of codes to data. This was achieved by following steps as articulated by Creswell (2003):

- Transcribing all interviews taking into consideration contact notes: This was done by typing up all interviews and capturing the data to the best of the researcher’s ability noting also the non-verbal cues. This was also done bearing in mind and taking

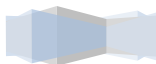


note of field notes. After this process was completed Creswell (2003) maintains that one must read through all interviews just to get a sense of the whole study.

- Reading and reflecting the most interesting and in-depth of all transcripts: This was done by capturing the most in-depth transcript and using it as the basis of all possible themes. Creswell (2003) suggests that one must make notes of the most prominent views and opinions emanating from the study and then combining them together as a way of creating themes. The researcher had to also pay attention to other themes emanating from other transcripts.
- Making a list of noticeable topics: After reading all the transcripts, the researcher made a list of all noticeable and relevant topics which may answer the given topic of discussion. Of particular interest is that Creswell (2003) maintains that in this regard, one should keep track of the study goals and objectives. The notable topics selected should hence be a response to the research topic and question.
- Coding process: Creswell (2003) describes this stage as the descriptive wording for already noted topics. This was basically abbreviating the grouped topics which had been identified previously. The data was grouped together with relative data put together and then assigned a code. For instance, a theme like possible relapse was abbreviated to PR.
- Assembling of data: Creswell (2003) alludes to this stage as the gathering of data belonging to each category in one place and performing a primary study. This was done by assembling key themes and subthemes together and also taking note of any consistencies and inconsistencies emanating from there.

The data analysis conducted by the researcher followed a chronological order as described by Creswell (2003). The following steps were followed.

- The researcher transcribed all interviews.
- The researcher then studied the entire texts of data transcripts with an aim of getting an overall understanding of the data.



- The researcher during this process also made notes on the data transcripts as guides of identifying common patterns that can be used as major themes of interest. This aided the process of identifying and clustering the major topics of discussion. This process also enabled the researcher to cluster and categorise the data. This categorising essentially enabled the process of grouping and organising the data to identify possible themes, interpretations and questions of interest relating to the study phenomenon. By grouping together categories in related codes, the total list of categories was reduced to form themes and sub-themes where there is relational data. In the next section the profiles of the participants will be discussed.

After analysing the data, the researcher had to verify and authenticate the data collected as described in the following section.

### 3.11 Data verification

Data verification simply refers to a process of ensuring that the data provided is authentic and trustworthy (Creswell, 2003). This also ensures that there are no errors in data and findings presented. Different steps and measures were taken to ensure that the findings and data presented are authentic and relevant to answering the identified research question. This procedure was guided by Creswell (2003) who outlined that findings must be verified for credibility, transferability and conformability which the researcher managed to implement during the study.

In ensuring credibility, the researcher gave a proper, clear and justifiable outline guided by theoretical outlines governing the study. The outline clearly stated and showed procedures taken during the study as proof that proper guidelines of practice which ensure authenticity were followed. The data verification was also guided by the concept of transferability where the researcher tried to project the findings as applicable into other contexts. This was however difficult as the study was restricted to a limited context and projection into other contexts may not have yielded the same result. The final criteria of data verification was conformability where the researcher acknowledged his own bias and views which may have affected the outcome of the study. I involved this as an ethical consideration in my study. During the study, the researcher also made use of reflexivity as a measure of data verification. This as postulated by Klenke (2008) involves self-awareness and critical self-reflection by the researcher on his or her potential biases and predispositions as these may



affect the research process and conclusions. The researcher therefore had to reflect on how much of his opinions had influenced the interpretations of his findings and study.

The researcher also attempted to make contact with the research participants themselves to verify some of the claims and findings that came out of the study. This would have been a thorough and near accurate way of ensuring that the participants of the study themselves confirm and agree to the study findings. This ensured trustworthiness of the study as suggested by Creswell (2003) who maintains that researchers should seek feedback and discussions of their interpretations and conclusions with the actual participants and other members of the participant community for data verification and insight.

The researcher also made use of data triangulation as a way of verifying the data which as postulated by Mouton (2001) refers to the use of multiple consultations to help understand a phenomenon. This was implemented by sharing findings and discussing them with fellow researchers and colleagues. Of greater influence in this regard were the reviews by more experienced researchers and the research supervisor.

### 3.12 Ethical considerations

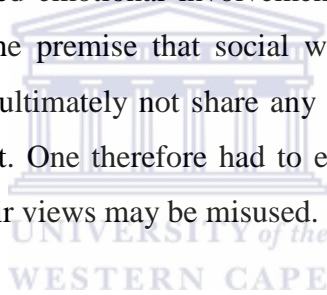
Ethics in any study is a fundamental element (Kumar, 2005). The researcher first obtained ethical clearance from the University of the Western Cape research directorate giving permission for the study to be conducted. The researcher also obtained ethical clearance and notified the Western Cape Department of Education about the study through the department's research directorate who issued permission for the study. All this had to be done as a measure of ensuring that ethical standards are maintained in the study.

Informed consent which according to Berg, Parker & Lidz (2001) simply refers to a process of getting permission granted by a participant in full view of the possible consequences of participating. This was obtained from the learners who participated in the study and their parents or caregivers before they participated in the research through issuing of consent forms. The researcher made it clear in the consent forms that the participants could withdraw from the study at any time should they not wish to continue participating. The researcher also explained to the participants that their participation, despite being selected by the educators, was strictly voluntary.





The researcher, despite not anticipating any danger to befall the participants, also made arrangements with the school counsellor registered under the organisation CASE. She would offer any support services to any participants that may require it. The researcher also made it clear that should the participants mention any information that endangers the researcher, participants or any known individual then the researcher would report the matter to the educators or the CASE counsellor. Fortunately, at the completion of the study none of the participants had indicated a need for support services as a result of their engagement in the study nor did they indicate any information that required the researcher to alert the police or the educators. The researcher had to also prioritise on the ethical principle of beneficence which maintains that the researcher must focus on no harm befalling the client or research participant. This was also vital noting that the study may invoke physiological response which would require utmost sensitivity on the part of the researcher. All this was done keeping in mind social work practice principles such as confidentiality, non-judgmental attitude, acceptance and controlled emotional involvement among others. All principles as stated by Homan (2001) hold the premise that social workers should be non-judgmental towards their clients and should ultimately not share any information obtained from clients aside from a professional context. One therefore had to ensure the participants and protect them from exploitation where their views may be misused.



Controlled emotional involvement was also applied on the premise that the researcher remained professional in all contacts and will use supervision as a guide where necessary should the researcher become emotionally overwhelmed with the study.

An important ethical element was also that all information gathered would be kept confidential noting the participant's right to privacy. Names or any identifying information that may link the participants to the study was therefore kept in the safety of the researcher's private locker and the audio recordings were kept in a password protected laptop only accessible by the researcher. The following precautions were taken in maintaining privacy as suggested by Homan (2001):

- The list of names, transcriptions and notes were kept in a locked safe.
- The list of names was kept separate from recordings, transcription and notes.
- No names were attached to the tapes or transcription or notes.



### 3.13 Summary on methodology

This chapter has to a great extent portrayed the processes implored by the researcher in conducting the research. Specific attention was paid to the population and sample methods used in conducting the study. The researcher also described the research approach undertaken as it highlighted the specific processes and methods implemented by the researcher. The following chapter will discuss the findings of the study as obtained from the interviews conducted with the research participants.



## 4.1 Data analysis

Data analysis is a process of evaluating facts using analytical and logical reasoning to examine each component of the data (Bendat & Piersol, 2011). The process of data analysis has been defined in different forms by different scholars. Silverman (2011) identify and describe data analysis as a science while Mouton (2001) views data analysis as an inspection of data. Creswell (2003) on the other hand identifies data analysis as the creation and application of codes to data to make meaning. Silverman (2011) maintain that data analysis is an analytical scientific process of examining raw data with the purpose of drawing conclusions about that information. Mouton (2001) further describes data analysis as the inspecting, cleaning, transforming and modelling of data with the goal of highlighting useful information, suggesting conclusions, and supporting the decision-making process. Creswell (2003) brings a different view point to this by suggesting that data analysis is an approach of dealing with data that involves the creation and application of codes to data. A common factor amongst all these scholars as stated by Rabinowitz & Fawcett (2010) is that no matter the form and structure one applies in conducting his data analysis, data analysis essential helps in structuring the findings and bringing meaning to the data from different sources of data collection.

For purposes of this paper, the researcher applied the thematic data analysis method which as defined by Creswell (2003) and Miles & Hurbeman (1994) is an approach aimed at dealing with data that involves the creation and application of codes to data. This method was determined by different factors including the qualitative approach, use of semi structured interviews and focus groups that where all applied in the research. With the use of this thematic data analysis, there is the identification and acknowledgment of key themes which guides the discussion of the topic of “Experiences of gangsterism by non-gang affiliated high school learners in Hanover Park, Western Cape”. Through this data analysis, the researcher will make inferences and use this process as a measure of delivering conclusions on the findings of the research.

Reference and comparison to relevant literature will also be provided to substantiate, challenge or negate the themes that emanate from the study or literature provided by previous scholars.



## 4.2 Participants profile

The data analysis was conducted based on the data obtained from learners from both Mountview High School and Crystal High School in Hanover Park with the following profile which depicts the profile of the learners that participated in the study and can be seen in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1: Participants profile

	Mountview High School	Crystal High School
Female	9	9
Male	9	9
15 year old	2	4
16 year old	16	14
Race (B=Black; W=White; I=Indian; C=Coloured)	Black = 1 Colored = 15 White = 0 Indian = 2	Black = 0 Coloured = 17 White = 0 Indian = 1
Grade 11	17	18
Grade 10	1	0
Known affiliates with gangs	0	0

There were 36 participants in total shared between the two schools that participated in the study with each school providing an equal number of learners being male and female. Thirty (30) of the participants were aged sixteen (16) years old while six (6) of them were aged fifteen (15) years old. Of the participating thirty eight (38) learners, only one (1) was a grade (10) ten learner and the rest were grade eleven (11) learners. In respect of racial classification which was done for statistical purposes, there was only one (1) Black participant between the two schools, three (3) Indians between the two schools, zero (0) White participants and thirty-two (32) Coloured participants between the two schools. This racial differentiation was mainly due to the fact that the community of Hanover Park is predominantly Coloured with an estimated 97.1% (Statistics South Africa, 2001).



### 4.3 The researcher's observations in relation to the study

Observation was not the main tool of data collection but while doing the research and while working as a child protection officer for two years in Hanover Park, important observations were made in line with the study phenomenon. It is worth noting these observations as suggested by Reyes (2004) who say that observation in research is the most important method of getting information especially when things are observed in their natural setting without influence from the researcher or observer. Reyes (2004) goes further to write that observation, even when not applied as a primary method of data collection should be acknowledged as a fundamental basic method as researchers are constantly aware and observing their setting while conducting their studies. This also to a greater extent provides context for the data collected. These observations aid the data analysis process as the researcher also relies on recollection from his observations in both the data collection process and data analysis process. A more important sterling view of why the observations are acknowledged is guided by the fact that the study made use of exploratory research strategies which according to Stebbins (2001) can at times rely on secondary research tools for reviewing data such as other literature and use of other approaches such as observations, informal discussions and review of case studies amongst others.

These were some of the observations that the researcher observed in relation to the study:

- Graffiti: The community is littered with a lot of graffiti on school walls, community halls, bus stops, private property and roads amongst others. The graffiti is usually in the form of gang signs. The graffiti also acts as a territory marker within the community by the different gangs. This graffiti includes gang names such as Mongrels; Sexy Boys and Laughing Boys amongst others. Figure 4.1 below is a picture of Como Court, Hanover Park which depicts some of the graffiti in Hanover Park.





Figure 4.1: Graffiti indicating the gang young Americans territory (Source: Underhill, 2013)

- Shootings: Gang shootings are noticeably a common and regular thing within the community of Hanover Park. Incidences of gang shootings would occur during the day and would transform the community in a matter of seconds. The researcher has witnessed one of the shootings first hand when he was doing community work within Hanover Park. Within a matter of minutes into the shootings, the streets were cleared and within minutes after the shooting; the community carried on with its day to day activities. No police officers were called. In a separate conversation regarding these shootings, a community member informed the researcher the lack of necessity in calling the police whenever there is a shooting seeing that they happen frequently. The community member informed the worker that they rather call the police if someone is injured or shot dead as they feel that the police harass them when they are there. Figure 4.2 below is a picture captured after gang shooting on an open field near Parkfields Primary School Hanover Park.







Figure 4.2: Man shot dead in Hanover Park. (Source: Fisher, 2013)

- Strict security controlled school access: Because of the gangs getting into the school premises and painting graffiti or harassing educators, the schools within Hanover Park both primary and high schools have adopted strict controlled access into their school premises. The researcher noticed that this was even intensified at Crystal High School where the gate is manned by a security officer while at some of the schools there is remote access controlled by the school administrator from her/his office.
- Police raids and random searches: The researcher also noticed that police raids are a common factor within the area. Driving through the community of Hanover Park, one will notice police officers pulling aside members of the public for random drug and weapon searches. One will also notice police officers randomly raiding houses of suspected drug merchants. An alarming fact is that the police raids are no longer just restricted to homes but schools as well when they suspect that learners may be selling drugs or carrying weapons (see Figure 4.3 below):



Figure 4.3: Police raids school (Source: Kotlolo, 2013)

- Gang members on street corners: Driving through the community, one will also notice gang members positioned in groups on street corners. The gangs are usually just



sitting and appear to be having discussions and loitering around. A community member in a separate interview with the researcher reported that the street corners are hubs for selling drugs as the gangsters usually pick street corners reportedly close to their own drug houses and use street corners as selling points. The street corners are also used by the gangs to demarcate gang zones.



Figure 4.4: Gangs gathering at the street corner in Hanover Park (Source: Kretzmann, 2012)

- **Gang members at school gates:** The researcher conducted numerous visits to the different schools within Hanover Park including primary schools such as Park-fields Primary School and Voerspoed Primary School; one will notice known gang members waiting at school gates especially as schools close for the day. The gangs noticeably especially in high schools appear to be engaging with students while some use the opportunity to approach female learners. The gangs are easily recognisable by their tattoos such as the number 27 and 26 on ex-prison gangsters while the Laughing Boys gangs are easily recognisable by comic and cartoon character tattoos on their faces and arms.
- **Gang members interacting with society:** A rather controversial noticeable factor is that the researcher noticed that known gang members do not exist in isolation and at times make attempts to normalise their existence in society. The researcher has therefore on different occasions observed community members inviting gang members to family events, sending the gang members for errands amongst other factors. The researcher has also noticed the gang members are not immune to social

ills including family problems as the researcher has on numerous occasions been approached by known and self-confessed gang members needing assistance with things like referrals for social support services and substance use rehabilitation services amongst others. To support this rather controversial interaction between the society and gangs, Hess (2013a) reported gangs have largely replaced council authority and filled the vacuum left by the lack of jobs, social services and recreation facilities. They organise everything from cash for school uniforms, a free taxi ride to hospital, rent money and soccer tournaments (Hess, 2013a). One can assume that this to some community members makes gangs a positive and rather desirable entity they would rather interact with than abolish.

- Tattoos: The gangs in Hanover Park can also be clearly demarcated by their tattoos, it is public knowledge that gangs in Hanover Park when inducting new members into their gangs or organisation officialise the process by what community members refer to as “sticking a chappy” (the phrase “chappy” is used to refer to gang tattoos which identify the individual as part of the gang). These tattoos are usually put on visible body parts like arms, neck and face were they can be clearly shown to the public or opposite gang members as an act of driving intimidation.

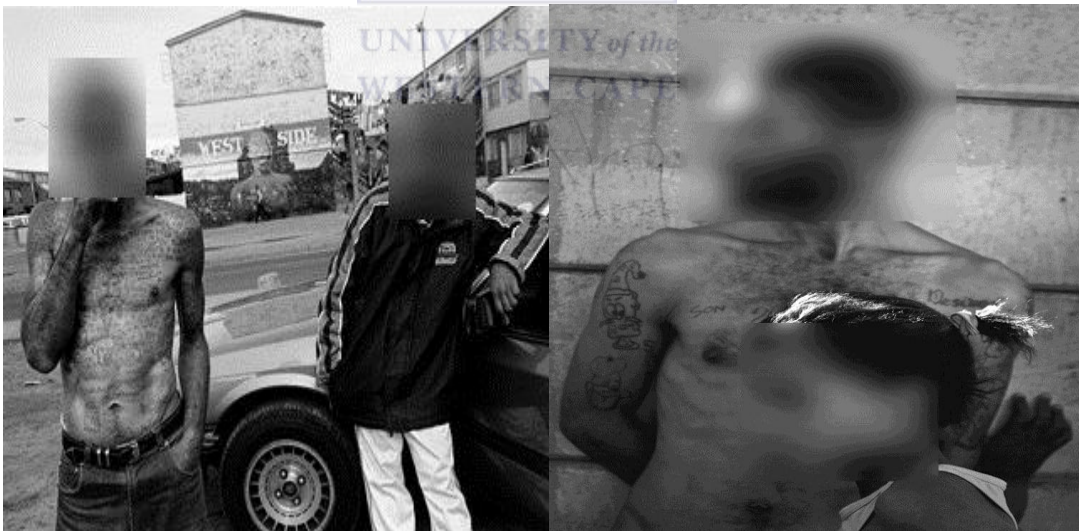


Figure 4.5: Laughing-Boys gang members' pride in their gang tattoos (Source: Pinnock, 2013)

In the following section, the themes that emanated from the interviews will be discussed.

#### 4.4 Discussion of themes

For easier presentation, the themes and sub-themes are shown in tabular form:

Table 4.2: Themes and sub-themes that came from the research interviews

Core themes	Sub-themes
Gang presence disrupting school functioning and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Low school attendance and class disruption as a result of gangs.</li> <li>II. The link between drug and alcohol use in schools as a result if gangs in the community.</li> <li>III. The link between weapons in schools and the presence of gangs.</li> <li>IV. Increased bullying in schools as a result of gangs.</li> </ul>
Characteristic of violence in schools as a result of gang activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Stabbing in schools related to gangs.</li> <li>II. Increased gun activity at school and in the community</li> <li>III. Innocent by-standers and non-gang members injured/killed during gang fights.</li> </ul>
Family disintegration due to involvement in gangs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. When gangs replace family systems.</li> <li>II. Gang infected areas result in broken family ties.</li> </ul>
Fear of gangs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Fear as a subliminal view due to the presence of gangs.</li> <li>II. Fear as a protective factor preventing learners from joining gangs.</li> <li>III. Restricted mobility by gangs on members of the community.</li> <li>IV. Business cautious to invest for fear of gangs.</li> </ul>
Increased criminal activity due to the presence of gangs	
Experiences in relation to law enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. The presence of police in schools creating discomfort and interfering with learning.</li> <li>II. Police failure to deal with gang violence propounds an experience of fear and lack of faith in service delivery.</li> </ul>
Judgmental attitudes and labeling by outsiders	
Gang turf affecting mobility and interactions of non-gang members.	

Below is the discussion of the core themes. Where necessary the researcher will give relevant literature that supports or challenges some of the contributions by the participants.

#### 4.4.1 Theme 1: Gang presence disrupting school functioning and learning

It emerged from the interviews that gangs are no longer restricted to the community's ambiguous corners, prisons or poor societies but are also openly present and operating within the school setting. Howell & Lynch (2000) highlight the severity of this by suggesting that incidences of gangs in schools nearly doubled from 1989 to 1995 in the USA. The presence of gangs in schools also brings with it different challenges. One issue that emanated from the study is that formal learning is disrupted by gangs on a regular basis with learners sometimes resorting to stay at home. Similar scenarios can be noted in Manenberg-Western Cape South Africa where a school was closed for fear that gang-related incidences were endangering learners (Gontsana, 2013). One can therefore safely assume that gangs are affecting schooling of learners from Hanover Park.

##### 4.4.1.1 Sub theme I: Low school attendance and class disruption as a result of gangs

According to a study conducted by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2013), teens attending schools with gangs and drugs compared to teens attending schools without drugs and gangs were twelve (12) times more likely to miss out at least 3 days every week of schooling and three (3) times more likely to have used alcohol. Although the study does not directly point out the link between missing school and gang activity, one can only deduce that in communities where there is high gang activity, this usually leads to learners at times staying out of school as a result. Directorate Communication of the Western Cape Education Department's, Paddy Attwell was quoted by Hanson (2013) saying, "Attendance has improved significantly considering it was at 33 percent during the gang wars so it has improved to 100 percent so everything is back to normal at the schools affected." This view suggests that the presence of gangs in communities affects school attendance and learners end up missing school.

Of the learners that participated in the study, a majority of them reported to having stayed out of school because of gang activity. The reasons for staying out of school were mostly because of gang shooting:

*...if the gangs are shooting my mom does not allow me and my little sister to come to school because we have to walk to school from the back of Groenall Walk (street in Hanover Park) to here and you don't know what can happen when the gangs are fighting, staying at home is better rather than letting us go to school and then we don't come back home or we come back dead.*

Another participant reported that:

*Not every day, it's usually when a big gang is fighting another big gang. Like the Mongrels versus the Americans...and the ghettos that side of Hanover Park (gestures East). They can't come through this side because this side is Americans now all that children that attend Crystal must stay at home because they will shoot them also.*

Another participant also stated

*...sometimes you can't even walk to school. When you come to school they shoot right in the morning.*

The longest any participant had stayed out of school consecutively within the same week according to the participants was two (2) days and this was during gang shootings. A survey conducted by Finlay (2006) recorded the views of learners' parents in Colorado USA. Finlay (2006) in the study noted that parents hold the notion that sending their children to school when there is rife war amongst gangs would be similar to state-sanctioned abuse where the parents openly send their children to school knowing that they may be susceptible to violence by gangs. The low attendance affects a greater proportion of the formal education system in Hanover Park as stated by one Grade 11 educator whom the researcher spoke with in a private conversation; the educator stated that schools in Hanover Park were generally struggling to produce good results because half the time the learners are at home and he cannot force them to come to school when he cannot guarantee that they will get there safely.

Another view point that emanated strongly from the study in connection with the challenge and effect of attending school was the view held by participants that when they make it to school, classes are regularly disrupted by gang-related incidences. The causes of disruption ranged from gang affiliated learners fighting amongst themselves to shootings happening

within close proximity to schools and learners being asked to assume safety positions. One participant even stated:

*...whenever we hear gun shots while in class, we all have to sit with our heads between our legs like an aero plane that is going to crush because you never know where the bullet is coming from and our school walls are really small.*

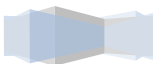
Another participant stated:

*...we were sitting in class like normal and we heard a glass break but it wasn't in our class you see. Then we had the sound again and the teacher yelled that we must all lie but it wasn't even a gun, it wasn't just a car or something...but you see that's how jumpy we always are even in the middle of class.*

The full extent of how formal education may be disrupted by gang activity is noted in a publication on the 19th of August 2013 when Education Department officials in the Western Cape South Africa temporarily closed sixteen (16) schools in Manenberg, Western Cape, South Africa affecting 1200 learners after a spike in gang violence left teachers and learners afraid to go to work (Hartley, 2013). It can therefore be concluded on this view that gangs negatively affect school attendance and the context in which learners should learn is not conducive in Hanover Park be it within the school setting or outside within the community as the community violence appears to breach the safety zones of schools.

4.4.1.2 Sub theme II: The link between drug and alcohol use in schools as a result of gangs in the community.

Teens in a just-released report by Fitz-Gerald (2012) in the United States of America reported that nearly one in five of their classmates drink, use drugs and smoke cigarettes and dagga during the school day and more than a third said it is fairly easy to do so without getting caught. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2010) (UNODC) reported in their World Report that South Africa is the largest international player in the import and export of drugs and that drug consumption in South Africa is twice the world norm with a majority of the drugs being consumed by people between the ages of 13 to 19 years old (Drugs and Crime, 2010). United Nations Children's Fund (2011) also reported that 40% of children below the ages of 15 years old in South Africa know that drugs were readily available in their





schools with 34% of the children having taken drugs in the last month. Of that same group of teenagers, 27% said they had used drugs in the last week with the most common used drugs being nyaope which has been dubbed by the Global Girl Media (2010) as the drug of choice for teenagers within the year 2013. Nyaope is made of a lethal combination of substances including heroin, detergent powder, rat poison and crushed anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) (Global Girl Media, 2010).

Andy Mashaile, chairman of the Gauteng Community Police Forum Board addressed a media briefing where he stated that drug lords had found a market in schools and are selling drugs to children as young as eight (Molosankwe, 2013). Their young clientele buy the drugs while in the playground and drugs exchange hands in classrooms and school bathrooms as a result of gangs. According to Kinnies (2000), the Western Cape in South Africa has the highest number of gangs and gangsterism in South Africa and that 35% of school learners drink socially. The National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) South Africa (2008) gave a different number indicating that 50% of Grade 11 learners admitted to using alcohol and drugs in the previous year to the study. This early alcohol and drug use is greatly attributed to the presence of gangs and gangsterism as noted by Triplett (2004b) who wrote that even preschool age children, four and five years old are exposed to many negative things including drinking, violence and drug use when gangs are present putting them at a higher risk for gang involvement themselves.

Of the participating 38 learners participating in the study, a greater majority of them openly stated to having consumed alcohol at an early age in their lives and a minority of the participating learners reported having used drugs with the main drug of use being dagga. Hundred percent (100%) of the participating learners at Crystal High School reported knowing a learner that sells dagga at school while only a minority of the participants at Mountview High School reported knowing a learner using substances:

Participant: *...yeah of cause there are people selling drugs at school and that is why we always have the police at school.*

Researcher: *...are these people learners here and to your knowledge are they gang members themselves.*





Participant: *...they sell for the gangs but not all of them are like the rough gangs, some just sell but don't do that hard stuff like fighting for the gangs you. So you can say they work for the gangs.*

Another learner reported that

Researcher: *Ok. Who do the learners sell the drugs to though?*

Participant : *They sell them here at school and we know who these people is that sell drugs but because they are expensive no learners buy drugs here so they end up selling to people outside you see.*

A notable picture painted by the views of the learners is that there is a clear relationship between drug use/selling by learners and the presence of gangs which correlates with the literature provided by the Howell & Gleason (1999) which stated that gangs are largely involved in smuggling large quantities of cocaine, marijuana, heroin and methamphetamine. Howell & Gleason (1999) further states that gangs are largely responsible for all the drugs currently circulating on the markets. One must however acknowledge that there are other factors that contribute to the early drinking other than the presence of gangs as noted by one learner who reported that he started drinking because his father allowed him to have beer from an early age.

#### 4.4.1.3 Sub theme III: The link between weapons in schools and the presence of gangs

Schools according to Sanders (1994) are increasingly acting as recruiting grounds for gangs and gangsters with children as young as 9 years old being used as couriers to pass messages amongst the older gang members. This point is taken to implicate that street gangs have breached the divide between schools and street gangs with a number of gangs being visible within the learning circle of learners. With the presence of gangs also comes another problem of the same learners carrying weapons to school either for their own use or on behalf of older gang members. According to a report published by the New York Department of Education (2011), 4.5% to 7.5% of students in the USA carry some sort of weapon with them to school. Gonzales, Richards & Seeley (2002) further allege that some schools worldwide have become vaults for gang weapons as some learners see schools as safer environments to hide

their weapons. The most common weapons used amongst students are scissors, knives and batons (Fingerhut, Ingram & Feldman, 1998).

The same effect and challenge of weapons in schools was also indicated by learners in this study. The learners reported that many of the gang members within their class come to school with concealed knives or screw drivers that they use to stab people with when they fight:

*...they carry the weapons but it's not like they go around stabbing us at school, they use them when they fight outside with other gang member because people from another gang can just approach them any time...don't get me wrong though, it is very scary sitting in class with someone you definitely know is carrying a knife of even worse a gun.*

Another learner also stated having witnessed a friend with a gun at school:

*...I don't know where he got the gun but he just showed it to me under the desk in class, we did played (sic) with it but it didn't have bullets or anything.*

This culture of violence and availability of weapons introduced to schools by gangs can also be noted in a recent incident in the Free-State Province in South Africa where a learner suspected to be affiliated to the Magomasha gang reportedly shot and injured his school teacher (Petrus, 2013).

Horowitz & Schwartz (2011: 239) maintain that the availability of weapons in schools has a psychological effect on the learners that they end up conditioning to believe that violence is the way to resolve certain problems in areas that are gang-infested and the learners simply resort to using weapons or violence as well even when they are not gang affiliated themselves. Horowitz & Schwartz (2011: 241) further states that gang ideologies such as responding to insults and offenses through vigorous violence, insults and carrying of weapons leads to the normalization and justification to carry weapons by everyone including non-gang affiliated learners. This is however counter to statements made by hundred percent (100%) of the learners that participated in the study as they all reported that they would rather turn away from any threat rather than carrying any weapons to challenge or confront the gang members.

*...I would never carry anything to school other than my books and pencil case, my mother would kill me and besides what if the police stops you and they find a knife, they will just think you are one of them (gangs).*

Another participant reported that:

*...you cannot go to war with gangs, they work as teams and there you will be alone and they you don't want to upset them because they will send big people to hit. No one goes to war with gangs, if they fight you walk away.*

This shows that there are those learners that would rather stick to the non-violent solutions rather than simply going straight for the violence. It also shows the fear and power the gangs display. One however has to take context into account. Horowitz & Schwartz (2011: 239) based their findings on a study in the USA where they concluded that the presence of weapons in schools leads to other non-gang affiliated learners adopting the use of violence and weapons.

#### 4.4.1.4 Sub theme IV: Increased bullying at school as a result of gangs

Bullying when it comes to gang matters is a two-fold factor. It can be the reason why people join or form gangs and it can be a survival technic used by gangs to make sure that the gang maintains dominance through threats, victimisation and extortion.

Gang presence causes incidents of victimization and bullying of both learners and teachers alike. Fearing for their own safety, teachers and authorities at times implore a laissez faire attitude themselves where they adopt a rather hands-off policy of allowing the bullying and victimization to continue says Weaver-Hightower (2003). Bullying is one of the greatest effects of gangs as seen in the United Kingdom where they have established a forum known as Youthoria where incidences of gang bullying and victimisation can be reported (Weaver-Hightower, 2003). This is also noticeable in learners within Hanover Park where learners from both the participating schools reported that bullying and victimization were present in their schools. A noticeable difference of interest however is that the learners at Mountview High School reported that the bullying was not emanating from gang members, but rather from learners and the bullying would include name-calling or just making fun of one another:

*...its not like we have a lot of gangsters here so they don't get support, it's just usual bullying like people picking on the nerd in class or the fat girl...or someone saying your Jou-ma se P... {sic}( derogatory way of referring to his mother's genitals) you know.*

Learners from Crystal High school however gave a clear indication of the relationship that the bullying was mainly being perpetuated by gangs within the school environment.

*...you could be sitting in the playground and they just come and you know you have to move and give them a sit...or one day you know what happened to me on my way to school, this other lighty (sic) a gang member came to me and told me to pick dog shit and put it in my bag because he doesn't like litter...that's kak (swear word) my broe (brother).*

In support of these, Taussig (2004) mentioned that gang presence to a greater extent escalates levels of violence associated with bullying especially amongst teens which includes being forced to do things such as carrying drugs, verbal threats and use of derogatory terms.

*...I get told 'jou ma se p...' (derogatory way of referring to his mother's private parts) everyday it doesn't even get to me anymore, I used to get angry but not anymore...*

An interesting fact that emanated from these views is the thought that only male students in Hanover Park reported being bullied by gangs while female learners reported being bullied by other learners that are not gang-affiliated. This to a greater extent can be interpreted to highlight the patriarchal views of Hanover Park and South African youth that are held on ultimate dominance being the ability to intimidate other males as suggested by Kardam (2005). This view is however not in relation to views by Noaks & Noaks (2000) who conducted a rather similar study in Turkey and established gender difference was found in the types of bullying behaviours directed toward boys and girls by gangs. Boys reported verbal threats, name-calling, having items stolen from them, hitting and pushing. Girls, on the other hand, reported gossiping as well as verbal threats and name-calling (Noaks & Noaks (2000). Another reason of this difference can be attributed to a lack of female gangs in the community of Hanover Park compared to communities in Turkey. This inevitably takes away

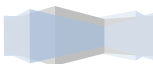
attention from female learners being seen as a threat to gangs, but the male learners leading to attempts of establishing dominance through acts of intimidation and bullying.

One of the worst forms of bullying by gangs in schools is when they bully learners into joining or forming gangs (Ryan, 2002). Taussig (2004) further states that gangs initiate and recruit new members in different ways, one of those ways is through enduring a test or a ritual of initiation. This can be in the form of a ritual which involves a series of beatings over a set period of time by a certain number of members to see if the initiates are tough enough to join the gang. Other forms include robbery, shoplifting, rape, burglary, a drive-by shooting, stealing a gun, assaulting a rival or self-mutilation. A counter to all these rituals is also a dark process of bullying where learners are left with no option but to join the gangs or be bullied with threats and physical assaults should they refuse to associate with the gang. This is common in Hanover Park where one participant reported that:

*...if you join them then you know one can say anything about you or even play any funny tricks around cause they don't care they will come and start shooting all over the place...some people that are weak will join so that they are not bullied anymore cause no one will ever-ever bully a gang my broe (brother) unless you wanna die...even teachers don't talk to gangs like they talk to us*

This statement clearly supports the view that in some cases, students do not actively seek out gang affiliation but are bullied into the lifestyle. It also to a greater extent indicates student's fear of gangs. An article by Integrated Regional Information Networks (2007) suggests that gangsters recruited learners to do their dirty work which included carrying drugs, hiding weapons and fighting. These learners in return received protection from bullying and any physical harm. The report further indicates that the recruitment was not always voluntary and the refusal to join the gangs when recruited would lead to gangs exerting pressure on learners through violence and excessive bullying.

A typical way of how bullying can be the reason why people join or form gangs is seen in the African American lesbian gang DTO (Dykes Taking Over) which is a student-initiated strategy for dealing with homophobic bullying in an urban American school district (Johnson 2008). This gang was formed as result of a series of alleged incidents of same-sex sexual



harassment by gang members (Johnson 2008). Whether the participating learners that contributed in the study will join gangs remains to be seen.

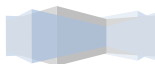
The next theme will refer to the characteristics of gang violence and how it affects learners in Hanover Park.

#### 4.4.2 Theme 2: Characteristic of gang violence in schools and increased gang activity

Modern gangs are commonly characterized by violence (Petersen, 2000). This violence is not restricted to street gangs, but is a common phenomenon even in prison gangs. The nature and extend of the violence may differ with context as stated by Petersen (2000) & Taylor (2008) who wrote that Asian gangs prefer using knives and clobbers while America, Cuban and South African gangs prefer the use of guns (Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, & Rose-Junius, 2005). A common trait however across all these gangs is that violence is embodied as a crucial trait within their gang culture.

Johnsons (2008) reports that in Nottinghamshire, United Kingdom where gang activity is believed to be less recorded, gang members carry out half of all shootings in the capital and twenty-two (22%) of all serious violent crimes. In 2012, more than five hundred (500) people were murdered in Chicago and a greater number in more populous cities such as New York and Los Angeles and most of the murders were directly connected in large to the gangs on its streets (Dorsey & Middleton, 2007). In the USA between the years 1996 to 2001, seventy-eight per-cent (78%) of the reported homicide cases were gang-related. Dorsey & Middleton (2007) also stated that four in every 10 street fights recorded between the year 2004 and 2009 in the USA were gang related. With reference to Cape Town, South Africa, at least seven children have been killed and many others wounded in crossfire shootings as gangs battle for territory (Hess, 2013b). Many of the youth gangs are extremely dangerous as evidenced by a report by Kinnies (2000) who stated that gang-related homicides in the Western Cape had increased significantly.

This violence is also experienced by learners from Hanover Park whom a majority of them indicated that the most prevalent violence they witness and experience are gun shootings and stabbings.





#### 4.2.2.1 Subtheme 2.I: Stabbings in schools related to gangs

The Western Cape government (2012) reports that at least 20 stabbings gang related stabbings were recorded in Hanover Park and Khayelitsha between the periods of June/July school holidays during the year 2012. These stabbings were reportedly carried out by teenage gang members some as young as 13years old. The occurrences of these stabbings as a result of gangs were also indicated by the participants that stated:

*...some people are scared of gangs but I am not, the gangsters because they use drugs will stab you for anything so that get money for the next fix. I once saw this other brada (sic)(brother) who was stabbed on the neck because he fight back a gangster who wanted to steal his watch at the taxi rank, the watch wasn't even expensive but the drug dealers take anything you see.*

Another participant from Mountiew High School gave a first-hand account of how she was almost stabbed:

*...I was almost stabbed by (with) a pocket knife, the taxi arrived late and it was already late and I was walking towards St Lucia Court when this other guy called me but because I know he is a gangster I refused to go then he followed me. I had head phones so probably he wanted my phone, when he got to me, he swung the knife close to my shoulder but good for me he missed and I ran...he was high on drugs and couldn't catch –up (laughs).*

Judging by the views of these learners, they experience and observe incidences of stabbing occasionally. They however appear unfazed by the incidences which may suggest that the participants are either unaware of the seriousness of the risk or may have become accustomed to the nature of the violence they live with. This however coincides with findings by Everett & Price (1995) who conducted a national study in the USA. Everett & Price (1995) established that out of 726 participating learners residing in gang stricken communities, only twenty-one (21) of the seven hundred and twenty-two (722) learners appeared worried or somewhat worried about being stabbed by gangs. An effect of these stabbings is therefore not mainly feelings of worry or feeling unsafe but rather worried about their surroundings which will be further explored.



Learners from Mountview High School did not report any concerns of stabbing at the school. A learner from Crystal High School indicated that the fighting was not only visible in the general community but had breached the walls of schools as gang stabbings and attempted stabbings were happening within the school at Crystal High School:

*...it happened, there is this guy that we all know in class is a “Laughing Boy” (name of gang), he comes here with a pocket knife and he goes around threatening people and I think but I am not sure, I once heard that he stabbed another student who belonged to another gang....he stabbed him at school and that happens in the school toilet and he even threatened a teacher with a knife.*

These views are in line with views by Huff (2002b) who conducted a study on gang activity in schools in the USA and concluded that schools in gang prevalent areas report that conflict amongst gangs frequently spills over from weekends into the school week into the school playground. The discrepancy of views between learners from Crystal High School and Mountview High School with Crystal High School having experienced and witnessed more violence despite residing in the same community can be interpreted in different forms. One can assume that Mountview High School educators implore stricter disciplinary measures in addressing learners that are gang-affiliated or it can simply be a locational matter as Crystal High School is located at the center of the community which is a major attraction for gangs.

The images in Figure 4.6 below further depict another incident of gang violence in schools in KwaZulu Natal (KZN), South Africa where gang violence was suspected to be behind the shocking footage of a learner that stabbed a fellow learner at school.





Figure 4.6: Shocking footage of a learner stabbing a fellow learner at school. Gang violence suspected, (Source: Eyewitness News, 2013)

#### 4.4.2.2 Subtheme 2.II: Increased gun activity at school and in the community

Another weapon of choice the learners are exposed to in the community used by gangs are guns. Osofsky (2001) wrote that chewing gum, budging in line, running in the hallway, and making noise were behaviors that led to disciplinary action in the year 1940. Today's schools must respond to alcohol and drug abuse, possession of weapons, gang membership, teen pregnancy and use of firearms (Osofsky, 2001) as one of the participants mentioned:

*...one day we were coming from school when we saw people running towards us telling us that the gangs were shooting each other, we then hear the gun noises and we had to go this other ladies house and wait there for about 10 minutes until they finish. They shoot all the time man, they don't care who is walking even babies...*

Another participant reported that:

*...if one gang member shoots another gang then you know that week they shoot and the streets won't be safe, when they start you have to stay indoors.*

Because of the prevalent gang violence, the participants also reported that a lot of people now own guns to protect themselves from gangs. None of the participants however owned up to ever owning a firearm except for one Crystal High School learner who confessed to having accidentally fired a gun at home.



*...my father owns a gun and one day me and my cousin were playing with at home playing cops in the house. I didn't think it was loaded though so it fired off a shot and the bullet went through the wall into the next house because we stay in a court (block of flats). Luckily there was no one in the house, we tried covering the hole with flour (a dough of baking flour) but it didn't work (laughs).*

This shows a discrepancy to views by Noaks & Noaks (2000) who after conducting a study with learners in the USA wrote that sixteen percent (16%) of girls and twenty-one percent (21%) of boys reported carrying a weapon for self-protection on a regular basis. These figures suggested that school violence is affecting the lives of many children. This however is not the case in relation to learners in Hanover Park and the discrepancy can again be attributed to a contextual fact where learners in South Africa have limited access compared to learners in the USA which has less strict gun control laws compared to South Africa.

In conclusion, it seems that gang presence and availability of firearms presents effects on the learners as it endangers their lives. Gang presence in this regard therefore affects the participant's sense of security as one is constantly aware of the impending danger of gun violence even by learners that may or may not be gang-affiliated but have access to firearms, usually illegal firearms.

#### 4.4.2.3 Subtheme 2.III: Innocent by-standers and non-gang members injured/killed during gang fights

Although the statistics of innocent community residences being shot by gang members are not readily available in South Africa, Hartley (2012) of IOL News has in the past published reports of children as young as 6 years old being wounded or killed after being shot in areas of the Cape Flats, Western Cape. From the age group, it is clear that not all people shot in the gang activity are gang members but rather innocent bystanders. A typical example given to indicate this view point is the case of Sherelda Nicholas aged 14 years old and Ghywin Konstabel aged 12 years that were shot in the thigh and buttocks respectively by suspected gang members allegedly affiliated with the Mongrels gang that opened fire at suspected members of the 26s (name of the gang) in a vehicle near the Manenberg High School (Ajam, 2011). One participant explained that:

*...I haven't seen someone who is not a gang being shot but we hear stories and besides when they start fighting they don't select because the gangs can fire at any one even if there are babies they don't care they just shoot so if you don't run you get shot for nothing.*

Another participant reported:

*...yes, gangs shoot just so in the open even when the children are walking around. He (gang member) knows who he is chasing maybe but he just shoots like they don't care. If you are there, he will shoot you. So you run back home, you can't come to school or rather hide at a house until the war is over.*

This to a greater extent reveals the daily experience of potentially being a victim of crime as an innocent bystander. Learners are therefore prone to high risk of being involved in shootings which put their lives at risk.

#### 4.4.3 Theme 3: Family disintegration due to gangs' involvement

Although the theme of family disintegration was not prominently identified by the participants during the study, it is worth noting as it presents some effects experienced by participants as a result of gangs and gangsterism within their community:

##### 4.4.3.1 Subtheme 3.I: When gangs replace family systems

Skiba & Peterson (2000); Mayer & Leone (1999) all reported that gangs lifestyle create a mindset of loyalty, pride and love for young students who are disengaged from their families. Skiba & Peterson (2000) further report that where the student is coming from a dysfunctional family where they may be neglected or do not receive adequate attention from their families, the gang can easily replace the family as a key influential factor. When bonds are created in the gang, these bonds may replace traditional family systems. Mayer & Leone (1999) also state that a gang member will do whatever his/her new friends want him/her to do and this has life-altering implications on families and individuals alike, including those that are not gang-affiliated. Because of this, loyalty is more affiliated to the gang than family. Noting that some of the participants had family members and siblings that are gang-affiliated, this family disintegration has effects on the entire family and inevitably the learners:



*....when your brother belongs to a gang and he is ordered to come rob you guys so that he can be captain, he will do it because that is how they go up the ranks and become captains and leader or just so that you can be respected by the gang, they don't care about their own families.*

Another learner stated:

*...there is this girl here at school, her brother, he is also a gangster. They shoot him through his face and his bullet came through the back of his head. His mommy came and shouted at the gangs but they continued to shoot and all this happened in front of his mother and they could have shot her as well.*

Loyalty is tested by gangs and in the process families inevitably lose their family member to gangs. This view is supported by Larson, Smith, & Furlong (2002) who wrote that it is very easy for a gang to replace family systems as gang members find a new family system that may be supportive or provide attention which may have been missing in their traditional family setting. Mayer & Leone (1999) postulated that a lot of people that join gangs come from low income, broken households that in the worst scenarios may have neglected or abused the individual as a child. It can be assumed that the presence of gangs in the community where learners have siblings that are gang-affiliated, presents family problems as gangs tend to compete for attention against the neutral family setting. Decker & Van Winkle (1996) in this regard wrote that gangs can easily fill in blank spaces left by the family. This inevitably affects the participant's learners that have siblings in gangs as the sibling may choose to affiliate with the gang and not the family.

Three of the participants openly revealed that they had brothers that are gang-affiliated. One participant stated that because of the gang violence, her mother did not allow her brother to come back home for fear that he may put the family at risk of being attacked by another gang.

*...like me,, my brother we all know is a Laughing Boy (Western Cape gang prominent in Hanover Park) and is doing drugs big time. We last saw him during Eid( Muslim religious day) last year and my mother does not want him home because she knows that another gang can come looking from him and find him with us...besides he steals anything he can get like spoons, tv arial, dvd's also cause he is using tik but I also miss him sometimes, it's not like he is a bad person, he would fight anyone who does*



*something to me and I miss him sometimes but if I even mention his name to my mother then she gets angry.*

With these views, it appears that families that have known gang members have constant fear that the gang violence will not end outside in the community but may also affect innocent family members. This is supported by Decker & Van Winkle (1996) who states that it is very easy for families of rival gangs to be victims of violence as gangs may use them as pawns for sending strong messages to rival gangs. This inevitably leaves the affected families with the option of staying rather choosing to stay away so that they secure the safety of the entire family.

Another element to this is when family members belong to different gangs or gangs outside of their living zone. The researcher having worked in the community of Hanover Park for two years had become familiar with a case of young man who was shot dead while visiting his mother because he belonged to a gang in a different section of Hanover Park that is at war with a gang that resides close to where his mother resided. By visiting his mother, he was therefore seen as a member of an opponent gang member trespassing outside his territory rather than an individual visiting family. For safety reasons in these instances, people end up not making any contact or chose to meet in areas outside of Hanover Park for fear that they may be targeted when they are seen together. It is therefore clear that some of the participants observe and experience family relations being strained by the presence of gangs in the community. Closely related to this aspect is also the effect that because of gangs, some extended family members chose not to be in Hanover Park because of the gang violence. This view is further discussed in the next section.

#### 4.4.3.2 Subtheme 3.II: Gangs infested areas result in broken family ties

*...people outside of Hanover Park they don't wanna come here, like I have aunts in Muizeinberg that will never set foot in this place because they are scared gangs will rob them because of what they hear in the news. We have to go there if we want to see them.*

These were the views of one participant which highlights how families can again be disintegrated and be affected by the presence of gangs. This view is depicted by Osofsky (2001:87) in simple words by stating that “it is common sense to stay away from areas where



there are a lot of gangs”. This view highlights that for fear of gangs, some family members chose to stay away from coming into neighbourhoods like Hanover Park despite having family there. It again presents an effect of family disintegration for the learners as they lose contact with relatives outside of their nuclear households that may reside in other communities outside of Hanover Park.

#### 4.4.4 Theme 4: Fear of gangs

This is noticeably one of the most prominent themes that emanated from the study and was visible across other themes presented. Fear of gangs has escalated dramatically over the past two decades (Katz, 2001). Katz (2001) state that researchers and policy makers have begun to discuss the costs associated with fear of gangs and have implemented programs and legislation specifically designed to address this fear in an attempt to calm the public and appease community demands. Given the role that fear of gangs has played in policy decisions, its study is all the more important (Lane & Meeker, 2000).

##### 4.4.4.1 Subtheme 4.I: Fear as a subliminal view due to the presence of gangs

A key critical question raised by the researcher was along the line of how do the participants experience and feel about being in Hanover Park especially when walking around the community. A substantial number of the participants reported that they had fear of the gangs and being robbed, stabbed or worse being shot dead. Interesting enough, a majority of the participants indicated rather to holding a concern about their safety because of the presence of gangs rather than fear of gangs or gang activity:

*...you cannot walk around Hanover Park dodging every corner or looking like you are scared and afraid because the gangs will notice that. Besides we are not scared like scared of the gangs, we grew up with these people and some of them we used to play with as kids so it's not like we fear them, we just know that they are there and they are bad people. There are of course one or two people you know are really bad but still that does not scare us.*

This view is in contradiction to views by Bennett & Flavin (1994); Covington & Taylor (1991) who wrote that fear is a daily ever-present factor amongst community members that reside in gang-infested communities. A rationale explanation for this discrepancy can be the adoption of the victimisation model propounded by Bennett & Flavin (1994) and Covington



& Taylor (1991) which focuses on perceived vulnerability as a proponent of fear. This model is based on the notion that fear of crime is related to people's perceptions of their own physical and ecological vulnerability; women and older persons are therefore hypothesised as more fearful of crime because of their perception that they may not be able to defend themselves physically against an offender and hence their feeling physically vulnerable to an attack. Because of this view, one may assume that the participants may perceive themselves as less vulnerable to criminal attacks; hence their lack of constant fear, but rather an awareness of gang presence. One may also assume that the participants are so accustomed to their environment that they are not scared anymore.

The participants that reported to experiencing fear revealed that they experience fear on their way to and from school. One learner from Mountview High School stated that he felt unsafe when he was at school, as well as on his way to and from school because gangsters extorted money or any valuable assets to buy drugs and alcohol.

*...what's to not be afraid of when they are always waiting at the school gates and we have to walk home alone, not all of us have our fathers picking us at the gate and we walk and the gangs take our money and anything they can sell to buy drugs.*

This correlates with the findings by Markowitz (2010) who published that students who attend schools that have a strong gang presence often fear coming to school. Markowitz, Bellair, Liska, & Liu (2001) goes further to state that students may fear bringing money to school because it may be taken from them and or they may be involved in gang fights or be the target of gang violence. This view is in relation to Lane & Meeker (2000) who state that gang members rule by intimidation, often extorting money from younger students and forcing them to hand over lunch money, new coveted pieces of clothing or even homework and assignments. Some students might avoid coming to school or skip some classes in order to avoid possible confrontations with gang members. With these views, one can assume that the presence of gangs also presents a new factor of vulnerability to gang violence by gangs as they prey on learners that may have lesser security systems or that are maybe not accompanied by a supervising adult to school which to a greater extent reveals a constant awareness and fear of never being safe and always having to look over their shoulders shared by many learners.



#### 4.4.4.2 Subtheme 4.II: Fear as a protective factor preventing learners from joining gangs

An interesting element to the effect of fear is that when asked the question of why are they allegedly not gang members themselves, a majority of the participants indicated that it was because they are afraid of being shot or dying young. The rest of the participants reported that it was because they despised the life of gangs after witnessing how wanted the people become. This can be supported by views of Wilcox & Land (1996) who wrote that at times fear can be the greatest advantage holding a society together; this fear may include the fear of going to prison or fear of death. This again supports views by Wilcox & Land (1996) who said that less than ten per-cent (10%) of children between the ages of 12 years old to 18 years old join gangs even in highly impacted areas by gangs because they fear going to prison. It can therefore be assumed that despite their high profile in the media and in communities, relatively few young people join gangs even in highly impacted areas.

*...have you seen those people, some of them can't even go back to their homes and scary imagine if it's you knowing that you can get shot and be killed anytime just because you belong to a different gang.*

Fear from this point of view therefore acts as a protective factor which at times keep learners away from joining gangs. This view contradicts with scholars like Bowen & Bowen (1999); Forrest, Zychowski, Stuhldreher & Ryan (2000); Lowry, Cohen, Modzeleski, Kann, Collins & Kolbe (1999); Noaks & Noaks (2000) who all suggested that fear of school crime is associated with defensive behaviours such as weapon carrying and joining gangs and fear is more likely to draw learners to join gangs rather than prevent them from joining as stated by the participants.

Directing this view back to effects and experiences of learners as a result of gangs, an undeniable factor is that learners also experience fear of gangs which however makes the learners socially aware of the impacts of gangs through the fear they experience.

#### 4.4.4.3 Subtheme 4.III: Restricted mobility by gangs on members of the community

Gangs in high risk communities control a territory which is not only restricted to gang members but extends over to non-gang members as well. People avoid leaving their homes

and avoid specific areas due to fear of crime or in some cases females abstain from flirtatious behaviour due to fear of rape (Foster & Giles-Corti, 2008; Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1997; Lane, 2002). This also came out in the study where it was revealed that gang territories are not limited to gangs only but in most instances spill over to affecting learners and other non-gang member's especially young males.

*...I cannot just visit my friends who stay where the Hard Livings are and mina I stay where the Laughing Boys area cause they just assume that any adult boy has been recruited by gangs...if I visit there now and you see how tall I am as a guy, they will just think that I am a gangster myself so I can't go there.*

An interesting finding to the element of fear is that male participants appear to have more fear of gangs and their mobility although a greater percentage indicated a consciousness of gangs rather than fear. Male participants' fear of being mistaken for gang members is more pronounced which restricts their mobility more than female learners.

*... during the day I can go anywhere as long as its day time but at night if you go to the taxi rank or walk past Voorspoed primary (school) then you are asking to be raped.*

Female learners' fear is time specific and rationale which to a greater extent shows that another effect of gangs is the perpetuation of gender specific fear on learners. One can therefore assume that the learners definitely are affected by the presence of gangs as their mobility is restricted and controlled by the gang zones that spill over to non-gang members as well, especially young males that can easily be mistaken for gangs. To fully express the extent of this effect, one participant stated that:

*...they literally control our lives.*

People therefore avoid certain streets and take a circuitous route to shopping areas at night to avoid gangs that operate in certain zones of the community. This to a greater extent shows the clear effects and experiences of the learners as a result of gangs in their community that learners do not always have the liberty to walk or roam freely within their community without fear of crime. This restricted mobility according to Wilcox & Land (1996) is an essential element of development where younger children may fail to fully develop mentally

and socially in instances where they are strictly controlled and their movement influenced by fear of crime and gangs.

#### 4.4.4.4 Subtheme 4.IV: Businesses cautious to invest for fear of gangs

Fisher (1991) and White (1982) stated that fear of crime can contribute to a reduction in business profits as security and insurance costs increase while customer traffic decreases. Although this view was not clearly portrayed and addressed in the research, one participant jokingly stated that:

*...we don't get other things people get out there, like if you call Debonairs and order your triple decker they won't come to Hanover Park 'cause (sic) they know the gang skollies will rob them and take the pizza and that delivery bike as well.*

The effect on the business side is not prominently pronounced by the participants which may be because of a lack of insight into the economic effects of gangs. It is however worth noting that businesses shy away from communities where gangs are rife for fear of vandalism and their businesses being robbed. A noted effect of this was recorded in Brisbane, England where Slotz (2013) reported that gangs have turned to extortion as the main source of income sending enforcers into local businesses to extract money using violence, threats and intimidation. Another noted example of this is in Mitchels Plain, Western Cape, South Africa where gangs have vandalised small businesses including tuck-shops and spaza shops which has driven most of the small business owners out of the community (Madihla, 2012).

Learners within the community are therefore indirectly affected by this as the decline in investment by gangs within the community of Hanover Park may also lead to a decline in property value and mainly a decline in the quality of city services such as parks, schools and libraries which are all essential to the growth and development of learners. This can even be substantiated by observations made by the researcher while working in the community where one noticed that community parks are not maintained and repaired. A community member rationalising this informed the researcher that there is no need to repair and maintain these services as the gangs end up taking the park anyway and use them as initiation spots or drug selling spots.

There were however no additional comments or statements made by the participants in respect of the business and investment effects as a result of gangs which may suggest a lack



of knowledge about the depth of the effects of the gangs. In the next section, the researcher will discuss the theme of increased criminal activity as reported by the participants.

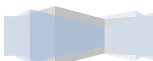
#### 4.4.5 Theme 5: Increased criminal activity due to the presence of gangs

Professor Willem Luyt of the Unisa Law faculty in an interview with Bezuidenhout (2013) of the Cape Argus reported that gang strategies have changed and they think bigger, are becoming more deviant to protect their activities and are prepared to eliminate all forms of opposition mainly because of growing intolerance and greed through criminal activities. This is further supported by MacBradaigh (2013) that the proliferation of gangs goes hand in hand with the growth of crime in areas where gangs take centre stage as recognised role players. Professor Willem Luyt as noted by Bezuidenhout (2013) further stated that despite a toll in gang violence, a more rife issue today is vigilant and criminal activity. Professor Luyt attributed this high crime and vigilant behaviour by gangs in South Africa partly to gangs expanding and protecting their turf (Bezuidenhout, 2013). He also attributes the high crime rate by gangs to the unfavourable economic conditions that are forcing gangs to become more devious to achieve wealth and status and also to simply knowing that they will get away given the low incarceration rate for criminal offenders in South Africa (Bezuidenhout, 2013).

Gangs through their criminal activities increase fear amongst learners as some have the fear of being robbed or being victims of violence. Another effect of the criminal effect is that loss of property was the most practised criminal activity particularly stealing and robbing, even from family members.

Contrary to popular views held by many scholars such as Lane & Meeker (2005) who hold the view that gangs pocket a lot of money and commit most of the crimes which include stabbings, robbery and house break-ins, the researcher established from the study that most of these crimes in Hanover Park according to the participants are in-fact carried out by heavy drug users trying to sustain their habits. These drug users are commonly referred to in Hanover Park as “tik-kop” (a methamphetamine user) and are not necessarily gang members.

*...the gangs get a bad rap like everything is always blamed on them but I know sometimes and a lot of the times we get robbed by tik-kops that just want money to buy drugs and sometimes if you get robbed by a tik-kop you can actually report them to the gangs that stay in your section and they will go get it for you.*



With this information, learners identified another group of individuals within the community of Hanover Park that are regarded as consumers of the drugs made available by gangs referred to as “tik kop”. It may appear that in many communities, crime is attributed to the gangs as they seem to take centre stage as the misfits of society. One however has to consider the view that there is a growing population of drug users in the Western Cape who mostly rely on criminal activities to sustain their drug use as supported by the South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (SANCA) (2012) which published that the Western Cape was one of the most affected provinces with the highest numbers of substance use with communities like Hanover Park, Mitchels Plain, Grassy Park amongst others with Milnerton and Delft being the worst affected. The Anti-Drug Alliance (2012) goes further to report that 88% of drug users within these areas are unemployed and spend up to R4 322.29 a month on drugs. Twenty-seven per-cent (27%) of the drug users’ population within the named residential areas are unemployed and to sustain their drug use, a lot of the drug users resort to a life of crime which includes stealing, house breaks-ins and day light robberies (Anti-Drug Alliance 2012). A participant explained:

*...tik-kops are the worst because all they want is money for their next fix, gangs on the other hand some of them don't even do drugs because they just sell it and they make enough money they don't have to rob or steal from people like tik kops that can't think straight because they are always high.*

With these views, one can assume that the community of Hanover Park is ravaged by gangs that supply drugs to a population already ravaged by unemployment and other social ills. It is therefore important to acknowledge that gangs are not the only misfits of the society and can to some extent be viewed in a positive light:

*...the gangs get a bad rap like everything is always blamed on them but I know sometimes and a lot of the times we get robbed by tik-kops that just want money to buy drugs and sometimes if you get robbed by a tik-kop you can actually report them to the gangs that stay in your section and they will go get it for you.*

Although gangs are presented by the participant in a positive light as possible caretakers of the community, a notable and ever consistent effect with the presence of gang in line with this view point is that gangs in themselves bring elements of criminal activity. They either commit crimes of robbery themselves or sustain an unemployed population with drugs



leading to drug users resorting to a life of crime to sustain their habits. This view is however opposed by Joe Public Blog (2013) published that blaming gangs for all criminal activities is a “dim view” propagated by the media and government as gangs are groups operate under ethical and good moral codes of conduct upheld and enforced by the elders of the community.

#### 4.4.6 Theme 6: Experiences in relation to law enforcement

The last 25 years has seen a growth of youth gang violence and a proliferation of youth gangs into smaller cities and rural areas across the globe (Curry & Decker, 2002). During this time, the number of gang members per city in the USA has increased seven times and the number of youth gangs has increased 10 times. The National Gang Youth Survey (2008) indicates that there are currently 800,000 gang members active across the major cities in the USA. In trying to address this problem, governments have dedicated resources aimed at addressing the issue of gangs in communities. The USA government has formed the Gang Resistance Education and Training Program (G.R.E.A.T.) administered by the Office of Justice Programs which offers a curriculum on reforming already existing gang members and also preventing further people from joining gangs (The National Gang Youth Survey, 2008). The South African government in the Western Cape drafted the Western Cape Community Safety Bill 2012 which is aimed at creating frameworks for safety partnerships aimed at combatting gangs within the province (Province of the Western Cape, 2012). The government was also able to stabilise gang hotspots by deploying the South African National Defence Force to aid the police in investigating and responding to gang crimes (Phakati, 2013). Despite all these moves and attempts by the local government, learners that participated in the study still feel and identify a lack of structural support by different role players:

##### 4.4.6.1 Subtheme 6.I: The presence of police in schools creating discomfort and interfering with learning

Driving past schools in Hanover Park, one will notice South African Police Service vans parked in the playground especially during times of gang wars and school intervals. The South African Police Service (2009) supported this move in its publication by suggesting that effective crime control measures in schools should involve vigorous police work, strict law enforcement and allowing young people more choice in education. Ferris (2011) goes further to support this view by suggesting that the presence of law enforcement is a necessity and they should actively participate in bringing truants back to school were gang violence is rife.





The researcher had on a previous school visit noticed the South African Police Service on school playgrounds at Crystal High School, as can be seen in Figure 4.7, but not at Mountview. Some learners from Crystal High School indicated this is a disturbance and hindrance to their learning and one may assume that it is because Crystal High School is central to the community of Hanover and most susceptible to gang violence. Another assumption can be in support of the commonly held knowledge in Hanover Park that Crystal High School has more truant learners than any learners in the community; hence the need for strict policing.

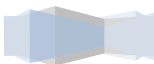


Figure 4.7: South African Police Services officer stands guard at a high school gate in Hanover Park as learners leave school, (Source: John, 2013)

One participant at Crystal High School stated that:

*...when you go to play during interval then you see the pigs (police) sitting there with their guns looking at us like we are the gang and it's not like they have to be there every day because it not like there is always something happening, now kids that area...you know that thing of just being scared of the police and we don't go to the playground when they are there.*

The learners use of the word “pig” can be understood and interpreted to refer to a generally disliked person as referenced by Webster (2013) who wrote that the use of the word across cultures is usually used in reference to describe an undesirable thing despised by many. One may also assume that the use of the word pig in reference to the police may also suggest that the learners feel unsafe instead of being protected by the police.



These views clearly highlight a discrepancy and a misunderstanding of information between the learners and the police department whose views on the need for strict policing as revealed in the South African Police Service (2009) article suggest that they recommend police presence in schools while learners see it as a hindrance to their play time and learning. To some extent, one may even suggest that the voice of the learners as the ones affected by the process is ignored or less regarded as scholars and the researchers such as Ferris (2011) recommend strict policing in schools.

As to why there were police officers at Crystal High School and not Mountview High School the participants voiced the following:

*...they say we are from the ghetto here at Crystal because we are at the center of Hanover Park but after school we are all the same cause (sic) my neighbors goes to Mountview and they don't have this police thing...and you know sometimes the police will even search our bags but if there is a shooting they don't even come.*

In trying to understand the rationale of why the learners despise having law enforcement in their schools seeing that they are there to protect them, another participant from Crystal High School in rather controversial statement stated that:

*...they are more annoying than maths teachers, always trying to catch you doing something wrong and they are not here to protect us the children but the teachers and this affects our classes and play time at school...and you know the police can be scary and people still fight at school and bring knives so it doesn't help but rather just adds more problems of people being scared and watched all the time.*

This is in line with views held by Green (2002); National Association of School Psychologists (2006) who both suggested that neither increasing the length of school hours nor putting security sensor systems, will decrease the crime rate in schools nor does it guarantee the safety of the learners. Inevitably it only frustrates the learners that make use of the system (National Association of School Psychologists, 2006). This view was proposed by Harris (2013) after studying modern industrialized countries such as USA where the use of security boom gates and strict body searches in schools in gang-infested areas has failed to reduce violence within the school setting. Harris (2013) further states that requiring children

to attend school longer or having law enforcement would reduce crime in arguing from a statistical fallacy nor does school uniforms or longer school days and school years be expected to reduce crime. Rather, law officers can either dedicate time during the day or funds can be dedicated for over-time pay to make home visits to provide warnings and serve citations to parents of gang-affiliated children. “The presence of security officers, metal detectors, and security cameras may deter some students from committing acts of violence, but this presence also serves to heighten fear among students and teachers, while increasing the power of some gangs and the perceived need some students have for joining gangs” (Thompkins, 2000).

Inevitably, one can identify that the presence of law enforcement both in the community and schools presents a challenge as it creates an uncomfortable and uncondusive environment for learning. Overall however, gangsterism poses a persistent threat to the well-being and safety of learners. It destroys school daily routine, the teaching program and the ability of learners to concentrate in the classroom.

#### 4.4.6.2 Subtheme 6.II: Police failure to deal with gang violence propounds an experience of fear and lack of faith in service delivery

There is no specialised gang unit at national or provincial level in South Africa currently and this has been interpreted by bodies such as the Pan Africanist Movement as a failure by police to respond effectively in addressing the gang issue crippling the province (Simon, 2012). The same sentiments alleging that the police have failed in addressing the issue of gangs are also shared by the research participants as they experience either a lack or a slow response by police in arresting gangs in the area when there are incidents of violence of gang shootings in the area:

*...you don't see the police when people are shooting, they come after because they know the gangs spray bullets at one and they will shoot even at the police. They don't care and they are not scared to go to college (sic).*

Another learner reported:

*...and when the police come they only bring one van and the gangs don't even run. There is nothing. This is something I have seen with my own eyes that the police are*



*nothing here and they allow these things to happen. Maybe they are on a payroll of the gangs.*

The researcher has also noted the same concerns when he engaged with a warrant officer from the Phillipi Police Station which is responsible for the Hanover Park Area. He reported that despite the high crime area in Hanover Park, the area does not have a police station of its own. He also reported that the South Africa Police Services is not fully equipped with proper protective gear and sometimes they need to consider their safety by requesting backup before responding to gang fights in the community of Hanover Park. Carlie (2002) also reported that in many instances, residents regard police officers with a handful of exceptions as unhelpful, conniving with gangsters whose shebeens and homes they frequent, or even as being on gang payrolls. This to a greater extent is taken to suggest that gangs are more dominant than the police.

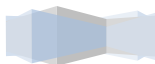
Because of this, one can assume that the learners experience a lack of faith in South Africa Police Services. With the lack of faith in the policing services, one can further assume that learners harbour a view of unreliability towards the police where they may feel unsafe and unprotected by the police within their community. One can even note that because of a lack of faith in the police, this may inevitably alter the learners' views towards authority where they may hold gangs as more established and authoritative than the police.

#### 4.4.7 Theme 7: Judgemental attitudes and labelling by outsiders

Zevallos (2013: 26) from a sociological view point wrote that “where we come from matters and can be overtly hazardous to how people perceive us”. This view point is also shared by learners that participated in the study as one learner revealed that:

*...if you in Cape Town and you tell people that you are from Hanover Park then they look at you like skelm.*

This view is again supported by Zevallos (2013) who wrote that societies make many assumptions about the types of young people who join gangs and why this might occur and furthermore label the entire community where gangs originate from. Zevallos (2013: 149) notes that labelling these communities especially the youth can become a “self-fulfilling prophecy,” increasing the likelihood that troubled youth will join a gang. The scholar adds that “People don’t get better when you focus on the bad stuff.”



To fully sum up the experiences of being judged and labelled, Vermaak (2012) a resident of Hanover Park published an article on her blog where she stated “My neighbours in Hanover Park have been variously described as drunken, disorderly, misguided and poor. While I admit that these problems do exist within our community, as they do throughout South Africa, the majority of the people residing here are decent, hardworking, and wish to live in a Hanover Park that is peaceful and safe”. This to a greater extent sums up the views and experiences shared by the participants and many others that reside in Hanover Park that because of social ills in their communities, they are easily judged and labelled by members of the public.

#### 4.4.8 Theme 8: Gang turf affecting mobility and interaction of non-gang members

Turfs typically define gangs by the territory that they control (Garland, 2009). The gang members themselves usually live within these territories which are used to demarcate gang zones from one gang to another (Garland, 2009). The scholar further states that, community members that reside in gang areas are victims of gang killings just as much as gangsters that reside in their turf as gangs use turfs as identity markers even for none gang members. The same experiences can also be noted in learners within Hanover Park:

*...I stay where the Americans rule and although I am not a gang member they regard me as one of them that is why I call them my people. It does not mean that I am a gang member myself.*

Another participant reported:

*...sometimes you can't even walk out of the house or go to a different street because of gangs or maybe because the gang that stays there is an enemy to the gang that stays in your street.*

These views suggest learners' experience of the possibility and fear of falling victim to rival gangs simply because of turf which is used to identify all residents that reside in a specific area even when they are not gang-affiliated.

*...I had to literally run for my life one day when I decided to take a short cut going to Shoprite. Like gangs in my street they don't walk in Grove Road but I it's shorted and*



*when the Dixies in Grove Road saw me...they started chanting, it was in Afrikaans, you wouldn't understand and after that I ran. They just wanted to scare me off I think.*

The reality of gangs within the community of Hanover Park as highlighted by the views of these learners is that gangs are so entrenched in the lives of community members and often affect a number of aspects in the residences lives which in this case is their mobility and freedom to engage freely for fear of association with an opposition gang.

#### 4.5 Summary on data analysis

The researcher has indicated some of the experiences and effects held by participants at Mountview High School and Crystal High School as a result of gangs within their community. Notable fear of crime and victimisation is one of the greatest experiences shared by learners from both schools. This is in line with views held by previous scholars such as Taussig (2004) and Markowitz (2001) who all reported that fear of gangs is prominent amongst learners in gang-infested communities. The research also established great effects in respect of the participants' learning as gangs appear to cause a lot of unrest and negatively affect the participants' learning by creation of rather unsafe and uncondusive learning environments. There has also been noticeably a few discrepancies with relevant literature such as the view that fear is a daily thing which in the community of Hanover Park is not as such as expressed by the learners which may be because gangs are a part of the learners' lives so much that they do not recognise the impact and effect of gangs fully or got used to gangs so much that they no longer identify their fear of gangs.





### 5.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher will present conclusions and recommendations that came from the study that aimed to explore the experiences of high school learners in relation to gangs and gangsterism within their community of Hanover Park-Western Cape. The conclusions are therefore based on correlating the aim, objectives, methodology and findings of the study and viewing whether these were reached. Within this chapter, the researcher aims to summarize the main points of the literature review, reflect on the aims and objectives of the study, briefly relook the research methodology, give an overview of the main themes that emanated from the study and discuss the broader implications the findings have. The researcher will also pay special attention to identifying limitations within the study and offer suggestions for future researchers.

The study was an exploratory and contextual qualitative study which made use of focus groups and semi-structured one-on-one interviews as the main methods of data collection. With the researcher having worked within the community of Hanover Park (community of study), the researcher's observations and interaction with community members were also noted within the study.

After the completion of the interviews and focus group discussions, all data was transcribed and a process of data analysis with the use of thematic data analysis ensued. Themes of interest were identified. Themes that emerged from the study were either supported or argued by relevant literature from different scholars and organisations that have focused on gangs and gangsterism especially within the South African context.

The fundamental research question which had to be addressed by the learners was:

“What are the experiences of the non- gang adolescents regarding gangs and gangsterism in Hanover Park”.

By answering the research question, the study achieved the following:





- Explore and describe how non-gang school-going learners experience gangs and gangsterism in Hanover Park-Western Cape. This was achieved by engaging in focus group discussions with learners from Mountview High School and Mountiview High School where the researcher expected to identify specific experiences in relation to the learners experience in relation to local gangs in Hanover Park.
- Explore and describe the effect gang-related activities have on the school going learners in Hanover Park, Western Cape. With the use of the mentioned focus group sessions and semi-structured interviews with the research participants, the researcher also enquired about any effects which the learners could identify as a result of gangs within their community.
- Identify protective factors that promote non-gang involvement by school going adolescent learners. Specific to the study was also a need to identify how it is possible that the participants are not gang members when it appears to be the norm. This was easily achieved by the researcher by enquiring about some of the protective factors that are present in the participants' lives.

All this was achieved by conducting focus group discussions that tapped into the many different forms of experiences that participants have in relation to gangs and gangsterism in their community. This form of discussion therefore revealed more about what people know and more about what people experience (Kitzinger, 2005). With the use of the focus group sessions, the researcher was therefore able to fully explore the learners experiences of gangs and gangsterism and also explored why they are not gang members themselves in a community that makes it appear to be norm for individuals to be gang members. One must also acknowledge that the use of qualitative research and research design of exploratory and contextual designs in the research aided the best attainment of these objectives.

Duckworth & Seligman (2006) wrote that whether completing a math test or completing a dissertation, one must always stay focused on the set objectives. The researcher had to therefore constantly review the research process and make sure that it was in line with the objectives.



## 5.2. Highlights of findings and recommendations

Eight (8) major themes of interests emanated from the study with a total of 17 subthemes in total. Below is a list of the themes and subthemes that came out of the study:

NB: *Bulleted lists represent the sub-themes per theme.*

THEME 1: Gang presence disrupting school functioning and learning

- Low school attendance and class disruption as a result of gangs.
- The link between drug and alcohol use in schools as a result of gangs in the community.
- The link between weapons in schools and the presence of gangs.
- Increased bullying in schools as a result of gangs.

THEME 2: Characteristic of violence in schools as a result of gang activity.

- Stabbing in schools related to gangs.
- Guns in schools as a result of gangs.
- Innocent bystanders and non-gang members injured/killed during gang fights.

THEME 3: Family disintegration due to involvement in gangs.

- When gangs replace family systems.
- Gang-infected areas result in broken family ties.

THEME 4: Fear of gangs.

- Fear as a subliminal view due to the presence of gangs.
- Fear as a protective factor preventing learners from joining gangs.
- Restricted mobility by gangs on members of the community.
- Business cautious to invest for fear of gangs.

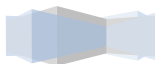
THEME 5: Increased criminal activity due to the presence of gangs.

THEME 6: Experiences in relation to law enforcement.

- The presence of police in schools creating discomfort and interfering with learning.
- Police failure to deal with gang violence propounds an experience of fear and lack of faith in service delivery.

THEME 7: Judgmental attitudes and labelling by outsiders.

THEME 8: Gang turf affecting mobility and interactions of non-gang members.



THEME 1: Gangs clearly to a greater extent affect the learners' school attendance as they at times have to stay out of school because of gang activity mainly gang-on-gang shooting. The reasons were mainly centred on events of gang violence and shooting between the major gangs in Hanover Park. This school absence affected the classes and school attendance was disrupted and noticeably, a substantial number of the participating learners experienced this. Participants also hinted at the presence of drugs and alcohol either for use or sale by learners that are gang-affiliated. Although the direct effect to the participants was not clearly highlighted, they however indicated that gangs were making drugs and alcohol available to learners as a recruitment process which to a greater extent ended affecting the participating learners as they are exposed to intoxicated and drug-high learners within their schools. Another noticeable experience insinuated in this theme is that the presence of gangs results in an increase in guns and weapons including knives in both the schools and the community. This added to the fact of school disruption and also increased fear in the participants.

The participants also indicated that they are called names and experience being bullied by gangs within the school. It also came to light that some learners would even go to the extent of joining gangs which inevitably switched their role from victims of bullying to being the bully. The name-calling included the use of uncouth offensive terms such as “jou ma se p...” (derogatory way of referring to his mother's private parts).

THEME 2: The participants also indicated that they experience extreme violence mainly in the community and at times at school. This violence includes witnessing and being victims of gang fights which at times include gun fights and stabbings. Central to all this is also the fact that despite the participants not being gangsters themselves, they also become innocent victims to shootings and gang fights with some even experiencing a fear of one day being shot by a stray bullet from a gun fight.

THEME 3: Participating learners also indicated that they experience family disintegration especially in families that have siblings or family members that are gang-affiliated. A prominent factor that came out was that family ties are also broken with family members that are not familiar with the context of Hanover Park as they fear for their lives and at times chose to stay away. There is also a constant experience of fear that family members involved in gangs may bring the trouble of gangs to the family.



THEME 4: The theme of fear was a prominent factor that was integrated in many of the themes. It was prominently announced and manifested in different ways. One of the ways, as indicated by the research participants, is that fear of becoming victims of criminal activities such as violence, gang wars and robberies has altered their lifestyles as they had to avoid specific areas of their community. This fear has however not just been a negative experience as it is also a protective factor that keeps the participants from becoming gangs as they fear becoming directly involved in the violence that they witness and experience daily.

Contrary to literature by Craig, Vitaro, Gragnon & Tremblay (2002) and Chapel, Petersen & Joseph (1999), the participants reported that they do not experience fear on a daily basis but rather as a subliminal view and factor they keep at the back of their minds. This is mainly because the participants are familiar with the gangsters within their community which creates a slighter sense of comfort around gangs.

THEME 5: The learners also indicated that they are exposed to different forms of crime mainly robberies which they experiences on a daily basis. An interesting finding however is that the crime is not always as a result of gangs and gangsterism but also a result of drug users in the community whom participants reported are responsible for some of the criminal activities in the community.

THEME 6: It also came out that the participants to a greater extent have little regard for the capabilities of law enforcement in addressing the issue of gang violence in the community. One might therefore assume that this perpetuates the fear experienced by the learners as they lack faith in the capabilities of their law enforcement.

THEME 7: In trying to address the issue of gangs in the community, law enforcement agencies have also strategically placed police officers in schools within Hanover Park. Learners however experience this as a way of rather criminalising the learners than rendering protection services.

THEME 8: Prominent across the other themes is also an experience of gang turf where the participants reported that they get to live within gang turfs with rules set by the gangs. They also reported a sense of being owned by gangs because of the gang turfs. This to a greater



extent also leaves the participants to experience the effects of gang turf as they are subliminally drawn into regard rules of the gang turf and may in some instances fall victim to gang wars or rival turfs.

### 5.3 Summary

The study clearly indicated that learners have certain experiences as a result of gangs within the community of Hanover Park. These experiences affect the different spheres of their lives namely education, exposure to violence and crime, family systems, mobility and socialisation. It also emerged that a prominent experience shared by most of the learners is fear which ranges from fear of being victims of crime and violence to other factors such as fear of ending up being gangs themselves or being involuntarily recruited into the circle and functioning of gangs.

A rather startling finding is that the participants responded with little impulse when asked about their experiences especially with regards to experiencing fear in the presence of gangs. The findings in this regard suggests that the learners are so used to the circumstances of gangs that they regard it as the norm and notice little negative experiences in respect of gangs present in their communities. This was an unexpected findings compared to the expectations of the researcher as the findings suggested a rather “conformity sort of process” were the learners have adapted and see the presence of gangs as posing a threat but not to the same extent as portrayed by media outlets and literature. This can be supported by views of his Holiness the Dalai Lama who stated that people get used to anything even war which to a greater extent supports the findings that the learners may be too used to the circumstances of gangs for them to realise the full extent of the situation (Office of the Dalai Lama, 2009).

Another finding of interest is the view that the presence of gangs has led to an increase in weapons and drugs within the community. The learners directly or indirectly experience these effects as they either become victims of crime by drug users that commit crime to support their drug habits.

In respect of the study process and methodologies, the researcher feels that the aim and objectives of the study were successfully achieved as the researcher managed to identify and



highlight the experiences of learners in relation to the presence of gangs and gangsterism within their community.

#### 5.4 Recommendations

Addressing an institutionalised system such as gangs that have evolved and adapted with each passing decade can be a daunting task. Gangs are controlling many of the Cape Flats neighbourhoods within the Western Cape Province and communities and when one looks at the current state of gangs in South Africa and globally, gangs thrive on the need to compete with the ever changing global economic state. This is even worse in South Africa where an estimated fifty-two per-cent (52%) of the population live on R416.00 per month (Statistics South Africa, 2013). With such poverty fuelling the existence of gangs, it therefore becomes paramount to take further steps in areas most affected. These steps may include job or income creation and project implementation steps such as those implemented by the Gauteng Premier N. Mokonyane who has dedicated R140 million towards the creation of at least 6000 jobs for troubled youth within communities such as Soweto and Soshanguve (Gauteng Online, 2013). Such initiatives can also be implemented in gang-infested areas like Hanover Park where unemployment is rife. This recommendation may seem far-fetched but is achievable. It will however be difficult to compete against lucrative drug smuggling businesses. Creative plans have to be made with the communities and perhaps involving the gangs as well. Gangs should be part of the master plans of addressing restoring the social fibre of the communities no matter how unrealistic it may sound.

The current state of family settings in Hanover Park is also worth noting. One can assume that in the need to survive, families may have focused more on “being” rather than preserving family systems. Families therefore have to establish themselves and retain their positions in society with the end goal of eradicating gangs. Families also need to take back control of their parenting roles, their families and the community. Although there is no sufficient statistical data on the nature of gangs in Hanover Park, it is clear that there are more family systems and individuals and the numbers overshadow those of gangs. The assumption from this stand point will be that the majority of the community cannot live in fear because of a minority.



In sum, it would take a collective institutional and community action to fight an institutionalised entity like gangs. This action should collectively include government sectors, families, non-governmental departments and economic players, the community and as mentioned, the gangs in an effort to restore societies. On a less grand scale, the researcher makes the following recommendations which can be implemented as a measure of managing and controlling the lives of the youth in these gang-infested areas:

#### 5.4.1 Educators and the Department of Education

Judging by the outcome and feedback the researcher obtained from the participants, they appear to have more negative experiences than positive experiences in view of the gangs being present in their communities. The impact of these experiences can be cushioned with effective educator support as suggested by Mukasey, Sedgwick & Flores (2007) who wrote that educators need to identify needs at the individual, family and community levels and address those needs in a coordinated and comprehensive response.

The following recommendations are made:

- Educators should undergo training and workshops to enhance understanding of the experiences of learners especially within Hanover Park. This can also focus on the impact of gangs in the community with a special focus on learners and their family systems. Educators can support and strengthen families by guiding and assisting with parenting.
- The Department of Education should make provision for providing support services through allocation of further resources. Resources allocated can be the provision of social workers and psychologists to provide counselling and support services to learners that may experience trauma such as witnessing extreme violence.
- There is also a need for detailed and professional psychosocial support services as the learners appear to experience trauma on a regular basis. This can be provided through continuous availability of social workers and psychologists offering debriefing and counselling to learners affected.
- Each school must be assigned a standby psychologist or counsellor that renders psychosocial support. The current state is that one social worker renders services to over seventy learners which inhibit the provision for thorough adequate services.



- Educators can provide an open-door policy where learners can openly approach the educators for assistance without feeling judged by the educators. Being available for their learners is therefore an essential expectation.
- Educators should constantly work with family systems within the community of Hanover Park as the experiences in relation to gangs do not happen in isolation. Attention can be paid to observing interactions among family members for clues to underlying relationships especially in families that have a member/s involved in gangs and gangsterism.
- The Department of Education must also constantly monitor security measures within schools and render child protection services to learners that may feel threatened within their own schools.
- Educators can also assist in curbing bullying as it appears to also be a motivator for some learners joining gangs. Addressing bullying will inevitably act as a measure of preventing gangs.

#### 5.4.2 Social scientists; researchers and tertiary education

Research is essential in advancing learning and bringing issues to light. While conducting this study, the researcher established a vast lack of literature that focuses on the experiences of learners especially with regards to the South African context. Where gangs have been studied locally, there is more focus on the experiences of gangsters themselves rather than the affected parties:

The following recommendations are therefore made:

- Researchers within South Africa must conduct more research on the epidemic of gangs and their impact on communities. This is more important noting the growing numbers in gangs and gangsterism locally.
- Like any other growing social issue such as HIV/AIDS, the study of gangs and gangsterism should be incorporated in the academia of schools such as social work and psychology. This comes after observing a near ignorance towards the issue of gangs by tertiary curriculum. Very little research has been done and it needs to be well investigated with a focus on getting to the heart of gangsterism.



- Educators from their tertiary years can be provided with the necessary coping skills and psychosocial support techniques on how to urgently respond and offer support to learners that may experience trauma as a result of gangs within schools.
- Research the core of gangs and gangsterism not only those around them. This will tell us where the real problem lies.

#### 5.4.3 Law enforcement agencies

One cannot undervalue the need for effective policing in addressing the issue of gangs.

The following recommendations are therefore made:

- There currently is no law enforcement or police station in Hanover Park. The community falls under the Phillipi police station which is on the outskirts of the town. For the issue of gangs and gangsterism to be effective, there is a great need for police services to be present within the community.
- There is also a need for law enforcement to foster a positive relationship with the community so that the community feels supported and protected not threatened by the police. Just the mere fact that they are called “pigs” shows mistrust of community members in their police services.
- Social workers should pay attention to parents and families. This is the core of social work and we should take that responsibility to restore family life.

#### 5.4.4 Models of addressing recruitment of learners into gangs

It appears that currently, there are more programs aimed at fighting gangs and law enforcement aims more at arresting people suspected or known to be gang-affiliated:

- It is therefore recommended that both state and Non-Governmental Organisations jointly work to create models aimed at early intervention and prevention of gangs to join gangs.
- Such programs include youth recreational programs such as the soccer program run in Khayelistha by Ithemba-Labantu which is aimed at keeping children occupied after school hours and during weekends.



## 5.5 Limitations of study

Every study no matter how well structured and well-constructed has some limitations which may directly or indirectly negatively affect the outcome of the study. The researcher has therefore noted the following as some of the limitations:

- Biased views

Whether we are conscience of them or not, we all have some bias views that we hold on various subjects (Goldberg, 2002). Bias is when a person, place, or thing is viewed or shown in a consistently inaccurate way; it is usually negative although one can have a positive bias as well. When proof-reading your paper, be especially critical in reviewing how you have stated a problem, selected the data to be studied, what may have been omitted, the manner in which you have ordered events, people, or places and how you have chosen to represent a person, place, or thing, to name a phenomenon, or to use possible words with a positive or negative connotation (Goldberg, 2002).

- Language of communication

A majority of the participating learners speak Afrikaans as their first language with English as a second language and a third for some. The researcher on the other hand speaks Shona as a first language with English being a second language. The researcher was therefore limited in being able to effectively engage with the learners in a language easily understood by the learners. This deficiency should be acknowledged although one must also acknowledge that the learners did not indicate any discomfort in communicating in English. An option would have been to use a language translator to assist with the language barrier. This was however not highly necessary as the participants were competent in English. Where the researcher did not understand what the participants were saying, one resorted to making use of the more English language competent learners to assist with the translation.

- Limitations of qualitative studies

Because qualitative studies occur within the natural setting of the study phenomenon, it becomes extremely difficult to replicate any studies and their findings (Wiersma, 2000). For this reason, the findings of this research cannot be taken as to prove or disprove any outstanding notions but rather as a reflection of real experiences shared by the participants in relation to gangs within their community of Hanover Park.



- Use of exploratory research

The exploratory nature of the research inhibits an ability to make definitive conclusions about the findings (Burns & Grove, 2003). The research process underpinning exploratory studies is flexible but often unstructured, leading to only tentative findings that have limited value in decision-making (Burns & Grove, 2003).

According to Burns & Grove (2003), exploratory research generally utilizes small sample sizes and, thus, findings are typically not generalizable to the population at large. This view suggests that the study is limited in its ability to project findings because of a smaller sample size. One should however acknowledge that the study managed to highlight all the critical themes relevant in the study and was most suitable in obtaining new information about the study phenomenon.

- Lack of feasible grand recommendations

Addressing the experiences that emanated from the study and providing realistic recommendations to eradicate gangs was difficult. The study therefore was limited in its capabilities to provide concrete viable recommendations that would eradicate gangs. Changing the gang culture communities like Hanover Park is will require collective action from economic structures, politicians, government and non-governmental structures and the community and the gangs that will collectively work towards inciting structural changes amongst gangs. Such changes cannot be taken as a sole responsibility of one profession, in this regard social work. It has to be noted however that the researcher managed to provide recommendations towards managing and addressing some of the effects of gangs as experienced by learners.

## 5.6 Recommendations for future studies

In the light of the limitations identified and the findings of the study, the researcher recommends the following for future research:

- Explore why the learners have negative connotations and lack respect for law enforcement when it is meant to protect them.
- Protective factors that prevent learners from joining gangs with a special interest in effective parental and family involvement.



- A model of addressing the issue of adolescent gang involvement and ways of curbing gang involvement among learners.
- Explore ways of addressing the issue of gangs in the community.
- More research with the gangs as an understanding of the gangs as the source will help alleviate the challenges presented by gangs and maybe pave ways of addressing the gang problem.
- Explore parenting and family life in these areas where gangs are “dominant”.
- Social Work is central to addressing some of the challenges presented by gangs and just like the study on HIV/AIDS and alcohol use, it may also be useful to consider integrating the study of gangs in the social work curriculum as they appear to be central players in modern societies.

## 5.7 Self reflection

Self-reflection simply put is a process of learning by a process of meta-cognition and synthesis which is a reflection on one’s thinking process (Webster, 2013). Webster (2013) further defines this process as the self-observation and reporting of conscious inner thoughts and sensations. A constant question held by the researcher throughout this process of self-reflection was “Am I pleased with the outcome of the study?”. This question literally guided the self-reflection process as the researcher reviewed his own process and learning areas in line with reaching a desirable outcome. In attempting to answer the question, the researcher had to therefore reflect on the process and look at the self during the research process.

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

With regards to the researcher’s role in the research process, to a greater extent one can say that it was not a passive role but rather a vigorous engagement where the researcher constantly got involved with the research participants and also actively towards making sure that the research complies with ethical standards. The researcher was therefore central in



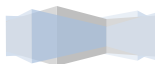
every process undertaken during the study. Another point of interest is that the researcher looking back at the process takes pride in the fact that the research findings and process was amply supported by relevant literature and examples from recorded events within the community of Hanover Park.

Another element to reflect on is that although to a lesser extent, the study brought out the researchers voice as influential towards the outcome of the study. This can especially be noted in the researcher's observations which formed part of the data analysis. The interpretation and sense-making of the data also to a greater extent relied on the researchers interpretations of the provided data.

Throughout the process of the research, it is important to mention that the researcher has developed not only academically but also on a personal level by engaging with clientele from a different background. This growth has also come in the sense of developing a sense of appreciation for the finer things in life. After listening to the different stories of family disintegration, experiences of fear, controlled mobility, schooling being affected amongst others, one developed a sense of obligation towards providing a genuine thesis that would address some of these issues and also gratitude towards maintaining one's own circumstances.

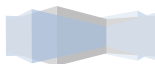
In respect of the interviewing process, the researcher found some of the interviews taxing and shocking given the experiences of the learners. It was at times very difficult, emotionally-draining but yet intriguing interviewing sixteen (16) year olds who would openly spoke about factors like playing cops and robbers (a children's game in which participants pretend to be either police officers or robbers) using real guns with live ammunition.

Having noted all these views, if asked again the question of "Am I pleased with the outcome"; the response would be yes. One has to however note that despite being pleased with outcome, the researcher to some extent still feels that there is more that could have been done by the study and more that can still be done by further research. One point being that the research did not table concrete means of addressing the issues faced by the learners as a result of gangs. It therefore becomes a half-done task were one identifies the problem/s but does not offer sustainable immediate results.



## 5.8 Summary of chapter

The objectives of the study appear to have been met satisfactorily. The study also established that high school learners that are not gang-affiliated appear to experience at most negative connotations associated with the presence of gangs within their communities. These experiences included a constant fear of gangs and being victims to violent crimes or gun fights. Experiences also included being bullied by gangs, exposure to gang wars and disturbance in school and learning system amongst others. Understanding these experiences was used as a basis for formulating ideas for future research and recommendations for current service providers within Hanover Park, mainly the educators seeing that they are an integral part of the child care.





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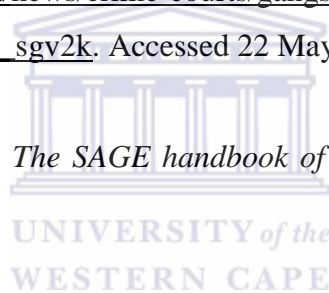
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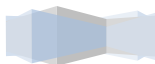
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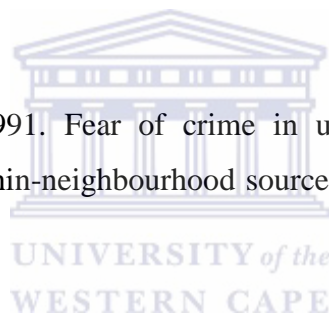
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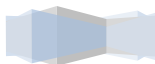
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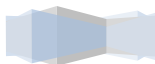
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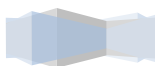
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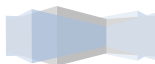
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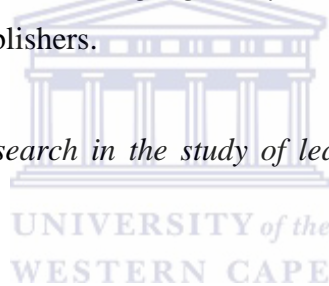
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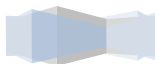


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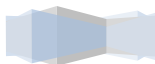
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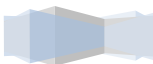
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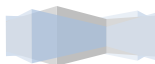
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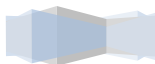
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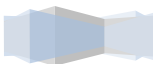
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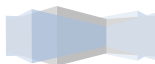
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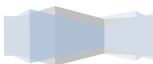
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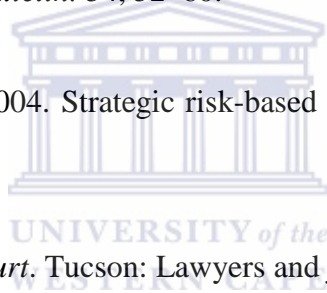
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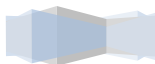
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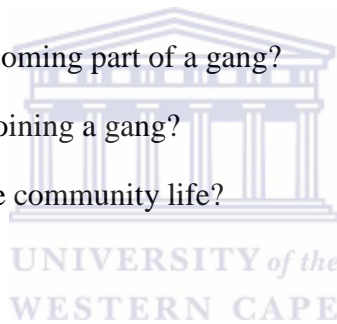
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## **SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTIONS USED IN STUDY**

- I. How long have you been living in Hanover park?
- II. Are you aware of gangs and gangsterism in Hanover Park?
- III. What are your personal experiences about gangs and gangsterism within the community?
- IV. How are you affected by the gangs and gangsterism in Hanover Park?
- V. In what ways if any have gangs and gangsterism affected your school work?
- VI. Which aspects did it affect your family life?
- VII. In what way did it affect you social life?
- VIII. Has any of your family members been affected by gangs or gangsterism.
- IX. Which aspects of your life did it affect?
- X. Have you ever consider becoming part of a gang?
- XI. What prevented you from joining a gang?
- XII. How do the gangs affect the community life?





# UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

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## FOCUS GROUP CONFIDENTIALITY BINDING FORM

**Title of Research Project:** “Experiences of gangsterism by non-gang affiliated high school learners in Hanover Park-Western Cape”

The study has been described to me in language that I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to participate. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed and that I may withdraw from the study without giving a reason at any time and this will not negatively affect me in any way. I agree to be audio-taped during my participation in the study. I also agree not to disclose any information that was discussed during the group discussion.

Participant’s name.....

Participant’s signature.....

Witness’s name.....

Witness’s signature.....

Date.....

Should you have any questions regarding this study or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact the study coordinator:

**Study Coordinator’s Name: Professor Catherina Schenck**

**University of the Western Cape**

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## CONSENT FORM FOR THE PARENTS

**Title of Research Project: Experiences of gangsterism by non-gang affiliated high school learners in Hanover Park-Western Cape.**

- The study has been described to me in my language.
- I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to participate.
- My questions about the study have been answered.
- I understand that my identity will not be disclosed and that I may withdraw from the study without giving a reason at any time and this will not negatively affect me in any way.
- I have been made aware of the fact that audio recording devices will be used during all interview sessions with the researcher.

Participant's name.....

Parent/Guardian name.....

Parent/Guardian signature.....

Witness.....

Date.....

Should you have any questions regarding this study or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact the study coordinator:

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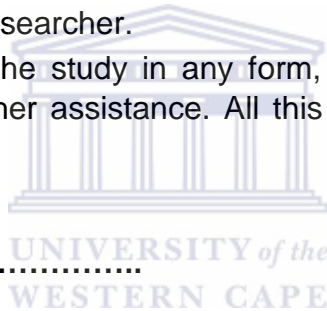
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## ASSENT FORM FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

**Title of Research Project: Experiences of gangsterism by non-gang affiliated high school learners in Hanover Park-Western Cape.**

- The study has been described to me in my language.
- I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to participate.
- My questions about the study have been answered.
- I understand that my identity will not be disclosed and that I may withdraw from the study without giving a reason at any time and this will not negatively affect me in any way.
- I have been made aware of the fact that audio recording devices will be used during all interview sessions with the researcher.
- Should you be affected by the study in any form, the researcher will refer you to the school social worker for further assistance. All this will be done holding the premise of confidentiality.



**Participant's name**.....

**Participants signature**.....

**Witness**.....

**Date**.....

Should you have any questions regarding this study or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact the study coordinator:

**Study Coordinator's Name: Professor Catherina Schenck**  
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**REFERENCE:** 20130409-9153

**ENQUIRIES:** Dr A T Wyngaard

Mr Mufaro Magidi  
Liberty Flat  
Liberty Residence  
UWC  
Modderdam Road  
Bellville  
7535

**Dear Mr Mufaro Magidi**

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL: EXPERIENCES OF GANGSTERISM BY NON-GANG AFFILIATED HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS IN HANOVER PARK WESTERN CAPE**

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Approval for projects should be conveyed to the District Director of the schools where the project will be conducted.
5. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
6. The Study is to be conducted from **17 April 2013 till 31 May 2013**
7. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
9. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
10. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
11. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
12. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services  
Western Cape Education Department  
Private Bag X9114  
CAPE TOWN  
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard

**Directorate: Research**

**DATE: 09 April 2013**





UNIVERSITY *of the*  
WESTERN CAPE

## Interview 1

Researcher: Ok so, for record purposes let me start of indicating to you again the need to maintain confidentiality as we engage hence we have said your names are optional if you feel you don't want to put it then you can leave it. Okay well I think we probably should start because. I also like to again say thank you for agreeing to participate but just like I explained earlier of the record, you are more than welcome to withdraw from the study at any time and I will not hold it against you in any manner. Do you guys understand this and if you do please kindly complete the confidentiality form I gave you earlier. Are there any questions before we start or before you sign the confidentiality forms?

Participants: No, no (shaking head)

Researcher: Ok, uhm before we start I also just wanted to say that I will be asking some questions as we go along, what I would like you to do however is to please respond as honestly and as truthful as you can. You are however welcome to not respond to a particular question if you do not feel comfortable about it. And because we are sitting here as a group, lets respect each other's views and to make it more organized I only ask that we allow one person to speak at time.

Participants: Ok!

Researcher: Ok, just a general overlook, how long have you guys been staying in Hanover Park?

Participant 1: Seven years

Researcher: Seven years; and before that?

Participant 1: I lived in Manenberg with my mother and moved to stay with my dad when my mother died.

Researcher: Ok. And you...?

Participant 2 My whole life I've lived here

Researcher: So your whole life you've been practically in Hanover Park?

Participant 2: And it has changed a lot

Researcher: I will get back to that point, but I would love for you to identify the specific changes that have happened. What about you my guy, how long have you resided in Hanover Park.

Participant 3: My whole life also I have been here.

(Interruption by participant 4,5,6) all of us have been leaving here in Hanover Park since we were babies.

Researcher: Ok thank you for that, coming back to you. You said a lot has changed since you stay here. What has changed exactly?

Participant 1: Yes! People...

Researcher: How so?

Participant 1: Like violence. It wasn't like this before

Researcher: Ok so what... (*Interruption*)

Participant 1: Sometimes you don't feel safe in your own... (*Disturbance*) how can I put it now.

Participant 2: In your own environment

Participant 1: yes in your own environment

Participant 2: or area if I can put it that way

Researcher: What do you mean in your own environment, are you talking about your house or the street or...

Participant 1: Our homes are fine, its being out there that's a nightmare.



Participant 2: Sometimes you can't even walk out of the house or go to a different street because of gangs or maybe because the gang that stays there is an enemy to the gang that stays in your street.

Researcher: Is it only the gang members that can't freely walk or everyone is affected?

Participant 3: All of us, even if you are not a gang, they say you are there to spy for the other gangs especially for us boys they think just because you are tall or big then you are a gangster which is not true.

Researcher: Is it because you are a young male that they do this or...?

Participant 3: I cannot just visit my friends who stay where the Hard Livings are and mina I stay where the Laughing Boys area cause they just assume that any adult boy has been recruited by gangs...if I visit there now and you see how tall I am as a guy, they will just think that I am a gangster myself so I can't go there"

Researcher: Do the girls experience the same thing or this only happens to boys? Like do you feel that as a young woman you are not safe as gangs may attack you while walking in the community?

Participant 4: Sometimes

Researcher: Times like when exactly are you referring to as sometimes?

Participant 4: It's not necessarily because I am a girl but what not to be afraid of...what's to not be afraid of when they are always waiting at the school gates and we have to walk home alone, not all of us have our fathers picking us at the gate and we walk and the gangs take our money and anything they can sell to buy drugs

Researcher: Ok, correct me if I am wrong but are you saying you feel unsafe not because you are a female but simply because gangs are everywhere.

Participant 4: Ja! (sic)

Researcher: I will get back your point of gangs waiting at the school gates. I need however to get clarity on the issue of the different streets that some of you spoke about and to my understanding, are you taking of gang turf?

Participants: Ja (sic)...the areas that gangs operate in.

Researcher: Has any of you guys ever experienced these problems were gang turf affects you directly?

Participant 5: Even the people...ja!

Researcher: You have experienced it?

Participant 5: Ja

Researcher: Do you care to share?

Participant 5: I had to literally run for my life one day when I decided to take a shot cut going to Shoprite. Like gangs in my street they don't walk in Grove Road but I it's shorted and when the Dixies in Grove Road saw me...they started chanting, it was in Afrikaans, you wouldn't understand and after that I ran. They just wanted to scare me off I think.

Researcher: ok! So, sorry sir, where do you stay?

Participant 5: Me?

Researcher: yes

Participant 5: Grieta Court and there the gang is the Sexy Boys

Researcher: What do you think would have happened if the gangs caught you and how were you feeling then.

Participant 5: I was scared really, and I don't know what they would have done. All I can say is never interfere with gang laws because they get violent.

Participant 4: Each gangs stays in one turf which they rule and we like stay in the other turf belonging to a different gang. The other gang comes to their turf...*(hand gestures a gang)* they shoot him immediately and ask questions later.

Participant 5: Only if the gangs like make peace then you can walk, like during Eid time the gangs all agree that no one is going to shoot.

Researcher: How is it though that you guys are affected by gang turfs when you are not gangs?

Participant 3: Boetie (*brother*) you don't stay in here I see, gangs claim us and see you as one of their own whether you are a gang members or not.

Participant 2: It's funny because gangs classify you as one of them even when you are not a gang member so when you walk in a different turf, to the other gang members you are a person coming from a different gang.

Researcher: How do you guys experience this though?

Participant 2: Each gang has their own turf where they rule now and like the Mongrels rule Ryburg side and if they are seen by people they will shoot them.

Researcher: When you say my people who are you referring to?

Participant 2: I stay where the Americans rule and although I am not a gang member they regard me as one of them that is why I call them my people. It does not mean that I am a gang member myself.

Participant 1: Come to think of it, all of us including the girls are affected by the issue of turf. My cousin dated a Sexy Boy (local gang in Hanover Park) and so the gangs had like a war and I was walking with my cousin and the gangs see us walking together then they came told my cousin to give her boyfriend and the other gang a message but they said it like so violent (*sic*) something like that.

Participant: It's wise to just stay away from a place that belongs to another gang.

Researcher: So that brings me to my next question and I need you guys to think about it. Let me give a critical example. In Hanover Park this past month there was a baby who

was involved in a cross fire, you guys might have heard but the baby who ended up at Red Cross. He was shot, it was a baby who was shot in a cross fire while crossing the street and I don't know if you heard the story. Eeerr, last week or two weeks back there was a child a grade 11 learner shot in Athlone

Participants: Yes, yes I had about the story. It was on ENEWS and in the Voice I think

Researcher: Yes it was. And mmmm...So all these incidences are happening in Hanover Park and they happening while you guys are watching. And you guys have experienced this more than I do and you know this, about this more than I do. So from, from (sic) your guys take. What has been your experience with such incidences whether they are linked to gangs or not.

Participant 1: The people dying

Participant 2: It is emotional

Researcher: Ok! What do you mean the people are dying and I understand it is emotional but can you explain more on that?

Participant 2: I'd feel a bit scared when people are dying like that because you don't know who is next. You are scared basically....

Participant 3: (*Interrupts participant 2*)...and the people are dying for real. Gangs are killing people every day.

Researcher: Ok, so do you feel like this every day or some days are better than others?

Participant 2: Not every day!

Researcher: Not every day! Can you explain further? Is it the killings or those the gangsters that you are scared of mostly?

Participant 2: The killings. They don't happen every day. Some days are actually very peaceful and quite.



Researcher: Like how often then would you say they happen and this question is for all of you guys?

Participant 4: It depends, they don't just start fighting, sometimes it's because a gang members is shot and they are revenging and sometimes it can be a simply fight but know that when they fight they fight to kill, they are not afraid to take a life.

Researcher: these killings you refer to, has anyone witnessed any or have you been directly affected by them in any way.

Participant 4: Like myself or just other people that I know.

Participant 4: I haven't seen someone who is not a gang being shot but we hear stories and besides when they start fighting they don't select because the gangs can fire at any one even if there are babies they don't care they just shoot so if you don't run you get shot for nothing.

Researcher: This brings me to my next question; do you guys know who the gang members in your community are?

Participant 1: Yes, these are people we know.

Participant 3: We just pass them.

Participant 5: we know them and some the gang members are masterminds that take control of the younger people and tell them to go shoot or rob people and recruit at a young age and it's easy for them to get new members because its people that you maybe grew up and you trust them.

Researcher: When you say recruit, do you feel like you have an option to not be a gang member especially when you said they claim you or are you just forced to be a gang member?

Participant 6: No (interrupted by the group yelling sometimes).

Participant 3: Mostly people come themselves to the gangs

Participant 5: For protection!

Participant 6: And for wine and stuff because the gang gives people free wine and braai meet if you are one of them you see. If you are not a gang then you can just come where the gangs are and drink wine and eat free meat if you are one of them. It helps a lot of people that do not have food at home you see. Afterwards again and again, you become one of them for real and they start asking you for favors like to go rob someone or hide drugs for them.

Participant 1: If you associate yourself with them then they will classify you as an American.

Researcher: You said something about protection

Participant 5: Mhhh (*mumbles*) yes some boys, young boys join gangs to protect themselves from other children maybe from being bullied or something but once they join a gang, they become bullies themselves.

Researcher: Who becomes the bully?

Participant 5: the people once they join gangs. They call you names say bad thing about you in your face. Like other times, you could be sitting in the playground and they just come and you know you have to move and give them a sit...or one day you know what happened to me on my way to school, this other lighty (*sic*) a gang member came to me and told me to pick dog shit and put it in my bag because he doesn't like litter...that's kak (*sic*) my broe (*sic*).

Researcher: Now I have realized you guys keep refereeing to violence in the community especially shooting, what has been the experience for you guys in relation to this violence?

Participant 1: Ahh a few days ago, one of my friends, he doesn't go to school here in Hanover Park though. He was shot there in Lavender Hill so the shot him two in the one leg and two in the arm and one here in his stomach (gestures to the belly) but he is still alive and he will not worry about the gangs but continue as who he is.

Researcher: That is very sad.

Participant 1: It is especially the fact that he is not a mhh...he is not a gang member.

Researcher: so why did he get shot at if you don't mind me asking?

Participant 1: I don't know but sometimes gangs just shoot maybe because they don't care. I really don't know why he got shot though to be honest with you. What I can tell you for sure though is that he is not a gang member.

Researcher: Are there any of you with similar experiences. These can be things you have seen or heard in Hanover Park?

Participant: Mhhh, this that we observe...things that we see. The gangs are here to tear down our community; they are not building us up or anything and if you perhaps go to the shops then they want to rob you

Participant 2: And they don't care who you are, they rob you still even if you are child going to buy food for home and stuff. For them its all about status, who has the most girls or who has the most guns and they want to rule the whole area.

Researcher: Ok, how many gangs do you know to be in Hanover Park?

Participant 2: A lot. Tjoo, how can I say, every street there will be a new gang there but these are smaller gangs you see.

Participant 6: and the other thing is that a lot of them are not necessarily gangs but drug addicts and it's difficult sometimes to separate the two. Like how can I say it, the big gangs supply them with heroin or tik which they sell for the big gangs.

Researcher: coming to the issue of drugs, who supplies them?

Participants: (interruption and participants speaking at once) big gangs supply the drugs and the smaller gangs don't always pay for them like they can say kill someone or something. If they tell you to shoot someone then they soema tell you they are gonna buy you a car. You must choose what you want.

Researcher: Ok still on the issue of drugs, you say gangs ask people to maybe sell their drugs for them, do they ask you as leaners or just adults

Participants: (Speaking at once) mostly leaners.

Researcher: ok are you referring to high school learners or in primary school.

Participant 1: Its mostly high school learners that they ask to sell drugs for them and the leaners sell the drugs here at school.

Researcher: had any of you ever been approached to sell drugs for a gang?

Participants: No

Researcher: why is it you haven't been approached or you resist the urge to sell drugs for the gangs.

Participant 6: we just avoid the gangs like I wouldn't want anything to do with them.

Participant: and we see how the people live their lives every day and we know how they do things so we don't see the benefit of doing that.

Researcher: Ok. Who do the leaners sell the drugs to though?

Participant 6: They sell them here at school and we know who these people is that sell drugs but because they are expensive no leaners buy drugs here so they end up selling to people outside you see.

Researcher: Looking and the issue of drugs as a whole considering the drugs, violence and turfs as you guys mentioned earlier. How does all of this affect your school work?

Participants: A lot....Tjooo

Participant 1: sometimes you can't even walk to school. When you come to school they shoot right in the morning.

Researcher: Does this happen every day or what?

Participant 2: Not every day, it's usually when a big gang is fighting another big gang. Like the Mongrels versus the Americans...and the ghettos that side of Hanover Park (gestures East). They can't come through this side because this side is Americans

now all that children that attend Crystal must stay at home because they will shoot them also.

Participant 4: Sometimes they will hijack you and keep you until the other gang come get you. It's like they want to call out another gang to a fight by keeping you.

Researcher: And have any you guys ever missed school because there is a shooting in Hanover Park?

Participant 1: No

Participant 3: yes, gangs shoot just so open even when the children are walking around. He knows who he is chasing maybe but he just shoots like they don't care. If you are there, he will shoot soema for you. So you run back home, you can't come to school or rather hide at a house until the war is over.

Participant 5: And when the police come they only bring one van and the gangs don't even run. There is nothing. This is something I have seen with my own eyes that the police are nothing here and they allow these things to happen. Maybe they are on a payroll of the gangs.

Participant 6: I think they are just scared of the gangs themselves, they soema ignore the gangs.

Researcher: Interesting details you guys are sharing here. Another element I want to touch on is the issue of family. Have you guys noticed any families that are affected by this gang thing in Hanover Park?

Participant 2: Yes. My brother.

Participant 3: there is this girl here at school, her brother, he is also a gangster. They shoot him through his face and his bullet came through the back of his head. His mommy came and shouted at the gangs but they continued to shoot and all this happened in front of his mother whom they could have shot as well. And his niece I think was also there.

Researcher: you also mentioned your brother?

Participant 2: Yes, I am not proud to say this but my brother is on drugs because of this violence in our community and he is a Dixie (gang in Hanover Park). Its affecting me as well to see how he is turning to be and the person that he once was and who he is now he has changed.

Researcher: in what way is this affecting you though?

Participant 2: he is still my brother and I love him but now he robs people and does anything for the drugs. He steals from the house and does not respect my mom. He doesn't care about us anymore and one day we are just going to here that he is dead.

Researcher: so there are clearly issues of gangs that affect you family. Coming back tour school, how is the issue of gangs here at Crystal High.

Participant: Its hectic, most of the leaners.

Researchers: What do you mean by most of the learners?

Participant 3: Most of the leaners are gangsters. We have gangsters here on the school.

Participant 4: And it's bad because if the big gangs fight outside then also fight at school because they must fight as well if their big gang is fighting. And sometimes the teachers just put them out of the gate or they call the cops.

Researcher: How does this affect you guys at school?

Participant 2: They sometimes bring guns to school and if you maybe tell the teacher then they want to shoot you or they threaten you as well. And they also wait for you at the gate.

Participant 3: So if they maybe show you the gun rather laugh and move away because if you report them then they see you as a sell-out. The best thing is to not report.

Researcher: You don't report because you are scared or because you don't want to be identified as sell out?

Participant 6: Both ways. You don't want people thininking you are a sell out but also

