THEORY OF DESISTANCE

By Natalie Hearn[1]

Abstract

The aim of this research was to explore factors which lead to desistance amongst offenders. There were three central areas looked at during the research. Firstly the correlation between age and offending, secondly the how and why the process of desistance commences, and finally, why people continue to desist from offending.

The findings from this research were obtained from semi-structured interviews with two desisters, one male and one female, similar age group, similar economic back ground and upbringing. Themes were kept broad so that the responses were those of the interviewees and not directed by the research.

It was discovered that the experiences and factors leading to desistance amongst the research sample group were not dissimilar to the theoretical frameworks of desistance. Given the level of funding put into simply punishing and releasing offenders back into society, this research looks at real interventions which may lead to people "choosing" not to offend in the future.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Crime and deviance has always been a topic of interest for society, with contradicting sentiments such as "nothing works" and "prison works", has increasingly become a hotly debated topic within Politics, with Billions of pounds being spent each year to increasingly punish, control and ultimately exclude members of society who impede its laws or behave in a way deemed antisocially. The aim of this research is to examine how former offenders are able to leave behind labels through the process of desistance and become law abiding functioning members of society.

The three main areas of investigation are the relationship between age and crime, secondly how social bonds and crime are related and finally, the influence of threat and perceived threat of retribution versus the benefits of offending, influence the continuation of desistance.

Firstly the correlation between age and offending is one of the earliest documented theories of crime and continues to find a place amongst criminological theories, and yet beyond the assumption that people will generally grow out of deviant behaviour, little research has been done.

The second area of interest for this research is how and why the process of desistance commences, are formal early interventions such as assisting in the strengthening of social bonds, the key to facilitating desistance or should individuals be given the freedom to come to the decision on their own terms and in their own time, with little formal intervention, would this be a disservice to potential victims and wider society or is it better to criminalise people who will not become life course persistent offenders.

The final area of research will explore factors which lead to continued desistance, whether buying into socially accepted goals and means to achieve them are the key or if it is the threat or perceived threat of punishment which is the key.

To explore these themes, both participants were given a list of themes to be discussed, the interviews were more of a discussion then a formal interview, leaving the participants the freedom and time to explore their own thoughts and perceptions, and articulate them. It was agreed for notes to be taken during the discussions, then for the participants to review transcriptions and quotes for accuracy. This information was later used in the findings to compare the theoretical frameworks to the realities experienced by the participants.

In this paper, Chapter 2, the Literature Review, examined secondary current and historical theoretical framework of desistance, also discusses the definitional issues surrounding desistance, unlike other behaviour, desistance is the study of none behaviour.   While onset, persistence and punishment of offending have been thoroughly examined within criminology, the area of desistance had relatively little attention, until more recently.

Chapter 3 looks at the methodological issues tackled during this research, and explores the benefits and drawbacks of the methods chosen to conduct the research at this time. The methodology sections explains how and why the participants were

chosen, and the method of recording information was chosen, looking at the benefits and drawbacks of using the various methods. Finally, the ethical implications of conducting undergraduate research were discussed along with the difficulties in gaining ethical clearance, due mainly to bureaucracy rather than techniques or intentions.

The information gathered during the interviews will be discussed during chapter 4, comparing the key points in the desistance theories and comparing them to the experiences of the sample group.

Chapter 5 is the research conclusion, expanding on the ideas looked at during the introduction, and identifying gaps in the literature and crime policies which could lead to more effective ways to look at crime prevention and intervention and future research ideas.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Within Criminology there is no single theory to explain desistance from crime, many theorist have pointed to their own frameworks in explanations of crime to account for desistance but there is no single theory on desistance from crime, criminology remains for the most part focused entirely on the onset (cause), persistence, escalation (in level of seriousness) incidence.

Historically Criminology has been focused on 'why do individuals start (offending)?' (Laub and Sampson, 2001) why are some people criminal while others are not, early criminologist such as Lombroso (1876, cited by Holin 2007, P. 46) used a positivistic approach and looked at hereditary criminogenic traits, separating "them" (deviants) and "us" (law abiding citizens). Studies continue to focus on static differences between offenders and non-offenders (Maruna 2001) and little attention has been paid to what distinguishes between persistence and desistance amongst offenders (Laub and Sampson, 2001)

> "Good theories of crime ought to account for the onset, continuation and desistance from criminal behaviour across the life span."

As the ultimate aim of the Criminal Justice System (CJS), probation and crime policy is to create a state of non-offending, the study of desistance should be given more time and focus, although the onset of crime is an important area, it has already been accepted that a large portion of crime is committed by a relatively small group of offenders, therefore by studying the process of desistance and enabling offenders to go through the process would in theory bring about the largest reduction in offending

Definition

Upon review of the literature on desistance from crime one common area of discourse is in defining what is meant by desistance, how do we measure and recognise desistance. Desistance is a difficult area for criminologists to observe as it is not an event that happens, but the absence of events, in this case criminal offending (Maruna, 2001: 17) The literal meaning of desistance is to desist, stop (committing crime).

Within Criminology Desistance is the "termination point" (Maruna & Immarigeon 2004:17) by using the literal meaning, no one, not even the most "hardened" of criminals commit offences constantly, sasy Maruna (2001 cited in Maruna & Immarigeon 2004:17) termination of offending occurs all the time in the criminal careers of all those we label as offenders. There is a good deal of consensus among academics and practitioners that individuals do not offend consistently; an individual can go for days, weeks, months, even years without further offending, one of the many factors hindering the study of desistance lies in the potential to offend until death, once the desister has died there is no way to attain why they never offended again.

This point is illustrated well by Maruna (2001 cited in Maruna & Immarigeon 2004. P:17) with the example of a purse-snatcher who stops offending:

> *Suppose we know conclusively that the purse-snatcher (now deceased) never committed another crime for the rest of his long life. When did his desistance start? Is it not the ...concluding moment the very instant when the person completes (or terminates) the act of theft? If so, then in the same moment that person becomes an offender, he also becomes a desister. That cannot be right.*

Laub and Sampson (2001) responded to the definitional issues by distinguishing between termination' (the result, the time at which criminal activity stops) and 'desistance' (the process which causes and supports the termination). It is the process that people go through when desisting from crime which will be the focus of this literature review.

If desistance could be facilitated early on then the financial benefits (to the CJS), holistic benefits (to potential victims and offenders quality of life) would be considerable. According to reports in the daily Telegraph (2010) £10bn is spent on short term incarceration for offenders. Were these enabled to desist the economic value would be justified.

On the road to desistance lies intermittency, very little empirical info has been brought forward because as Meisenhelder (1977) cited in Piquero et al 2007: 209) noted, 'a career in crime [is] a variable and varying process'.

One of the main objectives in the study of desistance is to explore theoretical factors associated with early desistance, and identify gaps for later analysis, by utilising Laub & Sampson's (2001) longitudinal study of desistance, the Liverpool desistance study (cited Maruna Et al. 2004) and various life stories of those who have gone through the process of "going straight" (Delvin & Turney 1999). Although there appears to be a gap in the systematic study of desistance, there is no shortage of theoretical speculation (ibid assume Delvin & Turney). These theoretical perspectives seem to fall into three broad areas, maturation, social bonds and narrative. (Maruna 2000, cited in McCulloch & McNeill, 2008, 155).

Although desistance is a relatively under-researched area of criminology, it is not a new concept and is ironically one of the earliest documented criminological studies. Quetelet 1831 work, *research on the propensity for crime at different ages,* looked at

the relationship between age and crime and found that people appeared to desist from offending, his study of crimes committed against the person and property in England and France, between 1826-1829, found the peak age to be in late teens. First large scale study to "describe the aggregate relationship between age and crime" (cited Piquero et al. 2007:1) for him criminal activity simply "burned out" as the individual aged.

This peak age of offending has seen little change in the last over 184years years, Graham & Bowling self report study (Bateman & Pitts, 2005) showed the peak age of offending to be 21 (for males) and 16 (for females) compared to the Home office figures of 19 (for males) and 15 (for females). Bateman and Pitts (2005) question whether the difference in peak age is due older offenders being able to more easily avoid detection and official statistics, or whether the younger offenders are the target group for the Police. Maruna (2001; 20) questions if the age curve relates more to incarceration, or the individual adapting less "risky" offending behaviour such as white collar offences. While these studies show us "when" they do not offer any explanation as to "why" or "how" the individuals go through the transformation from offender to desister.

McCulloch & McNeill (2008.155) say that *'chronological age has no meaning in or of its self'*, while age can be an indicator of various biological, social and experiential variables, these change and vary from time, place and location. This is reflected in the peak age findings, where females appear to desist earlier than males, one reason for this could be the belief that males take longer to mature than females. (Flood & Page et al cited McCulloch & McNeill 2008)

In further support of the notion that age is no meaning in its self, a Scottish Study of desisters (McIvor, 2000) girls offered moral rather than utilitarian reasons, compared to males who cited personal choice and agency as a reason to desist. These findings indicate gender and attitudinal differences in addition to age and differential social bonds.

General Theory of crime

One of the primary theories linking age and crime is maturation. Sampson & Laub (1999) credit the Gluecks with the most convincing theory of maturation and desistance. Glueck & Glueck (1974) suggested that so long as there were no neurological or biological defects, individuals mature mentally and physically and break from offending. Therefore those who continue to offend later in life have not matured yet. The Gluecks dismissed the '*external transformation*', but did not identify a set chronological age, a point later stressed by McCulloch & McNeill (2008. 155) with their observation that *'chronological age has no meaning in or of its self'*, without specifying an age it is difficult to pin point maturation and measure developments, making it difficult to place the vague notion of maturation and development within a chronological framework.

Hirschi & Gottfredson

Hirschi & Gottredson (1983 cited in Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1988) used the Gluecks data to argue that the relationship between age and offending was the overriding

factor, regardless of other factors such as gender, environment and race, which goes against Hirschi's (1969) theory of social control. By 1990 they had developed a new General theory of crime which they proposed explained all crime, regardless of seriousness (from shoplifting to murder) and all criminals, (regardless of age, sex and race).

Gottfredson & Hirschi's theory of desistance they distinguish between crime and criminality, crimes are 'short-term, circumscribed events that presuppose a particular set of necessary conditions (e.g. activity, opportunity, adversaries, victims, goods).' Gottfredson & Hirschi (1988:4. cited Messner. et al. 1989:47) where as criminality is based stable differences that impacts the likelihood of offending.

Self control

Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) point towards self control as a factor in offending, those with low self control are most likely to offend (ibid). Those with low self control were found to be risk takers, impulsive, and seek immediate gratification. This is linked to poor socialisation, via poor parenting, if a parent fails to curb a child's poor behaviour, a child doesn't learn self control. If the child fails to learn self control by the age of eight they are likely to lack the same level of self control at age 28 and throughout life. Just lacking self control will not indicate a chance of offending alone; it would have to be in conjunction with other factors such as victim and opportunity.

Social Control Theory

Hirschi's (1969) theory of social control is based on the theory people engage in delinquent behavior when their '*bond*' to society is weakened. Hirschi's theory was based on four elements:

(1) Attachment, which is the link between the individual and society, if someone has a strong attachment they wish to preserve this, they are less likely to go against the social norms or put the attachment at risk. Attachment can be to family friends, religion, anything outside of themselves, which might be detached if the individual deviates from the norm. If an individual has weak attachment, then they are less likely to be concerned about the outcomes of going against social norms, offending family, friends or wider society.

(2) Commitment refers to the level of investment, time and energy placed into an institution, for example, someone who has invested time and energy into school or a career, would be less willing to risk their place within the establishment by acting defiantly, conversely, someone who had less investment within an institution would not feel the same level of loss if they were excluded.

(3) Involvement, pertains to the level of interaction, and investment, if individuals are for example in school, employment, any behaviour that is considered '*socially*' acceptable, then they are '*simply too busy doing conventional things to find time to engage in deviant behaviour*' Hirschi (1969:22).

(4) Beliefs, being the final element of the social bonding theory, relates to the *'common value system'* (ibid), individuals belief in the values and morals of the wider society which they are attached to. In British society, the theory is that we live in a meritocracy, work hard and you shall be rewarded, work hard in school, get good grades, get a good job, and reap financial benefits and material rewards. If individuals don't believe they have access to these legitimate opportunities, then they have no reason to commit to the beliefs.

Matza (1964)

Although the Gluecks are credited by Sampson & Laub, with the maturational theory, they were not the first to discuss the concept. In David Matzas (1964) 'Delinquency and drift' he introduced the idea of *'maturational reform'* which explained why as adolescents grew up they simply left delinquency behind. (Cited Laub & Sampson 2001,2), he surmised that most delinquent behaviour should not been seen as a permanent state and that instead deviance is something that people *'drift'* in and out of is transient and situational, and most simply leave delinquent behaviour behind. At the same time Glaser (1964 – cited McCulloch & McNeil, 2008) talked about the 'zigzag' pattern of offending, and how offending was not a stable trait.

> *'Criminals go from non-crime to crime and to non-crime again. Sometimes this sequence is repeated many times, but sometimes criminals clearly go to crime only once; sometimes these shifts are for long durations or even permanent, and sometimes they are short-lived'.* Glaser (1969, cited Laub and Sampson, 55)

Therefore by looking at why these changes occur is of greater research value, then the fact that the variation in offending occurs. From a developmental, life-course perspective, people change constantly.

Social capital - Sampson and Laub (2001) Matza (1964) Glaser (1964)

Going back to the transient nature of adolescence spoken of by Matza, linked with this maturing is gaining more responsibility within the community and wider society.

Sampson and Laub (2001,2) pointed to a number of factors (turning points) that are associated with desistance from crime, elements such as family formulation and entering into employment. These bonds also referred to as Social capital by Hughes (1998, cited in Deane et al, 2007, 6) in her work Hughes uses a sample of inner city males in several American cities, surmised that her subjects were able to deviate from *'pathways'* of criminal activity to pathways away from crime, recognising that certain *'turning points'*, which she saw as being informal social bonds or forms of social capital, aided in the deviation from crime. In addition to age, *'respect and concern for children, fear of physical harm or incarceration, contemplation time, and support and modelling'* were important factors in creating 'turning points' away from crime. She also saw stable employment as an important factor in the desistance of her sample group.

Wright & Wright (1991, 54) argued that there are no clearly confirming set of findings to date that demonstrate that getting married and having children reduces the likelihood of criminal offence.

According to Bateman & Pitts (2005) women leaving home, forming a significant relationship or having a child marks an abrupt end to offending, Compared to young men where these landmarks appeared to have no apparent baring on reducing offending, in fact staying at home with less freedom lead to reduced access to alcohol, drugs and associated antisocial behaviour and offending. Graham & Bowlings (1995) study desistance in young people (cited McCulloch & McNeill 2008) support the findings and concluded that although these transitional and varying ties, incorporation with maturation provide opportunity for change, there is no direct correlation for males and females.

These differences can be linked to the differential socialisation of females and males within families, treatment in the criminal justice system and wider societal expectations. According to the theory, informal social control (see Heidensohn, 1985 cited in Cavadino & Dignan, 2001: 180), male roles are seen more outside the home, encouraged to be aggressive and provide, females are encouraged to be care givers, passive and sharing, while this was more true pre 1985, today male and females are socialised more fluidly, however differential treatment of male and females are still recognised. When men are imprisoned and taken away from families, even if they are apart a partnership or have children, it is assumed that women will be there to look after the children and maintain the home. So the risk of losing family as a consequence of offending is not as high as for women who are involved in the criminal justice system. Mothers who offened are often lone parents, with sole responsibility for children, if they were to be imprisoned, the children faced the possibility of going into care, even if the father were around. (Cavadino & Dignan, 2001)

According to Kazemian (2007) these notions of social bonds and control are somewhat out dated and not as relevant in today's modern society. The modern family set up is more likely to have a lone parent at the helm, with higher divorce rates than ever and less couples marrying, the notion of family does not hold the same meaning it once did, therefore the ties to the family unit, entering new relationships and having children will not have the same impact on the desistance process.

> *The Glueck men used in Sampson and Laub's studies consisted of two samples (one delinquent, one non delinquent) of men born between 1922 and 1929. The study began in 1939, in a social context that was very much different from contemporary society. When societies were much more family oriented and divorce rates not even comparable to contemporary rates, it is plausible to hypothesize that social bonds played a more important role in the desistance process of offenders during that period.* Kazemian (2007: 17)

Moffitt Adolescence-Limited and Life-Course-Persistent Antisocial Behaviour: A Developmental Taxonomy

Another theory that attempts to explain the desistance and persistence process is Moffitt's (1993) concept of dual taxonomy of offending. Moffitt (ibid) states that there are two types of offenders; life persisters and adolescent limiteds. Moffitt proposes that the two groups have unique factors which propel them toward offending and accordingly unique desistance processes.

According to Moffitt (ibid), life course persisters make up a distinctive group with a notably different aetiology to the adolescent limited offenders. They are likely to have neurological problems, such as cognitive or learning difficulties, which can be problematic when developing relationships and social skills, even within the family, creating poor parental bonds and leading to antisocial behaviour and low self control, much like Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990). Life course persisters usually display early signs of antisocial behaviour (for example under-age drinking, premarital sex), can be excluded from social settings, and rejected by peers or teachers because of poor behaviour and weakening social bonds and development. This early antisocial behaviour can act an indicator of future chronic offending, much like the age graded theory, offenders are likely to offender for longer and more seriously, as they are unable to arrive at alternative cognitive solutions and doomed to repeat the same social errors throughout life in alternative settings, such as relationships, marriage, education and work, leading to further social bond weaknesses.

Moffitt goes on to say that unlike life course persisters, adolescent limited offenders are not plagued by the same neurological deficits, they are able to form relationships, social bonds, do well at school and change cognitive responses. The explanation for their antisocial and offending behaviour is linked to the gap between social maturation and desires and age. Their age prevents them from engaging in adult behaviour they want to experience such as drinking or sex. These deviant acts lead the adolescent limiteds to socialise with the life course persisters, which leads to amplification of behaviour. however, because adolescent limiteds have developed better social skills and academic achievement, they are more easily able to change their behaviour, breaking from deviant behaviour and reintegrate back into conventional society, by drawing on their social skills and ties developed early in life.

Maruna (cited Laub & Sampson 2001) argues that finding continuity in the *'criminality'* maybe be caused by methodology, by concentrating on dispositional traits to the exclusion of other personality traits. Still people can and do change as Laub and Sampson write, even if their basic personality traits do not change radically over time. '*in order to understand desistance , researchers need to explore other aspects of personality* such as offender self perceptions or personal strategies' Maruna (cited ibid).

Life-course – developmental life course theory (DLC)

According to Laub and Sampson (2001:2) life-course perspective offer the most compelling institutional sources of desistance and dynamic social processes inherent in stopping crime. Developmental and life-course-perspective, designed to influence onset, persistence and desistance (Piquero et al. 2007) three main focus areas for

DLC are the development of antisocial and offending behaviour, the risk factors involved at different ages, and the effects on the course of development (Farringdon 2003: 221: cited in Piquero et al. 2007: 2)

There are 10 accepted concepts within DLC

* Prevalence of offending peaks late teens 15-19
* Onset begins around 8-14
* Early onset in an indicator of a relatively long criminal career and offences
* There is continuity of antisocial and offending behaviour throughout childhood, adolescence and adulthood.
* Small population of offenders commit large portion of all crime.
* Offending more versatile then specialised (wide range of offences)
* Acts defined as offences usually part of larger syndrome of antisocial behaviour, binge drinking, promiscuous sexual activity, lack of concern for others, reckless driving.
* Teen offences more likely to be committed within or perpetrated by a group, compared to adult offences which are largely solo events.
* Reasons by teen offenders given for offending include (but are not exclusive) are fun/excitement/something to do, emotional and utilitarian, as the offender matures utilitarian motives become the primary motivating factor.
* Progression of seriousness of offending linked to age, usually follow the route for example of shoplifting, personal theft, burglary, as they mature and learn more specialised skills.

Young offenders found to be committing more serious and frequent offences than older offenders more likely to have started offending at an earlier age.

Narrative identity

The narrative studies based on qualitative research indicate that desistance occurs as a result of subjective changes. Much like Lemerts (1948) theory of "primary and secondary deviance", whereby primary deviance can be triggered by stressors, such as loss of a loved one, unemployment, boredom, and secondary deviance is the continuation of the behaviour, so the deviance becomes part of the individuals' identity. In order to desist, individuals must go through "primary and secondary" process or 'symbolic reorganisation at the level of self identity' Cohen (1978, 6) Whereby the initial desire to "go straight" is continued and becomes their primary identity. Especially amongst probationers many have resolved to go straight upon release; however the national statistics for re-offenders who re-offend within two years does not support the desire.

Primary desistance happens so frequently it does not warrant further study according to Maruna and Immarigeon (2004, 19), focus instead should be on secondary desistance from crime when '*existing roles become disrupted*' and '*reorganisation based on new roles occurs*'. Maruna's (2001) study concluded that true desistance can only occur once the individuals' perspective of themselves change.
The value of the narrative perspective can provide insight into why the desire to '*go straight*' and support from the probation service and other groups, supporting reintegration back into community, such as NACRO, are still not enough for the

process of desistance. Sampson and Laub's (2003) 52 life stories from men in their 60's, some of whom continue to offend in one way or another, while others have stopped, offers an interesting perspective, they have had time to think over their life of crime, provide insight why despite good intentions they were unable 'go straight' or were able to turn their lives around.

Maruna's (2001) narrative study involving 20 persisters and 30 desisters, who shared similar criminogenic traits, backgrounds and environments study. Showed the significance of the individuals *'story'* or *'script'* to justify and explain their criminal careers, discussing their subjective perspectives on their past, present and future, and the role they played in their life story. Maruna noted that while each story was unique to the individual, two common themes of '*condemnation*' and '*redemption*' were repeated and differed between the persisters and desisters.

The persisters adopted a condemnation script, where they were the victims of environment and social circumstances beyond their control, lack of access to decent education, poor family, lack of financial freedom lead to crime and deviant behaviour as a method of taking back control and surviving, these feelings of being in a criminal career trap, in what Jock Young (1999: 395) describes to as a bulimic society, where the media and society present ideals everyone should aspire to (financial success, material goods, own homes) and yet certain groups are excluded from achieving these ideals through lack of legitimate opportunities, these individuals are '*vomited*' society and excluded.

Maruna (2007) suggests that by encouraging offenders to partake in community activities such as providing respite care, staff charity shops, the repair and maintenance of wheel chairs, they can combat the '*Bulimic*' society, by taking part in long-term volunteer placements, offenders reported an improved sense of self-worth, accomplishment and purpose. Unlike formal interventions such as menial community service, short-term imprisonment or treatment programmes for anger or social skills,

> *"Volunteer work gives the offender in the dignified position of being a help-giver rather than a passive help-receiver. Volunteering also sends a message to the community that the offender deserves further support and investment in his or her reintegration. Yet the real virtue of volunteerism might be its reversal of our bulimic value system" Maruna. Times online.*

In opposition to those who had a condemnation script, those who took on redemption script, (Maruna. 2001: 147) where individuals has a strong sense of self belief and control over their future and present. While they too put past criminal and deviant behaviours down to circumstances they could not control, they took responsibility for current and future successes, this is an area of psychological interest called '*learned optimism*' (Seligman,1991: cited Maruna, 2001. 147)

While Lemert (1948) pointed out there is no systematic theory to specify the social mechanisms which might change the secondary deviant into a '*normal*' acceptable member of society, Maruna (2001) narrative approach explains how the individual is able to transition subjectively, over time they [desisters] were able to explain and internalize '*why they did, what they did, and why they are now "not like that" anymore*', developing these credible stories themselves and other to understand, they

were able to move beyond previous identities they held. By being able to view themselves more positively when others still see the bad, desisters are able to utilise techniques of neutralisation, justifying their past and moving forward with their present. Separating themselves from their old social circles, who expect them to live up to their old identities.

Rex (1999) study of 60 probationers identified the importance of a significant relationship, or '*change agents*' (McCulloch & McNeill 2008; 157) for those who were able to successfully desist; she found that desisters identified probations workers as a positive influence. Those who had a reasonable probation officer, who was supportive and seemingly invested professionally, interpreted concerns for behaviour and welfare positively, as a '*display of interest in their wellbeing*' (ibid) and encouragement. This theoretical area provides practical ideas in the enabling of offenders to desist taking the role of the probationer from control, manage and monitoring, back to the old adage of '*advise, assist and befriend*', which were the original principles of probation. (Barry 2000) the current system of pandering to politicians and policy makers in order to satisfy public demand is failing all concerned, re offending statistics reflect this.

The pessimistic view that '*nothing works*' returns to the conclusion that offenders and non-offenders are fundamentally different. Lombroso (1911, 369 cited Maruna 2001, 19) stated

> "*Atavism shows us the inefficiency of punishment for born criminals and why it is they inevitably have periodic relapses into crime*"

Even when Maruna (2001) began and he discussed his study of ex-offenders who had '*gone straight*' the said he was greeted by a '*chorus of doubt*' from his peers and criminal justice practitioners, questioning '*how prove they are really clean?*' and '*How do you know they are not just lying to you?*' (Maruna (2001:19). But Maruna (2001) said he took interest in the 'false positives' those who due to socio economic and environmental factors should persist in offending, and yet go on to '*make good*'.

McNeil (2006) questions the ethical implications of probation officers and academics trying to enable desistance (or treat) through coercion. Laub et al (1995. Cited in Maruna & Immarigeon: 72) suggest that '*any probationer or parolee, should be required as part of their conditions of bail to obtain work or appropriate training*'. This raises questions as to how the Criminal Justice Service will be able to ensure there is appropriate and suitable employment and for those who want the option.

Also aside from Maruna (2001) who suggested the peak age of offending curve could be explained in part to less risky offending such as white collar crime, none of the theories really explain white collar offending. In Marunas (2001) study of persisters none of them were white collar offenders. All of them were from underprivileged and excluded groups, compared to the '*typical*' white collar offender, who has legitimate access to financial rewards, a respectable role within society, family and social ties.

It seems to me that this leads to one of the great problems with this issue: how many of the well resourced offenders continue to commit crime successfully? The problem is that the persisters are invariably the failures – the failed criminals re-cycled through the CJS giving credibility to theories like life course persistent when, in fact, there is

so much that we do not know because the evidence is lacking. We do not know enough about successful criminal enterprise.

Employment is another social bond factor which is often associated with desistance (see Farrell 2003, Rhodes 2008) Sampson & Laub (1993) studies of men also linked desistance good work habits, such as turning up on time and seeking promotion.

> '*A reduction in unstructured time and an increase in structured time; an income, which enables home-leaving and the establishment of significant relationships; a legitimate identity; an increase in self-esteem; use of an individual s energies; financial security; daily interaction with non-offenders a reduction in the time spent in single-sex peer-aged groups and ambitions and goals, such as promotion at work*'(Farrall, 2002, cited Rhodes 2008:2).

Glaser's extensive study of parolees and recidivism revealed that men leaving prison often had unrealistic expectations of entering the workforce and gaining promotion upon release, these unrealistic expectations were linked to level of income and ease of gaining steady employment. Many of those in the prison system are disproportionately low skilled (due to lack of formal work experience) and have poor literacy and numeracy skills, half of the prison population did not have level one literacy and numeracy (the level expected of an 11year old) (Rhodes 2008) In addition to these barriers to work, under the 1974 Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, potential employers had the right to obtain information about criminal records, studies of employers found that 60% of application for records checks were conducted regardless of the employment position being applied for and that employers would look upon applications from offenders less favourably, (ibid) leading to further exclusion from the legitimate jobs market. (Glaser 1969, cited Laub and Sampson 2003). Glaser found that lack of skill and work experience were the major obstacles to finding a good job and that job instability was in turn linked to criminal recidivism, couple this with further obstacles such as the threat of CRB checks, desistance becomes less likely.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Introduction

This paper will draw from both primary and secondary research data. Although a relatively under explored area, until recently, there is a wealth of knowledge already available exploring desistance, from the theoretical frameworks of the likes of Sampson & Laub (2003) to Matza (1964) who have offered varying theoretical explanations for desistance, to the likes of Maruna (1999, 2001, 2004) who conducted qualitative research in gaining his narrative perspective on desistance. By incorporating primary research the investigator will be able to explore alternative avenues of questioning or expand on ideas already expressed in the work of Maruna.

Theoretical and narrative approaches we will be able to compare the theory with the individuals' perception and vice versa.

> *'it is accepted that utilizing more than one data collection method ensures that the problems associated with one strategy may be compensated for by the strengths of another'* (Jupp et al, 2000: 43).

Ethics

All professions are guided by a code of ethics, the British Society of Criminology ethical guidelines are the standards this research will follow. The term ethics is a subjective one, most professions have their own code of ethics, which may vary from the ethics of other professions, ethics are also personally subjective, what is acceptable to one person may not be acceptable for another, or for the organisation which they may represent.

Kumar (2005: 210) uses the Collins dictionary definition of ethics: as "in accordance with principles of conduct that are considered correct, especially those of a given profession or group'.

For consistent level of ethical behaviour the relevant professional codes of ethics are the ones which must be adhered to. To ensure that everyone is meeting the standards of the profession, there is a bureaucratic process by which the researcher must prove to the relevant ethical committee that they will abide by the organisations ethical code of conduct.

The concerns raised by the Social sciences research ethics committee, at Nottingham Trent University, where the research was conducted, although all standards of Ethical behaviour were implied, if not expressed in the correct sections, with explicit wording, lead to the initial rejection of clearance, and delays in research. Although bureaucracy can ensure consistent levels, it can also hinder efforts.

Desistance Research and Ethics

The topic of desistance can be a sensitive area, as it is discussing people's lives and criminal behaviour (though avoiding discussion of specific offences) and therefore it must be approached with caution as there are many limitations and ethical implications when conducting research on this issue.

The researcher submitted a research proposal for approval from the SREC which conformed to the British Society of Criminology ethical guidelines. The application was initially rejected on several grounds, the issue of safety for the researcher and possible implications and harm to the participants should they reveal past crimes (unknown to authorities) or planned offences, after amendments to outline the potential risks had been considered and that all participants would be informed not to reveal actual offences, and reminded on the consent form consequences of revealing criminal offences, permission was eventually granted to conduct the interviews with individuals who had desisted from crime.

Primary Research

The primary research in this research was obtained through a series of short semi structured interviews (see appendix B for themes) with 3 volunteer participants, who had made the transition from persistent offenders to desister and productive law abiding members of society.

The opportunity to gather new information, or ask questions that the researcher had from secondary research, was an invaluable one.

Volunteer pool

Volunteers were drawn from family and friends; they were part of an easily accessed group available. Although a relatively small sample of participants the work of Stephen Farrall was able to publish his 2003 study based on only two case studies.

Interviews vs questionnaires

Questionnaires:

There are many ways to obtain information, popular methods being questionnaires, which can be structured, a set of questions with set answers that can be measured, used and compared to the findings of other questionnaires, this method is favoured by quantitative researchers.

Questionnaires requiring written response would be limited by the space available to respond and the participant's ability (literacy skills) to give full response, it might have lost some of the detail, also the time and effort cost for the participant might have lead to a reluctance to participate. (Kvale, S. 1996)

Interviews:

Unstructured interviews, where the interviewee is able to express themselves, it would then be for the researcher to draw out the relevant information, and then there are semi structured interviews, a mixture of the previous two; the latter of the two, being the preferred method for qualitative researchers.
The interview was the desired method as a 'major advantage of the interview is its adaptability' (Bell, 2005: 157) and flexibility, allowing the researcher to probe areas of interest. Opting for a conversational approach, allowed the participant to recall events from their memory, it built a relaxed rapport, unable to rely entirely on

recalling specific points from memory some notes were taken, although not ideal and the sight of someone taking notes would may have drawn attention (Kvale,. 1996).

Primary research is fraught with risks and ethical considerations, researcher bias being one of many. By omitting findings which would not meet with the direction and opinion of researcher especially if they 'hold strong views about some aspect of the topic' (Bell, 1999: 135) could lead to misrepresentation.

Researcher bias was also considered when interviewing participants, asking questions and discussing topics, so not to influence the tone of the conversation, 'there is evidence that interviewers' attributes can have an impact on respondents' replies (Bryman, 2008: 210). Trying to gain insight into people's subjective perspectives and opinions from an objective point of view, was important, the research relies heavily on the perceptions and meanings levied on events from the individuals perspective, they would have to be entirely honest and feel free to be so.

Consent

As the research will be overt, there is an opportunity and obligation to gain full informed consent. Informed consent implies that the participant is not only aware of what is expected of them by the researcher, but also what they can expect from the Researcher and the rights they have to withdraw or refuse to answer any questions they do not feel comfortable discussing.

The participants were given a list of broad themes to be discussed, it was made clear that at any point they could refuse to comment, when gathering information it is difficult to judge what the individual might find offensive or sensitive (Kumar. 2005:215), for example, when discussing anti social behaviour, the participants were enthusiastic in their response, however when the topics were of a more personal current nature, for example income and marital status, information was offered less enthusiastically. However, it was felt better to ask and possibly offend, rather than never know, "if you don't ask, you don't know" Kumar (2005:215)

To ensure informed consent each participant was required to sign an agreement form (appendix A) which they had access to read and digest in their own time before attending interviews, they were also constantly reminded they had the right to refuse to answer any questions, and cease participation at any point, until final submission.

Recording of information

It was agreed that there would be no audio recordings, due to time constraints, would not have been able to justice to the participants story, so rather than lengthy interviews, brief history and sound bites on particular topics were used, and notes were taken.

One of the main hurdles and a deciding factor in not recording interviews was the future task of transcribing. A time consuming and tasking process, missing the subtle nuances of the language used by participants, and lack of NVC (none verbal communications, such as hand gestures, facial expressions) could result in the meaning being lost or misunderstood, this would do a disservice to the participant.

Anonymity & Confidentiality

The terms anonymity and confidentiality are often banded about, for the purpose of this research anonymity could not be fully offered. The researcher had to be able to identify each participant; anonymity would mean that no one, not even the researcher would be able to identify each participant (Bell, 2005.48)

Confidentiality '*is a promise that you will not be identified or presented in an identifiable form*' (Sapsford & Abbott, 1996, cited Bell, 2005: 48).

Participants were advised that due to the nature of the work, their input would be published, while their identity would only be known to the researcher, information would be discussed with the researchers dissertation supervisor. However, there would be no information published to identify them and all notes would be destroyed.

One of the participants exercised their right to withdraw at the last minute, on the basis that although confidentiality was promised, if a reader knew the participant, their story and identity might become apparent. The last minute withdrawal didn't allow time to find another participant and conduct interviews, so the sample size was reduced to just two, which was unfortunate.

Selection of participants

The participant sample were drawn from an available pool of friends and family, who volunteered their time and experience, this method is also known as haphazard, accidental or convenience sampling (Bachman & Schutt: 106) they were used because they were available and easy to find, as an undergraduate piece of research, access to a idea sample was not a realistic option giving the time and level of competence.

Availability sampling is often used in academic environments, (ibid) by asking students to complete questionnaire or volunteer for research. One problem using an available sample lies in the fact that the participants do not represent the general population which is being investigated; therefore the sample groups input might not be generalizable, though all information provides a basic groundwork from which to build. Another issue lied in the withdrawal of a participant; concerns over their details of their offending and personal life becoming known to members of the wider family and social circle.

Secondary Research

Secondary sources were used initially to establish what is already known and has been theorised about the process of desistance, the idea that you would have an area of interest then look for gaps in the research where you have further questions or themes to be expanded upon. (Bell, 2005: 123).

The secondary sources utilized in this research involved initial analysis of the literature available, later home office statistics and in-depth narrative perspectives from Maruna and the Liverpool desistance study.

By making use of secondary resources the researchers are able to save time and money, while gaining access to high quality data in a short amount of time. By taking advantage of the work other researchers have conducted previously, researchers are gather necessary data without conducting costly and time consuming studies themselves.

Secondary resources used in this research were from reliable academic and government sources.

Reliability & Validity

'Reliability is the extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions on all occasions' (Bell, 2005: 117) Wragg (1980: 17. Cited Bell, 2005:117) asks

> *'Would two interviewers using the same schedule or procedure get a similar result? Would an interviewer obtain a similar picture using the procedures on different occasions?'*

On the basis of this definition, and the questions asked by Wragg, the research contained here is fairly reliable, even with the individual interviews, common themes were raised, while each story was individual, there were commonalities in the secondary research findings and primary research findings.

Validity asks 'whether an item measures or describes what it is supposed to measure or describe' (Bell, 2005:117). If a piece of research is unreliable, then it must lack validity, however, reliable items are not necessarily valid, if it does not measure what it is supposed to. In this case, the research is both reliable and valid, the work repeats themes found in similar studies and gives answers to the questions being asked.

Themes

Part of the ethical clearance conditions were that the researcher should produce a list of themes (see Appendix B) which interviews would follow, these were passed onto the participants prior to the interviews being conducted, with the consent form to be signed (see Appendix A) this allowed the participants to fully consider if they wanted to participate.

A list 9 of themes, broadly discussing past present and future asking the interviewee to look at motivations to offend and desist. The themes were kept broad so not to influence the responses or lead the discussion down any particular route, and allow the interviewer the space to probe particular issues.

Conclusion

The methods employed during this research were suited to such a small scale study. The secondary sources provided a solid basis and foundation used within the literature, it gave the work direction and helped identify area of interest. The statistics and studies involving individual narratives gave the theory a real life perspective.

By using primary sources, the researcher was able to explore themes and probe deeper.

Chapter 3: Findings

Following on from the previous chapter looking at some of the current literature available on the process of desistance, this chapter will utilise some of the primary data collected by the researcher, via a series of interviews. Initially there were three participants, but one of the male interviewees exercised his right to withdraw his statements from the work, due to concerns over confidentiality, previously discussed in the Methodology chapter. Despite the setback, the extracts from interviews below add personal perceptions and experience to the theoretical framework.

The ideas discussed with the participants were based several theoretical concepts explored by various academics. The participants were a male 27 and female 28, similar upbringing, and have both now desisted from offending for several years, with no plans to start again.

The first area looked at was based on Hirschi's (1969) theory of social control is based on the theory people engage in delinquent behavior when their "social bond" to society is weakened. He argued those poor bonds to institutions such as family, education and the society. Both participants were invited to speak about their lives, starting with childhood, family upbringing, education, onset, eventual process of desistance and factors in their lives which keep desistance as the rational choice.

Family

None of the participants came from "traditional" family set ups, each were raised by lone mothers, both participants expressed a real attachment to their families, immediate and extended. (see appendix 3: 1.1 & 2.1) Male A's family also had the extended church community, which he and his family were involved. (see appendix 3: 1.1 iv)

When Male A's offending seriousness of offending increased later in his teens, his family cut contact between him and his brother, also the threat of shame was introduced. (see appendix 3; 1.11; iii & 1v) at this point Male As level of involvement in offending increased.

Education:

Educational investment and attachment or lack thereof has been associated with antisocial behaviour and offending; Male A's family ensured homework was complete and school was attended, he was invested in terms of time put in. (see Appendix 3; 1.1: ii) but he never felt as though he succeeded academically despite efforts put in. (see Appendix 3; 1.2: ii) at the age of 12 he started to miss school through truancy (see Appendix 3; 1.3: iii) by not attending school, it eventually lead to self exclusion and removal from school. He never achieved any formal qualifications (see Appendix 3; 1.7: i) when questioned on an alternative to education which he felt might have proven more suitable to him, he suggested

> *'Maybe doing something more training wise, like coaching, or something. Something physical, I hated books, still hate it, I can read and write, but school was never something that came easy'*

Returning to more skills and training based education is an option being discussed by the government and opposing political parties. Although GCSEs and the national curriculum provide a solid frame wok, to enable all children aged 5-16years the same basic level of knowledge and academic attainment, an option for those who do not engage with the material might provide alternative that keeps people involved in the institution.

Female A, had a different school and educational experience. Her detachment to education suffered from an early stage, problems were not in the lack of academic ability (see Appendix 3; 2.2:ii) but due to bullying within the academic institution (see Appendix 3; 2.1 iii), and influence of family who were truant from school (see Appendix 3; 2.2:iii).

Unlike Male A, female A, did well academically, when she applied herself. (see Appendix 3; 2.3:I & ii) Her barriers were the outside social rewards of being with family outweighed the perceived future academic rewards; there are now increased pressures on parents to ensure their child's attendance. When the realisation that academic qualifications were required to achieve meaningful employment and decent salary (see Appendix 32.3: iii) , the financial burden outweighed the future benefits. There is now a policy whereby students attending further Education can receive a weekly studying allowance of £30, although helpful, realistically in a low income household where the income is benefits, that £30 would be expected to pay for all luxuries, clothing and entertainment, more could be done to encourage continued participation.

For the next part of the discussion, we looked at the onset of offending behaviour, and the life-course perspective offer, which according to Laub and Sampson (2001, P:2) offered the most compelling institutional sources of desistance and dynamic social processes inherent in stopping crime. According to this theory there are 10 accepted concepts within DLC, the discussion with participants looked at onset, range of types of offending and the reasons behind behaviour.

Onset

Onset for Male A, was age 10 (see Appendix 3; 1.3: i & ii) , the DLC cites onset as between 8-14, so he fit within these perimeters. Early onset of antisocial behaviour is also cited as an indicator in the DLC, although the behaviours displayed by male A and his friends would usually fall within the realms of "normal" behaviour for children, but once he and his friends perceived the reaction of the local community, business owners and his step father as unfair, the behaviour intensified and became offending behaviour (see Appendix 3; 1.3: ii) Young people are often portrayed as being a menace to society, this is not a new concept, each generation perceives the next to be worse than when they were children. By making children feel like normal behaviour is wrong, they become excluded from the community and their bonds to its success is weakened.

Female A onset into antisocial behaviour and criminality started from a very early age (see Appendix 3; 2.4: i) according to the DLC this early start should lead to escalation and frequency of offending, however, she was able to leave offending behind without formal reprimand.

Cause of offending

Onset for female A, was much earlier, she couldn't even remember when it had started, taking from shops had always been what she had seen and done, her mother turning a blind normalised the behaviour to an extent, she stole because she could, not out of need.
Female A:

> *'Didn't always take things we needed, my mum always provided the stuff I needed. So it wasn't life or death stuff, it wasn't even stuff to make us look like we fit in, like clothes, it was stupid stuff like food or sweets, stationary, cheap little things really'*

While Male A, at the time attributed the unfair treatment by adults as a cause of offending.

> *'I guess at the time I would have said because I wanted the stuff or I wanted to earn my punishments, now I guess it was because I could and my friends were doing it. I had money, not loads, but I'd get bit of pocket money, or I could make a raise easily, just ask for small amounts of money from lots of people, begging really (laughs). My friends weren't paying; I didn't want to stand out'*

As an adult he recognised it was his was of fitting in with peers, both Male A and Female A's motivations fit within the DLCs framework.

Range of offences

Male A previously mentioned antisocial behaviour such as egging *'a neighbour's house'* and how he had *'started stealing little sweets from the shops, drinks when it was hot, or ice poles'* (see appendix 3; 1.3: ii) at around the age of 10years old. He went on to discuss further anti social behaviour, escalating into criminal behaviour, such as joy riding, intimidating behaviour, under-age drinking, illegal drug use and eventually ABH which lead to a custodial sentence (see appendix 3; 1.4: i, 1.9: ii & iii) while this was Male As first spell *'inside'* it was not his last, he went to offend further upon release, as a drugs runner, and did further time for ABH (see appendix 3; 1.11: v& vi). This fits in with the DLC model which says that antisocial behaviour is constant throughout childhood and offending will escalate.

Despite Female As offending and antisocial behaviour starting from an earlier age, she never escalated beyond shoplifting; although she participated in under-age drinking there was no mention of drugs. (see appendix 3; 2.4 i, ii & iii)

<u>Desistance</u>

As stated in the opening gambit of this chapter, both Male A and Female A, have both successfully desisted and continue to desist. For many years the link between age and crime has been noted for writers such as Gottfredson & Hirschi (1988) Quetelet (1831), offenders simply mature out of crime (as discussed in chapter 3) providing there are not mental deficits.

The peak age of offending has seen little change in the last over 184years years, Graham & Bowling self report study (Bateman & Pitts, 2005) showed the peak age of offending to be 21 (for males) and 16 (for females) compared to the Home office figures of 19 (for males) and 15 (for females) the DLC identifies peak age of offending mirrors the findings of the Home Office.

Peak age of offending for Male A was 17years of age, this was when he was most seriously and actively offending, however, after his first stint in a detention centre at 16years of age

> *'I was only there [in the detention centre for] 6months, didn't have time to do the anger management or drugs course, so did a couple of IT certifications and worked out in the gym ALOT, got certificates for that. Didn't really have anyone who was trying to fight me, I played football so I got on with most people. Some people did struggle, I was lucky, but knew it was somewhere I didn't want to go back to. Mum said I could go home and we'd move, I promised to leave old friends behind. Didn't hear from any of my old friends or anything while I was there'*

Lack of contact from friends on the outside had left Male A, disillusioned with the concept of friends offending and sticking together.

Although Male A had made a conscious decision to desist, without the proper social capital, advice and assistance, he went on to offending again to earn money and feel respected. (see appendix 3; 1.11 ii & iii)

> *'it [offending] gave me a level of respect I guess that I didn't have any where else. I know now it wasn't respect but using me, but I had money in my pocket, could still do my YOT meetings'*

As explained earlier, Male A went on to be convicted of wounding with a deadly weapon; his desistance process began when he was detained after the incident. see appendix 3; 1.11 viii) taking steps to gain formal qualifications and experience.

> *'got some GCSEs, did courses in IT again, and counselling and mentoring programmes, being in that long, I was given a role in the centre as a mentor to some of the younger kids inside, giving them my life story, hoping they'd take advantage when they got out I suppose.'*

By being given the role of mentor within the centre, Male A, felt respected and as though he'd matured, he started to differentiate between him and his experiences and those young men who he was entrusted to give advice to.

'lots of the kids came back, when you're in as long as I was you become a bit known, so people look out for you, try and be mates or something, but I didn't have time for no little youths who still weren't learning, I didn't think my life was anything great, and them thinking I was something special made me pity them.'

With the emotional support of family and the practical support of the Probation Officer, Male A was able to make the break from his offending pattern, which had seen him detained twice already. (see appendix 3; 1.12 i-1v)

Male A was able to reject what Jock Young (1999. 395) describes to as a bulimic society, in which the media shows people financial rewards they cannot legitimately achieve (as discussed in chapter 3) and found value in volunteering so he was able to reject the "bulimic Value system" as suggested by Maruna (2009)

'Didn't really like the idea of working for nothing, but once I got involved with the kids and the people doing the work, I really enjoyed it'

'I found the respect that I had the last time I came out [of prison] but in a more positive setting, plus I respected their opinion, unlike the street runners and kids in prison, they didn't see the real me, just the street version of me'

For Female A, her process was more gradual (see appendix 3; 2.7:i) and did not require the formal intervention of detention, CJS or a Probation officer. Female A had never offended through altruistic reasons but more vicarious reasons, because she could. (see appendix 3; 2.5: ii) however once she moved to college, she adapted her behaviour to suit her new environment. (see appendix 3; 2.7:ii) risk of shame outweighed the benefits of shoplifting.

'my mum still got benefits for me and I got a small bursary from college, so i didn't need to steal anything. so I stopped'

On the surface it appeared a simple enough explanation, which fit Quetelet's notion of offending simply "burning out" but when asked about events outside of the university, it appears that tragedy lead to disbanding of friends, which played a part of the desistance process also. (see appendix 3; 2.8:i)

'Things changed in the area I lived in, there was an accident, my friend was killed on a moped bike, being chased by the Police. It was horrible, lots of people saw it. [while] I was at school, one of the rare occasions. But it changed everything. People stayed in more. I stopped drinking on the streets, spent more time at home.'

The accident had lead to a change in the social environment, and the activities of the wider social groups, people weren't together as much, as shoplifting and under-age drinking had always been something done as part of a group, there wasn't the opportunity for the groups to congregate any more, this lead to Female As time being consumed by more conventional activities, such as college education.

Continued desistance

Interviewees discussed what motivates them both to continue in their desistance. While Lemert (1948) pointed out there is no systematic theory to specify the social mechanisms which might change the secondary deviant into a 'normal' acceptable member of society, Marunas (2001) narrative approach explains how the individual is able to transition subjectively, over time they [desisters] were able to explain and internalize 'why they did, what they did, and why they are now "not like that" any more', developing these credible stories themselves and other to understand, they were able to move beyond previous identities they held.

In the last section Male A stated that the respect he had achieved on the street from other offenders was not the type of respect he wanted as

> *'They didn't see the real me, just the street version of me'*

Who is the real you*?*

> *'(laughs) I mean I know I did all that stuff, or I was stupid enough not to say who did, but really I'm just a mummy's boy, I want to make my mum, [step] dad and Gran proud.'*

In Marunas (2001: cited McCulloch & McNeill. 2008) narrative study, he noted that while each story was unique to the individual, two common themes of 'condemnation' and 'redemption' were repeated and differed between the persisters and desisters (see chapter 3). While Male A shared common themes with the "redemption" scriptees, he did not see himself as a victim of his environment, but as a victim of his own decisions. Given assistance he was able to make life changes and full fill the potential he had envisioned for himself. (see appendix 3; 1.13: ii)

> *'I want to continue with the work I'm doing. I have a really good relationship with my mum, [step] dad, little brother and extended family. Keep building on that I suppose, my Gran passed 2years ago; it really hit home how important family is. I'm glad she got to see me turn things round, I like to think she's still with me'*

Returning to the opening idea of social bonds, Male A expressed his commitment to the wider society, family and job, as reason to continue in desisting.

Female A cited less socially conscious reasons for desistance. Currently employed as a supervisor in a beauticians franchise, she is happy with her life.

> *'I'm a supervisor now, I could move up. I would like to for the money, but I enjoy working with my friends. It's a bit like school all over again really'*

<u>CRB checks</u>

Finally the "threat" of CRB checks was discussed, the researcher wanted to explore whether or not the CRB check posed a real threat to future potential, either actually or if the threat was perceived.

Although Female As offending behaviour had started earliest, the level of seriousness of offending had never gone beyond shoplifting, she only briefly came into contact with the CJS, and no action went further than a warning. While Rhodes 2008 work indicated that 60% of employers sought CRB checks regardless of the position however Female A never encountered this (see appendix 3; 2.11:i) however she did not know exactly what might be recorded or passed on if she were to encounter a CRB check.

> *'Don't think anything would show up now, last time I was in trouble was 14years ago, nearly 15, they'd be off now I think, nothing formal anyway, I hope'*

For Male A, having been in the CJS more frequently and seriously the potential for something to show up in a CRB check was more realistic, however, due to the type of work he does, this has proven to not be a barrier to him, but outside of the organisation he recognises the barriers young people with records might face, in addition to be another technique of normalisation, it becomes another excuse not to seek legitimate employment (see Appendix 3; 1.17 ii).

> *'I've not been stopped [in applying for jobs] because of my CRB checks; I'm fully disclosed to my employer. But a lot of the [young] lads I work with find the suggestion of a CRB check by employers, even if it's not mentioned, a big mental barrier to even trying to apply for jobs.'*

> *'But part of it is the not knowing what is counted, and revealed or how long. Most people don't know. I'm not even sure if mine are still on there. Do they get spent? (Researcher is unsure) that's what I mean. It's like the white elephant or something, or like an invisible arrow pointing out your past that only you and employers can see (laughs).'*

The final point raised by both participants lie in the lack of knowledge of what would be disclosed on a CRB check and how long information would be held. the point raised by Rhodes (2008) shows that a system put in place to ensure clarity and provide protection to vulnerable groups, is potentially excluding and creating new vulnerable groups.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This aim of this project was to examine the process of desistance and consider the possibility for outside forces such as professional intervention in successful desistance from crime. The use of primary research, in the form of semi structured interviews, and secondary data analysis enabled these themes to be explored in relation to theory and from personal perspectives, in order to determine whether formal intervention and assistance could enable desistance from crime, or if this should be a process which the individual must chose and attain alone.

When looking at the theoretical perspectives on desistance, the opportunity for formal intervention, such as family counselling, steps to toward wider inclusion, were all policies which could be further developed. When discussed with individuals, it was apparent that formal interventions were more of a hindrance, both actually in terms of the labelling affects and the potential exclusion from meaningful employment via CRB checks and psychological hindrance, in terms of the self perception of the individual and their perceived exclusion because of the potential for previous convictions, arrests and cautions which might be revealed via a CRB check.

In the discussion chapter which looked at the various themes discussed both theoretically literature review and the participants input, a number of factors were identified which may help to understand why individuals are able to desist from crime and how formal agencies might be able to make this process easier.

There are traditional criminological theories, in particular maturation, which argues that people will eventually simple 'grow out' of crime, society is unable to wait for people to mature out of offending behaviour as this process occurs at different times for different people. By strengthening the individuals social bonds, at an earlier age and stage of offending, desistance becomes a rational choice, the potential harm to victims and wider society is reduced, and it is less likely individuals will be held back by CRB check in the future, when seeking employment.

This research successfully achieved the aims that were set out at the beginning of this project; it discussed the individual and social experience of those who desist from crime, and also the idea that people, especially criminals and those who commit crime at a young age, can and often do change, criminality is not a fixed state, and most people desist from offending. Despite this public opinion and the government policy still tends to ire on the side of caution that nothing works, insisting on increasingly punitive punishment and dismissing rehabilitation and inclusion initiatives as being the soft option and soft on crime. There is a real focus on the opinion of the general public when it comes to Crime Policy, especially with a general election coming up, each Political group is trying to appear tougher on crime then the next, with further study into the area of desistance and the important role the state can perform formally via interventions and enabling desistance, without the formal use of convictions and labelling, the public can be educated and interventions can be shown to work, in reducing crime, future victimization and the burden on the CJS and Prison systems. As an outcome of this project, it is recommended that more research into desistance is carried out, as this is an important issue that appears to have been overlooked academically.

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Appendix 1: Themes

Themes

- Family – who was around – happy/stable/chaotic

- Childhood (7-11) – level of freedom – anti social behaviour – early education experience -friends

- Education (11-16) – relationships with teachers – relationships at home – friends-peers

- Onset of criminal behaviour – criminal friends? – group behaviour? – lone actors

- **16-18 – education/employment/home life -**

- Intervention – formal (CJS) – informal (Family)

- Becoming an adult – Employment – Relationships

- Desistance vs Persistence – Social capital

- Future – hopes – family - employment

Appendix 2: consent form

I have read and understand the purpose of this research and my part in it;
I understand that should I reveal intent to commit further offences or reveal offences unknown to authorities, the researcher will have to pass all details on to the research supervisor and the relevant authorities.
I have asked questions if needed and understand that I can contact the investigator at any time with queries or concerns.
I give permission for the interviewer to take written notes on the understanding that the notes will be destroyed at the end of the project.
I have the right to withdraw my data at any point during or after the interview and all materials will be destroyed. final deadline for withdrawal is 2ⁿᵈ April 2010, to allow for final submission.
I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Signature of participant: …………………………………………
Date: …………………………..

Investigator contact details:
Natalie Hearn
BA Criminology 3rd Year
E-mail: N0185760@ntu.ac.uk
Supervisor: Andrew Wilson (Andrew.Wilson@ntu.ac.uk)
School of Social Sciences
Nottingham Trent University,
Burton Street,
Nottingham NG1 4BU

Appendix 3: Transcripts
Interview: Male A

Raised in a lone parent household, with mother and younger brother (10year age gap) mother entered a new relationship, stable father figure. All involved in the local church.

1.1 Family

i. "It was just me and my mum for a real long time ya'know, for about 8-9years. My dad wasn't around really, I knew his face but that was it, never had any love for him or anything, I was a mummy's boy, but not a wimp, just real respectful and stuff... Liked to help her out... spent a lot of time with her and my Gran before she passed my aunts, cousins and them. Lots of strong black women, no real constant male figures. Uncles [were] in and out of prison, I guess now"

ii. "My mum worked, she still does, same job. So I spent a lot of time with family, but my mums always made sure stuff like homework was done, house was always clean, cupboards full and stuff, she'd make time in the evening and stuff, but I was mainly round my Gran"

iii. "lived in a mostly white area, there were only a few black families, so we stood out, but never no racial stuff really when I was a kid anyway, liked staying with my family though who lived in a black and Asian [Indian and Pakistani] area, didn't stand out so much"

iv. "Went to church like every Sunday, big family dinners after. my mum met my step dad there, he was a big scary dude (laughs) he was cool, into his church, came in and wanted to be my daddy straight away,. It was cool at first, but then he'd try and tell me what to do, when that was my mum's job really. I liked him but had no respect. I see now he was just trying to be the good guy, but it was a big shock to me at the time, I was about 8, they got married soon after. Then my little brother comes along"

v. "My mums took a few years off work when I was about 10, just before I started comp[rehensive school], so there was a lot of changes quick. My step father continued to work, but we didn't go to church as much, guess my mum was too busy mostly. I didn't miss church, meant I could have more free time to play out. My mum didn't like having me under her feet, but I did miss my Gran and the family. We still went but not as often"

1.2 Free time

i. "I guess because before when my mums worked I had to go to different family members, even though I was mostly with my Gran, had to know where I was, I mostly spent time with cousins and doing homework and stuff until my mums collected me. But when she [my mum] took time off to have my baby brother, I was further from my cousins so I played football and stuff with kids on the street. Always close enough to be called in. but in summer and at weekends, we did stuff before, me and my mum, but she was busy with my brother or we didn't have enough money, so when summer and weekends came round I was out from like 9-10 in the morning, come back for something to eat, like a sandwich, then probably take it out with me and not come in until like tea time"
"Still in school every day, doing homework. I was never top of the class but my mum always encouraged me and the teachers were ok, especially the men teachers because I was real good at football. Got on with everyone"

1.3 Anti social behaviour onset

i. "summer before I went to comp[rehensive] I started running around with some older boys, just playing football or going swimming, but we'd be out all day and sometimes old folks on the street would tell us to keep quiet, at like 2[pm] in the afternoon, what's that all about, just kids playing not doing anything really, not even loud, but people just got mardy threaten to call the police or get our parents. My step dad was strict, he didn't hit me often but he had hit me, and he beat me once because a neighbour complained we were playing football on the green, for god's sake. I was only 10, I always walked off, but the older boys sometimes talked back, nothing bad really, just stating the obvious. but after I got a beat because the folk on the street knew my step dad was strict, so they'd go to my yard, and low the other boys 'cause their mum would just tell the people to get a life and let the kids play. Shops were the same always telling tales to my mum, even on days when I was at my Gran's. My mum and step dad didn't like them boys"

ii. "I soon learned to be sneakier, we egged a neighbour's house once, started stealing little sweets from the shops, drinks when it was hot, or ice poles, we took nuff [lots] of them. It was good and bad that they owners knew my family, bad because they were always running and telling tales, but good because they [the shop keepers] only thought I was running with the boys who were nicking stuff, they never thought I was actually taking stuff"

1.4 Stealing

i. "I guess at the time I would have said because I wanted the stuff or I wanted to earn my punishments, now I guess it was because I could and my friends were doing it. I had money, not loads, but I'd get bit of pocket money, or I could make a raise easily, just ask for small amounts of money from lots of people, begging really (laughs). My friends weren't paying; I didn't want to stand out"

1.5 Economic environment

i. "Everyone had a bit of money, no one needed to take 5p ice pops, but everyone did it, well not everyone. But most did. I was lucky my step dad didn't earn loads but I always had clean nice clothes and my Gran got me special stuff like trainers which were stupid expensive, but even then everyone had to wear Nikes. I know some kids had to wear Kingfisher or JJs [Jonathon James] shoes, I never picked on kids for what they didn't have, but I had to have good stuff. I never stole stuff like that"

1.6 the Police

i. "just before I was 12[years old] run ins with neighbours got more often, I started arguing back, I went through a growth thing [spurt] and got tall quick, so people noticed me even more. didn't do it on purpose, really, just playing with a football on the green and kicked a ball too hard at someone's house, put the window through, we all scattered, it was the funniest thing, but it was obvious who'd done it, we'd been there all day, probably had my name on it or something stupid like that. police were called and came to my house, I wasn't in, but when I got home, my step dad started, my mum was in tears, my Gran was in tears, I thought someone had died. I was hand on heart gutted, I started crying like a little girl or something (laughs). My step dad had to take me to the police station or the police would come and arrest me in the morning. I had visions of prison or something. I didn't have a solicitor or anything like that, just my step dad. I told the Police everything; I was crying and snotting all the way through it"

ii. "I was grounded the rest of the summer, by the time I got back to school I was a proper Billy [no mates], my mum and step dad had gone to my friends parents and said their kids couldn't come near me. could've kept my head down I guess and just got back into the old routine of school and family, but instead I went all out to impress my mates"

iii. "Following my mates, skiving off school, being the first to do stupid stuff, smashes something or talk to someone make them feel

stupid to impress my mates. got in trouble a few more times with the police, managed to hold it together and not bawl or grass people up, my family weren't so traumatised by it now, they knew I wasn't in serious trouble, just antisocial stuff they call it now, then it was just kids stuff, probably would have got ASBOs or something like it now."

iv. "when I was in the third year had another growth thingy [spurt] and got taller than my step dad, me and him kept coming to blows, nothing physical, really, just shoving and getting in each other's faces, my mums hated it. I was about 13 started missing loads of school, went to live with my Gran for a bit but stayed out lots, didn't like lying to her, but staying at my friends smoking peng [weed] and playing on PS [play station] all night was more appealing, plus she lived far from my school and friends"

v. "Weren't out on the streets much, but whenever we were the Police would stop us constantly. Always trying to Police our every breath, the way we walked, talked, everything. I got sick of the Police quick, always running to my family, talking about my football or school, or family like they knew me. Now I know they were trying to help, but they didn't go about it the right way for me then, or now for that matter, not much changes really"

1.7 self exclusion from school

i. "stopped going to school altogether when I was in my final year, there was no point, I was never going to be put in for exams, teachers were cool with me, especially PE, thought I had skills on the pitch, still do, but I just saw it as unnecessary reason to get up early"

1.8 alternative to school

i. "Maybe doing something more training wise, like coaching, or something. Something physical, I hated books, still hate it, I can read and write, but school was never something that came easy"

1.9 life of crime

i. "Mum and dad were bothered but couldn't do much, my step dad tried to talk to me about apprenticeships in cars or something, I did like cars, but I liked driving or being driven, didn't feel the need to get my clothes dirty like that."

ii. "I got involved with some lads who went joy riding, I was the token black kid in our group, but they all dressed and tried to talk like me (laughs) we'd drive to a forest park place and smoke, or try and get into clubs, and bars, it was easier for girls, I didn't do too bad because I was really tall. A mate of mine started doing a load

of coke [cocaine] I tried but it made me edgy, got into fights. I'm not a fighter, I'm mouthy, but never a fighter. One night we were trying to get into a bar and got turned away baring in mind I was just 15, but these big lads got mouthy and I got a lucky punch in, broke a man's eye socket"

iii.   "I was given 12months custody, blokes face was a mess. In court that was the most shameful time, felt like when I was a kid again and broke the window, didn't cry or anything in court, but my mum did, even my step dad did, Gran never came to court, but she wrote me while I was inside"

1.10 Prison

i.   "That first night was the longest of my life; I sobbed like a baby in my room. Think I must've cried every night for the first week. When my mum finally come for a visit, it was horrible having her searched like that, didn't even feel right hugging her in case it got her in trouble"

ii.   "I was only there 6months, didn't have time to do the anger management or drugs course, so did a couple of IT certifications and worked out in the gym ALOT, got certificates for that. Didn't really have anyone who was trying to fight me, I played football so I got on with most people. Some people did struggle, I was lucky, but knew it was somewhere I didn't want to go back to. Mum said I could go home and we'd move, I promised to leave old friends behind. Didn't hear from any of my old friends or anything while I was there"

1.11 life after Prison

i.   "I was out just before my 17th Birthday, moved in with my Gran for a while to be near family and away from old friends, I was all determined to "go straight" maybe finish off college or something. I signed up with YOT [youth offending team] they promised to help me fill the gaps that prison left. help me get into college, do anger management or something, but I only had to report once a week, spent 5minutes with the caseworker, can't even remember the blokes name, he was that helpful."

ii.   "My Gran was quite old, couldn't sit round with her watching true-life movies or anything all day. My mum and step dad tried to help me get into college and apply for work, but I was worried I wouldn't get in or be able to do it, so didn't really do it. My mum was back at work, my little brother at school, tried to help out, collecting him and what not, they'd give me little bits of money, but not enough to live on."

iii. "started smoking peng again, seeing old friends, put me in touch with a guy who needed a runner, dropping drugs and money between people, because I looked older and had been inside, it gave me a level of respect I guess that I didn't have any where else. I know now it wasn't respect but using me, but I had money in my pocket, could still do my YOT meetings"

iv. "My [step] dad knew what I was doing and stopped me coming round the house to see my brother, my mum knew too, but we never really talked about it, she told me to think about my Gran. I just kept thinking I needed enough money to get me to 18 so I could do my door badge and work with one of my uncles on the doors, it was only meant to be a short term thing."

v. "only been doing it a few weeks, my face was kind of known, I stood out I guess, so some lads tried to rob me and a lad I was running with, I still wasn't a fighter, but they knew I had done a bit of time for fighting so they came with knives, there was a few of them, me and this lad, then some more of our mates, one of the other lads got stabbed with his own knife, nothing major, just a flesh wound really. Don't know who did it, probably caught himself. Police were called and I was first on the list for a visit, I had the lad's blood on me, I had run with everyone else, but the Police caught me with some money and the blood on my jeans"

vi. "I was held in remand, ended up finishing the rest of my first sentence off, and did 7years for ABH, wounding with a deadly weapon, only had to do 4, another lad got a suspended sentence, and the lad who got stabbed got done for possession."

vii. "it was made clear if I opened my mouth my family would be hurt or something, I was let off the debt, couple of hundred quid taken by the Police for doing the time, nearly 5years for £300 quid max, not even minimum wage is it?! (Laughs)"

viii. "no crying this time, knew I was there for a long time, so tried to do courses, wasn't allowed to keep my head down this time, got into fights inside, the first 6months were physically and mentally tough, everyday was a battle. Started playing football, going to the gym, studying for GCSEs and reading the Bible, my Gran sent me a family copy in. I'm not religious nut, but it helped to keep me out of trouble"

ix. "got some GCSEs, did courses in it again, and counselling and mentoring programmes, being in that long, I was given a role in the centre as a mentor to some of the younger kids inside, giving them my life story, hoping they'd take advantage when they got out I suppose. lots of the kids came back, when you're in as long as I was you become a bit known, so people look out for you, try and be mates or something, but I didn't have time for no little youths

who still weren't learning, I didn't think my life was anything great, and them thinking I was something special made me pity them.

1.12 life after Prison pt.2

i. "I was out when I was 20, didn't have to go to proper big man's prison, doubt I could take that, didn't even want to try. Got a proper PO [probation Officer] Lydia, she was dead nice, really helpful. I was released into a half way house, I didn't want to live with my Gran, mum and [step] Dad, but I saw the regularly, they say they saw the change in me"

ii. "Got a council flat and helped to sign on, it was hard being so broke, knowing how easy money could be made, but it wasn't for me anymore. Looked at college courses but I had had enough of class rooms, or being locked in anywhere if you get me. Lydia suggested I approach a charity for youth work experience, put my mentoring and counselling stuff to good use. Didn't really like the idea of working for nothing, but once I got involved with the kids and the people doing the work, I really enjoyed it"

iii. "I had the life experience, even at only 20 odd, but was still young enough for the kids to relate to. I was big still so people listened to me, plus I was still handy on the pitch so I was quite popular"

iv. "I found the respect that I had the last time I came out [of prison] but in a more positive setting, plus I respected their opinion, unlike the street runners and kids in prison, they didn't see the real me, just the street version of me"

1.13 the real 'you'

i. "(laughs) I mean I know I did all that stuff, or I was stupid enough not to say who did, but really I'm just a mummy's boy, I want to make my mum, [step] dad and Gran proud."

ii. "I've been doing the mentoring work for 6years now, paid for the last 4 and half, I didn't have the confidence to apply for a paid role, didn't think I'd be a better choice then someone with formal training, like a Criminology student (laughs) but I was supported and encouraged. I had the practical on job experience; I was helped with the application forms. I've done NVQs, there is an opportunity to get help doing a degree, but I've never really been interested in going down that way. I see the benefit, but I'm already in a job I love, so I don't see the point really."

1.15 the future

i. "I want to continue with the work I'm doing. I have a really good relationship with my mum, [step] dad, little brother and extended family. Keep building on that I suppose, my Gran passed 2years ago; it really hit home how important family is. I'm glad she got to see me turn things round, I like to think she's still with me"

ii. "My brother is 17 now, he had a bit of trouble for a while, but I brought him into work with me, he see what can happen if you make the wrong choices. With both his parents working and me butting in, he's stuck at college, he's the brains."

iii. "I would never do anything to jeopardise my life now, I mean I smoke a bit of peng still, but I don't drink, don't do drugs, like to party, going to the clubs, meeting ladies (laughs) all the good things in life you don't get inside, this is the life I'd prefer for the kids I work with. Just trying to get them to a happy place skipping the prison part"

1.16 Relationships

Relationships, you never really mentioned any significant relationships, has the future potential family played any part in your desistance?

i. "Not really (laughs) is that bad? There haven't been any really, there have been girlfriends, but nothing when I was younger that was more important than getting high, or playing games, or football, girls just kind of fit around my general life"

ii. "Since getting out, don't get me wrong, I've not been a monk dedicating 24/7 to the kids, but I've not met the girl who is going to tie me down yet (laughs) much to Grandma's disappointment. I'm the oldest grandchild without any kids, but I don't want to be the guy with kids everywhere you know. Family is for life not just for Christmas (laughs)"

iii. "Family is definitely on the cards, just not at the minute. I think I will be a good dad and husband, I'm no saint, so I could relate, I've ran about, so once I'm settled there won't be any midlife crisis, I had that when I was like 12 or something (laughs)"

1.17 CRB Checks

i. "I've not been stopped because of my CRB checks; I'm fully disclosed to my employer. But a lot of the lads I work with find the suggestion of a CRB check by employers, even if it's not mentioned a big mental barrier to even trying to apply for jobs."

ii. "For some of the lads its [CRB Checks] are just another reason in a long list of reasons why they can't get real jobs that they come up with. But part of it is the not knowing what is counted, and revealed or how long. Most people don't know. I'm not even sure if mine are still on there. Do they get spent? (Researcher is unsure) that's what I mean. It's like the white elephant or something, or like an invisible arrow pointing out your past that only you and employers can see (laughs). Doing the work I do, my [criminal] past helps me to relate, means I'm more than talk; I've done the walk too. I hope it doesn't hold me back in the future. Got me thinking now"

Female A

Raised, in single mother household, two younger sibling, large age gap. All very close, with close extended family. No strong male role models.

2.1 Family

i. "It's never been just me and my mum, my aunts and cousins were always around, and my Gran. So when my sister was born when I was 7 and second when i was 9, and my aunt had another kid when I was about 5, so it wasn't a big shock or anything. Having babies round was alright, can't remember much really, my best friends mum had a baby at the same time, so it was kind of normal everyone going through the same stuff"

ii. "My mum didn't work, she didn't start work until recently really, last few years, but it was different then, harder to get work and childcare, plus me and my sisters were hard work. Never saw my dad, never met him 'til I was 21, met him once and never saw him again. I never missed having a dad. Even when my sister's dad was about, he never lived with us, but he included me, but I wasn't bothered, I was always closer to my mum"

iii. "There were only a handful of black kids in the area and school, I noticed the difference early. My mum's family are all white, except me and my sisters. We never felt different with family though. At school my hair as different, clothes were different, everyone was poorish, so that didn't matter, but my mum bought me some shocking clothes, I got picked on a lot. But at the same time I had lots of friends. Played football a lot and was always allowed to play on the streets, so I was social"

2.2 school

How did school and family deal with bullying?

i. "My mum would go in all the time, but saying the same thing over and over, she got sick of it. I didn't hate school, but I did prefer to

mess about at home. But I would tell my mum it was because of bullies. Teachers tried to get me interested, but I never saw the point of school."

ii. "I didn't struggle, I could always do the work, it wasn't too easy, the teachers would give me harder stuff, just preferred to mess about, I just never bothered with the work"

iii. "In secondary school I tried harder for the first few months, 100% attendance, but then I saw my family outside of school and it always looked more appealing. Obviously now I wish I'd stuck at it, or my mum had been stricter, but no point thinking about what if"

2.3 But what if?

i. "I think I would have done well. By the time I got to secondary school I gave up trying and teachers gave up trying to push me. I didn't mind being ignored and left to mess about but I hated being talked to like I was stupid, so every now and then I'd ace a test, or do a piece of work really well, just to show I wasn't stupid, that I was choosing not to take part, which was stupid, but at the time it seemed smart"

ii. "I was entered for a few exams, so left with some GCSEs, Es Fs, some unmarked. I went to college for a few years, did travel and tourism, got really good grades, mum was dead happy I stuck to it, no one was surprised I did well. Just that I'd stuck at it."

iii. "Even though I didn't like school or college for that, I was always broke I knew I needed some qualifications to get a decent job. My cousins and friends got pregnant, that wasn't for me, I'm still a big kid myself."

2.4 First time you got into trouble?

i. "Used to go shoplifting all the time. We never had much money. And it was easy to just take. My mum would have hit me when I was little. But as I got older she knew what I did. As long as I didn't get in trouble she wasn't bothered. I mean she was bothered but she wasn't always on at me!"

ii. "Had a couple of informal cautions, I'm not sure what they were actually. The Police were called to local shops once when I'd stolen a birthday cake; I wanted to do something nice for a friend. Got taken to the station, it was so embarrassing but my best friend was there, we were 14, it was funny at the same time, or we were laughing so people didn't know how embarrassing it was. All I remember is laughing so hard I thought I'd pee. Then in the

[police] car, the [police] Officers were nice enough, my mate started crying, that made me scared."

iii.   "The Police knew us from the local area, just tell us to move on if there were groups of kids at the shops, there were two main shops we hung round, and a park in between, so we'd go from shop to shop, and then end up on the park once the little, little kids had gone in. Police were always called to move us on, not because we were doing anything, just the old people moaning. I moan at kids hanging about now but, there was nothing to do then or now, except facebook"

iv.   "My mum came down, I remember thinking I never want her to feel ashamed of me, but she found it kind of funny once she knew it wouldn't go any further, and we got home. I wasn't grounded or anything"

2.5 How did the mother feel?

i.   "Think she wasn't proud, but she didn't have the money to give us extras so it was kind of necessary, well not necessary, but it was away to have the same as others. It was only from big stores, not local shops, except sweets and stuff, god that's really bad init?!"

ii.   "Didn't always take things we needed, my mum always provided the stuff I needed. So it wasn't life or death stuff, it wasn't even stuff to make us look like we fit in, like clothes, it was stupid stuff like food or sweets, stationary, cheap little things really"

iii.   "She [my mum] came to the Police station twice. First time with the stake, second time it was for being drunk and disorderly or something when I was about 15. Didn't get into trouble formally. My mum was pissed at that one the most, because I put myself in danger"

2.6 Who is "we"?

i.   "Oh my friends, my cousins, other kids, just everyone I guess. It wasn't like we were clearing out clothes shops or TVs or anything expensive or useful"

ii.   "I keep saying we, because it wasn't just me, it was something done in groups, or alone"

2.7 start of desistance

i.   "can't really remember, I think it was probably a gradual thing with the shoplifting, and then when I got to college, I was with people who didn't shoplift all the time, I did it from time to time still but I was hiding it, so I knew it wasn't right and then I just

never did again. Wasn't worth the hassle, didn't want to get caught or arrested in college or anything, it'd make me look like a tramp."

ii.   "My mum still got benefits for me and I got a small bursary from college, so I didn't need to steal anything. So I stopped"

2.8 Change of social environment, more apart of wider environment

i.   "I didn't really change friends, just made some new ones. Still have the same family obviously. Being close never changed. I just got more into college"

2.9 Why were you more involved in college?

ii.   Things changed in the area I lived in, there was an accident, my friend was killed on a moped bike, being chased by the Police. It was horrible, lots of people saw it. I was at school, one of the rare occasions. But it changed everything. People stayed in more. I stopped drinking on the streets, spent more time at home. My best friend was starting college, she was doing something to take her to Uni, I couldn't do the same course because my GCSEs were poor. I did my IT and did well, she dropped out"

2.10 Future, employment

iii.   "I tried getting IT jobs, but never got anywhere, did bar work, but didn't like the hours. Did call centre work, still do that, different places over the years, but the money is ok, I'm a supervisor now, I could move up. I would like to for the money, but I enjoy working with my friends. It's a bit like school all over again really"

iv.   "I still live at home, I'm happy with that, I get to spend money going out, on my car and on holidays. My mum works too, my sister has a little boy and still lives at home, she works with my mum, we're all still really close."

v.   "I'll think about moving out if I met someone and wanted to move in, but at the minute I'm happy. I have the freedom of being an adult and earning, with the support and security of my family"

2.11 CRB checks

i.   "They [CRB] checks don't bother me, they did a few years back, I had no idea what was kept on record or which jobs required them. I didn't need one for any jobs I have had or applied for. Don't think anything would show up now, last time I was in trouble was 14years ago, nearly 15, they'd be off now I think, nothing formal anyway, I hope"

Male B

Raised in a two parent household, one of 9 children came over from Ireland with his mother in the 1960s, moved to a mostly Black Caribbean area. Strong ties to the Catholic Church and surrounding areas.

3.1 Family

ii. "i was raised by my older sisters mostly, my mum and Dad both worked long hours in low paying jobs, older siblings were charged with looking after the house and younger children. we all did our bit to make life easier and to avoid getting a clip [around the ear]"

iii. "We played up, for the older kids and the younger kids played up for me when it was our turn, but we all knew, that if our Dad found out we'd get a beat. we each had our fair share of them. my dad was a stern man, always had a lot of respect for him though"

iv. i attended school, mostly Jamaican and Caribbean kids, but it was different in the late 60s early 70s, Irish were as black as the Jamaicans in our area, al the kids mixed. the adults were always more weary of the other adults"

v. "i was always in school, didn't do great, but i was there, got into the usual amount of trouble, if my dad was called then it would mean a beating from him and tears from my mum, we'd be out playing in our   kids were expected to be out playing. causing mischief, not like today, kids can't fart without it getting reported"

vi. "My Dad died when i was 11, can't remember why, mum never liked to talk about it, so it was never discussed and i was young. My mum continued to work worked hard, she didn't stop working until she was in her 70s, working hard for a living has always been something we were taught."

vii. "we spent a lot of time in Church, especially with so many of us and my mum working hard to keep us provided for, we often had to take handouts. the entire area was poor, and large families weren't out of the ordinary, being poor didn't bother me, not until i was a teenager. then i noticed the older fella's around the way, driving big cars, dressing smart, i wanted that."

viii. "i didn't do well at school left with no real education, so i signed up to the Army, it seemed the only option for me to make something of my life. my older sisters got married young and started their own families, it was easy for them to go from one house to another, my older brother was entrepreneur, not entirely legal, but not a big time crook. i never had it in me to sell like he did, i was more physical, army routine and discipline suited me, i loved it, i got to train, travel, earn a wage, my mum was proud, but

it was all over when I was 19 after an accident knocked my knee out. I didn't have the brains for a desk job, so it was back to my mum's"

3.2 criminal career start

i. "I had moved in with my girlfriend and we had a baby on the way, I was 20, unemployed, in a council flat. I tried working with my elder brother, but I was no use to him, I was angry all the time. I recognise that I was probably depressed now. Coming from a life in the army with the structure and prospects, every minute of everyday had a purpose."

ii. "being quite a big lad and having lots of friends and family in the area I was known, I started drinking and partying, got involved in handling stolen goods, easy money, low risk. Left I time to party more."

iii. "my relationship ended before my daughter was born, I always gave her and her mother money, but otherwise I wasn't involved, they moved out and I went on to father 2more children with 2other women within a short period of time. It was easy to provide financially, but I was never in the homes, they knew who I was and how I was, they didn't try to change me. I know it was wrong and I was selfish, now"

iv. "My criminal behaviour escalated quickly, peak was armed robbery where a man was injured, and I spent much of my 20s in Prison."

3.3 Turning point

i. "i was in my 30s, started working for a local contractor, doing building, odd jobs, D.I.Y, i had 4 kids, met another woman who didn't want children, that suited me. i was earning good money, i got married, she earned well we had a nice life, but i was bored, felt caged in. my relationship ended again"

ii. "i moved into my own place, still kept my job, did really well, eventually started doing my own jobs, took on a couple of lads, started handling [stolen] goods on the side for extra money, nothing as big as last time. Met another woman, had another child, my oldest kids came over most weekends, my life was in a good place."

iii. "one night some local lads broke into my home, my partner and baby were at her mothers, so i was alone. i went down to get them out, i had a baseball bat, they had had bats too, three of them beat me badly, took all the goods and more, my kids games, my wife's jewellery"

iv. "everyone knew who'd done it, i knew, i had always trusted people within my circles, most people would laugh at the idea of trusting criminals, but for most there was an unwritten rule book, don't turn each other over, don't hurt old people, women or kids."

v. "my partner and kids thought i was going to die, i thought it too. i promised from that point to never step outside the law again, and never have. i cut all ties with my old criminal friends, some i still see, never ignore anyone, but i don't have time to mix with them sort of people anymore"

vi. "that was when i was 36, i'm now 52, I've been straight for as long as i was offending. i have a new relationship, she knows about my past but has never seen any of it, have grandchildren now, they have no idea who i was then, and i never want them to know. I've turned my life round, i earn well, i live well."

Appendix 4: Ethics

British Society of Criminology
Code of Ethics for Researchers in the Field of Criminology

The purpose of this Code is to offer some guidance to researchers in the field of criminology in keeping with the aims of the Society to value and promote the highest ethical standards in criminological research. The Code of Practice is intended to promote and support good practice. Members should read the Code in the light of any other Professional Ethical Guidelines or Codes of Practice to which they are subject, including those issued by individual academic institutions and by the ESRC (see Further Information section below).

The guidelines do not provide a prescription for the resolution of choices or dilemmas surrounding professional conduct in specific circumstances. They provide a framework of principles to assist the choices and decisions which have to be made also with regard to the principles, values and interests of all those involved in a particular situation. Membership of the British Society of Criminology is taken to imply acceptance of these general principles and the need to be aware of ethical issues and issues regarding professional conduct that may arise in people's work.

The British Society of Criminology's general principle is that researchers should ensure that research is undertaken to the highest possible methodological standard and the highest quality in order that maximum possible knowledge and benefits accrue to society.

1. General Responsibilities

Researchers in the field of criminology should endeavour to:

i) advance knowledge about criminological issues;

ii) identify and seek to ameliorate factors which restrict the development of their professional competence and integrity;

iii) seek appropriate experience or training to improve their professional competence, and identify and deal with any factors which threaten to restrict their professional integrity;

iv) refrain from laying claim, directly or indirectly, to expertise in areas of criminology which they do not have;

v) take all reasonable steps to ensure that their qualifications, capabilities or views are not misrepresented by others;

vi) correct any misrepresentations and adopt the highest standards in all their professional relationships with institutions and colleagues whatever their status;

vii) respect their various responsibilities as outlined in the rest of this document; viii) keep up to date with ethical and methodological issues in the field, for example by reading research monographs and participating in training events (see Further Information section below);

ix) check the reliability of their sources of information, in particular when using the internet.

2. Responsibilities of Researchers Towards the Discipline of Criminology

Researchers have a general duty to promote the advancement and dissemination of knowledge, to protect intellectual and professional freedom, and therefore to promote a working environment and professional relationships conducive to these. More specifically, researchers should promote free and independent inquiry into criminological matters and unrestricted dissemination of criminological knowledge. As part of this, researchers should endeavour to avoid contractual conditions that limit academic integrity or freedom. Researchers should endeavour to ensure that the methodology employed and the research findings are open for discussion and peer review.

3. Researchers' Responsibilities to Colleagues

Researchers should:

i) recognise fully the contribution to the research of junior colleagues and avoid exploitation of them. (For example, reports and publications emanating from research should follow the convention of listing contributors in alphabetical order unless one has contributed more than the other(s));

ii) actively promote the professional development of research staff by ensuring that staff receive the appropriate training and support and protection in research environments which may jeopardise their physical and/or emotional well-being;

iii) not claim work of others as their own; the use of others' ideas and research materials should be cited at all times, whatever their status and regardless of the status of the ideas or materials (e.g. even if in draft form);

iv) promote equal opportunity in all aspects of their professional work and actively seek to avoid discriminatory behaviour. This includes a moral obligation to challenge stereotypes and negative attitudes based on prejudice. It also includes an obligation to avoid over-generalising on the basis of limited data, and to beware of the dangers of

failing to reflect the experience of certain groups, or contributing to the over-researching of certain groups within the population.

4. Researchers' Responsibilities towards Research Participants

Researchers should:

i) recognise that they have a responsibility to ensure that the physical, social and psychological well-being of an individual participating in research is not adversely affected by participation in the research. Researchers should strive to protect the rights of those they study, their interests, sensitivities and privacy. Researchers should consider carefully the possibility that the research experience may be a disturbing one, particularly for those who are vulnerable by virtue of factors such as age, social status, or powerlessness and should seek to minimise such disturbances. Researchers should also consider whether or not it is appropriate to offer information about support services (e.g. leaflets about relevant self-help groups);

ii) be sympathetic to the constraints on organisations participating in research and not inhibit their functioning by imposing any unnecessary burdens on them;

iii) base research on the freely given informed consent of those studied in all but exceptional circumstances. (Exceptional in this context relates to exceptional importance of the topic rather than difficulty of gaining access). Informed consent implies a responsibility on the part of the researchers to explain as fully as possible, and in terms meaningful to participants, what the research is about, who is undertaking and financing it, why it is being undertaken, and how any research findings are to be disseminated. Researchers should also make clear that participants have the right to refuse permission or withdraw from involvement in research whenever and for whatever reason they wish. Participants' consent should be informed, voluntary and continuing, and researchers need to check that this is the case. Research participants have the right to withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason without adverse consequences. Research participants should be informed about how far they will be afforded anonymity and confidentiality. Researchers should pay special attention to these matters when participation is sought from children, young, or vulnerable people, including consideration of the need for additional consent from an adult responsible for the child at the time participation is sought. It is not considered appropriate to assume that penal and care institutions can give informed consent on research on young people's behalf. The young people themselves must be consulted. Furthermore, researchers should give regard for issues of child protection and make provision for the disclosure of abuse. Researchers should consider the possibility of discussing research findings with participants and those who are the subject of the research;

iv) where there is a likelihood that identifiable data may be shared with other researchers, the potential uses to which the data might be put should be discussed with research participants. Research participants should be informed if data are likely to be placed in archives, including computer archives. Researchers should not breach the 'duty of confidentiality' and not pass on identifiable data to third parties without participants' consent. Researchers should also note that they should work within the confines of current legislation over such matters as intellectual property (including

copyright, trademark, patents), privacy and confidentiality, data protection and human rights. Offers of confidentiality may sometimes be overridden by law: researchers should therefore consider the circumstances in which they might be required to divulge information to legal or other authorities, and make such circumstances clear to participants when seeking their informed consent;

v) researchers should be aware, when conducting research via the Internet, of the particular problems that may arise when engaging in this medium. Researchers should not only be aware of the relevant areas of law in the jurisdictions that they cover but they should also be aware of the rules of conduct of their Internet Service Provider (including JANET - Joint Academic Network). When conducting Internet research, the researcher should be aware of the boundaries between the public and the private domains, and also any legal and cultural differences across jurisdictions. Where research might prejudice the legitimate rights of respondents, researchers should obtain informed consent from them, honour assurances of confidentiality, and ensure the security of data transmission. They should exercise particular care and consideration when engaging with children and vulnerable people in Internet research;

vi) researchers should be aware of the additional difficulties that can occur when undertaking comparative or cross-national research, involving different jurisdictions where codes of practice are likely to differ.

5. Relationships with Sponsors

Researchers should:

i) seek to maintain good relationships with all funding and professional agencies in order to achieve the aim of advancing knowledge about criminological issues and to avoid bringing the wider criminological community into disrepute with these agencies. In particular, researchers should seek to avoid damaging confrontations with funding agencies and the participants of research which may reduce research possibilities for other researchers;

ii) seek to clarify in advance the respective obligations of funders and researchers and their institutions and encourage written agreements wherever possible. They should recognise their obligations to funders whether contractually defined or only the subject of informal or unwritten agreements .They should attempt to complete research projects to the best of their ability within contractual or unwritten agreements. Researchers have a responsibility to notify the sponsor/funder of any proposed departure from the terms of reference;

iii) seek to avoid contractual/financial arrangements which emphasise speed and economy at the expense of good quality research and they should seek to avoid restrictions on their freedom to disseminate research findings . In turn, it is hoped that funding bodies/sponsors will recognise that intellectual and professional freedom is of paramount importance and that they will seek to ensure that the dissemination of research findings is not unnecessarily delayed or obstructed because of considerations unrelated to the quality of the research.