Development of Violence Across the Lifespan: A Preliminary Model

By

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Abstract

Violence has serious implications for both the victim and the wider community. The current adult rehabilitation programmes accept violent offenders ranged from 20 years and older. This age range could have serious rehabilitation consequences, as a twenty year olds violence and violence related goals may differ substantially to a 70 year old. For this reason an understanding of the development of violence and violence related goals can aide rehabilitation and punitive policies. A review of recent research highlights there are many methodological and empirical gaps in the development of violence whereby the current research aimed to assuage this issue. The current research used grounded theory to develop a model on the development of violence over the life-course. For this research twelve men currently incarcerated at Rimutaka Prison in a violence rehabilitation unit were interviewed. This method developed two models. The *"Influences on violence development*" model outlines how environment and personal choices had an impact on the development of violence. The *"development of violence"* model outlines the increasing severity and frequency of violence over time, and the increasing complexity of violence related goals. This model is nested within the influences on violence development model. Comparing the current models to Loeber et al's (1993) pathways model, and Sampson and Laub's life-course perspective on offending, has found support for both models. Thus this model's theoretical value lies within its ability to draw together other areas of research and provide a holistic understanding of both *how* and *why* violence develops. One implication of these models is the understanding of the varying influences of environment on violence, upon both different individuals and different ages. This implies that rehabilitation should perhaps follow a more individual based focus. There are many limitations to the research, the most salient one being lack of saturation in the model and low sample size.

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1. Introduction

Violence is present almost daily in the news, with consequences ranging from distress to serious injury, psychological trauma or even death. In New Zealand, approximately one in ten people have reported being a victim of violence (Ministry of Justice, 2003), and this rate is higher in teens where every second high school student been victimised across twelve months (Adolescent Health Research Group, 2003). In 2009, violence accounted for 14.5% of total reported criminal activity (Statistics NZ, 2009).

Imprisonment is a common consequence to violent acts. However, after a 36 month follow-up, 67% of offenders who have been incarcerated for a violent offence have reoffended (Department of Corrections, 2007). Rehabilitation programmes within the community or prison exist as a preventative step towards reoffending. Polaschek and Collie (2004) have shown that violence can be reduced with rehabilitation programmes, and evaluations of two violent rehabilitation programmes in NZ have shown promising results. Berry (1999) and Polaschek, Wilson, Townsend, and Daly (2005) examined violence reconviction rates for the Montgomery House Violence Prevention Project (MHVP) and Te Whare Manaakitanga (TWM, previously known as the violence prevention unit) respectively. MHVP has shown a violence reconviction rate of only 25% for programme completers versus 42% for non-completers over a 16 month period; TWM had a violence reconviction rate of 32% of treated individuals compared to 63% of the untreated sample. Many violence rehabilitation programmes focus on group based treatment of adults from a variety of ages (for example TWM which takes individuals who are 20 or older). Although grouping individuals of varying age in a programme can save on resources, the rehabilitatory effect of this is questionable. A 20 year olds lifestyle is very different to that of a 70 year old; therefore their violence could be motivated differently. It would be expected that violence, or violence related goals, would change over time to accommodate biological and social changes experienced throughout the lifespan. Examining whether violence changes over time could have both social and rehabilitation implications. It could help guide sentencing, or rehabilitation could be more age tailored.

The current research is an exploratory study analysing violent offender's accounts of their violence, with the aim of developing a model exploring the patterns of how violence may develop across the lifespan. These models and the use of offender accounts will have implications for rehabilitation practices, where programmes can be tailored to individuals in different stages of their lives. The introduction is broken into three sections. Firstly the introduction will focus on developmental aspects of violent offending and current research which has examined the development of violence across the lifespan. Secondly goals and motives behind violence are considered important to the research as this may also develop across the lifespan and influence violent actions. The third section of the introduction will be a brief overview of biological and social changes throughout the lifespan which may influence violence.

1.1 Development of violence

There are many theories on the aetiology of offending, and much research on the development of offending behaviour; but only a small number of these focus explicitly on violence. There are some noteworthy theories which help describe the aetiological background or research into offending behaviour, which can be related to violence. Further research has examined specific aspects of violence which may develop, such as frequency, severity, or violence type. This current chapter will be a descriptive chapter focussing explicitly on the violent actions and how they change.

1.1.1 Aggression, learnt or innate?

Bandura (1977) developed a theory of aggressive behaviour focussing on social influences; social learning theory. This theory is based on the assumption that aggression is learned not innate. This learning involves imitation of family, acquaintances and the media. The behaviour is then reinforced by peer acceptance or social reaction. Huesmann (1998) presented that early social learning informs the development of schemas and scripts. Schemas are where the mind organises concepts, events or people into categories for quick access of knowledge; scripts are the organisation of behavioural repertoires for automatic responses to schemas (Huesmann, 1998). These two theories can be combined to develop a comprehensive account of how some people can "learn" to be violent. A person who has learnt aggressive behaviours during early development (Bandura, 1983) is more likely to have aggressive schemas and scripts than pro-social problem solving ones

(Huesmann, 1998). Thus these people are more likely to activate an aggressive script to a problem rather than a pro-social script.

Contrary to the above theories is recent research such as by Tremblay and colleagues (2004). They argued that aggression is present and normative during infancy. Aggression during infancy is seen as functional aggression, such as when a baby wants something or needing attention (Hay, 2004; Stouthamer-Loeber & Loeber, 1988; Tremblay, 2000) as the infant has not yet developed behavioural controls to act pro-social (Stouthamer-Loeber & Loeber, 1988). It is also seen as normative, whereby socialisation processes are hypothesised to reduce this aggressive behaviour by the age of five (Tremblay, 2000).

On the surface it seems that the two theories are mutually exclusive. However Bandura's (1977; 1983) social learning theory of aggression states that an individual learns aggression via observation, imitation and social reinforcement. If the role-models are antisocial in nature, this could reinforce the early aggressive behaviour in infancy discussed by Tremblay and colleagues (2004), and also limit pro-social socialisation. This is an important factor in the development of violence, as much of the research has focussed on children and adolescents (for the purpose of this thesis, an adolescent refers to 13-19 years old) and assumes violence is learnt (Tremblay, 2000), however the current research highlights that aggression may be both learnt and innate and developed in response to socialisation.

1.1.2 Developmental research on aggression

The previous section highlighted that aggression and violence can be unlearnt or reinforced during early infancy, however there is very little research tying the link between early aggression becoming unlearnt and then re-learnt later in life (Loeber & Hay, 1997; Tremblay, 2000). Instead, most of the research understanding developmental aggression focuses on aggression starting around five years of age (Tremblay, 2000). Understanding how aggression may develop over the lifespan involves examining age at onset, prevalence of offences, and its persistence over time (Loeber & Hay, 1997). Furthermore to examine change in violence over time we must look at seriousness, which also includes violence in peers and weapon use (Wells & Horney, 2001).

Research on the development of aggression compares differences in the development of an aggressive individual to a non-aggressive individual (Loeber at al., 1993). This type of research identifies the early risk factors for aggression

(Farrington, 2003; Loeber, Wei, Stouthamer-Loeber, Huizinga & Thornberry, 1998), the effects of lifestyle and events important for individual changes (Farrington, 2003), and enables prediction of future offending pathways (Loeber et al., 1998). Trajectory studies focus on aggregate frequencies of offending behaviour across age, identifying and comparing different groups of offenders. In a study of individuals in the Dunedin Multidisciplinary cohort, Moffitt (1993) found two trajectories of offending behaviour: those who only offended during adolescence were coined adolescent-limited (AL) offenders; those who maintained a high level of chronic offending through to adulthood were termed life-course persistent (LCP) offenders. According to research (e.g Farrington, 1986; Moffitt 1993) LCP offenders make up 5-6% of the population and are characterised by an adverse reciprocal relationship of neuropsychological disturbances and difficult temperament with inconsistent parenting. For the purpose of the current study, the following chapters will only focus on LCP offenders as they are more likely to have been convicted for a violent offence than AL offenders (Farrington, Ttofi & Coid, 2009; Moffitt, 1993). Furthermore to examine the development of violence, AL offending would not be a sufficient timeframe.

1.1.2.1 Violence stability and frequency across the lifespan

Research has shown that a violent act at a young age can predict violence into adulthood (Farrington, 1986). For example Kokko and Pulkkinen (2005) showed that aggressive behaviour during adolescence was strongly related to violence at age 36 in men. Both studies highlight that violence has the potential to remain part of a person's behavioural repertoire throughout the lifespan. One of the major findings examining offending behaviour using trajectory studies was the increased frequency of offences around 17 to 18 years of age (Farrington, 1986; Fonagy, 2003; Laub & Sampson, 2003; Sampson & Laub ,1993; Moffit, 1993). Research highlighted that this was both due to an increase in aggregated number of offenders and also an increase in number of offences carried out by individuals (Le Blanc & Fréchette, 1989). Further research showed that violence follows a similar trajectory. For example Farrington, Loeber and Jolliffe (2008) examined trajectories of offending behaviour of males in the Pittsborough youth cohort. This study showed that violent acts were carried out with highest frequency between the ages of 17-19, and decreasing at 20-25 years of age. Sampson & Laub (2003) found a similar pattern in violence; however the frequency of violent acts peaked later at around the mid-

twenties, and decreased in an erratic fashion. Elliott and colleagues (Elliott, 1994; Elliott, Huizinga & Morse, 1987) and Marcus (2009) examined the prevalence of serious violence only. Elliot and colleague's (1994; Elliott et al. 1987) self-report study found that frequency of violence was highest at 17 years old and had declined substantially by 21, decreasing to a frequency below that of a twelve year old. Marcus's (2009) study found the highest frequency was two years later, around age 19.

Interestingly there is very limited research extending trajectory studies to beyond late 20's. In Moffitt's (1993) LCP theory, she stated that these offenders were likely to continue offending unless an important event such as death or failing health reduces their offending rate. This was also supported by Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) who claimed offenders are innately criminal and this is resistant to change. However research such as by Sampson and Laub (2003), has found that no matter the type of offender, offending always decreased in frequency with age.

Previous research shows that there tends to be an increase in offending behaviour during adolescence, and that violent behaviour also follows this pattern, however at a slightly older age – late teens/early 20's. Research extending trajectories into late adulthood has highlighted that offenders tended to decrease offending behaviour. This highlights that there is a developmental change in violent behaviour across the lifespan. Later in the introduction I will look at reasons for why changes in the development of violence may occur.

1.1.2.2 Violence severity and type over the lifespan

The change in violence frequency during adolescence and into late adulthood highlights that violence has the potential to develop. Therefore it would be prudent to examine whether violence-type also follows a pattern throughout the lifespan.

As Tremblay and colleagues (2004; also see Hay, 2004; Tremblay 2000) stated, aggression is present in infancy. Further research has shown that this type of violence is characterised by utilitarian (self gain) physical aggression, such as over a toy (Hay, 1984). Stouthamer-Loeber and Loeber, (1988) theorised that physical aggression is used due to lack of access to other (pro-social) means of acquisition and that once children develop social skills, physical aggression reduces (Björkqvist, Lagerspetz & Kaukiainen, 1992). Moffitt (1993) suggested that aggressive behaviour can develop in severity from childhood to adulthood, such as; from kicking and biting at four to robbery and rape at 22. Using trajectory studies Farrington et al.

(2008) compared the ages at which frequency of different offences peaked. They found that prevalence of property crime peaked at a slightly earlier age than moderate violence, which in turn peaked at an earlier age than serious violence. They therefore suggested offending has the potential to develop, where property offences preceded moderate crime or violence, which in turn preceded serious crimes or violence.

Le Blanc and Fréchette (1989) examined adjudicated adolescents on a variety of measures, and Le Blanc (1996) extended this study to 30 years old. Their studies found that offending became more sophisticated with increasing age. Examples of this included: victims of violence were usually known to an adolescence offender – but victim anonymity increased with age; weapon use and offence planning also increased with age. Increasing anonymity and weapon use suggests that when younger, offending behaviour is opportunistic, but when older offending became increasingly planned (Le Blanc & Fréchette, 1989). Finally alcohol use increased around late teens, which corresponded with increasingly disorganised and impulsive offending behaviour (Le Blanc & Fréchette, 1989). Le Blanc and Fréchette (1989; Le Blanc, 1996) finally concluded that with age, crime becomes more 'criminal'; implying that offenders increasingly went in search of offences, and offences became increasingly planned serious. This increase in offence severity with age was further supported by Loeber et al. (1993) who investigated boys in the Pittsborough youth sample up to 16 years old; and by Le Blanc, Côtè and Loeber (1991) who compared a delinquent to non-delinquent sample.

The previous studies examined all types of offending, Loeber, Keenan and Zhang (1997) carried out a study focussing on the development of aggression. They looked at the age of onset for, minor aggression (annoying others, bullying), physical fighting (fighting and gang fighting), and more serious violence such as rape. They found that less severe violence almost always preceded severe violence. Age of onset for minor aggression ranged between three to 16 years, physical fighting followed at ten years and older, and serious violence started from eleven onwards. Elliott (1994) supported this finding where he examined aggravated assault, robbery and rape, finding that these three offences also increased in seriousness.

Both co-offending and weapon use also changed across the lifespan. Co-offending was especially prominent in Moffitt's (1993) AL offenders, where she considered that AL offenders could be imitating LCP offenders. Further studies

showed that this increase in offending behaviour could be due to adolescents increased likelihood to offend in peer groups than solo (Reiss & Farrington, 1991), and because adolescents tend to associate with people who are similarly aggressive (Cairns & Cairns, 1994). Adolescents who offended alone were more likely to become LCP offenders or engage in more serious violence (Reiss & Farrington, 1991). Offending in groups also impacts on the severity of violence: violence can be more serious as this violence often leads to injury and weapon use; adolescences are less likely to back down from a violent act due to its potential detrimental effect on reputation; and finally it can lead to an escalation of violence with each participant trying to outdo the other (Reiss & Farrington, 1991).

Weapon use is characteristic of violence in the early 20's (Le Blanc & Fréchette, 1989). However there is limited research on the development of weapon use. It has also been shown to increase the severity of violence; use of a weapon increased the person's chances to attack regardless of intent to injure, and weapon use increased the victim's chance of injury (Wells & Horney, 2001).

Finally, with the increase in frequency of violence during adolescence, there is an increase in the variety of offences. With time the number of offences an offender carries out decreases, implying they are more likely to specialise (Piquero, Paternoster, Mazerolle, Brame & Dean, 1999). Very few studies have examined this and its implications, and to my knowledge, there is no research examining whether this specialisation with age occurs with violent offending.

1.1.3 Summary

The current research highlights that there is a potential for violence to develop and change across the lifespan. Violence increases in frequency during adolescence, and there is a tendency for violent actions to increase in severity. However research has not shown whether this increase in violence severity stops or deescalates with age (Piquero, Farrington, & Blumstein, 2003). The research often does not focus on violence alone, or on offenders with a high number of violent offences, thus not necessarily identifying the development of violence. Much of the research involves snapshots of aggregate samples offending behaviour, this method provides collective data on groups however loses individual information. Finally it does not account for the offenders' perceptions of how their violence changes.

Although research has shown that violence changes, there is more to the violence than the actions alone. Motivation and goals directing violence can help

provide insight into why we see changes in violent actions, or have an influence on these changes. The following section will focus on these aspects of violence.

1.2 Goals and motivation to violence

Much research focussed on *what* makes an individual likely to become an offender, but is limited into examining *why* offenders offend, such as examining goals (Birkbeck & LaFree, 1993; Carroll, Houghton, Hattie & Durkin, 2001). Violence related goals provide motivations behind offending. If violence related goals changes across the lifespan, it would be useful in providing insight into why violence changes across time, and also help direct rehabilitation of offenders.

1.2.1. Theories of goal directed offending

Some theorists believed that offenders are innately criminal and therefore their motives behind offending behaviour are irrelevant to offender rehabilitation (Gottfriedsson & Hirschi 1990); conversely there is the school of thought which takes the view that behaviour – including offender behaviour – is goal oriented (Locke, 1991; Todorov & Bargh, 2002; Wood, Gove & Cochran, 1994) and that violence is a conscious choice of offenders (Agnew, 1985).

One theory which captures the latter opinion is rational choice theory (RCT). RCT states that offenders weigh the costs and benefits of offending behaviour, and carry out the action which maximises their perceived benefit (Cornish, 1993; Kiser & Hechter, 1998). This is evidenced by various studies, for example Becker and Mehlkop (2006), who found that burglaries were more likely to be committed if the risk for punishment was lower than perceived gain. However this theory has encountered criticism (Kiser & Hechter, 1998). Firstly RCT failed to take into account the influence of environment upon behaviour (Carroll et al. 2001) and secondly it did not account for impulsive behaviour (Kiser & Hechter, 1998). Rational choice theory implied that behaviour was always thought over, however situations where an offender violently lashes out and thinks afterwards does not fit into this theory.

Similar to RCT is Hirschi's (1969) social control theory (SCT), where attachment to peers, family and the community can influence offending behaviour. There are four facets to SCT; the opinion of others, decision to act, time and energy spent on action, and whether the actions are socially reinforced. Similar to RCT, SCT stated the costs and investments are weighed for a certain action (Marcus,

2008), however unlike RCT, the costs and benefits of SCT are social in nature and are to maximise pleasure. Sampson and Laub's (2003) informal social controls (ISC; the collective response to behaviours, especially when behaviours do not follow the norm of the group) and turning points supported this theory, where they stated that turning points are important to the individual due to the ISC and social bonds they have on the individual. Social bonds are the connection a person feels towards society, family or friends.

Both theories above describe offending behaviour as systematic and thought out. However a review by Todorov and Bargh (2002) established that aggressive behaviour can be carried out automatically. Frequent goal directed behaviour carried out in response to similar scenarios and environmental inputs, can eventually make the goal automatic (similar to the development of scripts and schemas by Huesmann, 1998). Furthermore frequent exposure to violence, such as witnessing or experiencing it, can also help develop these automatic goals (Todorov & Bargh, 2002). Thus these goals are implicit and the costs and benefits of aggression are not considered.

Berkowitz (1998) revised a drive model of aggression which can account for both impulsive violence and automatic goal processing in violence. This model, Cognitive Neo-Associationist Model of Aggression, has been developed from his previous revision of the frustration-aggression hypothesis (Berkowitz, 1989). This model describes aggression as a behaviour carried out to reduce frustration (Berkowitz, 1989). Frustrations can include obstruction of a goal (therefore creating frustration; Berkowitz, 1989), or a response to unpleasant situations such as pain (Agnew, 1985; Berkowitz, 1998). The frustration experienced leads to a build up of 'aggressive energy' which causes a person to act out aggressively (Berkowitz, 1989), or activates the physiological fight or flight response (Berkowitz, 1998). Frustration is the functional role which leads the person to develop other methods to achieve the obstructed goal – which for some people can be via violence (Berkowitz, 1998). The activation of responses in relation to frustrations can be influenced by factors such as genetics, or early development and learning – this learning can influence cognitive processes such as access to schemas and decision making. Unlike rational-choice theory, this model does not find reinforcement contingencies are important - and cognitive functions are not necessarily present in the aggressive action. Instead, it is also considered possible to act out impulsively in accordance with the fight or flight

response (Berkowitz, 1998). This theory however does not define ‘aggressive energy’, or what happens to this energy when the person experiencing it does not act out aggressively (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994; Blackburn, 1993), neither does it describe who will react and who will not (Beck, 1999), finally it does not describe the frustration behind instrumental aggression (aggression for self-gain; Beck, 1999; Berkowitz, 1989). There is also limited research examining the internal fight or flight mechanisms which Berkowitz states are important (Beck, 1999).

1.2.2. Hostile and instrumental aggression distinction

The theories described above opened an avenue for distinguishing between two different types of violent behaviour; hostile (reactive or defensive) aggression similar to the cognitive neo-association hypothesis (Berkowitz, 1993; Vitaro, Brendgen & Barker, 2006), and instrumental (proactive or offensive) aggression similar to RCT and SCT (Vitaro et al. 2006). This discrimination between aggressive acts has been widely debated (see Fontaine, 2007 who argues for the distinction, and Bushman & Anderson, 2001 who argue against), however much of the research which has come out of this distinction has been valuable for examining goals behind offending behaviour.

Hostile aggression occurs through physiological activation to aversive cues, and often results in impulsive (or automatic) aggression carried out directly following the provocation; furthermore this aggression is often out of anger or fear (Bushman & Anderson, 2001; Fontaine, 2007; Vitaro et al. 2006). The goal of this aggression is often retaliation or reducing threat by hurting the person (Bushman & Anderson, 2001; Vitaro et al. 2006).

Instrumental aggression is planned; the goal is self-gain and in anticipation of rewards (Bushman & Anderson, 2001; Fontaine, 2007; Vitaro et al. 2006). This type of aggression is usually carried out without anger (Fontaine, 2007).

The major distinction between the two forms of aggression is that hostile aggression is in reaction to external cues, where instrumental aggression is to internal cues (Fontaine, 2007). Fontaine and Dodge (1996) stated that there are different goal development processes behind hostile and instrumental aggression, and the expectations following aggression depends on the type. Children who were fundamentally hostile aggressors were likely to attribute hostile biases to situations, and not likely to expect positive outcomes following their aggressive behaviour, thus highlighting that their aggression was not for self-gain (Crick & Dodge, 1996;

Dodge, Lochman, Harnish, Bates, & Pettit, 1997). Conversely children who carried out instrumental aggression were likely to expect positive outcomes following their aggression. Furthermore they were unlikely to consider relational/social goals, preferring self gain goals. Finally, instrumental aggressors were also more likely to endorse the use of violence compared to hostile aggressors (Crick & Dodge, 1996; Dodge et al. 1997).

Dodge and colleagues (1997) found that there are distinct developmental pathways for the two types of aggression. Individuals who carried out hostile aggression were characterised by early physical abuse, where individuals who carried out instrumental aggression had aggressive role models who used aggression to problem-solve.

Although there is much research on the distinction between the two types of aggression, research has shown that both can be present in an individual (Barker, Tremblay, Nagin, Vitaro, & Lacourse, 2006) and there is limited research on how the types of aggression may vary within the individual (Vitaro et al. 2006). Later this chapter will focus on whether these types of aggression can change across the lifespan. Although the distinction between hostile and instrumental aggression is widely used in sentencing processes, most of the research on these types is done with children or adolescents (Kempes, Matthys, de Vries & van Engeland, 2005), highlighting the need for research into this area to span into adulthood.

Bushman and Anderson (2001) disagreed with the distinction between instrumental and hostile aggression. They stated it is difficult to identify intent behind an aggressive act; furthermore both forms can be present in one aggressive act (Bushman & Anderson (2001; Vitaro et al. 2006) and there is high correlation between the two distinctions (Vitaro et al. 2006). Instead Bushman and Anderson (2001) described two terms to define different levels of goals behind aggressive behaviour – proximate and ultimate goals. The proximate goal is the immediate intention to do harm, and the ultimate goal is the goal wished to achieve by doing harm. For example in a revenge attack, the proximate goal is harm and the primary goal is revenge (Bushman & Anderson, 2001). According to the hostile and instrumental distinction, the primary goal of hostile aggression is harm, Bushman and Anderson (2001) argue that this may not be the case, as the primary goal may be reduction of anger, and harm is their method.

The verdict is still out on which distinction is most appropriate. Both definitions are relevant for the current study. Later we will examine the research which examines instrumental and hostile aggression within the individual, and whether this changes across the lifespan. Furthermore the distinction between proximate and ultimate goals is also relevant to the current study, it would be interesting to see if there are individuals who distinguish between the two types of goals, and whether this ability develops. The term proximate can also be used as part of a definition of violence, where the proximate goal is harm, and area of interest is to see whether the ultimate goal changes over time.

1.2.3. Hedonistic and utilitarian goals

Another distinction between goals and offending behaviour is hedonistic versus utilitarian goals. These terms are especially used by Le Blanc (1996) and Le Blanc and Frechétte (1989). Utilitarian goals are goals covering personal gain, where hedonism is for pleasure or fun. Agnew (1990) found that violence was generally carried out in response to a situation, and the main goals behind violence were retaliation/revenge (60% of their assaulters) and conflict/fighting, thus suggesting utilitarian goals. This is contradictory to Le Blanc and Frechétte's (1989) research where hedonism was relatively common amongst those who carried out personal attacks (assault without gain); and hedonism was also high amongst aggravated theft or personal larceny. The grouping of utilitarian versus hedonistic goals is important to the current study to examine whether there is a tendency for an individual to focus on one or the other type of violence, or whether both hedonism and utilitarian goals are present within the individual and if it changes across the lifespan. One problem with this dual distinction is whether cathartic goals such as to reduce stress or cope with anger is utilitarian, hedonistic, or both.

1.2.4. Violence-specific goals

Various distinctions between goals behind violent offending have been described. These have tried to describe; subsets of violent people, a specific goal behind violent offences, or to describe violent individuals in general. These will be described in brief to highlight the range of goals behind offending behaviour.

One largely researched goal of aggression involved public perception and personal identity. For example Baumeister, Smart and Bodin (1999) developed a theory of violence based on identity and ego. This theory postulated that aggressive men have high self-esteem or ego, and use aggression to counter any threat to their

ego. Furthermore those with this self image felt they were superior and had a sense of entitlement. This means they felt it was their right to take what they wanted. Another self-image theory was developed by Carroll et al. (2001). They researched violent behaviour in delinquents and formed a theory where adolescent violence was in response to reputation enhancing goals. This theory states that adolescent violence was carried out in the vicinity of peers and adjusted to their responses. Furthermore the risk associated with aggression was seen to build their ego and make them look better to their peers.

Further support for peers influencing violence-related goals is by Farrington (1993). He found that goals behind violence during adolescence varied between whether the offender was alone or in a group. When alone, violence was to relieve feelings of stress or tension, and reactive to a provocation. Violence carried out amongst peers usually involved helping out a friend and less likely to be carried out in anger.

Further peer related goals involves vicarious revenge investigated by Lickel and colleagues (Lickel, Miller, Stenstrom, Denson, & Schmader, 2006). In their research they stated that strength of belonging to a group influences intergroup revenge. If a person within their group gets harmed, those with in that group will seek revenge upon any individual within the group belonging to the harm-doer – thus vicarious revenge.

Retaliation and revenge have also been found as important goals to violence in many other studies (Agnew, 1990; Luckenbill, 1977; Wood et al 1994). Further goals for violence research include power and control, fun/excitement, financial gain, peer influence/pressure (Toch, 1992; Wood et al. 1994), and conflict/fighting (Agnew, 1990).

Although there is much research on different goals which could influence violent behaviour there is limited evidence of whether these goals are limited to specific developmental phases of the participant, or if violent offenders specialise amongst a few goals. The following section focuses on goals and research examining whether they change across the lifespan, and research on specialisation in goals behind violence.

1.2.5 Research on the development of goals

During the lifespan there are many developmental and social changes, for example pressure to do well in school develops into pressure to get married and find

a good job. With this change in social pressure also comes a change in biology, such as the hormone changes during puberty. These changes affect our goals throughout the lifespan, for example a child's goal may be to obtain a toy, as an adolescent the goal may be to impress friends, and as an adult to own a house. It would therefore make sense to assume that goals behind offending behaviour and violence would also change across the lifespan.

The physically aggressive behaviour shown during infancy is largely due to a desire for food or due to discomfort (Hay, 1984). It is assumed its goal is to signal to the caregiver to remove the discomfort, and therefore considered utilitarian aggression. With socialisation the child learns more pro-social methods to reduce this discomfort (Stouthamer-Loeber & Loeber, 1988). In aggressive children Björkqvist, Lagerspetz and Kaukiainen (1992) showed that physical aggression develops into relational aggression (non-physical aggression).

Adolescent offending is often hedonistic and done in the vicinity of friends or a group of peers. It has been shown that adolescents often carried out violence for reputation, which could be due to peer influence or witnesses (Carroll et al. 2001). Kempes and colleagues (2005) stated that because children are still developing behavioural and planning controls, they would be more likely to carry out hostile aggression; instrumental aggression would occur later after development of skills pertaining to planning and forethought. Research has partially supported this notion highlighting that adolescent violence is a mixture of hostile and instrumental violence (Barker et al. 2006), and developed into slightly more instrumental aggression with age. This research however only examined adolescents and therefore instrumental aggression can become more predominant at a later age. The mixture of hostile and proactive aggression during adolescence is thought to be due to the frequency of adolescent offending being so high that the range of offending types is also very high and varied (Piquero, et al 1999).

During adulthood also it is theorised that offenders learn outcomes of certain behaviours and tended to use the behaviours which suited their needs the most (Kempes et al. 2005). Kempes and colleagues (2005) also stated offenders' goals behind violence changed in respect to their needs and that their violence also developed into what has worked best for them. This is supported by some research which highlighted men's offending behaviour developing from predominantly hedonistic and hostile aggression, to instrumental and utilitarian aggression with

increasing age (Le Blanc and Fréchette, 1989); and also supported by Kempes et al's review (2005) who found that planned aggression increased in adulthood. According to Vitaro and colleagues (2006) the research into the distinction and frequency of the two forms of aggression is insufficient to draw a conclusion on its prevalence in adulthood.

Studies carried out by Le Blanc (1994; Le Blanc and Frechétte, 1989) are among the few to have examined how goals behind offending can change over the lifespan – from childhood to 30. Their study found slightly different developmental changes for different types of violence from childhood to adolescence and into early twenties. With increasing age, hedonism became the more prevalent goal behind personal attacks (assault without specific personal gain). This violence became more impulsive and less utilitarian into early twenties, highlighted by the offender's increasing random selection of victims and lack of weapon use. This increased violence was also characterised by alcohol use which could be a cause in the increasing impulsivity. Aggravated theft and personal larceny (defined by theft against businesses versus theft against individuals) changed from high hedonistic goals during early adolescence and almost entirely replaced by utilitarian goals into early twenties.

1.2.6 Summary

Although there is research highlighting goals and motivation behind violence, much of the research focuses on adolescents. We are unsure if the reputation goals described earlier carry on into adulthood, furthermore we are unsure about violence goals beyond 30 years of age. What we do know is that in many cases goals may become more instrumental with time; however the research is also undecided about to what extent. Further research would involve examining goal directed behaviour in violence more in depth, especially beyond 30 years. Furthermore, it has often been mentioned that intent is difficult to examine in aggression (Bushman & Anderson, 2001) therefore asking the men for their opinion on intent and how this may develop over time, may provide insight into the development of violence.

1.3 Biological and social changes across the lifespan

Until now research reflects that there may be a change in violence with age. This section examines normative biological and social processes which may influence changes in violent behaviour.

A person experiences both social and biological changes throughout their lifespan, both of which can influence violence. Paus (2005) hypothesises that the different rates of growth for different sections of the brain can influence aggression at different ages. For example the pre-frontal cortex (PFC) continues developing into mid-twenties, and is responsible for empirical reasoning, planning and decision making (Kalat, 2004). This region of the brain has been implicated in offending behaviour, where the PFC volume of people with antisocial personality disorder was 11% less than control participants (Raine, Lencz, Bihrle, LaCasse, & Colletti, 2000). We can therefore predict that late development of the PFC could influence offending behaviour between adolescence and adulthood, for example this could play a part in the increase in planning with age described earlier. Also during puberty males experience an influx of testosterone which has also loosely been tied with an increase in aggression (Archer, 1991).

Moffitt (1993) stated that *"…life-course-persistent antisocial behaviour emphasises the constant process of reciprocal interaction between personal traits and environmental reactions to them"* (p684). Environmental factors include change in social pressure with developing age. Emergence into adulthood used to coincide with finishing school and marriage, however lately higher education removes the clear cut emergence into adulthood (Arnett, 2000). Because of this shift in emerging adulthood, one theory states that this will change adolescent identity formation, leading to sensation seeking such as driving intoxicated or unprotected sex (Arnett, 2000), or underage behaviour to try mimic adult behaviour such as drinking. Furthermore with this emerging adulthood teenagers are less monitored by adults and therefore have more freedom to offend (Marcus, 2009).

With age people also learn control over their emotions (Kochanska, Murray, & Harlan, 2000). This increase in control may reduce impulsive violence or increase the level of planning in aggression (Dodge et al., 1997). Emerging adulthood also sees personality developments, which also influence the development of violence (Marcus, 2009). Research has shown a decrease in anger (Costa & McCrae, 1994), and decrease in sensation seeking (Costa & McCrae, 1994) from adolescence into

adulthood, both of which could lead to the decrease in violence (Marcus, 2008) shown by the trajectory studies.

While researching desistance, Sampson and Laub (2005; Laub & Sampson, 2003) found three events which reduced offending. They named these events "turning points". Their research found that there were three major turning points which helped a man decide to desist from offending, these included; joining the military, marriage, or employment. According to Sampson and Laub, these turning points provided new social controls which influence offending behaviour. Social controls are the strength of ties a person feels to peers, family, social groups or the community. Sampson and Laub have also described turning points which can lead to an increase in offending behaviour. Accordingly Stouthamer-Loeber et al (2004) found that school and employment were important factors in desistance, whereas Marcus (2009) and Farrington (2007) did not find any effect of employment on desistance. Marcus (2009) also noted that marriage was a strong predictor of desistance. He stated that marriage may signify an endpoint to the search for a mate and thus decrease the inter-males competition. Furthermore the cost of violence following finding a mate may be too high. Further research needs to examine whether the effect and range of turning points develop across time.

Finally evolutionary psychology deems that violence would be at its highest when competition for females is fiercest (Daly & Wilson, 1990), which is shown by the increase in violence during late teens, early 20's.

1.3.1 Summary

Although brief, the main purpose of this section was to highlight that there are hormonal and brain developments throughout a person's development which may influence propensity for violence. Furthermore this section aims to highlight social factors and turning points which are also shown to influence violence. The main focus of this research is the development of violence and what changes, however understanding why it may change biologically and socially will help further develop understanding of violence development.

2 Rationale and introduction to grounded theory

2.1 Rationale

The effect of violent offending in New Zealand has drastic effects on the community and on its victims. Prison and rehabilitation are both used to reduce future violent offending, however have very limited results. One of the reasons for the limited effect of rehabilitation on violent offending could be due to the varying ages of violent offenders in offending programmes. People at different ages have different expectations, social and biological needs, and goals. If goals and needs develop across the lifespan, we can also assume that violence and violence related goals would also develop across the lifespan.

The introduction has shown that there is a body of research which has examined violent offending, and through careful selection of research it was possible to show how violence may develop across the lifespan. However most of the research did not set out to discover the development of violence across the lifespan, but rather other areas of interest such as the development of general offending or violence development at childhood and adolescence. Furthermore those who did examine its development either, compared adolescence to adulthood, used cross sectional analysis, or examined a few time points. These methods often missed the full range of information needed to examine violence development (Le Blanc, Côtè & Loeber, 1991). Because of this, the information gathered on this topic has been rather piecemeal. One area of interest also neglected is the development of violence in relation to development of violence related goals. This is important as changes in violence may be difficult to pinpoint, but underlying violence-related goals could develop – implying that violence also develops. Furthermore, goals can provide information on the motivation behind violence and thus aide rehabilitation. The current research aims to examine the development of violence and violence related goals across the lifespan.

The methodology of recent research mostly used group based analysis and statistical analysis. This has provided strong groundwork for the current research however it also has many limitations. One of the limitations of this method is the loss of individual data (Farrington, 2003). Much of the research which has provided insight into the development of violence sampled general offenders, or the general population. Due to violence offenders having a low base rate, these studies which draw information on violent offenders will have a very limited number of violent

offenders which will limit how well the results generalises to other cohorts. In order to examine the development of violence, offenders with a high frequency of violence need to be researched to draw patterns in offending behaviour. To my knowledge this has not been done.

The final methodological issue found in the development of violence research, is the lack of offender input into the research. Much of the research is heavily focussed on statistics, categories and analysing the chances of people entering different offender pathways. Furthermore it often follows examining official offence records (which often does not capture most of the violent offences; Le Blanc, Côtè & Loeber, 1991), and using a strict interviewing protocol. These methods fail to examine the offender's perception of this development. The offender's perception is important for the current research as this research is directed at rehabilitation programmes. Understanding the offenders point of view will help develop therapist/client rapport and also help guide therapists to ways in rehabilitating offenders.

The current research aims to examine the development of violent offenders, with the intention to reduce the methodological issues mentioned previously. Due to the limited research in this area, this study is an exploratory study aimed to gauge whether there is a developmental aspect to violence and violence related goals. The study will use Grounded theory which is a very prescriptive methodology commonly used for exploratory style research without trying to fit it into preconceived ideas. With relation to this study, this methodology enables us to analyse phenomena (the violent offence) and derive a theory which 'grounded' in the data, using a prescribed method and analyses technique.

2.2 Grounded theory

Much research on the development of violent offending uses a positivist approach, using hypothetico-deductive methodology; one issue with this is that no new ideas or theories can be derived (Rennie, Phillips, & Quartaro, 1988). Qualitative research allows for the exploration of new ideas without imposing researcher bias onto the data.

Qualitative research is the analysis of actions or experiences of people, seeking explanation for why these phenomena occur. Instead of quantifying the dataset numerically, qualitative research focuses on understanding and interpreting

human dialogue, behaviour and relationships. There are many different types of qualitative methodologies, which all follow different strategies, however, the major similarity is the desire to develop further understanding of phenomena through understanding and interpretation related to its context, rather than affirming or declining previously made hypotheses (Elliot, Fischer & Rennie, 1999).

Grounded theory is a structured systematic analysis of data applied to generate a theory, following an inductive or *bottom up* methodology. This method searches for patterns and themes in the data provided, to generate meaning and explanations of the phenomenon researched.

Originally developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967), Strauss and Corbin (1990) have since built upon and created a slightly different version of this methodology which is used in the current study. The difference between the two versions of this methodology is that Glaser (1992) maintains this methodology should be used with no preconceived questions in mind, and that all analysis should be directly from the data only. Strauss and Corbin (1990) find that researchers should be able to use existing information on the topic to help guide the researcher into appropriate data collection and interpretation. An example of this being used in the present study, was where some areas of interest were researched into (such as weapon use) to help guide the interviewing process. However the differences, both sides state that the analysis of the phenomenon should be guided by the data not by the researcher.

The procedure used for the current research was Strauss and Corbin's (1990) version of grounded theory. It follows that each segment of interview is broken down using "constant comparative method" (CCM) into small meaning units called concepts. Concepts can be anything from a segment, phrase, or an entire paragraph in the raw data. These concepts are then grouped together into second order categories by similarities in definitions using CCM. These second order categories can then again be organised into even higher order categories, where the level of abstraction increases through each category. Through this constant grouping and comparing of data, patterns and relationships between categories begin to emerge. Saturation of the data occurs when no more concepts form new categories. Through continuous categorising an overarching category should emerge. The formation of a theory occurs when the highest order categories form an organised structure based

upon the overarching category. This is done by examining relationships amongst categories and memos gathered during the coding process.

Finally once a model is developed, subsequent data analysis should be carried out to see if the data fit.

2.3 Defining violence

Before considering the method of this research, a definition of violence needs to be developed. During the introduction aggression and violence had been used interchangeably depending on the word used by the research described; however for the current research these definitions need to be developed. Some types of aggression are present in everyday life and often condoned; for example aggression on the sports field or law enforcement. For this reason, there needs to be a distinction between socially condoned aggression, aggression not condoned and violence. Aggression is difficult to define, as it is socially constructed and depends on the norm in the country (Bandura, 1983; Berkowitz, 1993; Blackburn, 1993). Commonly the definition used for aggression is the intent to harm another individual either physically or psychologically where the act is not normally socially condoned (Berkowitz, 1993; Blackburn, 1993). Included in this definition is the victims' motivation to avoid the harm (Anderson & Bushman, 2002; Blackburn, 1993; Bushman and Anderson, 2001), however this may not be the case in aggression such as gang wars. Violence has been defined as aggression where the goal is *"extreme harm"* (Anderson & Bushman, 2002, p29) and using illegal force (Blackburn 1993). For the purpose of this research the definition of violence will be aggression where the *proximate* goal (Anderson & Bushman, 2002) is harm, and the harm is considered illegal in New Zealand. Because intent is relevant for the current study, the definition will also include threats and intended violence which was not carried out.

3 Method

3.1 Ethical considerations and permissions

Ethical approval was sought from Victoria University Wellington School of Psychology Ethics Committee (SOPHEC) and the New Zealand Department of corrections before data collection.

3.2 Participants

Twelve male offenders at Te Whare Manaakitanga (TWM) participated in this research. TWM is a rehabilitation unit at Rimutaka Prison, Wellington which incorporates cognitive behavioural therapy to reduce violent offending.

The ages of participants at interview ranged from 24-44 years old, age at first violent conviction ranged between 16-20 years old[1]. The number of violent convictions ranged between 4-28, however only two participants had more than ten violent convictions.

Over half of the cohort identified as being of Maori descent; the rest were Pacific Island or Pakeha/European. Due to the exploratory nature of this research, cultural differences were not specifically included in the study. This is because the aim was to develop a model of violence changing according to the men's opinions, if they mentioned their culture as a part of the development of their violence, it would have been included as a meaning unit during the analysis phase. Before undertaking this research, the cultural advisor of TWM was approached, and asked to verify if this method, my research and approach allowed for cultural sensitivity.

Index offences (offence which they are most recently incarcerated for) were: three wounds with intent to Grievous Body Harm; two assaults; two aggravated robberies; one injuries with intent to injure; one murder and one burglary[2]. Their sentence lengths ranged from three years to life and one was serving a preventative detention sentence.

3.2.1 Participant requirements

As this is a study of how violent offending changes over time, participants were required to have a number of violent offences. However, as participants were

[1] In some cases convictions are not recorded in their conviction history due to being sentenced in the youth court

[2] Although not a violent offence, this person still met the requirements

all in TWM they had at least three violent convictions (one of the eligibility requirements). Other requirements for TWM include; aged twenty years or older, high risk of re-offending, no literary or language barriers, and willing to participate in the Programme (Department of Corrections, 2011).

Participant files were accessed prior to the interview (except for in one case). This is for a number of reasons. Firstly access to this information can be used to guide the interview; secondly the interview may not cover all aspects in their file, including demographics; thirdly, in cases where the integrity of the interview is questionable (for example inconsistent answers), the interview can be compared to file data.

3.3 Materials

3.3.1 Recording equipment

All interviews were recorded on an Olympus DSS recorder with an external microphone. Participants were informed that the interview would be recorded and signed the consent form with this knowledge. The audio data was downloaded onto a secure School of Psychology at Victoria University laboratory computer and transcribed onto a computer using Olympus 2000 transcribing software.

3.3.2 Participant information sheet (Appendix A)

The information sheet included details of the study, confidentiality information and what was required of the participants; participants had the choice if they wanted to keep it. This information sheet was handed out to all participants at the beginning of the interview, and both participant and researcher went over it together. It was also read aloud in some group therapy meetings to recruit volunteers. Following reading the sheet participants and researchers discussed the study and participants were given the opportunity to ask questions. At this point it was stressed that everything they said in this interview was strictly confidential, that this study was independent of the Department of Corrections NZ, that carrying out this study would not affect their sentence and rehabilitation programme, and information given would not be shared with the police or therapeutic staff. Participants were also informed that all identifying factors will be removed from final report so the individual could not be identified in the study.

Participants were informed that all information was kept strictly confidential in accordance to the rules and regulations of the NZ Psychological Association,

whereby this confidentiality could only be breached if the participant exhibited strong intention to either harm himself or another person (this did not happen in any of the interviews).

3.3.3 Participant consent form (appendix B)

Once participants understand the purpose and process of the study, they were required to sign two consent forms (one for the university to keep for five years, and one for their prison file as proof of informed consent required by the Department Of Corrections). The consent form was read out to participants when required. The form stated that the participant understood their role in the study and its purpose, and that the study is voluntary. Also it was ensured that the participant understood that the study is confidential and all raw data will be destroyed after information had been extracted.

The bottom of the form also gave participants the option to receive a summary report of the study if they wanted it, and asked where they will be at time of completion of study so this can be sent out to them.

3.4 Procedure

3.4.1 Institutional co-operation

All the interviews were carried out at TWM at Rimutaka prison. Before the researchers are allowed to come into the unit, they are requested to take part in a powhiri (traditional Maori greeting).

Before interviewing, contact was made with staff about appropriate times to interview which did not interfere with therapy. The therapeutic staff provided insight into selection of the earlier participants, and how to best approach them. After the first few interviews were carried out, I spoke about my research in some therapy sessions and volunteers were asked to come forward. Once participants were selected or had come forward, the guards took them to the interview rooms and monitored the interviews from a (visual only) video camera for safety.

The interviews were carried out in a private interview room, which was situated a small way away from the compound so the interviews were entirely confidential. The rooms were bare except for a table and a couple of chairs, there was also an emergency button near the door.

3.4.2 Participant recruitment

Prison staff determined participant eligibility for the study, and then organised a meeting with the principal researcher. Early on in the interview process, participants were selected by perceived honesty and openness (as described by the therapy staff). This was so that the interviewer could get good interviews to base the research upon, and get eased into the interviewing process. The final participants were selected by speaking in their group therapy sessions, handing out information sheets about the study and asking volunteers to come forward. Two participants volunteered to be interviewed after having met the researcher at one of the prison gatherings and having spoken about the research, and another had heard about the study from another participant. Of those who were approached, two declined to be interviewed. Reasons for declining to be interviewed were; feeling he had nothing of importance to provide to the study (although he was reassured that this is not the case, that every person spoken to has useful information). The second person declined to be interviewed due to lack of interest in the study.

No interviews had to be terminated due to extreme distress. One interview was only partially used due to dishonesty issues (where file and interview data did not match).

3.4.3 Interviews

Before the current research was carried out, conviction history and offence information was gained from 40 male violent offenders who had participated in the Violence Prevention Programme at TWM. When entering this programme offenders are required to sign an agreement that this file data may be used in research. This data was used as a guide for the range of questions to be used for the study and therefore was not used in the analysis.

The first two interviews were conducted with an experienced clinical psychologist present. This is to allow the interviewer to learn the interviewing process.

The interview was a semi-structured interview. A semi structured interview allows for flexibility and free-flow of conversation, to keep the dialogue natural and to allow free unbiased recall (Shea, 1998). Every interview followed a structured beginning and similar lead on into the main body of the interview. The interview began with discussing the information sheet and related questions, then signing the consent form. The participants were offered a pen and sheet of paper to create a

timeline of events if they wished. Sometimes the researcher plotted on the timeline instead. Participants were asked to mention any events in their lives which were of significant importance to them, and to plot it on the timeline. This technique has been suggested by Shea (1998) as it allows the participant to relax and builds rapport. The plotting of other significant events also can be used as an anchor point to help remember certain offences. Some participants plotted on the timeline themselves, others preferred not to.

Once this discussion was exhausted, participants were all asked "at what age did you leave high school". This neutral question was chosen as it provides good anchorage to start a list of questions such as "why?", "what were you like at school?" which can often build into speaking about their earliest violence. From here the interviews flowed depending on what the participants said. Generally the interviews followed a sort of timeline, or went through major phases in the person's life.

Previous research and examining files of previous TWM participants developed some areas of interest which would be relevant to the topic. These areas included "co-offenders", "weapons", "offence", "affect", "age", and "victims". These categories were used as a guide to help the interviewer extract as much information as possible from the participants. As more interviews were analysed, more categories were added to the list, such as "provocation" and "catalysts" for certain behaviour. This information was also used to create a diagram which was shown to participants if they struggled to speak freely and enabled them to have concrete examples of what to talk about. This diagram was not used on every occasion due to fear of leading the participant.

The main style of questioning used was open ended questions. This is to allow the participant to elaborate on the topics without any bias or input from the interviewer (Shea, 1998). Open ended questions often tended to allow the participant to go off topic, in these situations, closed-ended questions were used to get the participant back on track. These types of questions were also used when requiring specific information on certain topics. Questions were also repeated later in the interview, or reworded allowing for easier recall and also to check validity (Shea, 1998). At the end of each description of a phenomenon or event, the interviewer repeated a summary of what had just been said to allow for more recall for the participant, to help with rapport, and to ensure that the interviewer understood what the participant was saying.

Following a discussion of every violent offence (or every age phase), a summary question was used which was/or is similar to "so how did these behaviours change from the previous offence?"

3.4.4 Debriefing

Due to the nature of the topic, and the ease of which participants spoke about their offences, debriefing was kept short. It recapped the purpose of the research and how important everything they divulged was to the study. Participants also received some chocolate as a small token of our appreciation. TWM is a rehabilitation unit and so most of the participants were used to speaking about their offence processes and such topics, therefore no participants experienced distress or discomfort during the interview. If this had happened, participants would have been asked if they would like to speak to therapy staff at the conclusion of the interview.

3.4.5 Data collection timeframe

All interviews were carried out between September 2009 and June 2010. The interviews were one to two and a half hours long, and were transcribed the following day when possible. Following each subsequent interview pair, the interviews were analysed and further changes were made to the interview process following any new information gained,

The first six interviews were used to create the initial categories, where the following two were used to validate these. The final four interviews were not fully transcribed and were coded from the audio interview, this was done due to time constraints and because these interviews were only developing a small number of new categories. The final two interviews were used to see if saturation had been reached.

3.5 Data analysis

Primarily six interviews were carried out and analysed to form the first order codes (where first order codes are the first definitions of concepts derived from the data), and begin the original analysis. The next four interviews were carried out following the primary analysis and formed new categories. The final two interviews were used to examine if they fit into the model, the model was rearranged to fit new categories which developed from the final interviews. Unfortunately due to time constraints, saturation was not met.

Each interview was transcribed using a different colour font and with line numbering. This interview colouring carried over to the concepts and the line which the concepts corresponded to, were also included. This enabled fast access to the concept's original document so context was not lost in the coding process. During coding it was noted that this process was losing the temporal aspect, which is important to the developmental nature of the topic. Therefore when coding, an age range was often included.

The first phase of the analysis was line by line coding of interviews into concepts. These were highlighted or circled directly onto the interview.
In the example below, each concept is separated by a forward slash:

> *Everyone / is drinking / a lot more because / they are nervous / and…but I tend, I tend to think about how far we are gonna take it, / you know, just, just is this c**t gonna be alive by tomorrow? / Just, only wanna beat him up / don't wanna kill the c**t you know.*

Each concept is separated by a forward slash. This example was also used to highlight how two separate concepts can form a singular concept. For example "they are nervous" is a meaning unit on its own, but also "drinking a lot more because they are nervous" has a slightly different meaning.

The concepts were each given a descriptive label (code) based on the meaning of the concept. These labels could be directly out of the interview or created by the researcher and are the least abstract category. More than one concept could fit into a code and one concept could fit into more than one code; a new code was formed when a concept did not fit into one. For example, the above concepts were coded as following:

"Everyone" = friends as co-offenders (Note: we know this from earlier in the interview)

"Everyone is drinking" = alcohol use before offence
= Drinking with peers

"Drinking a lot more because they are nervous" = alcohol to ease nerves

"Because they are nervous" = pre-violence nerves

Following the coding of the first six interviews, the codes were collapsed into second order categories. These are more abstract than the first order codes. For example:

Friends as co-offenders = co-offenders

Alcohol use before offence = Alcohol effect on violence

Drinking with peers = peer leisure activity

Alcohol to ease nerves = drugs and alcohol for affect management

Pre-violence nerves = affect pre-violence

The following four interviews were analysed using the same process. Relationships between the second order codes were developed and rearranged in accordance to the new material at this time. Second order codes further collapsed into higher order categories, allowing for the easy manipulation of large amounts of data. Relationships between these categories were also developed. It should be noted that the grouping of codes into higher order categories was dynamic and often changed with respect to input of new data. For example, one of the highest order categories was *early development;* within this category was *type of first violence.* However when creating the model, it was noted that *type of first violence* afforded more explanatory depth under the higher order category *violence change* as it was used to describe change in violence from childhood.

After ten interviews were entered into the coding process preliminary models were developed.

Once the final categories had been formed, the final interviews were coded to see how well the data fit in the categories. Unfortunately this process still came up with new codes and saturation was not met. Furthermore it was noted that the preliminary models did not adequately explain the development of violence. At this point it was decided that two major models would need to be developed, where one could be nested within the other. One model analysed both violence-related goal change and violence change over time, the second what influenced change. The final categories and codes produced three highest order categories, and six categories within these. Nested within the violence category of the first model is a second model which described violence and goal change across time. It has five categories each showing change across time.

With each new interview, the data was compared to the model to see if any new categories were formed. The final four interviews skipped the transcribing phase and were written straight into first order meaning units, and then fitted against the model.

3.5.1 Reliability checks

Reliability checks are useful to indicate whether the meaning units created by the primary researcher can be found by other people. A person experienced in the grounded theory methodology was approached and was asked to also code the first six interviews. This was done with the intention to see if she would find similar meaning units as the researcher. Any differences were discussed between the two and agreement was reached, therefore agreement was reached on almost all of the codes. This person also helped with the formation, of subsequent categories and training of the grounded theory methodology.

4. Results

This chapter outlines the models for the development of violent offending in men inductively developed from the data using grounded theory. To adequately depict the development of violence across the lifespan, two models were developed, one of which can be nested into the other. The model depicted in Figure 4.1 is *"Influences on violence development"* (IVD) and depicts what the men stated influenced how their violence developed. Figure 4.2 is the "*Violence developmental path"* (VDP) highlighting the change in violence over time. This model can be nested within the *violence* category of The IVD model.

4.1 Description of models

The IVD model is broken into three components; *environmental factors, violence,* and *change.* These are dynamic, and follow a continuous cyclical pattern throughout the lifespan; where change in one component influences change in another.

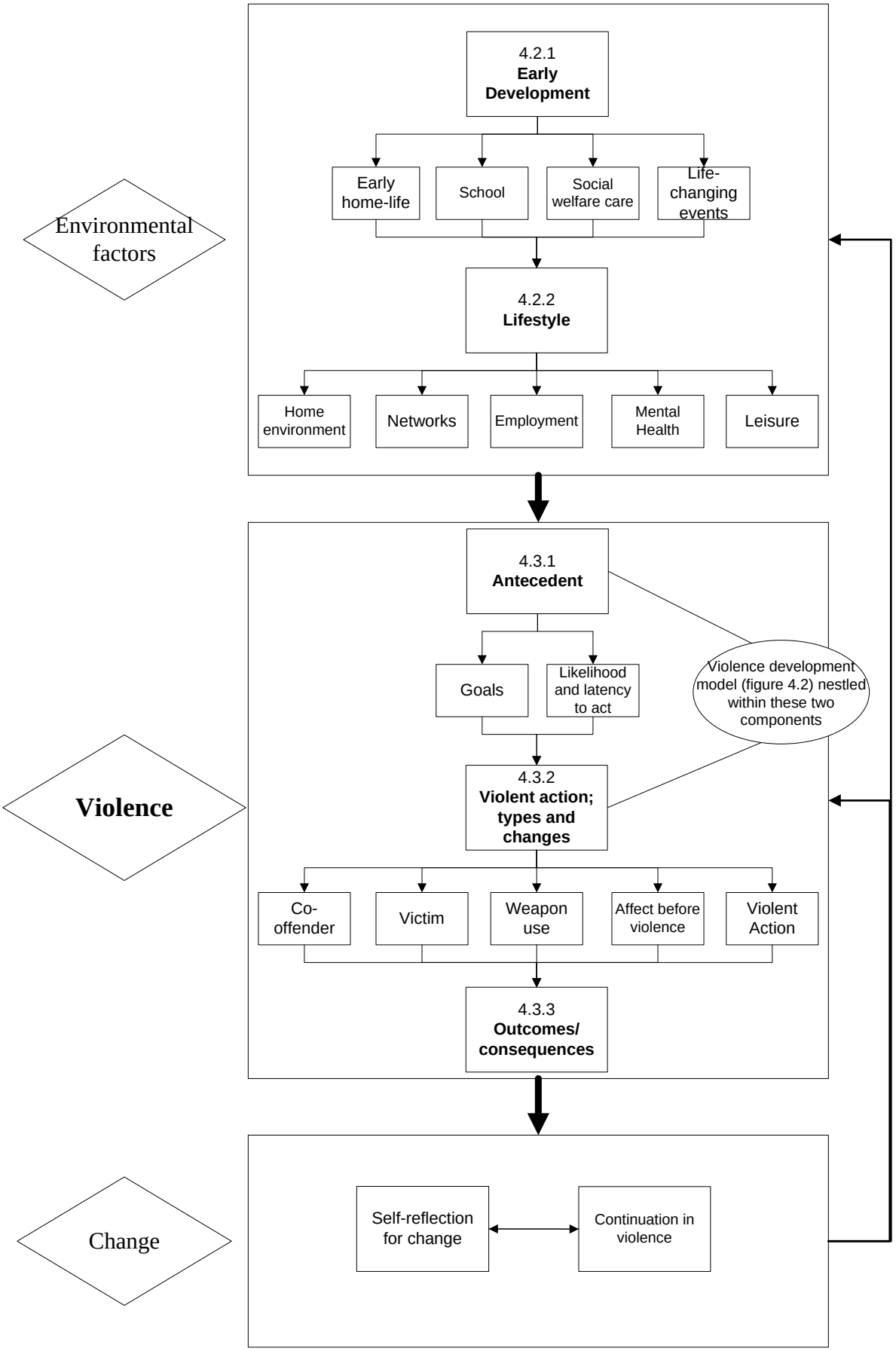

Figure 4.1: Influences on violence development

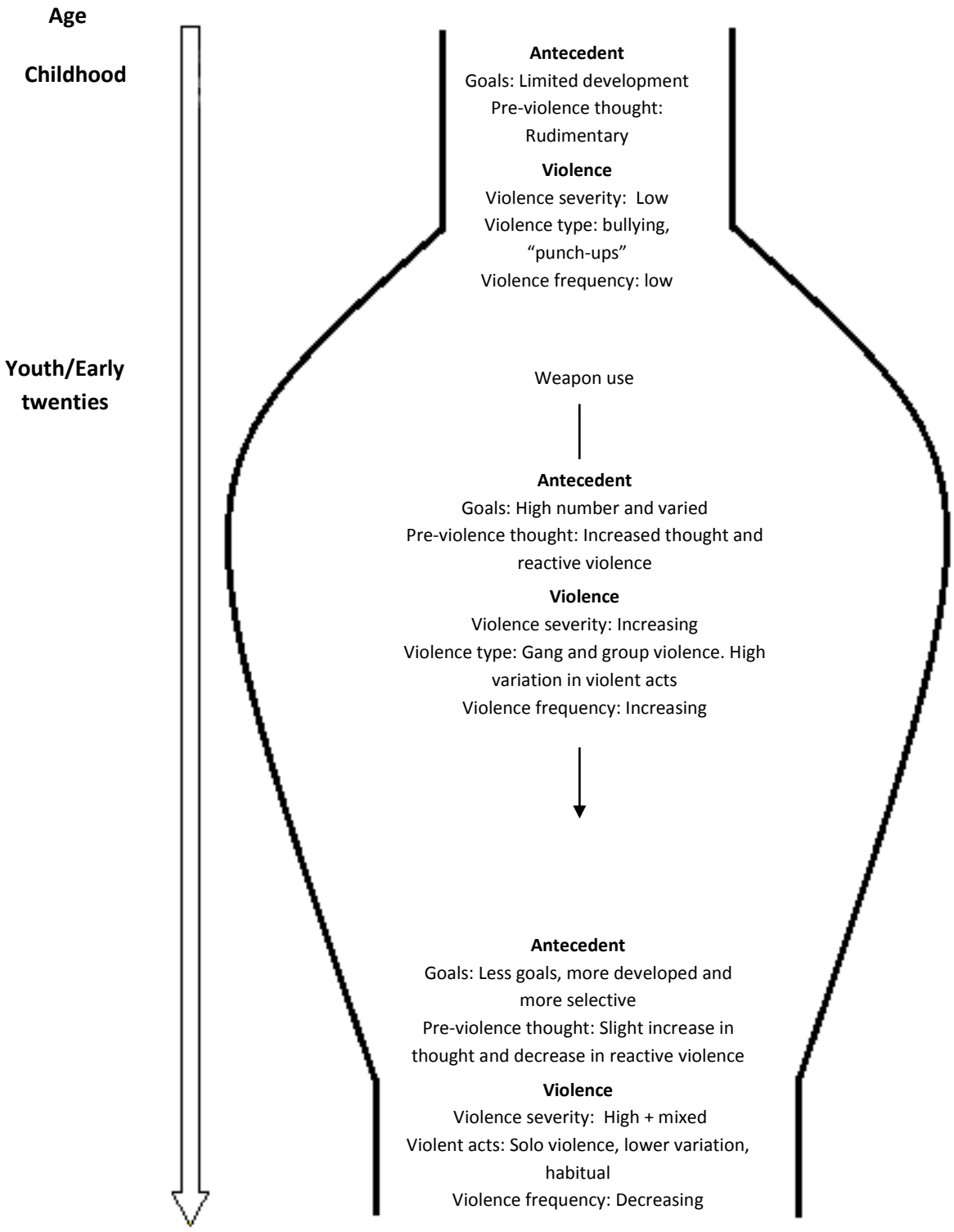

Figure 4.2: Violence developmental path

The first component in the IDV model is *environmental factors*. This component covers areas of interest not directly related to violence, which are *early development* and *lifestyle*. *Early development* focuses on factors present at a young

age which the men stated influenced their early (or propensity for) violence. It provides scaffolding for the *lifestyle* component, which focuses on aspects of the participants' lifestyle and how it impacts on violence by increasing or decreasing violence opportunities.

The second overarching component in the model is *violence.* This section is the primary component of this research. It encompasses three factors important to the violent action, and how these change. These factors include; *antecedent, violent action; types and changes* and *outcome/consequences.* The *Antecedent* is comprised of two components; *goal* of violent action and the *likelihood and latency to act*. *Environmental factors* formulate the environment and needs which provides scaffolding for the goals behind the violent action. After developing a goal, *likelihood and latency to act* can be impulsive or planned violence, and is influenced by the participants *affect* at the time. *Violent action; types and changes* is the actual violence. It focuses on various factors which may impact on the seriousness of the action and whether these actions change over the lifespan. The final factor in the *violence* component of the model is *outcome/consequences,* which is influenced by the violent action and goal outcome, and directly influences the final component, *change.*

The final component in IVD is *change. Change* looks at the samples *self-reflection* of past events and their subsequent plans for managing similar incidents in the future.

The second model (Figure 4.2) is the "*Violence developmental path"*. In brief it extends both the *antecedent* and *violent action* components in the *violence* component of the IVD model, and shows how these develop over time. It outlines increasing complexity of violence and violence goals

The description of the results section will follow the IVD model (figure 4.1). However due to the nested relationship of VDP model within the IVD model, once the *violence* component is discussed, the VDP model will also be described.

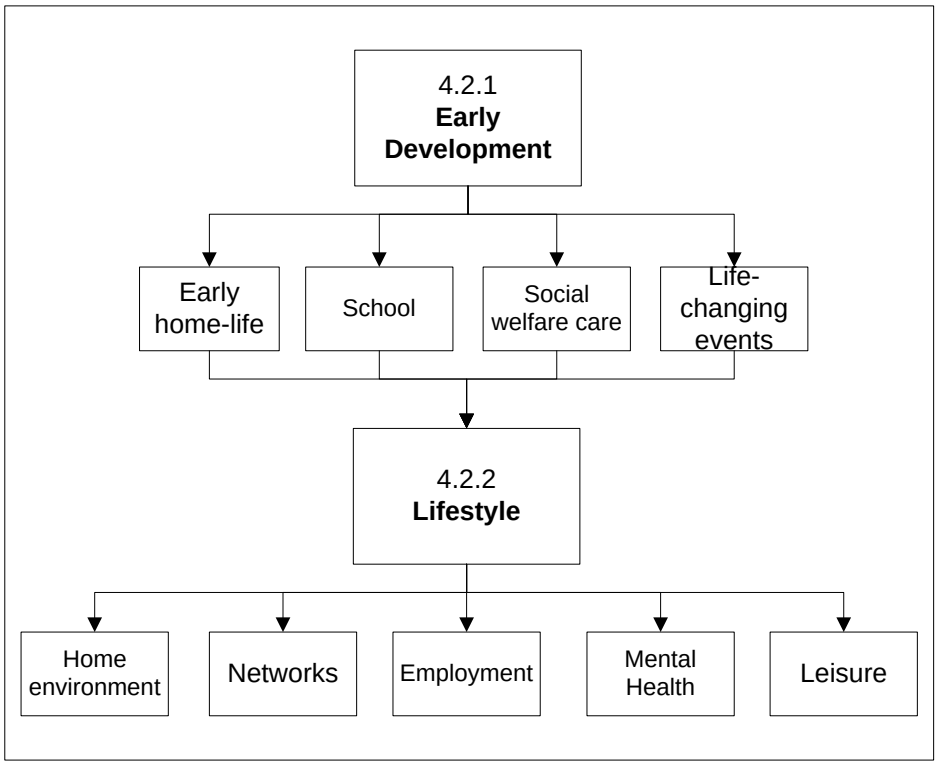

Figure 4.3: Environmental factors on violence

4.2 Environmental factors

The first component (figure 4.3) in the IDV model provides the scaffolding and context for the violent actions. *Early development* is the groundwork behind violence, which influences the adult *lifestyle* and likelihood of future violence. This is done by developing cognitive schemas and early environments supportive of the development of violence. *Lifestyle* focuses on aspects of the participant's day-to-day life which puts them into situations which increases and decreases their propensity for violence.

4.2.1 Early development

The original research focus was the development of violence from adolescence through to adulthood. However another category soon emerged; although introducing the research focus to the sample, the men often described violence in relation to early influences on their violence *("Oh just because I didn't develop those skills when I was growing up";* 008;). *Early development* explores the experiences the men faced when younger, their interpretation of these experiences and how they impacted on violence. These experiences can be described as important events or people during childhood and adolescence; furthermore during

early development begins identity formation. Many within the sample had an image they wanted to portray and carried out behaviours to maintain this image. During *early development* we start to see this identity formation theme slowly emerge. However this will not be fully discussed until the 4.3.1.1 *Goals* section of the results. Finally *early development* shows the beginnings of a lifestyle fraught with violence, with only one exception.

4.2.1.1 Early home life

Most of the sample came from homes where families participated in violence, drug use, and general familial criminality; only one man did not experience this.

Violence at home was often so frequent that it became normalised amongst many of the sample. These men both witnessed and were subject to domestic violence. Violence was generally experienced at the hands of primary caregivers or siblings, but in some cases was also experienced from extended family members or associates. In the latter cases adults often did not intervene. The men who experienced frequent violence became resigned to this behaviour and saw this as *"the norm"*. Experiencing and witnessing violence at a younger age resulted in participants' inability to learn appropriate reactions to situations and men who witnessed this behaviour during early development often saw themselves modelling this behaviour during adulthood:

> *"*[discussing why he carried out domestic violence] *And because what I see my dad do when I grew up doing that* [beat partner] *to my mum. And when my dad used to do it and you know my mumma would do what my dad do. Far out. So I grew up like that."* (006)

In some cases, violence was encouraged by parents or other family members to display family pride or to learn to defend themselves. These men were taught how to fight by fathers or uncles, and participants stated they were often made to spar against siblings. The sample also had this mindset later in life - also teaching their children to fight, and knowing that their sons could defend themselves gave them a sense of relief and pride.

Many used maladaptive coping mechanisms to deal with violence at home, such as carrying out violence in the school or retreating within themselves, avoiding all social contact.

Neglect and emotional abuse was also prevalent amongst the sample. A small number were frequently left alone to care for siblings as young as seven. Some rarely had food at home, and burglary was seen as a necessity:

> *"Some of it* [stealing] *was for survival, it wasn't really for pleasure, it was just because half of the times the cupboards were empty, coz dad sorta drunk our shopping, and Mum sorta thought 'well if your father can do that, then with the money I got I can do the same too'. He made us suffer then we all suffer."* (009)

Burglary was often described as a precursor to violence; getting caught, wanting more, or getting picked on could turn the burglary violent. Furthermore these men stated that as they got older they went for bigger goods, which often required violence.

Emotional abuse was evident through descriptions of constant put downs, indifference or parental favouritism toward another child. Men who experienced emotional abuse and neglect were more likely to use violence as a mechanism to gain this attention elsewhere. Furthermore the frustration at and emotional distance from emotional neglect at home lead to inappropriate methods substituting it elsewhere:

> "Why did you [bully]?"/ "*...I was looking for attention because I don't usually get attention at home.*" (008)

File data showed that approximately a third of the sample had experienced sexual abuse – of these only three mentioned it, and two actually spoke about it. Those who spoke of the abuse went into depth. Some accredited their lack of behavioural control to sexual abuse:

> "*Um just out of control violence, just build myself up into rages where I'd even black out and I'd take out people just walking down the road and I don't remember and smash all f***n shops cars everything...*/ What would bring the rages on?/ *Um, just brooding and stuff.../*What were you brooding on?/*All the old stuff* [child physical and sexual abuse]" (001)

Sexual, physical and emotional abuse influenced attachment to others and intimacy issues later in life. This was highlighted by men who stated they did not know how to conduct themselves in relationship or friendships ("*I didn't actually*

know how to have friends. I didn't have the ability to um, you know I didn't know how to treat people" 008). They were often outcasts, untrusting and in frequent, short and abusive relationships. The frequent emotional and physical abuse from family caused the men to try to portray a tough person's identity – done by bullying and victimisation at school:

> "*Um I was taking that out on others; I'd bottle it all up and then take it out on others... Yeah I like being you know, part of it was in control, and can control others. I liked that feeling you know of people back then at school you know of um you know my own age group peers being you know afraid of me*" (002)

Drug use was also prevalent in these men's homes where parents or visitors were frequent users. Some men grew up in "*tinny houses"* (places to buy marijuana) or with dealers. This drug lifestyle resulted in early drug use where many started smoking marijuana or drinking alcohol by the age of seven, or had tried methamphetamine before ten years old; these acts were often condoned or unobserved by their caregivers. Drug dealing at their home not only influenced early drug use, but also introduced the sample to criminogenic communities such as gangs, or severe violence at the hands of strangers. Some of the sample sold drugs at school, either enlisted by or stolen from, their parents. Early drug use was often a factor in; introduction to antisocial individuals, school failure, school expulsion, or future drug use. The men listed these consequences as lifestyle factors which influenced their violence.

Finally, men who were abused experienced environments where pro-social skills or emotional control were not modelled or learnt, because of this abuse these men found they struggled to react appropriately to situations without resorting to violence. These men also stated having limited emotional repertoire ("*I didn't feel anything… it was either happy sad or angry…there's no in between… there's only three feelings";* 003) or hyper-vigilant towards (mis)perceived hostility ("Oh so they attacked you first?/*No. But that's what I believed they were…just warming me up for the hit*"; 007). The sample noted that this carried on through to adulthood. Furthermore abuse took away control over their lives, with the result that violence was used to regain this ("...what would you do when you got told no?/*I'd have a tantrum*" 006).

> *"Well I couldn't do anything about it at home, so I would have to take it at home, I wouldn't take it anywhere else*" (001).

Many in the sample lived in a number of environments; this was due to running away, sent to other family members or social welfare care (SWC). Changing living environments had both positive and aversive effects on the men in the sample. Many of these men stated that adjusting to new environments was difficult where they got picked on or struggled to make new friends, and because of this their violence increased ("What happened when you were being ridiculed? *I would attack them*"; 007). For others a new environment reduced their violence:

> "*Nah I wasn't into violence up there. Coz I moved to my sisters I could do what I wanted. More or less. Um I had a lot of time to myself to do what I wanted, as long as I did my chores for my sister I could go anywhere. And most of the times we were at the beach, and coz the beach was only like ten min down the road.*" (006).

Some participants often ran away from home to get away from abuse, avoid punishment (for previous actions), or to try find a better lifestyle. Of these some resorted to violence such as standovers[3] to look after themselves. Others experienced physical punishment from their parents upon returning. In few cases they did not return home, instead living with gangs or other violent role models:

> *"Well I slept rough for a few weeks once I ran away from home. And then I moved in with this lady who was an alcoholic. …. And then yeah we'd all these alcoholics come in the house and threaten me with violence and so forth*." (008)

In contrast to the home-life described above, some also experienced positive influences in their early development; for example some had extended family members who tried to guide the men; such as an uncle who would not allow the boy to carry out serious violence; or a loving Nana whose opinion prevented one man from becoming prejudiced against other ethnicities. Furthermore, although experiencing abuse or neglect, many excused this behaviour as being normal or due

[3] Standovers are an act of violence which involves using intimidation, threat and fear as a means to extort property. Sometimes referred to as "street robbery" in other research

to their family circumstance at the time (such as low income) or belittled the abuse, *"he wasn't that bad"*. These men still felt loved and had strong family loyalties.

4.2.1.2 School

Most of the men had difficulties at school describing; bullying, an inability to form friendships, drug use, or struggling with school work – all of which impacted on future violence.

Bullying was prolific amongst the sample; many were either bullies, bullied, or both. The men who were bullied stated they experienced feelings of anger or injustice ("*why me*?") and many resorted to further bullying to cope with this. Because of its frequency, the men considered bullying was a normal schoolyard practice and considered it part of growing up.

Some men in the sample also had learning difficulties. These men described a fear of ridicule because of these difficulties and resorted to violence as a coping mechanism:

> *"Just* [fought] *whoever laughed at me because I had learning difficulties at school. To avoid being singled out I used to always play up... ...I just thought that it would look better if I went to the principal's office for fighting instead of going there because I didn't know how to do this or do that. And yeah coz everyone else in my class knew how to do it."* (003)

None of the men spoken to completed school to the final year, most dropped out aged thirteen to fifteen due to violence, drug related trouble, disinterest, or because that was what their friends did.

4.2.1.3 Social Welfare Care.

Between the ages of seven and fourteen, approximately half of those interviewed had social welfare care (SWC) place them into new environments; these being corrective training, residential boys' homes, or foster homes.

Reasons for entering SWC included a history of crime or inadequate care at home. For most of the sample, there were high levels of violence within the SWC placements. The men discussed how they could not see an alternative to violence in these residential homes; where to not fight they would get "*picked on"* or lose respect. The homes were very high stress environments where the men felt they had to remain on guard:

> *"They weren't very damaging* [physically] *but they were, you know there was a lot of umm 'we'll get you' you know the verbal side of things that was more scarier than having a fight.*" (002)

The men described a number of ways SWC homes influenced their violence. They stated it taught the men to fight, or those who were previously violent it made them better fighters; men learnt how to carry out new types of violence and also how to use violence to manipulate weaker people:

> "*I wanted smokes I could get smokes; if I wanted … I could manipulate the situation to get what I wanted*" (002).

These homes also taught them to avoid being manipulated by hiding weaknesses and allowed previously passive, *"scared"* boys become assertive and confident men.

Violence in the homes usually progressed from self-defence (or being bullied) to violence instigation. Some formed cliques to stand up for each other and protect themselves. Others within the sample begun their stay using anger as a defence mechanism (*"couldn't break me, that was my attitude"*; 002), and continued this behaviour throughout their stay(s).

Although the SWC homes are designed protect those in its care from harm or crime, many stated that the staff often turned a blind eye to violence, or took part in it themselves.

Only one of those spoken to had a positive experience with SWC where he was placed into a foster home.

> "Did you do any violence while in this home...?/*Nah I didn't need to...The people that looked after me, anything I needed they'll get it for ya. Flash clothes, bedding, proper meals, lunch."* (009).

Overall most SWC residential homes were often considered as turning points in the men's violence. There were high levels of violence within these homes which helped them as boys became more assertive, aggressive and confident in their fighting styles; some formed lasting friendships with other antisocial individuals within these homes. Furthermore these homes taught them to hide fear and weakness and to exude a tough identity as a defence mechanism.

4.2.1.4 Life-changing events

Few men described a specific time or event as a precursor to their violence, or where violence changed dramatically. One participant described witnessing a family member drowning. Although he was seven years old at the time and tried to prevent the victim from drowning, he believed his family blamed him, as at this point he started experiencing physical abuse – he responded by carrying out violent acts himself:

> "*So I always believed, yeah I don't know, it was just a kid's thing I suppose, but I always believed that they blamed me for losing him."* (007)

Other life changing events include sexual abuse, discovery they are the product of rape, death of family members, or parents finding new partners.

4.2.1.5 Summary

The men interviewed predominantly came from homes where drug use, violence, and other forms of abuse was prolific. The abuse experienced lead to men struggling to form social bonds, cope with emotion or control their actions. Violence directed at and witnessed by the sample at an early age lead to violence becoming a learnt behaviour, where violence was used as a tool to deal with emotion or frustrations. Victimisation at home and at school resulted in the men also victimising others, or retreating within themselves and avoiding social contact. Furthermore, abuse resulted in the men experiencing emotional difficulties such as loss of control. Most of the sample experienced difficulties at school, where violence was used to counter this. Some of the men described using violence at school to gain control lost at home due to abuse, or to create an identity. Because of crime and violence carried out by the interviewees or their families, many were put into SWC. SWC provided men with an opportunity to develop their fighting skills, or begin fighting. All these influences had a strong effect on future violence. Only one of the men spoken to did not experience this sort of environment and subsequently did not carry out violence at an early age. The early development of this sample set the scene for a criminogenic lifestyle, as described in the next section.

4.2.2 Lifestyle

With the early formation of a tough identity, the development of inappropriate coping mechanisms, learnt violence, and introduction to criminogenic associates at a young age, many of the men had already developed the scaffolding

for violent *lifestyle*. Thus the *lifestyle* component covers; the influences of *home environment* on a violent action, relationships, *networks* and *employment* which may influence violence, and the foundation for the motivation behind violence – such as mental health or leisure. To extricate this from *early development, early development* covers areas which influenced a propensity for violence and occurred in the past thus cannot be changed; the *lifestyle* section covers areas in a person's life which may influence violence and is subject to change. For example following a violent action, the men often have a period of reflection upon the outcome, and thus will adjust their lifestyle in accordance to this – as shown by the arrow linking *self-reflection* to *environmental factors* in the IVD model. The adjustment of the lifestyle can therefore have further implications on violent actions. Five categories within *lifestyle* emerged in the coding process; these categories are displayed in the IVD model (Figure 4.2), and the environmental factors model (figure 4.3)

4.2.2.1 Home environment

As a child (and teen), the homes the men lived in had a strong effect on the development of violence, for example violence at home lead to learning violence as a coping or defence mechanism. As adolescents the men had limited supervision and therefore had the opportunity to carry out violence out on the streets. The men only described a few situations where the home environment had an effect on adult violence. Stress in the home often lead to violence, where money worries, children and such could induce this stress. Violence in stressful home situations could be either domestic, or cause the men to leave their homes in rages.

This section focuses on two aspects of living arrangements, *'moving home and cities',* and *'prison'.* Living at home was often not discussed by the sample, instead when describing home-life it was discussed in relation to family, friends or intimate partners – thus will be covered in the *'networks'* section. Social welfare care is also a type of living arrangement however it was covered in the previous section.

Moving home and cities

Changing environments often had an effect on violence; this effect could be an increase, decrease or change in type of violence. Men moved cities out of boredom, to try sort out personal problems or wanting a change in environment. Or men changed cities because of prison or due to partners' wishes.

New cities presented new associates and new experiences, both of these affected violence. For example different gang cultures in different cities can lead to one questioning their membership:

> *"...I seen people the same colour as me* [Maori] *going away doing white power and everything. And I was thinking you know something's wrong here...but I was confused to see dark skin going white power…Because it* [gangs down south] *showed me you know, I can go back to the north island and start shooting people that could be related to me and then I got down there and these people down there are in mixed up gangs is something else, they should be attacked you know what I mean*" (006).

This participant was questioning his gang. He was discovering a different, less racially segregated, belief system amongst the same gang in a different city, which contradicted his original racial beliefs. The result of this meant that he was more often on the receiving end of violence as he disagreed with their beliefs. Other men changed cities in an attempt to reduce their level of violence, demonstrating that these men were aware that changing environments can change their violence levels.

Prison

All but one had experienced a prison sentence by the time they were 25; and many had lived a substantial part of their lives in prison. Prison played a fundamental role in many of the men's lives in a number of ways, as described by this section.

Opinions of prison

The sample had a variety of opinions of prison which varied with age. These opinions had important consequences to violent offending; prison is used by society as a means of punishment or deterrent, but was not always experienced as such.

Many of the men stated that when younger, they viewed prison as a positive or learning experience. For them prison was a sign of status, a place to meet friends and a normal part of their lifestyle. A prison lifestyle was viewed as a better lifestyle than on the outside:

> *"The biggest challenge is living on the outside...because everything* [in prison] *comes free; free food, free rent. All it is is you're living your life but you're just not out in society and family...all my friends we are together."* (009)

Prison was not viewed as punishment; instead participants spoke of meeting new people, gaining respect or status, learning or getting to fight, or feeling like they were *"somebody".* In SWC many of the men learnt to fight effectively at a young age, furthermore these men begun to develop identities and self-confidence; for those who had not experienced SWC, prison was a place which taught them these things:

> *"*[in prison] *I finally felt like I had a worth...I finally felt like I was someone...I finally started having friends...I started learning to fight.."* (011)

Those who had been in high security prisons achieved status amongst other inmates and felt proud of this new status. Some participants considered prison as a "*containing*" environment, where they would go back into the exact lifestyle they were removed from. Conversely prison was intimidating to some, these men were afraid of the level of violence seen in prisons however this was a time to come out of their shells and to learn to fight.

The participants described that as they became older, their opinion of prison changed. The final section of the results will focus on reasons for this change, however the main points are; these men increasingly valued family and freedom, they were tiring of their violent lifestyle and therefore were trying to reduce their violence. Furthermore, they also became disillusioned with prison and inmates:

> "*Been there done that I've lived that life, and I'm sick of it. You get these young fellas* [inmates] *sitting around talking about this Subaru they stole... they are either full of war stories or bullshit, and I can't be bothered with that...*" (002)

Prison often got in the way of these changes in values and ideas; therefore they reduced prison violence in order to try achieve an earlier release. At the time of interview, every person spoken to disliked prison, which is different from what the majority said they were like at a younger age.

Prison influence on violence

Later in the results will be a section discussing how violence type changed with age; the current section also focuses on how violence type changes with age however only relating it to within prison. This is because many of the men stated that their violence changed dramatically between the community and prison, and

violence within prison was often at a higher frequency. One man commented on why violence frequency was much higher in prison:

> "*On the outside you're not gonna get 30 nutters all at once. You know out there in the whole town you might come across one out of 20,000 people in the town."* (002)

On entering prison three approaches to handling prison emerged. Those who tried to maintain a low profile and avoided violence; those who started off intimidated by prison but learnt to fight and developed confidence; And those who come in violent, whether angry, in the middle of gang wars, or just wanting to fight.

Two avoided violence in prison. One avoided it during his first sentence out of fear, as he had no friends for back-up or self-confidence. During his second sentence he had built up confidence from working out, making friends and joining a gang – and therefore carried out violence. The other claimed he avoided violence as he preferred to try "*keep the peace".* This man felt he was non-violent and a leader, and tried to live by this image. Interestingly this second man had many misdemeanours in prison for violence.

Those who came in passive often got bullied and victimised. These men were generally the type who had not experienced SWC and therefore underwent the same changes as those in SWC. Therefore these men learnt more effective violence in prison, and started developing an identity for themselves.

Identity formation was an important aspect of adolescence and young adult development; although this will be discussed later in the section it is important to mention it in relation to prison violence. At a younger age many came into prison as angry, volatile people and carried out unprovoked attacks. These adolescents and young adults were at a phase where they challenged authority. Being in prison was a sign of status and proved they were tough, however conversely prison was also a challenge to their own authority. Because of this challenge, they became angry and violent. Furthermore many felt they had to constantly display their toughness, often carrying out attacks on others to prove this. Many also felt like they had a standing or *"owned the wing"* and therefore felt they needed to enforce their law:

> *"...my first 18 months of my jail sentence, I thought I was the man, I was untouchable and I was all that..."* (006)

> "*Just guys that coming in they're shattered about doing I don't know 12 months you know. Its only 12 months, man shit, you should be happy with 12 months…And that'll just piss me off because they're shattered about it, so, in my eyes it's like I might as well make them shattered for a reason you know.*" (003)

Furthermore, these men were often at the age where they were trying to join the gang, therefore much of their violence was to make themselves appear like they would benefit the gang.

A large proportion of prison violence was due to gang wars or was debt collecting[4] . Men spoke of running illegal shops in prison (for a bit of extra money) and either debt collected themselves when money was owed; or getting others to collect for them (for a small fee). Some of the men were recruited as debt collectors for their reputation, or because these men chose to do this job (for a fee). Finally men also carried out violence during sports games – this was during sports games so they could fight without being caught.

As they grew older many participants reduced their prison violence. One reason given for this reduction in violence is moving to new prisons. Some of the men were moved into high security facilities which meant they had no opportunity to fight; others were moved into prisons where the other inmates prevented violence. This prevention was either due to age of inmates – older inmates would not give the opportunity to fight – or because there was "*no one to fight"* implying that all the inmates were of the same gang. Reduction in prison violence also occurred when men in the sample had gained a reputation for skilled violence, being volatile, or due to coming from a maximum security prison. This reputation led to other inmates avoiding them. Finally reduction in prison violence was similar to the reduction of violence in general – the men started worrying about injury, caring about family, and were sick of the violent lifestyle. This will be covered more in depth later in the *change* section of the results.

Prison as change

The men described that when they were adolescents, prison did not have the desired effect of deterring participants from future violence, and extra punitive action

[4] Debt collecting involved using implied or actual force upon a person who 'owed' something or 'deserved it' for personal gain and to assuage this assumed debt

by prison staff (such as being placed into the pound[5], placed into other units, charged, ineligible for parole) was also ineffective. Punishment was seen as "*part and parcel*" of their behaviour. In some cases, the men did not want to let go of the benefits of their violence (respect and material goods). This changed when older, where being released from prison was important.

Few in the sample reduced their violence largely due to imprisonment. In one prison, the prisoners had a rugby league team which played teams in the community, misbehaviour resulted in removal from the team. This was sufficient punishment to incite them to change. Being placed into other wings also put an end to violence, *"...I ran out of people to fight...".* Finally, when older, prison meant restricted access to family, especially their children, and men reduced their violence hoping to be eligible for parole earlier. Two men in the sample purposely got arrested in an endeavour to turn their life around:

> *"Coz I thought if I rob this liquor store um and I'll just hand myself in and go to prison. Um, all my decisions are made for me. Um, and I'll just isolate myself and get well… there's definitely other alternatives, but at that time, just because my life was really unmanageable."* (008)

In these cases the participants sought to gain access to rehabilitation, and get themselves removed from the environment currently in as they felt no sense of control over their actions.

Summary

Violence in prison occurred at a higher frequency than violence outside of prison, this is due to the higher concentration of violent offenders and gang members in prison. At a younger age, being in prison was seen as a sign of status and a place where everything is free. This changed when older, with prison instead viewed as a place separating prisoners from their family or preventing them leading a normal life. Generally violence in prison decreased with age.

4.2.2.2 Networks

As noted earlier, there was a strong influence of peers and family on the early development of violence, especially through abuse (family) or a need to fit in (peers). The main focus of the *networks* component highlights the importance of

[5] a cell where the offender has limited activity and recreation

those relationships and other networks upon violence beyond early development. Later sections will look at co-offending and victim choice.

Family

This section describes the importance of family on violence (post early development). It focuses on the importance of family ties and loyalty, and whether family relationships changed over time.

Although many in the sample were on the receiving end of familial violence, they still expressed strong loyalty towards their family. This loyalty could influence pro-social or antisocial behaviour

The two major antisocial influences included introduction to gangs (within family or via familial criminogenic lifestyles) or the perceived necessity to use violence to defend family members from threats or attacks:

> *"*[speaking of why he attacked *two* gangs] *I wouldn't let them pick on the girls. I was still helping my family out; umm I was just helping with the family"* (007).

However because of this loyalty, men took protection of family members (and friends) very seriously. Even though a requirement of TWM is desistance from violence, many stated that a barrier to this would be if a family member was in need, where these men would still carry out violence defending their family and their family's honour

Family members also had pro-social influences upon the sample. Many interviewees had members of the family who tried to help them desist from violence:

> *"Um, well at the time they* [biological family] *were trying to pull me out of trouble...and so they all took me under their wing and that so I started turning round and keep on getting better."* (001).

The age at which family tried supporting desistance and level of respect held for the family members influenced its success. For example 001 held much respect for the men in his family as they were ex-gang members, but if they tried helping him at a younger age, he would not have listened. There were also pro-social influences from family members within gangs. Although not preventing the men from violence, they may have helped influence the level of violence carried out by the sample. These influences included, preventing men from having more violent roles within gangs

(weapons carrier instead of gunman in a robbery[6]), preventing gang members from assaulting the men, support when leaving the gang, or teaching "morals" (such as never attack first). Below is an example where the uncle wanted his nephew to learn the consequences of his bad decisions ("hard yards"), while preventing him from making *very* bad decisions:

> *"...my uncle was sorta the pres*[ident]*...he wanted me to go through the hard yards, to see the sort of journey I was taking..."* (009)

Family ties also changed with age. In some cases family remains important throughout the lifespan, but generally family is viewed as less important during adolescence:

> *"The gang comes first no matter what. My parents, my kids and that, they're nothing, you know. I don't want you's in my life, this is my life...I don't even know who you's are, this is my new family here...it took a while to sort of break away and realise that no I do have a family that love me, they want me in their lives and yeah."* (009)

This change in family loyalty with age resulted in men's attempts at desistance – where a violent lifestyle would prevent them having family contact. In some cases family ties remained strong throughout the lifespan, however at an early age it resulted in more violence (protection of family), and at an older age less violence (wanting to *"go straight"* to get out of jail and see parents before they die). Where family is less important to a teenager, and more important to an adult is important to this research as these changing family ties with age, is reflected in the development of motivations behind violence actions.

The birth (or adoption) of children often changed the men's level of violence. In most cases they decreased their violence either by moving cities, attempt to leave gangs, or in attempts to change their lifestyle abstain from violence. For these men providing their children with a better upbringing than their own (e.g. no SWC, parents being around, no crime in the home, general safety) was important to them, furthermore it was important for most men to be there to watch their children grow up, where the risk of jail or death due to violence was motivation to stop:

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[6] For the purpose of this research, robbery refers to robberies carried out on premises. Differs from standovers which are carried out on the streets

> *"I changed quite a bit too. It stopped me from a few things. I tried to do as best I could...I fell head over heels for my daughter. And nah I would do everything I could." (006)*

However the birth of a child can also have the opposite effect – where perpetrations of domestic abuse increased. The following quote is from a participant whose domestic abuse began due to an obsession with his son sparking jealousy towards his partner:

> *"Oh I have never been abusive to women until I think because I had my son I became possessive and obsessed* [with son and partner] *and all that" (006)*

Friends

As with family, much violence was influenced by friends. Violence carried out with or against friends will be covered in the *violence* section of the thesis.

Where family became increasingly valued with age, the importance of friends went in the opposite direction. During childhood, adolescence and early twenties, the men described friends having more influence and being more important to them than family; where this influence decreased later in life (ages varying between the sample). Therefore friends had a huge influence on recreational activities such as drinking, and violence. This influence is especially noticeable during adolescence where men stated they started drinking or left school due to peer influences. During late childhood and adolescence some of the sample joined adolescent gangs (and often followed them into adult gangs), and violence in large groups of people was commonplace. The sample often stated violence with friends involved; joining in with violence to help out friends, or carrying out violence they would usually not do (*"pack rule"*), where fitting in with friends was often the goal behind this violence. In fact during adolescence, the importance of reputation and a tough identity was at its highest. For this reason, many participants stated that it was difficult to back out of violence in the vicinity of peers for fear of appearing weak. Furthermore many in the sample stated that their violence was to impress or to *"look cool".* Many stated however, that their friends were not real friends:

> *"Yeah I started getting friends, drinking friends. But that's all we had in common." (008).*

Later into adulthood friends were often replaced with gangs, or the participants joined gangs with their friends; gangs will be discussed later in this component.

The men stated that with increasing age, although protecting friends was still important to them, group fighting and fitting in decreased in frequency and became less important. Many had lost contact with their friends due to prison, or were trying to reduce contact with people associated with their violent behaviour. Furthermore the importance of family and intimate relationships replaced the importance of friends.

In only a few cases had the participants stated they had pro-social friends who helped them abstain from violence.

Intimate relationships

Intimate relationships resulted in behavioural changes for a few of the men. Generally participants spoke of their first relationships occurring in late adolescence to early 20s. The men were often in short-term relationships. They often ended by the men's abuse towards their partners, or the men's prison sentences. Many described feeling jealous or possessive towards their partners, often resulting in violence to cope with this.

Some of the men felt they were imitating their parent's relationship behaviour, where they would try to control their partners with violence. One mentioned a sense of ownership he felt towards his partner – this was expressed via physical abuse for breaking a *"rule"* such as not coming home on time. Intimate partners also influenced drug use and introduced men to antisocial individuals.

A few of the men have had relationships with women who did not accept the men's violent lifestyle, and therefore played a role in the reduction of their violence.

Emotional distance

While some of the men considered themselves well liked, others spoke of a desire to fit in, considering themselves as "*loners*":

> *"I never really had any, no real close friends. Coz I didn't know actually, I didn't actually know how to have friends. I didn't have the ability to um, you know I didn't know how to treat people." (008).*

Those who were *"loners"* during childhood were generally those who started violence at a later age as they kept to themselves. In some cases social isolation was

self-imposed (especially when older), but at other times, the men's behaviour led people to avoid them: *"... no one else wanted them* [speaking in third person about him and his group of *"loners"*]*"* (010). Those who exhibited a desire to fit in were often taken advantage of – being easily led into violence or used for drugs.

Gangs

Gang association had a large role in the sample's lifestyle; many had grown up in environments where family and friends were in a gang. Virtually the entire sample was associated with a gang through either membership or as co-offenders. Joining a gang was important; "*I don't care what it takes, I just want to be one*". Being a gang-member made the men feel like they belonged somewhere. Some completely replaced their family life with gang life *("...I had pretty much traded in my family life.."; 007)*, and others had divided families due to opposing gang loyalties. Many men were willing to do anything to remain in the gang; to some, being in a gang was so important that while younger they fought their own family to be accepted - in some cases still fought their family when older. The loyalties and strong ties each man had towards the gang, made it feel like a betrayal to leave.

Prospecting

To be part of any gang, a potential member (usually an adolescent) must prospect, where prospecting involves showing how they might benefit the gang. Each gang had different rules dictating prospecting; the length of prospecting and how to gain a patch (membership).

A prospect is (usually) selected by a patched gang member. This prospect must answer to the wishes and desires of any patched member. The things asked to do could be anything from fetching a cup of coffee to violence:

> *"You know um being an enforcer. Taking the rap. Do this, do that, sort of thing…It wasn't so much violence, it was sorta like you know, um get told to you know, wallop someone up* [fight them]*."* (004)

Prospects were expected to follow these rules blindly, where their desire for gang membership overrode their conscience or fear of injury;

> *"Yeah I'd just do it. Win or lose you had to do it. And if you couldn't do that you got a hiding from him* [gang member]. *So it was no matter what happened you were going to get* [beaten up]*...So you might as well try and win, and then this fella* [gang member] *won't give you a hiding."* (006).

Pros and cons

Being in a gang had a variety of consequences on the positive side. Participants spoke about gaining, a new family, new loyalties, and were looked after and feeling protected:

> *"Not all gangs are violent, most gangs are like, I go to jail for a gang issue, my wife and ten kids are at home, the boys will go around there and drop off firewood for her, some of them go and mow the lawns, just help out."* (002)

Those who came from disadvantaged backgrounds were in awe of the cars, guns, and women offered and that they never went hungry. Violence pros involved protection from other gangs, and the comfort knowing they had a number of people who would always help them in a fight.

There were also negative aspects to being in the gang – which men stated they became increasingly aware of with age. A requirement most of the men had for joining a gang included proving they would do anything for the gang, however they were sometimes asked to carry out (or witnessed) violence which went against their personal values and limits:

> *"…coz I always believed I was on the good side and that* [rape] *never happened, this was sorta seeing the ugly. And the only one I went to after this was the boss. I just told him f**k, I didn't know we were doing this sort of things. I knew that we were a gang and that we had heaps of girls and stuff, but we didn't do rapes, well I didn't think we did."* (007).

This challenging of their beliefs was one of the factors which made the men question their loyalty towards the gang. Other negative aspects included constant violence and crime (although this was not considered a negative to gang membership until much later in the men's lives), difficult rules and values to live by, and prison. Members even unknowingly attacked family members, where some expressed a regret at this. Once the men started wanting to settle down or spend time with family, the negative aspects of gang life became more salient. Furthermore, aspects of gang-life, which were once positive, now became a hindrance. For example, crime and violence began to have higher costs (prison, injury) to a man with a child to take care of.

It is these negative aspects of gang membership which made men start to question their loyalty towards the gang, and start to consider leaving (mentioned later in this section).

Gang wars and violence

Gangs demand a high level of loyalty. If a gang member asked for the help of another member, they would be expected to drop everything to assist them. Assistance could be in the forms of finishing drinking a box of beers to a revenge attack. Violence within gangs often involved coming to another member's aide, or revenge attacks for perceived or actual slights against the gang. Most of the men spoken to were involved in a "gang war" which was due to a perceived slight otherwise following a longstanding rivalry:

> *"...a lot of it* [gang wars] *was standing up for what we believed in; don't ask me what that was. The main belief between our troubles was we were not them* [other gang]*...We believe we had morals, we had, f**k what we thought we had but yeah." (007)*

Interesting point to note is that every gang had their own set of laws and beliefs, some would not allow drug use (other than marijuana), whereas others would not allow standovers or violence outside against the community. Often gangs would set themselves above the rest, believing that their system is *"better"* than that of another gang, which leads to further gang rivalry. This rivalry played an important role in gang violence, where hatred of another gang led to members attacking their own family in a rival gang.

Prospects and young members were likely to be active participants in gang wars, often starting unprovoked attacks against enemy gang members, and in some cases even hunting them. Gang violence was generally more serious than other violence. Gang violence had increased likelihood of involving; weapons, a large number of people, and some degree of planning.

At an older age, men's participation in gang violence reduced. They spoke about disillusionment with the endless violence or wanting independence from the gang. These men started having a sense of independence, and found it difficult to continue following orders from those in a higher hierarchy than them. Many had family in opposing gangs, or discovered that opposing gang members were no different to themselves (discovered when forced into close quarters with rival gangs

in prison, and getting to know them). Finding that rival gangs were made of similar people to themselves, resulted in the basis for the gang wars becoming redundant – their gang was no better than another, but rather similar.

Leaving

Many in the sample had tried to leave the gang, however most found this very difficult. Ties which linked the men to the gangs were often comparable to familial ties - in some cases the gang replaced family:

> "*But it's hard to leave once you're in, because, oh especially with my crew because…they are like my brothers. I've grown up with them; they've helped me out through the hard times. Saying no to them is like ohh turning your back on your family"* (003)

While leaving the gang could be very difficult as it was seen as a betrayal, or the leaver was viewed as a *"loose end"* or somebody who might know too much about the gang – thus somebody they would have to quieten. In other cases leaving the gang was as easy as telling the president they want to leave.

A few of the men had attempted to leave the gang but found it too difficult, usually after their late 20s; others are still struggling with this; and still more remained loyal to the gang at the time of interview.

The difficulty experienced leaving the gang resulted many of the men being forced into a cycle of violent offending, even when they expressed a desire to stop.

4.2.2.3 Employment

A few of the men interviewed mentioned employment as related to their violent offending. Many of the men held numerous jobs, frequently moving on due to job dissatisfaction or requested to leave due to their violence. A few of the men managed to hold stable jobs, where their violence did not impact on their employment.

Employment as linked to violence

Both legal and illegal employment influenced violence. Legal employment which increased propensity for violence included jobs where the men met antisocial associates or gang-run (legal) businesses such as scrub cutting, bar work, or a repossession business. Knowledge of a workplace was also used in violent acts, for example a cleaner's knowledge of buildings led to a series of well-planned robberies.

Finally, work-related stress also increased violence propensity, where the stress led them to ineffective methods of dealing with day to day problems:

> *"It's hard, yea exactly you try tell that to a solo mother. 'Specially when you come home buggered* [from working two jobs], *man the last thing you wanna be doing is pampering baby... And then um that* [argument about looking after baby] *just went on and on and on and on it was just the same old thing. And then yea I ended up assault her* [sic]". (004)

Illegal employment utilising violence included; robberies, debt collecting, and drug dealing. Many of these activities were undertaken through gang membership.

Employment as a protective factor

Employment also had some positive influences on the men's lifestyles. Hard earned money and possessions facilitated a sense of pride, which aided in reducing crimes such as standovers or robberies:

> *"But I liked working. I always liked working, I liked to own my stuff. I could do stuff, work made me part of something. I don't really know what but yeah*." (007)

In some cases financial stress lead to domestic abuse or robberies; in these cases employment reduced financial stress decreasing the propensity for violence. Finally employment introduced men to pro-social individuals.

4.2.2.4 Mental health

A small number in the sample faced mental health issues. Trauma and sexual abuse lead to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in one of the sample, which seriously influenced his violence:

> *"Um just out of control violence, just build myself up into rages where I'd even black out and I'd take out people just walking down the road and I don't remember and smash all f***en shops cars everything, and I only came to when dogs barking at me or lights flashing and everything, that's what would snap me out of it, bright lights and barking. And I'd wake up."* (001)

This violence lessened in frequency during late adolescence after receiving counselling. Quite a few of the sample received counselling during their adolescence, with half stating that it had no or limited effect:

> "[during counselling I learnt] *The triggers that caused me to do all those things, I sorted them out, and it's like ok, my mind is starting to get clever now, it's like 'oh he knows all those triggers' so we'll give him these new, new real um, oh I don't know, clever triggers."* (001)

Many in the sample were involved in drugs of a sort, a small number heavily addicted. Addiction was a strong precursor in some violence especially methamphetamine addiction:

> "…what was your goal [when carrying out robberies]…/*To gain money…*/…why did you need money?/*Because I was using my tax money to buy meth, and my business was slowly slipping away* [from investing all his business money into purchasing methamphetamine]. (005).

Many of the sample were addressing or had addressed these drug and alcohol issues by the time these interviews were conducted, some receiving help while in prison, others getting help of their own accord.

4.2.2.5 Leisure

Interestingly, what the men done in their spare time changed little with age. As adolescents, the men often 'hung out' with friends, engaging in activities such as drinking, boxing and cigarette smoking (or other drugs). Adolescents would also carry out burglaries, property crime and get into fights. While hanging with friends, some would gather in cars and drive around town searching for a fight. The main reason for adolescent violence during leisure time was *"because we were bored".*

Playing sports was a common leisure activity for both adolescents and adults and this was often used as an excuse to fight; either fighting the opposing team or their supporters.

Consumption of drugs and alcohol often filled leisure time, for some this started as early as seven. Much of the participant's leisure time was taken up by drinking at home, parties, or night clubs – where partying usually declined as participants reached early to mid 20s. Alcohol fuelled violence was an especially common occurrence, with many stating they hardly fought except when under the influence. The majority of men who mentioned attending parties highlighted this as a common situation where violence occurred. Violence at a parties were usually while intoxicated, and with little provocation. A few of the men were not welcome at parties because of alcohol-fuelled violence:

> *"Yeah because I was always, in* [town] *I am well known a legend for fighting over there. And it's only a small little town but everybody knows who I am. I could go to parties and places and pubs and crime scene the place* [carrying out violence to the extent of police being called]*."* (002).

Heavy drug use was also a common past-time amongst the sample, with marijuana, alcohol and methamphetamine the most abused. Other abused drugs included prescription medication, ecstasy and LSD. Marijuana use was present amongst the majority of the sample, and many of the men admitted to being under its influence while carrying out violence. However most men stated that marijuana had a calming effect rather than fuelling violence, and some stated that other drugs also had no effect on violence:

> *"...trips* [LSD], *mushrooms* [hallucinogen], *crack* [cocaine]*...I wouldn't get angry on that stuff...P*[methamphetamine] *made me feel good, trips made me feel good, mushrooms made me feel good... wouldn't ever fight on them."* (010)

Methamphetamine (P) was the other drug commonly mentioned. In some cases it was brushed over: "*I smoked P every day*" however often led to an increase in violence. Finally a small proportion of the sample accredited mixing a cocktail of drugs to having no self-control or memory, and finding themselves having carried out violence the night before:

> "*We took some rivotrils, we had about eight rivotrils, two joints* [marijuana] *and we were drinking Jim Beam* [bourbon] *like water. And bang I blacked out. Wake up the next day, and my mates go to me, "you know what you did last night?" "naah bro, but it was a mean time"* (006).

The men described that most time fillers involved criminal activity, whether it was violence or drugs. Furthermore, when leisure time was legal (drinking or sports), the men still found ways or opportunities for violence. This highlights that spare time did not create an opportunity for violence, but rather the men tended to create their own violence opportunities.

4.2.2.6 Summary

The reciprocal relationship of *lifestyle* with *early development* and *violence* makes it an important component of the IDV model on the development of violent

offending. *Early development* provides the scaffolding upon which future lifestyle is based upon; such as through introduction to antisocial associates, learnt behaviours, and life changing events. *Lifestyle* directly influences goal directed violence behaviour, with drug use, antisocial relationships and boredom often leading to an increase in violence. Lifestyle may also influence positive non-violent goal directed behaviour, such as trying to reduce violence for the benefit of the family or through pro-social relationships developed through employment.

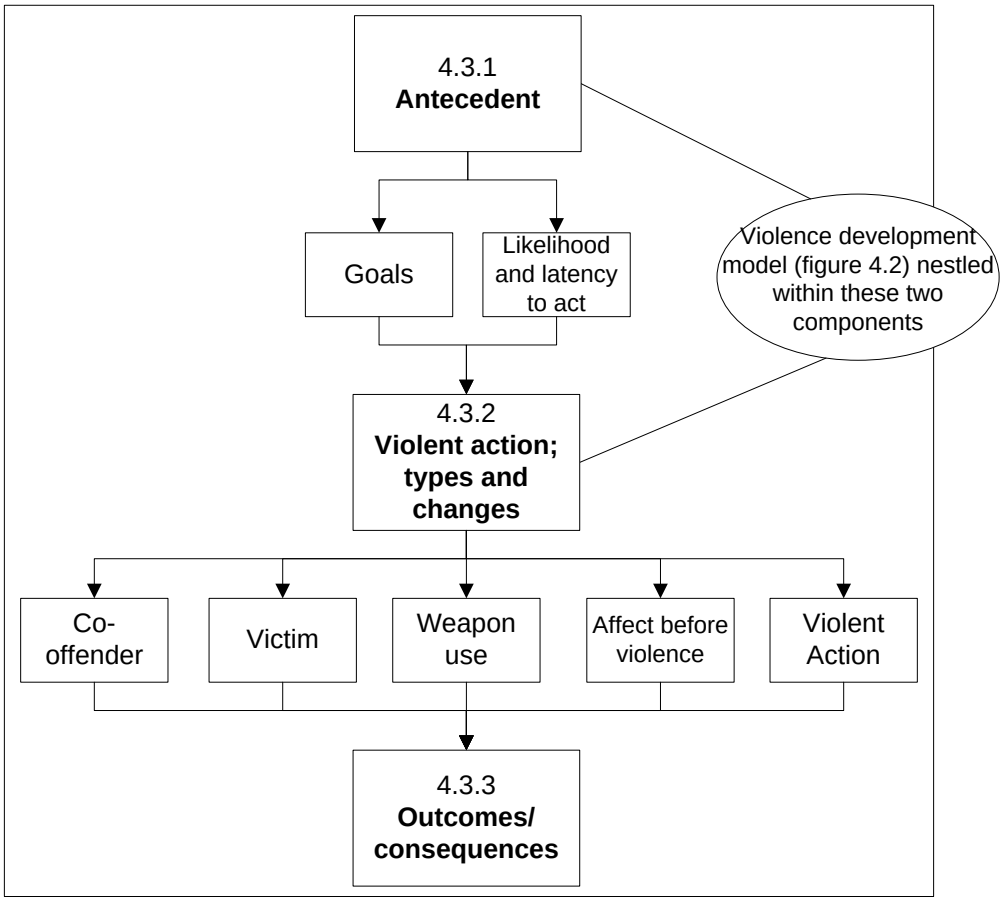

Figure 4.4: The violence component of the IDV model

4.3 Violence – Introducing the "*Violence developmental path*" model

During the analysis, two models were developed. The VDP model highlights the dynamic quality of *how* violence changes, and the IVD model offers a description of *why* this occurs. Up to now the results section focussed on the *environmental factors* from the IVD model, which provided the groundwork for the violent action. The final chapter of the results section will focus on the *change* component, where the participants analysed the outcomes of their violent actions and planned for future change or actions. The current component (replicated in figure

4.4) focuses on the violent action itself. It is broken into three sections; *antecedent, violent action,* and *outcome/consequences.* Figure 4.2 depicting the "violence developmental path", incorporates a summary of *how* the antecedent and violent action changes over time. This is the crux of the research, where all other components of the IVD model revolves around. The final section in the *violence* component is *outcomes/consequences.* This is related back to the IVD model on violence changes.

4.3.1 Antecedent

The antecedent component of the models focuses on the time before the violent action occurred. This section focuses on two areas. The first area is the *goal* of the violent action. It was noted that with all violent behaviour, the men attempted to give an explanation of *why* they carried out this violent action, furthermore this *why* component varied across the lifespan. The second component is the *likelihood and latency to act.* This section focuses on once the goal is generated, how much time before the action occurs. This encompasses violence which appears to have no forethought to violence which is planned, and how emotional state affects these. The VDP model shows that these two components change across three developmental phases. The next two sections will explain this in depth.

4.3.1.1 Goals

There were a number of reasons the men attributed to their violence. Violence was often carried out in order to achieve a goal. When prompted, some of the men tried to provide summaries of how this changed over time. This section looks at these violence related goals, and examines how this changed over time.

Affect regulation

Affect regulation refers to the regulation of one's mood. Affect regulation through violence occurred in a number of ways: it could be used as a cathartic to managing stress, anger, or other strong emotions; to bring a forceful end to a negative situation; managing feelings of inferiority; or for the adrenaline rush and excitement.

Often when violence is used as a cathartic, the violence is an immediate reaction to a stressful or emotionally arousing situation or provocation:

> "And how'd that make you feel?/*Angry aye*/And what did you do about your anger?/*Um I ended up lashing out...with violence, with the fists*". (004)

> "*I didn't care, it wasn't about achieving anything, it was about inflicting some pain, letting them share my pain" (007)*
>
> *"...don't think I was angry at her, but I was angry at something, but I took it out on her" (006)*

However, the participants often said that this was usually not successful in reducing their anger. Interestingly, although this violence was not successful in achieving the catharsis goal, it was one of the most frequent types of violence. The men often alluded to having no control over this violence, or reacting on impulse "*I was sort of reacting, not thinking about reacting on that impulse*" (002). Thus it would appear that even though knowing it is ineffective, this type of violence had become an automatic even habitual defence mechanism which may have its development rooted in early childhood.

Violence as a coping mechanism during periods of extreme emotion was perpetrated by the entire sample; and was mostly prevalent from childhood through to early adulthood, some still experiencing it at time of interview. This type of violence was also common in relationship violence, where violence towards partners often brought extreme frustration and anger:

> *"Yeah well the same sort of thing aye you know normal thing you know day to day things, um finances um the kids and /*Yeah cool and then why did you hit her this time*/You know, 'scuse my language but the same old s***, we talked about that last time and it still comes up you know what I mean."* (004).

The above is also an example of where violence was used in response to negative situations. Some men carried out violence "*to end the bad situation*", where the goal may be to "shut the person up" or calm a situation down – however admitted that it often did not have the desired effect.

Some men experienced positive feelings during violence, such as pride, an adrenaline rush, or excitement. Therefore violence was often used when feeling down or negative about oneself. Furthermore, winning a fight led to an increase in self-worth, which the men stated was especially present during adolescence. The men stated they often enjoyed violence for the associated euphoria and adrenaline rush as adolescents (and in some cases as adults). Those who enjoyed violence knew where to go to find fights, and how to go about start one:

> *"We um used to always drive around up in* [city] *and look for random guys...and we would all jump out of the van and jump this one guy and then move onto the next."* (003)

This feeling of excitement could also extend to the period following the violence, when they were trying to evade the police.

Self-preservation

The goal of self-preservation is where violence was carried out for perceived safety; this can include, self-defence, or a pre-emptive attack (*"I'll get you now and don't worry about tonight*"; 002).

Men acted in self-defence when experiencing a physical threat. However sometimes self-defence was carried out only to discover they had misinterpreted the cues.

Pre-emptive violence based on the thought that if they attack someone first, those people would fear them and not attack them later. Another form of self-preservation described by the participants was violence used to stop another person carrying out an action which could negatively affect the participant; one example is stabbing a person to prevent them calling the police.

Pre-emptive attacks generally occurred at a younger age, and often were due to misreading of cues. When younger, pre-emptive attacks were often out of fear, or with the hope it would lead to a tough identity, which in turn led to others leaving them alone:

> *"...you know so you sorta had to fight so that they'd leave you alone."*(007)

At an older age pre-emptive violence occurred less frequently as men learnt behavioural controls and other methods of dealing with fear.

Revenge

"Who in their right mind doesn't want revenge?" (004). Many men carried out violence in revenge - some holding grudges for a long time. Revenge could be in retaliation to a perceived insult, or for violence perpetrated against them or someone close to them (family, friends, or their gang). Revenge attacks were likely to be more planned, but could also be opportunistic:

> *"...I would run into some of them* [bullies from high school] *at parties and that and have had a few drinks, and I would go 'remember me?' and just attack them." (011)*.

The men found revenge was more important during adolescence. Into adulthood the desire for revenge waned, especially if the incident happened years ago:

> "*...we didn't really bring it up really. It just didn't matter because it was so long ago and to pathetic anyway..."* (001).

Personal gain

Standovers, debt collecting and robbery are all types of violence for material gain. Participants stated they commonly carried out standovers when the men were younger; occurring as early as primary school to obtain such things as CDs. For some, robberies occurred at a young age, the youngest being in primary school. Younger people were more likely to carry out standovers than robberies. Robberies were relatively uncommon in this sample, where only two men carried out highly organised robberies, one of them on a frequent basis.

Debt collecting involves the (forcible) collection of goods from people who are perceived to owe something to someone. Debt collecting was carried out by most of the sample and its frequency remained stable throughout the life-course. For some debt collecting was a form of employment, where they are paid by various associates to collect. Others did it for their own personal reasons or for that of the gang. This differed from standovers and robberies, as debt collectors perceived that the victim had committed a wrongdoing, or owed something, which to them justified their actions – therefore debt collecting can be seen as both a form of revenge and a form of personal gain.

One final form of personal gain, is violence seen during prospecting – where personal gain is becoming patched.

Identity

As alluded to in earlier sections, identity formation played a strong role in violence. Early in the men's development, the sample began to form personal identities which could be formed through social influences – such as mimicking a parent (*"Well I couldn't do anything about it at home, so I would have to take it at home, I wouldn't take it anywhere else"; 001)*, or as a coping mechanism for abuse.

These identities would develop and form into more complex identities with age and new experiences. There is a reciprocal relationship between, a person's identity, their behaviour, and how people react to them. For example; most of the sample spoke of wanting to appear *"tough"* when young. To maintain this identity, they often bullied or fought with people. Because of this behaviour, the men were avoided, which for some was the reason they wanted to appear tough. One openly admitted that tough identity resulted in behaviour with the intention of *"pushing people away".* This example is also an identity developed a coping mechanism, where the appearance of being tough would mask fear or ridicule:

> "*A lot of it* [bullying] *was just trying to, trying to put myself out there, it was image really... I just wanted to let people know that um you f**k with me you're gonna get it...classed as a toughy*/yeah but why would you want to be classed as tough?/*Oh so I wouldn't get picked on really. A lot of it was to do with protection really. I wanted to be tougher than the others, I wanted to be cool."* (009)

The effect of the participant's behaviour on people around them also led to these people forming an identity about the participants. This resulted in the men actively trying to maintain this identity; or to take measures to change this. Finally, for some, their given or personal identity by peers led these men to carry out behaviours they *thought* they should carry out – thus to reduce cognitive dissonance.

Personal identity changed across the lifespan also. For example, the *"tough"* identity developed into a *"leader"* identity (discussed shortly). The development of identity was influenced by things such as social input from peers and family (for example some men were often saught out for protection), in some cases social influences dramatically changed identity towards desistance. For example the birth of a child redefined some of the men's identities to one of a *"family man"* or *"provider".*

Because of the men's desire to actively maintain chosen identities, *identity* has been placed in the *goals* section. *Identity* will focus on types of personal identities the participants held about themselves, and the violent behaviours they carried out to maintain this identity.

Reputation/image

When asked why the men committed violent actions, many replied "*reputation*" or "*Fighting was something you had to do, for your image".* This active maintenance of a reputation or an image was often described as a violence goal by almost all the sample. Thus for these men, violent behaviour became a method used to maintain their reputation.

The reputation the men used violence to maintain, were "tough" reputations, or people that others did not want to mess with. For many, inability to succeed in other areas led to a need to show they were worthy in other respects:

> *I just thought that it would look better if I went to the principal's office for fighting instead of going there because I didn't know how to do this or do that.* (001)

This tough image also helped achieve gang membership, and was used as a form of self-preservation. These men come from an environment where they were constantly awaiting attacks, either because they were attacked at a high frequency or due to misreading cues from others.

Furthermore, due to childhood abuse, men grew up expecting the worse of others, and therefore expected attacks:

> *"Yeah because it is a learnt behaviour and you don't understand like as a person you don't really, you just take it on board to your adult life....Because I don't understand any other way, because unfortunately we live in a world that you know you can ask people to do things or explain that you know and they don't understand any other away other than being physically attacked."* (008)

Knowing they had a *"tough"* reputation meant the men could relax and let down their guard more as they were not likely to be approached.

Appearing *"cool"* or gaining respect from their peers was another reputation maintained using violence; violence being used to appeal to peers highlights the environment the men came from. Earlier it was mentioned that these men struggled to fit in with peer groups, and to fit in these men resorted to violence. This highlights that these men had developed ineffective problem solving techniques to cope with social environments.

Some in the sample felt they had a sort of leadership role, this especially developed in their adolescence to early twenties; however, some already had this image at a young age.

Although there were no specific acts of violence to gain a tough reputation, this image underpinned a large proportion of violent acts. For these men one-on-one fights were often reputation enhancing by virtue of fighting. Winning was especially good, where some men would keep returning until they had won. At a younger age, much violence was carried out in the vicinity of their peers. This violence was often joined or encouraged by other people and backing out of this sort of violence would be seen as and damaging to their reputation. Appearing weak could mean they lost respect and subsequently people would take advantage of them:

> *"...then one of my bros goes, "cuz! Are you gonna let that slide, bro, are you gonna let him give you a blind shot and let him get away with it?" and I was thinking 'aye? Nah f*** that'. And because everyone's drumming in my ears it's played on my mind 'nah I can't let that slide because if let him slide then every other c*** is gonna try and do it you know. And then that'll just make it worse for me you know."* (003)

Robberies and standovers were the only kinds of violence generally not carried out to enhance reputation; however standovers relied on reputation to be successful.

The men stated that during their adolescence and early 20s, a *"tough"* or *"cool"* reputation was important for the majority of the sample, very few stated they did not care about it. The importance of a tough reputation at a young age is highlighted by one who stated how he wanted a big name like "*al Capone*" or would have killed for reputation. As these men got older, this reputation became less important. The only image/reputation that persisted for many of the men is that of being *"sheriff"* which is discussed below. At an age where men started wanting to settle down and fight less, their reputation became a hindrance; they found that people would still act hostile towards them or approach them because of their reputation (especially those who considered themselves as "*sheriffs"*).

Sheriffs and leaders

A *"sheriff"* is the term one of the men gave himself when trying to describe what he felt was his role in society, others called themselves *"law enforcers"* or

even just the law. These men felt they had a responsibility to act out the law as they saw fit, and would place themselves in roles where they enacted this. For example they: doled out punishment to wrongdoers *("If I'm not allowed, you're not allowed";* 001); taught people morals or rules using violence; or protected the weak ("*Well I just see it as doing my duty...to protect the people I care about";* 008*).*

Punishment usually involved hand-to-hand violence. When punishing, some attacked without stating the reasons, often at a younger age. Others would punish first, and then give their reasons afterwards. Rarely were any warnings given, and these only happened at a later age. Punishment differed from revenge as these men considered themselves the law with a right to enforce punishment; furthermore the punishment would *"teach"* the victims that they did wrong, where as revenge is more emotional and *"get them back"*. Reasons for punishment could be; an insult, giving their gang a bad name, or for a crime they have done against themselves or others. Finally punishment and law enforcement was also used if someone broke a "*law".* These laws were usually principals and morals the men held themselves – such as "*don't hit women"* or *"he was a kid f***ker* [sexual abuser]"

Sheriffs felt protective over women, children, friends, family, or anyone weaker than them. When younger, some of the men stated felt they had to protect victims of bullying and continued this into adulthood. If a friend or family member was in a losing fight, everyone in the sample felt it was their responsibility to protect them. Violence could be pre-emptive warning fights, or violence with weapons when protecting people who are already in a fight.

Those who likened themselves *"sheriffs"* liked to appear reliable and dependable. Some felt they had a leadership role, where people would approach them for help, but often the men acted of their own accord. When asked if they were thanked when acting on their own initiative, many replied that it has gotten them in trouble or that they had not been thanked. However being a sheriff was not always thankless, some received protection, gang memberships, or some sort of payment in return.

Many retained a sheriff identity throughout their lifespan (some starting as early as seven), stating even at time of interview they still felt obliged to; protect/defend a friend or family member, or enforce punishment. Some were becoming aware of how, although with the right intentions, acting sheriff could result in further trouble. At time of interview these men stated they would be more

likely to consider consequences before taking action, however many would still carry out the violence. In some cases, being an enforcer ended during late adolescence to early 20s; although, these men still considered themselves a kind of leader and protector.

Development of goals

Above is a description of the goals found to underpin violence; this section looks at the development of these goals and whether they changed across the lifespan. It also examines how this goal change influenced violence.

Affect regulation was a common goal amongst the sample. However there were notable changes in the type of affect regulation. Violence for fun and excitement or to end boredom was predominantly during childhood and adolescence. Most of the men felt like violence was more a chore *"something you had to do"* when older – this was a chore when *having* to carry out his sheriff or law duties. Violence as a catharsis or to put an end to negative situations was common throughout the lifespan. Some men stated they begun to have a sense of control over this violence at a later age, having the ability to think before they react:

> *"... now where I'm evaluating things. I can picture things I know what words to say, sort of know how to get myself out of it*/And when did you start learning that?/*I think I've always known it but I've never practiced it"* (002).

Identities formation started at a young age, and for most of them it was to appear *"tough".* For these men, violence during adolescence was largely carried out to feed this "*tough"* or "*cool"* reputation. With increasing age, the development identity became increasingly complex. Identity became less about being *"tough"* but more about leadership and taking on a sheriff role. These men developed into having a sense of importance of themselves and felt that this importance gave them a right to enforce their morals and beliefs. Being *"tough"* was still an important image, however it was now part of a complex identity.

Finally notable during goal development is the level of complexity between early goals and later goals – which is also highlighted in the next section *likelihood and latency to act.* Early goals were black and white, such as being angry, bored, threatened or personal gain. However with age they increased in complexity. Rather than spotting something they want and going for it, men tended to weigh up costs and benefits of these goals ("*...the best thing to do is to stop breath and think about it*

[violence]..."; 006). Violent actions reflected this change by the men thinking before they acted, these were gain related or acting as a sheriff. Where being a sheriff an offender would have to justify their actions (to themselves) before carrying it out.

4.3.1.2 Likelihood and latency to act

Sentencing is often related to a person's level of planning (premeditation), thus the more planned a violent action is, the more severe it is perceived. This section looks at once a goal is formed, how long until the violent action occurs. This section also focuses on the event directly prior to the goal formation, and how likely the men were to react to this event. And finally this section looks at whether likelihood to act changes with affect.

Likelihood to act

This section looks at the event that occurred preceding the violent action, which aroused the participant to action. This event could be anything such as spotting an object they desired, to an insult.

Most of the sample stated that when younger they needed little or no incentive to act violently. These men stated that they were very *"reactive"* to the smallest perceived insult or argument. Between childhood and early twenties some of the sample went in search for violence, where any excuse to fight was good enough. Victims were often chosen by virtue of location or clothes choice, for example; people on the street, gangs, people wearing gang colours, certain ethnicities or police – thus chosen without provocation.

With age, most men became less likely to act violently, and thus the level of provocation needed increased. This is because violence at an older age has greater consequences, the men learnt to control their anger or because random violence did not hold as much interest. However a small number did not follow this pattern. There were few who, when younger, were afraid of violence or withdrew into themselves instead of being violent, and so it would take much to provoke them. Then for these men they became easily provoked into violence as they grew in confidence.

Although much violence had been started by the men in the sample, they were also involved in violence they did not start. Reputation (for being volatile, or '*getting the girls'*) or gang membership could often be cause enough for a man to be attacked with little or no provocation. Many of the participants called themselves smart mouths – and stated that this was often the cause for fights. Some men had accidently instigated violence because they were acting too silly/annoying:

.”*Cause you know I was just hypo, I’d get hypo, on the piss, full on, heavy metal playing...and um I’d get carried away sometimes and I’d head butt someone too hard, I’d run right across the room, bang head butt. And that started it.” (001).*

Affect

The mood of the participants affected both the latency and likelihood to act on their goal or on the provocation.

Overall, a significant proportion of the sample carried out violence while angry. The sample felt the world was against them (“*We knew that the police were our enemies, we knew that they* [gang] *were our enemies, we knew society was, so we just tried to destroy as much as we can;”* 009*)* and experienced paranoia (“*...ahh paranoia. Um. Yeah just not thinking straight, thinking everyone’s out to get you”; 003*), causing them to carry out unfounded attacks on people whose body language often misinterpreted as offensive.

Some of the men described their violence as due to being perpetually anger resulting from events in early development such as bullying or abuse. This was dealt with by bottling it up and then going into rages. Other men described themselves void of any feeling, or just a combination of a few types of emotion:

“Yeah yea, like even feelings, like when people ask you how do you feel, I didn't feel anything. I was just like ohh it was either happy sad or angry. You know there’s no in between, these feelings you know. You asking but there’s only three feelings.” (003)

Frustration, having a bad day, or stress could also cause one of the men to act out in anger, particularly financial and relationship stress which were often seen as a precursor to domestic abuse.

“*Umm if I was in the mood anything I decided. Look at me the wrong way and cut in front of me and yea*/What would the mood be?/*Angry, bad, domestics at home, got up in the morning stubbed my toe, kicked the cat, spilt the milk...*” (002)

Anger as a precursor to violence occurred throughout the lifespan, being slightly more common when younger. During these years, anger could often override the men’s attempts to self-regulate, causing them to lose control.

Violence was also often carried out for excitement, especially at a younger age. These men experienced slight nervousness and fear before the violence. Some stated that this nervousness never went away, but the danger of getting caught is part of the excitement. Pre-violence anxiety is often ignored or is dealt with by taking drugs:

> *"Um, I was high on meth, and wasn't thinking much at all. There was no anxiety, there was, before I started say the evening we went out, um, before I put the pipe in my mouth, heaps of anxiety, heaps of fear, heaps of wanting to just 'that's me' you know? But yea, once you get a bit of meth into you like I said it subsides. Um then everything changes, then you become immune to all that stuff I suppose and um that was it, so then yeahwe went and did it."* (005)

Level of planning

This section looks at how much thought went into the violent action. This relates to both self-control and also whether the goals were explicitly thought about when carrying out the violent act. From the data four types of planning were uncovered; completely unplanned, unplanned but prepared for violence; planned opportunistic violence; and fully planned. Each of these levels of planning were located during different phases of the men's lives.

Unplanned violence is generally impulsive or reactive violence, with violence generally a consequence of anger or from specific situations, such as joining a friend's fight to help. This type of violence was more frequent during the men's early years, but many men still reported this type of violence in later years, especially in relationship violence (and when helping out friends).

Unplanned but prepared violence is where the men did not plan specific acts of violence, however were prepared for violence which they considered inevitable, such as upon entering enemy gang hang-outs (areas such as sports grounds). These men often arrived armed with weapons for the inevitable fight.

Although not planning specific acts of violence, there are some who search for any excuse to carry out violence. This was often done either when in a *"bad mood",* or with a group of friends, and it was generally opportunistic. This type of violence was almost exclusively restricted to their adolescence or early twenties; however it was also seen as adults when extremely angry or in gang wars.

Completely planned violence is where the men plan what, when and where the violence will take place. These crimes can be revenge attacks or robberies and were very rare amongst the sample. Because of how uncommon this violence is, there is no specific age group for when this occurred.

Additionally to the increase in planning across the lifespan is the increase in habitual violence. Thus many of the men had carried out violence actions as a coping mechanism or response to threat, and often did this without thought of cues.

Finally, overall the men described that their level of planning generally increased with age. Few did not follow this pattern, and this pattern could also be interrupted by a life event. For example one in the sample had managed to remain violence free for six years, and at one point lost control and perpetrated a violent action, thus sending him back to prison. He became so angry at himself that in prison all his violence was unplanned, unprovoked and reactive.

4.3.1.3 Summary of antecedent

Generally speaking, the men were more likely to react, and with lower level of planning when younger. This level of planning increased with age, where men were more likely to consider other options before carrying out a violent offence. Although this pattern was common, there were few who did not follow it. For example those who did not start off violence at a very young age, or the following man:

> *"I think it was a lot harder to provoke me when I was younger but I seemed to be a lot angrier. You know I was unsure of myself so I didn't really want to get into fights very often, you know it was more when I was drinking that I would get into fights when younger. As I was older, I was quite proud of myself and my abilities, it was all sort of planned, you know, how can I do it, how would it affect me, how would it affect my reputation, the club. And it was way more violent, like even when I was 16 I had that incident I don't think I would have stabbed him or anything, but at this end I wouldn't even think twice." (011)*

4.3.2 Violent actions: types and changes

The topic of the research is the violent action and how it changes over the lifespan. This section looks at the different aspects of the violent actions, and how they changed. There are four aspects to violence which will be focussed on this section: who the violence was committed against; who the violence was carried out

with; weapons used; how the violence was carried out. This section will be followed by the outcomes/consequences of these actions.

4.3.2.1 Co-offenders

Co-offenders are the people with whom the men carried out their violence. All of the sample had carried out violence with a co-offender at some point, however there were some who predominantly preferred to carry out violence alone. The major trend noticed amongst the sample is that men became more likely to offend alone with increasing age.

Groups of friends (or gangs) as co-offenders was most common during adolescence and early twenties. These could occur in situations where groups would go in search of fights together, fighting at parties, or friends fighting to protect each other from other fights. Group violence with friends gradually reduced in frequency as they got older, often replaced by gang fights.

Friends as co-offenders generally reduced into adulthood, however gangs as co-offenders decreased at a much later age. This could be because gangs often consisted of friends, implying that friends were still co-offenders. Furthermore, gangs often replaced family, and the loyalty this engenders remained strong for a long time. Violence with gang co-offenders reduced in frequency when men tried to gain a sense of independence, or were trying to leave the gang.

Family as co-offenders was more prevalent at a younger age, where men often called upon cousins, brothers or uncles for help. This also decreased with age, at a slower rate than friends, but faster rate than gang violence.

Although not common, some of the men committed violence with an associate (somebody they do not know, or met through a peer). In these cases they may have been brought together through friends or family, because of their reputation, or because they had complementary skills. In this scenario the crimes usually involved a high level of planning, as they were for mutual gain.

Adolescent group violence, gang fights and brawls were the more common types of violence involving large groups of people; and robberies and debt collecting generally involved at least one co-offender.

A few men predominantly carried out violence alone, whether by choice or not. Those who fought alone through choice stated reasons for this included taking pride in doing things for themselves, or disinterest in working with others. Those who felt they had no choice considered themselves as "*loners*" or friendless – this

changed as they got older if they found a niche they fitted into. Fighting alone not by choice was more common when younger; those who chose to carry out violence alone generally were older. The increase in solo violence could be because violence was less often done out of fun or for reputation; therefore fighting in the vicinity of peers was no longer needed. Furthermore, with age the men started forming intimate relationships; these generally left less time for hanging with friends. Partner violence was the only type of violence exclusively carried out alone, however it was often witnessed by their children, which was a similar experience to the sample growing up.

4.3.2.2 Victim

The victims of the sample changed little as the sample got older. Violence at a younger age was more often perpetrated against school friends. This included those who picked on them or *"lippy people"* (those who were smart to them or talked back). Some formed cliques who carried out violence against anyone who they felt was weaker, whereas other groups only fought those they considered bullies. A few of the sample were unselective in who they fought, especially when in violent rages.

The men stated that as adolescents their repertoire of victims increased to include gang members. This was also the age where travelling in groups and attacking random people on the street (and in school) occurred. The increase in victim types during this time could be due to the adolescents experiencing freedom from parents and independence, thus having more opportunity for violence. Upon reaching late adolescence or early 20s, many of the men entered relationships, and their partners became victims of their violence.

With the exception of violence against gang members or partners described above, victim choice was influenced more by the men's situation than their age. For example; regardless of their age, men would protect their friends and family from whomever necessary. Therefore a victim could be a family member, a stranger, or even a friend if the situation required it.

Men had different *"morals"* about who their victims were. Some gang members had no qualms about fighting their own family if they belonged to the opposing gang, whereas other participants stated they did not attack anyone outside of a gang or criminal environment, and others claimed no victims were women. Ethnicities were discriminated against by some of the sample, as were authority figures – however targeting specific groups usually decreased with age. The only

type of victim which was consistent across the sample and their lifespan were those they considered bottom dwellers (those at the bottom of the prison hierarchy): "[why did you attack them]/*because they were kid f***ers/*that's it...?/*no excuse..."*(002).

4.3.2.3 Weapon use

Approximately half of the sample reported carrying weapons as early as primary school, while the majority regularly carried them by their early adolescence.

By age 15, most were carrying weapons (generally knives) for protection. Due to the men's lifestyle they were often hyper-vigilant for attack, therefore they often carried weapons to protect themselves from this. Up until early adolescence, most had only used weapons for threats and protection, very few had caused injury.

Knives were the weapon of choice for most, however but some reported using a variety of weapons:

> *"Um, it started off small aye. Bits of wood, from the, you know the steel half shovel, you know things like that."* (004).

In rare cases some of the sample carried a gun for protection.

Although the main reason for carrying a weapon was for protection, some of the men also carried weapons with an intention to use them for other violence. These men often entered a situation prepared with weapons where they felt a fight was inevitable (revenge, or gang fights). When heading to large group fights, weapons carried could range from sports-bats to guns:

> *"Nah, it was just, 'grab all the weapons we are going to league'. So you just grab all your baseball bats and couple of guns, coz you know they gonna show up too. Or they may show up, you just assume they were going to either be there, or they're coming to hit you while you're playing league. So you turn up aware for every scenario." (007)*

Weapons may also be used on an opportunistic basis. A small number in the sample scanned the vicinity for weapons when they were preparing for violence when younger:

> *"Yeah but, if I saw them coming, I'd scope out 'oh yea, over there, there's a bit of wood over there'. And then I'd keep myself in that area so I know where stuff was, and know when they're gonna come over, I'd have those things ready. So I didn't necessarily carry, I did carry later on in years." (007)*

This weapon choice involved a low level of planning and could be anything from kitchen utensils to pieces of wood.

Most men stated that their weapon use decreased in later years, but the age at which they stopped ranged from early 20s to their current incarceration. Reasons for desisting weapon use included increased prison sentences, increased risk of harm (to both self and victim), increasing confidence at hand-to-hand fighting (did not need help from a weapon), or deciding that weapon use was for weaker people.

4.3.2.4 Affect during violence

Many of the men stated that during a violent action they were unaware of how they were feeling. This especially occurred when they lost control (when younger or through mental illness), or when violence had become habitual (when they were older). One man described this violence as "*primal instinct"* and felt like violence was his *"calling":*

> *"Like, I know that this sounds really crazy, but like, like in my element. Like that's my calling. Like um I wasn't really scared, I was sort of like, well that's gotta be done, so I just did it. Nah I wasn't, there was no fear, just was really calm." (008).*

Those who felt anger during their violence, found it made it harder to control their actions. The level of anger a man felt during a violent action impacted on the seriousness of their violence ("What would cause you to go very far?/*My temper*."; 004).

Some of the men felt good while carrying out the violence. Reasons given for this included; because it relieved stress, they felt they were doing right, they enjoyed the act of violence, or they felt invincible.

4.3.2.5 Violent action

This section looks at the violent action, and whether the severity and type of violence changed with age.

The data showed that early violence followed three trajectories: no childhood violence developing into some/minor violence during adolescence, early minor violence increasing in frequency and severity, or consistent serious violence across the lifespan. Interestingly the majority of men in all three trajectories described burglary (or other property crimes) as one of the major precursors to violence.

The men who perpetrated no childhood violence, stated reasons for this lack included: fear or disinterest in violence (shown by either retreating into the background or by running away from the violence), inability to fight, or being in an area where violence did not occur. For these men, moving to a new school/city (and not fitting in, making friends, or into a violent neighbourhood), learning how to fight (such as by family members, boxing lessons, or becoming bigger in size) or continuous bullying, led them into fighting:

> *"Um you know when I was going through aye um it was sorta like why me? Why these guys picking me? Yea and then I started copying it, copping a bit of push and shove so I started doing it to you know others."* (004)

The late starters described their early violence as infrequent, generally involving bullying or minor violent acts. They described themselves as being more likely to engage in property crime than commit violence. A small sample of the men in this group experienced their first violent acts as infrequent caused by explosive onsets of rage caused by an inability to cope with too much stress:

> *"There were a couple of times where I was just driven to breaking point* [from constant abuse] *where I would just hit out..."* (009)

Those who started minor violence at an early age described their earliest violent acts as *"just little things"* and *"boys being boys"*. These men described early violence as starting small (push or a punch), progressing into more serious acts such as standovers or weapon use at school.

A small number of participants admitted to consistent serious early violence, for example, *"I would be sitting in class, and this kid sitting next to me and have their compass, and stab them in their hand"* (001). These men considered their violence *"horrific",* generally without provocation and characterised by loss of control and weapon use.

Some described early violence as group violence, including; *"[bikie] clubs,"* or miniature gangs imitating their parents. They spoke of violence involving wars with neighbouring adolescent gangs or indiscriminate violence. Other groups included packs of "*misfits*" who stuck together to protect themselves from others;

> "*...you know that one guy is going to pick on all of us so let's get together and then we can beat him."* (007).

Only one man had abstained from violence at a young age (except for one isolated incident when he was a teen). He stated his mother kept him well under hand, knowing where he was and not allowing him to befriend antisocial individuals. Furthermore she sent him to live in another city when she feared he may become an offender.

Many reported an increase in the frequency of their violence in their teenage years. The range of violence during adolescence is extremely varied: some men restricted their violence to bullying or fights on the sports field; but in many cases the violence escalated to group attacks, standovers, debt collecting and occasionally aggravated robbery.

Many in the sample stated that during adolescence many also started drinking alcohol and partying, often leading to fights at parties; this included large brawls, and using weapons such as bottles. Gangs also held appeal during adolescence, and many joined in gang wars involving use of serious weapons such as knives and guns.

During late adolescence or early 20s the majority of the men shifted their focus from fighting at parties or on the streets, to violence in or for gangs. At the same time there is a trend where violence severity and frequency continued to escalate. Initially violent acts within a gang involved attacking other gang members on the street without provocation, but could develop into a cycle of revenge attacks and brawls. It is also at this age that relationship violence started. Generally the men used their fists during relationship violence, but these also increased in severity throughout the lifespan, with a couple of men speaking of "accidently" stabbing their partners.

The years between late adolescence and early 20s (in some cases until early 30s) seemed to be the most violent period for many of the men. Violence committed in these years included aggravated robberies, stabbings, shootings and in some cases murder. Many of the men experienced long prison sentences due to their violent crimes. Violence occurred both inside and outside of prison. Prison fighting was commonly status fights, gang wars, and debt collecting.

For the majority of the sample, the frequency of violence decreased around late 20s to early 30s, however this could be due a lack of opportunities owing to serving long prison sentences. Other men however stated that they had not reduced their violence until placement in this unit (and in some cases they stated they were still active). Violence severity tended to rise, only dropping for a small number

within the sample. There showed a trend for the perpetration of specific violent acts to develop from bullying and smaller fights, into violent group fighting during teenage years. The frequency and range of violence decreased into adulthood, where although there was a decrease in serious gang or group violence, severity remained high for example highly planned robberies.

4.3.3 Outcome/consequences

The IVD model highlights three parts to the violence section; *antecedent, violent action;* and *outcome/consequences.* The outcomes or consequences are what resulted from the violent action. Although not important for the VDP model, this component is important to the final component of the IVD model – *Change.* Change involves self-reflection and evaluation of the outcomes and consequences of the violent action. The consequences of violence carried out by the participants in this sample could be both positive and negative; these consequences and the men's opinions of these are discussed in this section.

Earlier the results showed that violence is goal directed; therefore a positive outcome for the violence is if the violence was successful in meeting that goal.

However, the men also discussed undesirable consequences of violence, particularly if the goal is not achieved. For example men stated that using violence to *"shut her up"* often resulted in the opposite effect. Extraneous consequences could also be undesirable; family members or friends may disapprove of the violence, some men found that they were related to the victims, or violence may lead to themselves being injured. Violence against the wrong person could also have dramatic consequences such as gang wars:

> *"…Cause um, it woulda caused a big train* [sic] *reaction if we did anyway…Because, we are not kids anymore, it's 20 years later, and um, it wouldn't be a good thing with who I am now and who he is now, it woulda been like a war we coulda caused a little war."* (001)

Punitive consequences of violence (e.g. prison, community service) were perceived by each man differently, as was discussed earlier in section *4.2.2.1*. However not all violent actions ended in punitive action; in an extreme case a participant estimated daily violence and numerous stabbings, yet only had three violent convictions.

Finally a consequence of violence was their affect or feelings following a violent action, which often depended on its outcome.

If the violence was successful in achieving the goal, the men usually felt good about themselves. It evoked a sense of pride, success, and adrenaline. This feeling of thrill and excitement following violence usually decreased with age, which is one of the factors identified by the men as why their violence decreased. But violence also induced negative feelings, such as guilt toward the victim. Guilt especially occurred when their violence was against their own partners or children, or when the violence was reactive and unplanned. This feeling of guilt may be experienced immediately following the violence, or later following a period of self-reflection. Men also felt guilty if they felt they had gone too far, or by discovery that gang wars resulted in them assaulting their own family.

Other men in the sample struggled to identify feelings of remorse, stating that these feelings – or feelings of hurt or sadness were a sign of weakness, or stating their victims deserved the violence. While some men regretted their actions, a few only regretted the violence because of the consequences they experienced (such as jail term), rather than for the harm they inflicted.

Although the men stated that they often felt good following violence, there are a few in the sample who never felt good after a violent action. Despite this they still carried out violence due to a perceived sense of duty, responsibility or habit.

As adolescents, many in the sample were violent regardless of the consequences – where injury, reputation, and prison, was all *"part and parcel"* of their lifestyle. However, as they progressed into adulthood the weight of the consequences became heavier due to a more prominent impact on their lifestyle and wellbeing.

4.3.4 Summary

Figure 4.2 *"violence developmental path"* is a model highlighting the development of *violent actions; types and changes* and *antecedents* over time. Thus it highlighted the findings that with age, men developed more and more complex identities – the maintenance of these identities were a significant precursor to violence, especially during adolescence. Goal directed behaviour also increased in complexity, where black and white reasoning behind violent actions developed into more intricate and thought out reasons. Because of this pre-violence reasoning, *latency to act* also decreased with age – that is after the event which stimulated a

man to action, the men were more likely to take their time and consider their actions before acting. This pattern however does not occur smoothly. Some individuals experienced this development at a different rate to others, therefore this model does not depict specific ages. Furthermore, events can trigger men to resort back to reactive violence. These events can include a prison sentence, or a highly charged emotion such as stress or anger.

Violent actions themselves developed little across the lifespan. Major areas of change included; weapon-use and group violence most frequent during adolescence and early 20s, and a general decrease in violence frequency across time. Most of the men stated that their violence increased in severity to mid adolescence/mid twenties, and in most cases this severity decreased little beyond this point. Interestingly specific violent actions only changed a very small amount, where planned robberies were more likely to be carried out at an older age than other violence; this highlights that the development of violence is more likely goal related than violent action related. Finally, there were both positive and negative outcomes, the effect of these on future behaviour is discussed in the next section

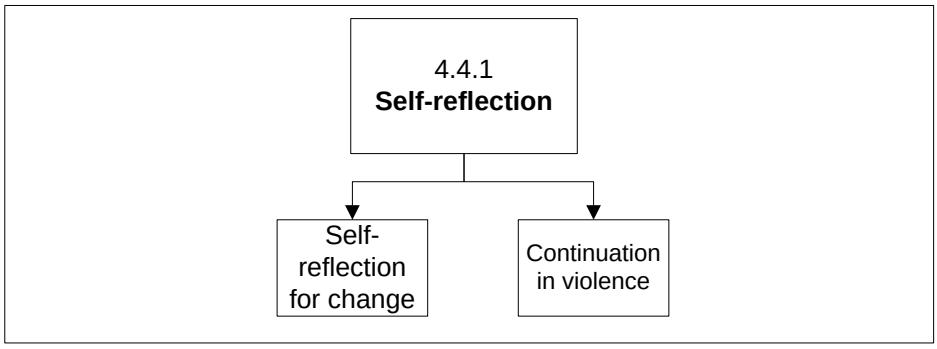

Figure 4.5: The Change component in the IDV model

4.4 Change

This final component represented in the IVD model highlights the men's decisions for changing their violence and reasons for this. These decisions could pro-social or antisocial in nature. Change in violence usually resulted from self-reflection of the outcomes and consequences of violent actions. The results section has focussed on things which increased the propensity for violence, and goals outlined the reasons *for* violence. This section highlights self-reflection for reducing violent behaviour. The final section highlights barriers for changing, or reasons the men did

not, would not, or could not stop their violence - even following negative outcomes to the violence.

4.4.1 Self-reflection for change

To be in Te Whare Manaakitanga (TWM), the men had to express an interest in addressing their violence. Approximately half of the sample had tried to address these issues before entering TWM. This section looks at reasons behind wanting to change, the changes they had already made, and any future changes they will try to make.

Trying to leave a violent lifestyle can be due to a number of reasons and take place as either as a gradual change or pinpointed to a specific point in time.

Some of the men had an *'epiphany',* or sudden moment, where they decided they wanted to change and were unable to pinpoint exactly why this occurred. Others identified specific events which helped their decision to try leaving their violent lifestyle. These events included the birth of a child, a relationship or an injury:

> *"*When did you start trying to walk away*?/Umm that's a number, that if the times not right, all depends now, I don't want to get arrested, pretty much. Had my jaw break and had my head caved in, been stabbed I've been shot at…Yea, after my head injury I changed a lot. I nearly missed out on my 14 year old son being born."* (002)

Some wanted to change because they could see the effect their violence had on their families; others got *"sick and tired"* of their violent lifestyles or afraid of where they may end up if they did not stop:

> *"...and I could sorta see a pattern you know, where my life was heading every crime was getting worse and worse you know, and if I didn't stop, if I try not to stop now, yeah if I didn't try to stop now then I'll, chances are, 90% out of a hundred I'm gonna end up back in here for doing a life aye. F*** I'm only 24 years old. I see a lot of old fellas in here you know and they're at the age of 60 you know, and I'm like 'f*** I don't wanna be that fella'"* (003)

4.4.1.1 Past changes and attempts

Approximately two thirds of the sample had previously taken steps toward a non-violent lifestyle. There was no pattern for the age at which the men tried to

change, varying from nineteen to the mid 30s, where some tried more than once throughout their lifespan.

Some of the sample had joined counselling or education courses to help them with change, one starting these as early as nineteen. Many attempted major lifestyle changes, such as completely giving up alcohol or drugs, leaving the gang, or changing their perspective on life:

> *"I stayed on the outside for six years...I got my own house, created me a family, partner and kids. I thought Jesus this is a good life, you know just being a parent... I handed my patch in*." (009)

Two of the sample even purposely got themselves arrested to help them with change (as highlighted in section 4.2.2.1).

When trying to give up their violent lifestyle, some had successful periods for up to six years, evident both within their files and self-report. However all men had experienced a set-back resulting in further imprisonment (hence being in this unit). Reasons for these set-backs included an inability to cope with the daily stressors of life (or partner); continuing to feel they needed to use violence to protect friends and family; or not having developed pro-social behavioural controls.

4.4.2 Continuation in violence

The goals section focussed on reasons men had for carrying out violence, and the outcomes section highlighted that there are both positive and negative outcomes to violence. Most of the detail on why the men continued into violence is mentioned throughout the results section. This section is a brief summary on why men continued with their violence, even after negative consequences.

When the men carried out violence to achieve a goal, if the outcome was successful, the men would have no motivation to stop their violence. However not all the outcomes were positive as mentioned above, and yet many men carried out their violence even when this occurred.

Many of the men described their early learning environment as teaching them violence, and restricting their ability to learn how to react pro-socially. Many of these men were unable to form friendships or control their emotion. Having violence as a method to overcome these barriers made it difficult for the men to make pro-social changes - they needed to develop other skills to help develop different methods of achieving the goals outlined in the *antecedent* component. Other reasons

the men did not desist from violence even after aversive consequences involved being in a gang, or with antisocial peers. To reduce their violent lifestyle many of the men would have to reduce contact with these people, and as they are like family to them, many were not willing to make this change until much later in their life. Leaving the gang was also difficult for other reasons, many gangs made it hard and even dangerous to leave; therefore many men feared leaving the gang. Other barriers to change included the men's identities. For example a sheriff would have to give up his law enforcing role to become pro-social and thus develop a new identity. Furthermore not being able to *"deal to"* people would mean the men would have to rely on law enforcement, which many were not willing to do.

At a young age many of the men had no interest in reducing their violence. Violence was fun and part of their identity. Thus their enjoyment, sense of pride in who they had become, and having new friends all became motivating factors for continuing with violence even after negative consequences.

The men in the sample were expected to make changes to their lifestyle to reduce their violence as a pre-requisite of being in this unit. The sample had learnt about attitude changes, keeping a low profile, thinking before they act and so forth. However it was noted in the interviews, that some men still held firmly to beliefs which may be a barrier to prevention of future violence, and spoke about resorting to violence if there was a good enough reason. A good enough reason still involved levels of violence not condoned in society. For example, some would still '*deal*' (inflict violence upon) to people who; owe them (or their friends/family) money, or have attacked someone close to them. Furthermore some still firmly held on to the belief that violence is an adequate response to threat or as punishment. Finally a barrier to desisting violence is enjoying violence, feeling like it is part of their personality, or feeling like it is justified:

> "And do you still want to join the [army]?/*Yeap*/Why/*So I can go and kill people*/You actually want to kill people?/*Yea*/Why?/*Coz it makes me feel good*/Really?/*Yeah coz they like, not like, I don't have any interest in like going and killing some vulnerable people, there's people in the world that do like some really sadistic things like chop peoples, like small children's limbs off. Like in Sierra Leone and was it 2000*/And so you want to get them?/*Yeah the*

Taliban like you know they go and cut peoples noses and ears off because they vote." (008).

4.5 Summary of the models

The DVP model (Figure 4.2) highlighted the dynamic component of violence and how it changed over time. It showed that violence generally increased in severity and frequency from childhood into the twenties, where early thirties is often characterised by a decrease in violence frequency. It also highlighted that violence tended to become more planed over time, and that violence specific goals became more complex with time.

The IDV model (figure 4.1) summaries why violence is dynamic. Most of the sample experienced adverse development environments, such as domestic violence, difficulty at school or life changing events. The men described these environments as teaching inappropriate coping mechanisms to situations, where men often resorted to violence. Violence was used by the sample as a means to an end. Reasons for violence could include boredom, because friends were doing it, for gangs, gain, revenge, or because they felt they were a sheriff. Violence was influenced by lifestyle, where violence is affected by relationships/associates, drug use, or environments.

The decrease in violence seen around approximately the thirties is often due to life changing events such as the birth of a child or injury. It is also because the men started to become disillusioned with their gang or was sick of the lifestyle, or from lack of opportunity due to being in prison.

Finally self-reflection could also influence change, where personal agency dictated whether to continue offending or stop. Although many of the men were trying to leave the violence lifestyle, barriers they faced included antisocial friends and family members, or an inability to let go of firmly held beliefs such as needing violence to manage relationships.

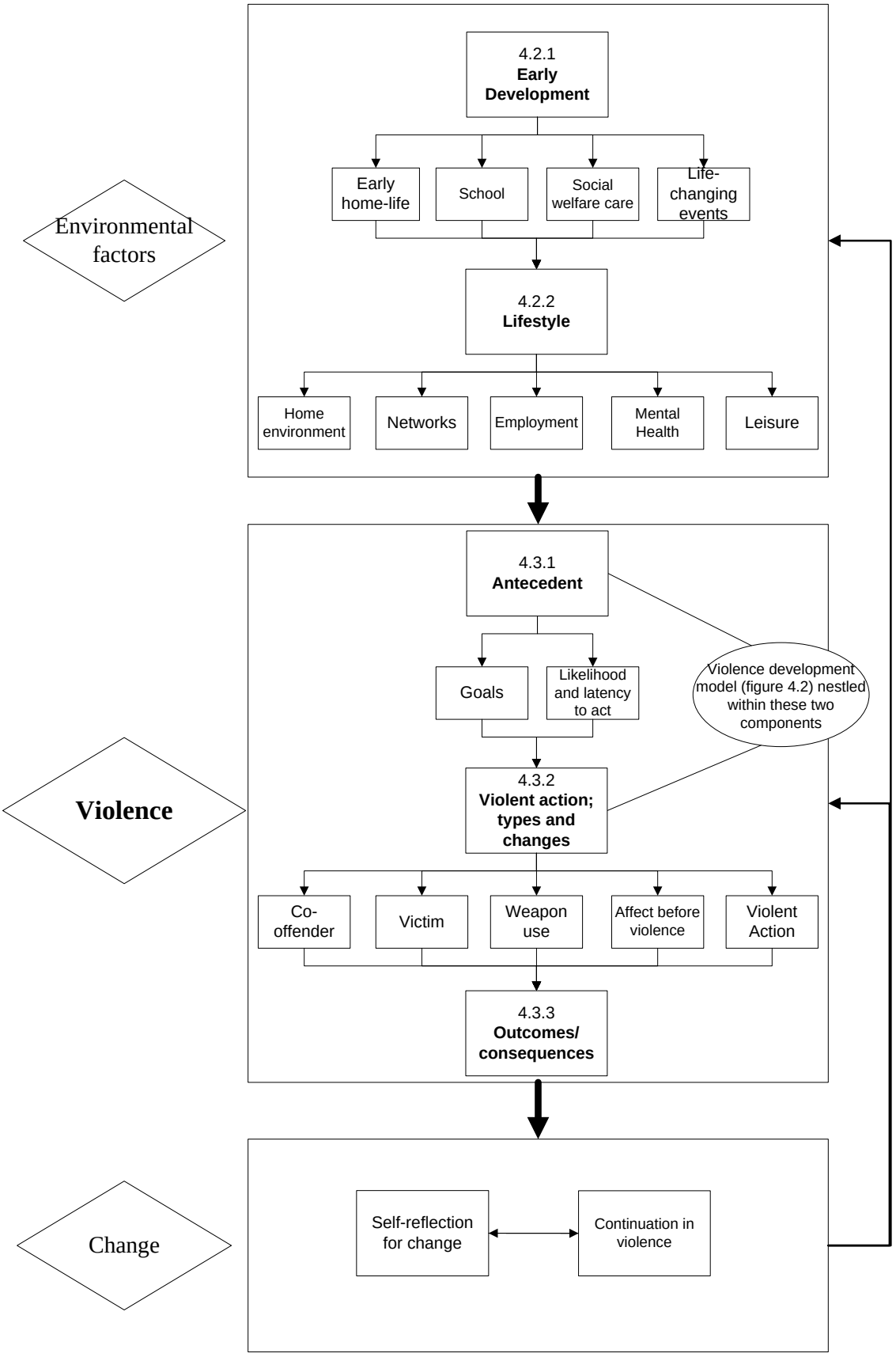

Figure 4.1: Influences on violence development

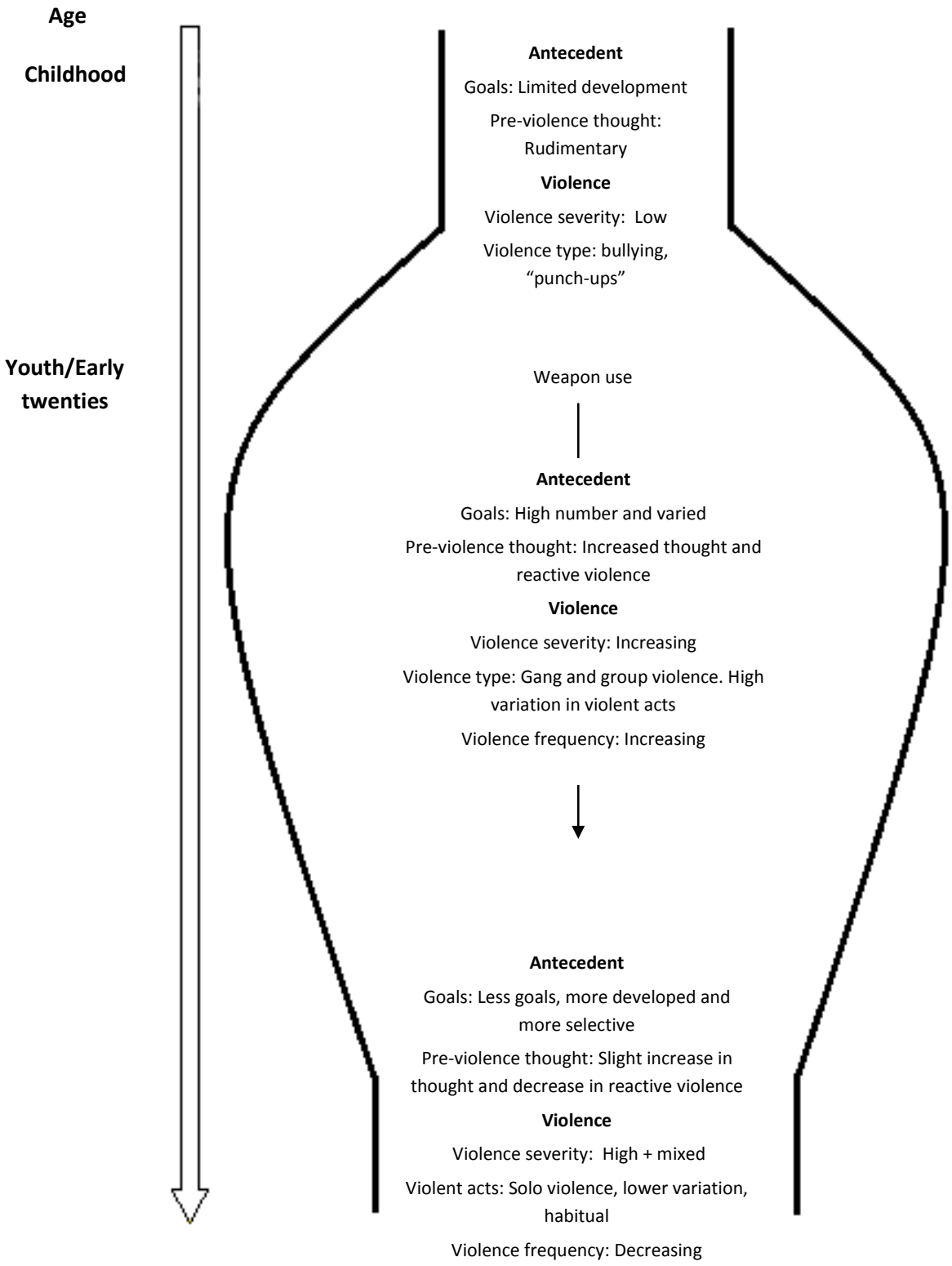

Figure 4.2: Violence developmental path

5. Discussion

The current research aimed to develop a model of violent offending, and how violence develops across the lifespan. The research was directed at overcoming current research methodological issues discussed in the rationale such as: lack of incorporating offender perspective, and lack of analysing change in violent behaviour with the change in violence goals. Using twelve violent offenders' accounts of their violence and grounded theory methodology, figures 4.1 and 4.2 were developed.

Figure 4.1, *"Influences on violence development"* model (IVD), highlights the reasons for *why* violence changed over time. It has three over-arching components; *environmental factors, violence,* and *change. Environmental factors* provide the scaffolding and environment to a violent behaviour – which are represented by the *early development* and *violence lifestyle* components. V*iolence* is the change in violent actions over time and incorporates *goals* behind violent actions and how they change. Finally the *change* component focuses on the men's self-reflection upon their violence and the result of this – such as active reduction in violence or continuation of offending. The three components have a reciprocal relationship with each other, where environment influences violent action, violent actions influence change, and change in turn can influence an environmental (lifestyle) or violence change.

Figure 4.2, "*Violence developmental path"* model (VDP), highlights how violence changed across the lifespan for the sample. The VDP model is nested within the *violence* component of the IVD model. The wider areas of the model correspond to the increasing frequency of violence, and the length of the model is the men's lifespan. This model highlights the increase in violence frequency and severity over time, and also represents the increasing complexity of these actions whereby violence related goals generally become more elaborate with increasing forethought. The tapering end of the model highlights decrease in violence frequency, however severity did not decrease.

The two models highlight a number of aspects of violence development over time; however, for the purpose of this discussion only two theoretical points will be discussed. Firstly Loeber and colleagues pathways to delinquency model – namely the overt pathway – will be discussed in relation to the current research. Secondly

Laub and Sampson's life-course perspective on offending behaviour is analysed. The last chapter will focus on implications of the model and future research, and finally limitations of the model.

5.1 Loeber and colleague's overt pathway to violence

The key issue researched in this study is how violence developed over time, where VDP describes *how* and it fits into the larger IVD model which describes *why*. There is only one other model which also highlights the change in violence over time; thus Loeber et al (1993) are pioneers in this research. They developed a model highlighting three pathways of offending behaviour, which follow a pattern of early minor offending developing to more serious offending across time (figure 5.1).

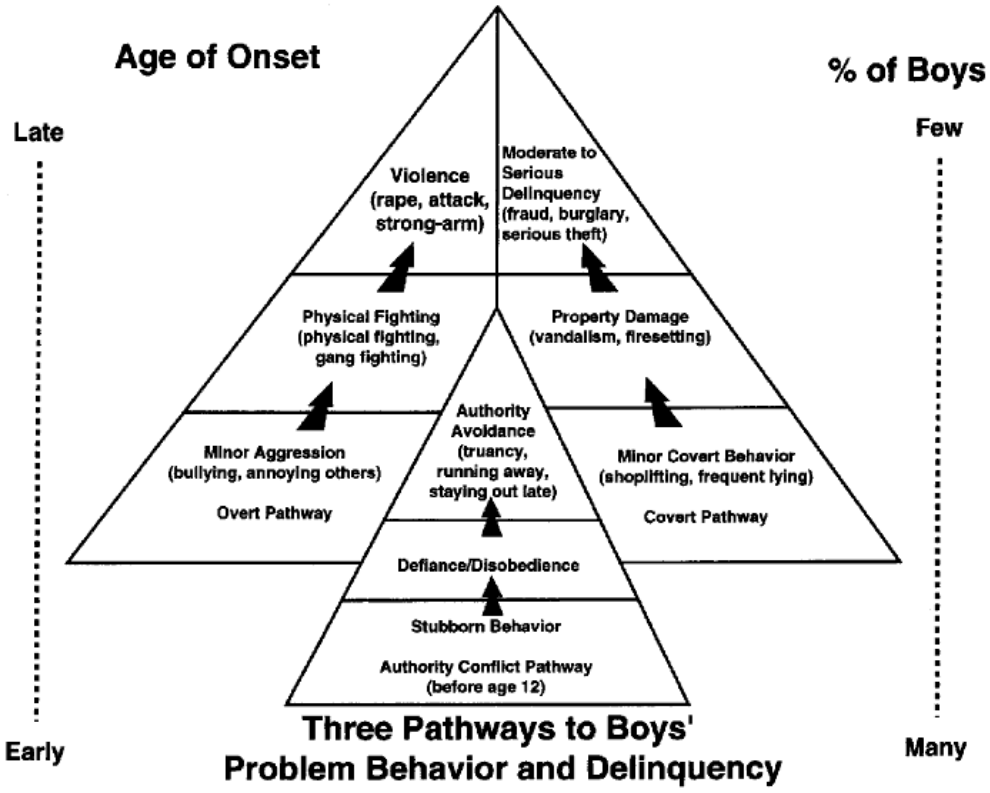

Figure 5.1. Loeber et al (1993) model on pathways to boys' delinquency. Retrieved from Loeber & Hay (1997).

Loeber et al.'s (1993) model was developed from boys in the Pittsburgh Youth Study. The data collected in the initial development of the model spanned from ages three to sixteen, however subsequent research on the model extended this age to 30 (Loeber, Wei, Stouthamer-Loeber, Huizinga & Thornberry, 1998). Each of the three delinquency pathways are described in three stages and shown in Figure

5.1. The *"*overt pathway*"* focuses on the development of violent actions, for this reason it is the only pathway of interest for the current research. The major finding in Loeber and colleague's (1993) overt pathway is that violence severity increases with age. This increase develops across three stages: stage one starts at approximately thirteen and involves minor aggression such as bullying; boy's violence then increases in severity at stage two, which involves physical and gang fighting; and finally violence develops into more serious violence such as rape at stage three. Their studies showed that boys can enter the pathway at any of the three stages, and not all adolescents proceed to the final stage in their model (violence). The current research focuses on those who proceeded to stage three; where most of whom *did* follow stages one to three in order.

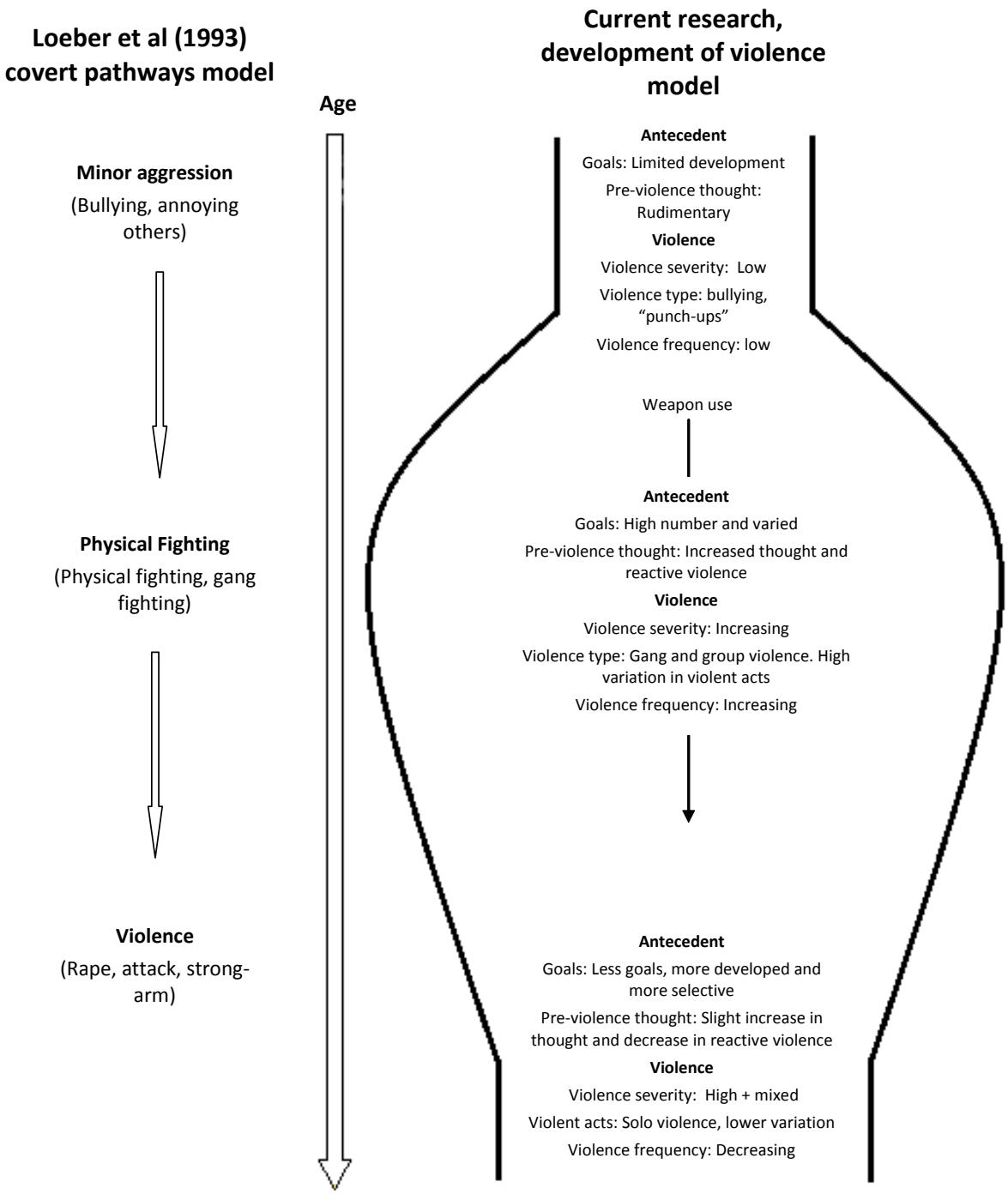

Figure 5.2 Figure comparing the violence developmental paths as developed in the current study (right) and Loeber et al's (1993) overt pathway in their pathways to delinquency model (left).

For ease of comparison, the overt pathway from Loeber and colleagues (1993) has been placed beside the VDP model (figure 5.2). Both models highlight that there is an increase in violence severity over time, where Loeber and colleague's

(1993) model outlines changes in specific violence, the VDP model focuses on different aspects of violence which changes over time.

Both models have strengths which add value and support to the other model. The remainder of this section will firstly discuss the strengths of Loeber and colleagues's (1993) pathway model and how it provides support for the current model. It will then discuss the strengths of the current model and how this adds depth to the pathways model.

5.1.1 Strengths of the pathways model

The pathway model has a number of methodological strengths. Firstly their model was empirically formulated and many subsequent studies have showed high ecological validity for their research. For example different cohorts had been used (Loeber et al, 1993; Loeber, Keenan & Zhang, 1997), such as non-delinquent males (Le Blanc, Côtè & Loeber, 1991), cohorts from other research (Loeber et al, 1998), and cohorts of different ethnicities (Loeber et al. 1998) have all supported their model. Secondly, their data was collected from a multiple sources – parents, participants, teachers and court data. The variety of sources adds to the strength and reliability of their research. Finally, their research followed participants both retrospectively (Loeber et al, 1993) and prospectively (Loeber et al, 1993; Loeber et al, 1998). Further support for this model comes from Moffitt (1993) who highlighted the increase in severity of offending behaviour over time; Elliot (1994) who found that serious violence (aggravated assault, robbery and rape) also increased in severity over time; and Farrington (1986) who found that severe violence increased in frequency through late adolescence into early adulthood. Although examining a different avenue of offending behaviour, Le Blanc and Fréchette (1989) and Le Blanc (1996) also noted the increasing complexity and severity of offending behaviour over time. Their research discussed the increasing severity in relation to the increased level of planning, and thus providing further support for Loeber and colleague's (1993) model

Both the overt pathway of delinquency and the current VDP model highlights the increasing severity of violence. The methodological strengths and empirical validation of Loeber's model by subsequent research, thus provides support and validation to the increasing severity component of the VDP model. In turn, the VDP model provides depth to the overt pathway. Furthermore it provides explanations of why the trend of increasing severity occurs.

5.1.2 Strengths of the VDP model; adding depth to Loeber and colleague's (1993) overt pathway

The grounded theory approach was used for the formation of the VDP model. This method helps the development of theories and reduces bias by developing ideas grounded within the data. Thus instead of having a research question, analysis of the data guided the researcher (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The different methodologies used by the current research and Loeber et al. (1993) both came to a similar overall conclusion; that violence increases in severity over time. This highlights that both models have a high reliability. Further differences in methodology is highlighted in the method of data collection; the current study gathered the men's perspectives and descriptions of their violence change thus increasing the ecological validity of both models. This therefore implies that the quantitative method used by Loeber and colleagues and their subsequent studies has found similar results to the men in the current study's own perspectives. This convergence of ideas from researchers and participants helps validate the model and make the model more applicable to offender rehabilitation.

One of the weaknesses of Loeber and colleague's (1993) model is that it fails to consider what may occur once the offender has reached stage three (the highest level of violence). For example, will the offender continue at this high severity or will their severity decrease over time (Piquero, Farrington & Blumstein, 2003)? To my knowledge there is no research into this, however Sampson and Laub's research (Laub & Sampson, 2003; Sampson & Laub, 1993) found that most men tended to decrease in offending behaviour over time, implying that all men at some stage in their life will desist. With this in mind, an assumption could be made that violence will decrease in severity as men are reducing their offending; the VDP model attempts to explain this. Some of the men stated their violence decreased in severity, where as others stated only their violence frequency changed. This provides support for at a decrease in violence severity over time. It is unsure whether this effect of slight decreasing violence severity is due to a plateau effect - where the men have carried out the most severe action – or because these men are in a rehabilitation unit where they are a subset of violent offenders already taking steps to reduce their violence. Extrapolation of the current findings across different violent offender samples is one area for future research.

Although having methodological strengths, Loeber and colleague's (1993) model lacks explanatory depth in a number of ways. Firstly severity of violence is measured by the violent acts. For example, bullying is a minor violence. However there are much more components which can impact on its severity; these may include areas such as weapon use, or hostile versus instrumental violence. There are also other areas which may highlight violence development (especially if no change in violent action is visible); for example change in violence related goals. Finally their research does not discuss the reasons why violence may be increasing in severity. The VDP model aimed to capture as much about violence change as possible. Thus it outlines the developing antecedents to violence (change in violence related goals and latency to act), and specific aspects of violence such as frequency, severity, type, co-offenders and weapon use.

The final areas where the current model supports Loeber and colleague's (1993) model, involves participant selection. Loeber et al's (1993) cohort was generated randomly from the public; the current research focused on offenders who had a high number of violent convictions. These men were at higher risk for re-offending and had a higher number of convictions than those in Loeber and colleagues (1993) sample. Finding that these men also followed the three stages in the pathway model, highlights that this trend is found across offence types.

5.1.3 Summary

Both models highlight an important aspect of violent offending – its increasing severity over time. The different methods and samples used highlight the applicability of these models across offender types and offence types. The VDP and IVD models add depth to the pathways model by exploring other aspects of violence development, and explaining why these changes occur.

Both the VDP model and Loeber and colleagues's model (1993) outline *how* violence develops, however Loeber and colleagues do not discuss *why* this may occur. The VDP is nested within the influences on violence development (IVD) model (figure 4.1). The IVD model discusses *why* we see the changes highlighted in the VDP model. The following section focussing on Sampson and Laub's work will go into more depth about how this model explains why violence develops.

5.2 Sampson and Laub's age-graded life-course perspective

Sampson and Laub (1993; 2005_A; 2005_B; Laub & Sampson, 2001; 2003) have carried out a large number of studies on offender behaviour, following the life-course of men up to 70 years (Laub & Sampson, 2003). In their research they took a life-course perspective on offending behaviour stating that offending is not just a product of personality and early developmental factors, but that it is dynamic in nature due to a continuous interplay of personal agency (individual choice to desist or persist in offending) and the effects environments/situations on desistance and continuation of offending. One of the fundamental aspects in Sampson and Laub's (2005_A; 2005_B; Laub & Sampson, 2003) research, is that offenders persist and desist following similar mechanisms, and that all men desist from offending, albeit at different rates and ages. This view point counters much of the research on life-course persistent (LCP) offenders, especially Moffitt (1993) who stated that LCP offenders maintain chronic offending throughout the lifespan, and Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) who posit that lack of self-control is responsible for offending behaviour, and that this trait does not change throughout the lifespan. Similar to Sampson and Laub, the IVD model stresses that violent behaviour is dynamic and that continuous interplay between the environment, violence and change component leads to violence behaviour varying over time.

In Sampson and Laub's argument Sampson and Laub's (Sampson & Laub, 2005_A; 2005_B; Laub & Sampson, 2003), they describe how "*informal social controls*" (ISC), such as ties to relationships, institutions and communities, increases "*social capital"* (the amount of 'worth' a person places on people, places, communities or events) and can account for both desistance and persistence of offending behaviour. They also argue an *age-graded* theory of offending behaviour (Sampson & Laub, 1993); stressing that ISC are dynamic and develop with respect to a person's development, and in turn having different effects at different stages of a person's life:

> *"A fundamental thesis of our age-graded theory of informal social control is that whereas individual traits and childhood experiences are important for understanding behavioural stability, experiences in adolescence and adulthood can redirect criminal trajectories in either a more positive or more negative manner."* (Sampson & Laub, 2005_B, p16).

They call these experiences mentioned above *"turning points".* In their research, turning points are normally events which influence offending behaviour by encouraging either offending or desistance. These are commonly occurring events, which affect each person differently, and some not at all.

5.2.1 Turning points in the IVD model

Turning points are effective for desistance or persistence as they create new ISC which influence behaviour. Thus turning points influence offending behaviour by; influencing social support, investment of new social supports (such as marriage), reducing ISC to antisocial controls such as peers (for example military reduces access to antisocial peers); changing routine activities; and finally aiding in identity transformation (described below; Sampson & Laub,1993; 2005_A; 2005_B; Laub & Sampson, 2003). An example of this is marriage. Marriage restricts access to antisocial peers, creates new routines, creates attachment to a new person who may influence behaviour, and helps the formation of a new identity (family man) which is not compatible with offending behaviour (Sampson & Laub, 1993).

Sampson and Laub's concept of turning points was derived from both retrospective data (1993) and qualitative analysis of interviews with their samples (Laub & Sampson, 2003; although the idea of turning points was developed before this). In their interviews participants discussed specific thoughts, times or events which influenced their offending behaviour. In the current sample men explained their change in violence similarly, which is represented in the IVD model. For example, when interviewing the participants in the current research, one of the questions asked was *"why?", "why did you carry out this violence?"* or *"why* (or how) *did this change?"* The latter question relates to the turning points; the men never discussed a change in violent behaviour without stating a certain event or thought which occurred to encourage this change. Each component of the IVD model has examples of turning points. For example, the *lifestyle* component captures context or environmental factors at which violent offending occurs, but it also discusses change in these factors which led to a change in violent behaviour. One of the factors which changes includes the *living environments* section. This section discusses both moving home and going to prison. Each of these were turning points that the men described as influencing their violence. One man stated that when leaving home he was not given the opportunity, nor had the inclination, to carry out violence because he was kept busy. Prison at a young age however was a turning

point to increase violence for many of the men, as this is an environment where "tough" reputations are needed, and men learnt to fight.

There are four areas important to Sampson and Laub's turning points; they are not the same for every individual, do not have to be a specific salient event, effectiveness depends on age and context; and they alter ISC. Three of these have been supported in the current study as described below.

A turning point is not the same for every individual. As an example of this Laub and Sampson (2003) discusses how the military was a turning point which influenced some individuals. In theory, the military creates a *"knifing off"* process, cutting people off from the environment in which they offend. For some of the men this had an effect on desistance. However other men rebelled against these restrictions or got forced out of the military, leaving some men angry and more likely to offend. The current study also showed that turning points can have different effects for different people. For example an intimate relationship caused one man to try and settle down and buy a house for her, for another it caused a man to begin domestic violence.

Turning points do not have to be a salient event. Sampson and Laub (1993; 2005_A; 2005_B; Laub & Sampson, 2003) stress that every person has *personal agency* - the ability to exercise free will – which can alter the course of their lives. For this reason a man can simply make the decision to stop offending. Interestingly Sampson and Laub (1993) also state that men can slowly reduce their offending without being aware of the process, but still exercising their personal agency. According to Denzin (1989) a turning point can be an epiphany, where the consequences of previous offending can lead to a decision to stop. The *change* component in the IVD model discusses self-reflection which led the whole sample to decide to change their violence in some way. Some of these self-reflections were not based on a single time or salient event, but instead due to a number of factors that in time build up to cause a man to decide to change.

Turning points are age-graded. They depend on the context and time, in a way that the same turning point can have a different effect at different points of a person's life (Sampson & Laub, 1993; 2005_A; 2005_B; Laub & Sampson, 2003). This concept was also found amongst the sample. One salient example is the birth of a child. For one man the birth of his first child led to an increase in violence and rages; however, the birth of his second child became a turning point at which he absolved

to try completely abstain from violence. He explained that with his first child he was not ready to settle down and become a father.

Sampson and Laub's (1993; 2005_A; 2005_B; Laub & Sampson, 2003) final idea is that all turning points influence ISC and thus change offending. This was only partially supported in the research. Most of the turning points the men discussed involved such things as peer relations, identity, moving home, or family. However one man discussed severe injury which influenced his decision to desist from violence. Following his injury he feared further injury, thus made lifestyle changes to try reducing further risk of this. There are no obvious ISC associated with this turning point.

Thus most of the concepts of turning points are supported in this research. The next section focuses on ISC and how these influence turning points.

5.2.2 Informal social controls

Sampson and Laub (1993; 2005_A; 2005_B; Laub & Sampson, 2003) state ISC, such as attachment to peers, family, institutions and the community, can influence offending. This is similar to Hirschi's (1969) social control theory which also states that social attachment informs offending – whereby the pros and cons of offending behaviour are weighed up and considered to maximise their social benefit. According to Sampson and Laub (1993; 2005_A; 2005_B; Laub & Sampson, 2003), previous delinquency fosters future crime by the weakening of pro-social bonds. Furthermore, creation of new pro-social bonds (for example, with turning points) increases social capital and thus decreases offending. For example marriage strengthens the bond felt towards their partner and in turn can reduce the strength of bonds felt towards antisocial peers.

When looking at the IVD model we see that much of the participants' behaviour was influenced by social bonds, both pro-social and antisocial. One example from the research is where the lack of bonding one man felt towards his family led him to try and find this attachment elsewhere. He stated he replaced his family life with gang life. The ISC of gang life therefore led to this man developing stronger criminal attitudes, he was more likely to carry out violence due to the bonds he felt towards them. However, social bonds can be less obvious, one given example is in the next section on identity.

5.2.2.3 Identity

When discussing the influence of turning points and ISC on an offender, Sampson and Laub (1993; 2005_A; 2005_B; Laub & Sampson, 2001; 2003) discussed that offenders may experience a change in identity. For example, marriage is considered an adult role, thus once married an offender may change their identity to "a family man"; an identity which may not be compatible with offending behaviour. Identity formation as a goal for offending behaviour has been widely researched. For example reputation enhancement theory (RET; Emler, 1984) states that adolescents choose an identity they wish to portray (Emler, 1984) and use this identity to show others that they belong to a specific public group to gain acceptance (Emler, & Reichter 1995) or gain approval (Agnew, 1991). The men followed a similar pattern where identity formation and maintenance played a strong role in the goals behind the participants' violence behaviour. These men (especially at an earlier age) had violence supporting identities they wished to portray to the world. For example they often firstly discussed developing a "*tough*" identity to either "*fit in*" with a peer group or as a defence mechanism from potential threats such as attack or ridicule. Their identity often further developed as one of a *"sheriff"* whereby the men considered it their right; to enforce law "*if I can't then he can't*", protect those weaker than them, or just take on a leadership role. This identity also developed in relation to turning points and new ISCs. The *sheriff* identity was developed in relation to people approaching the men for help; and identity further changed to one of a *"provider"* at the birth of a child.

5.2.3 Cumulative disadvantage

Finally also important to Sampson and Laub's (1993; 2005_A; 2005_B; Laub & Sampson, 2003) life-course perspective involves cumulative disadvantage. Cumulative disadvantage explains the continuity seen in many "persistent" offenders (Sampson & Laub, 1993; 2005_A; 2005_B; Laub & Sampson, 2003). This is also similar to Moffitt's (1993) contemporary and cumulative consequences. Moffitt (1993) describes cumulative consequences as a snowball effect of early life failures leading to future life failures. Sampson and Laub (1993; 2005; Laub & Sampson, 2003) extend this to where delinquent acts changes the ability to develop strong social bonds early on, and therefore they cannot create these later in life continue offending. For this reason, many men present a stability in offending behaviour over time.

The men in the current sample also stated similar consequences. Many explained the inability to form friendships because of their early development which lead to the development of peer-bonds with antisocial peers or not knowing how to behave in a relationship. This inability to form pro-social peer bonds or behave in a relationship also led to further violence.

5.2.4 Summary

Sampson and Laub take a strong view that offending behaviour is dynamic. Their view posits that although there may be early developmental aspects to offending behaviour, they state that turning points or events change ISCs and thus can influence both persistence and desistance. They further describe that offending persistence and desistance cannot be predicted but rather are dynamic with respect to these turning points and personal agency. The IVD model also highlights that offending is dynamic, and men also discussed turning points which influenced behaviour. Sampson and Laub also highlight personal agency, which is that the offenders can personally dictate whether to continue or desist offending through choice. This was further supported by the research where in the *change* section of the model men reflected on their past and thus made a decision (whether consciously decided or not) to continue or desist their violent behaviour. Finally cumulative disadvantage discusses how men's early development can make offending behaviour appear stable over time.

There is only one aspect of this view not supported by the model, and that is that *all* turning points influence offending behaviour through ISC. The example given was where one man experienced significant injury nearly causing death as a turning point however there seemed to be no social implication to that decision. However, following injury, this man did make the decision to avoid his antisocial peers, which could imply that injury led to a breakdown of antisocial ISC. Furthermore, Sampson and Laub (1993; 2005_A; 2005_B; Laub & Sampson, 2001; 2003) discuss personal agency; stating that men carry out offending behaviour because they *choose* to do so, and that they have the choice to desist. This could also account for the decision to stop when injured.

The current research focuses on violent offenders only, these men make up a small subset of highly frequent offenders. The high risk and highly criminal aspect of this group supports Sampson and Laub's theory, thus extending it to more violent individuals. Furthermore the methodology was grounded theory - the data and

participants themselves informed the model. This converging of ideas from two different areas and times leads to the strength of both models.

5.3 Summary: theoretical and clinical implications

5.3.1 Summary and theoretical implications

Two different models were developed from the data, one describing how violence develops over time (Figure 4.2) and the other highlighting why we see this change (Figure 4.1). The methodological practice used derived these models entirely from the men's own perceptions of how violence changed. Thus comparing the IVD and DVP models to the pathways model by Loeber et al. (1993), and Sampson and Laub's life-course perspective of crime furthers understanding of how violence develops. Both Loeber and colleagues and Sampson and Laubs extensive research has focussed on offenders in general. They found similar changes in offending behaviour as the current study has found with violence, thus highlighting that the development of offending and the development of violence can follow similar mechanisms. The ability of the current models to both show how violence and violence related goals develop over time, aides us in the understanding of the processes the men feel they undergo when carrying out violence. A further strength in this model is that it ties together research from all areas of both criminology and psychology. It has found support for both Loeber et al's (1993) pathways model and Sampson and Laub's life-course perspective on offending behaviour, and has drawn together both the why and how violence changes. Other areas of research mentioned in the model included social learning theory, rational choice theory, and reputation enhancement theory, however this is not an extensive list and further research could examine more theories in relation to this model such as developmental theories mentioned in the introduction. Thus this model has the ability to provide a holistic view on the development and change in violence over time.

Much of the research focuses on one pathway to violence or offending behaviour (Loeber & Hay, 1997). Loeber et al (1993) disputed this by providing three developmental pathways of offence development. Sampson and Laub (1993; 2005_A; 2005_B; Laub & Sampson, 2001; 2003) argues there is one process but many pathways to offending and desistance. This current model also supports these, however is more focussed on highlighting that there are a number of aspects influencing offending behaviour. Thus knowing that there is one process but many

influences, highlights the dynamic property of violent offending. Furthermore many researchers discuss risk factors which can predict persistence and desistance (for example Moffitt, 1993), both the current model and Sampson and Laub's theory highlight that offending behaviour is dynamic and unpredictable. Although there are factors in childhood which influence continuity into offending behaviour, whether a man will desist or continue is unpredictable due to environment, ISC, and personal agency.

5.3.2 Clinical and policy implications

Understanding that all men have a tendency to desist and that this is not predictable, has strong implications for imprisonment. For example, if a man will desist, is imprisonment for long time a viable measure? This question is especially important when examining the costs of imprisonment, and that many of the men described imprisonment at a young age as a turning point for their *increase* in violence. Furthermore imprisonment can prevent a man from developing pro-social bonds which is important for desistance in violence (Sampson & Laub, 2005).

Understanding the progression from less severe to severe violence can also provide greater understanding of violence progression for authorities. Prevention models can be created for separate stages of violence progression allowing improved incarceration treatment to prevent recidivism in re-offenders.

This research also has a number of clinical implications. That violence develops due to a combined influence of environment and personal agency is important for rehabilitative practices. Knowing that men have some sort of control or personal agency (whether they realise it or not) over their decisions could help with motivational interviewing, to help an offender take the first steps to desistance. Furthermore, understanding the choices and goals a violent offender makes, also has implications for rehabilitation, where therapy can be tailored to find pro-social methods for goal attainment. This knowledge can also aide in the creation of new opportunities for men to develop pro-social bonds. Furthermore as this model has shown that there are many factors which influence violence development, it highlights that perhaps violence rehabilitation should follow a more individual based approach.

The methodology used means that the information gathered is from the perspective of violent offenders. Understanding their perspective is very important to

build rapport in a rehabilitative setting. Rapport is very important for a therapeutic relationship, which has been proven to aide rehabilitation

A final rehabilitative implication is understanding at which point the man is in their offending (for example the DVP model or Loeber et al's [1993] model), helps to show specific changes where treatment may be utilised more effectively than other stages. For example, understanding that gang and group violence is more common around adolescence and early 20s can help guide the therapist or psychologist to try lead the participant to the development of pro-social bonds and severing antisocial bonds.

5.4 Limitations of the present study and future research

The most salient limitation is the sample size. Because of the limited sample size saturation had not been met. This will imply that there is much more knowledge about the development of violence which has not yet been understood. For example, Kazemian and Le Blanc (2004) found two types of offenders, disorganised and organised subtype. The current research has not found this, highlighting that there is a potential for further research to analyse whether there may be different subtypes. This is especially important as the current research has highlighted that influences on violence varies between men, and thus suggests a more individual approach to rehabilitation, however if there is subgroups in violent offenders, this may account for the variation found. Thus the model developed in figure 4.2 may only explain one subtype.

A second limitation is the participants were in a rehabilitation programme where they had to show that they were willing to desist from violence. This would impact on the model which showed the frequency and severity of the violence decreased for the sample, but this may be due to the stage every participant was at, at the time of interview. This finding may not have been found had the sample within the general prison population. Also the men being in a rehabilitation programme meant they will have been taught and learnt reasons for their violent offences. This means that some of what the men say could be parroting from the therapists who took their group therapy. For this reason, future sampling of violent individuals should come from a variety of areas, such as maximum security violent offenders, minimum security, and those who have never been imprisoned.

The oldest man in the sample was in his forties, this means that the model developed does not extend beyond this age, thus highlighting the need to collect data from older men.

Other factors which could impede the reliability of the research is the researcher gender and age. Some of the men were especially willing to speak to a young female, others may have tried impression management techniques thus questioning the integrity of the interviews. Whereby one man's interview did not match up to his criminal offence history, thus only part of the interview was used for the analysis.

Another area for future research involves interviewing violent offenders at frequent time points across the lifespan. This is because retrospective recall can be inaccurate, and this will also enable a more accurate depiction.

Finally there are many issues and debates about the method of choice such as offender honesty and recall, and where some find it is not an empirical method. However this is one of the first studies in this area, thus grounded theory is the appropriate methodology to help develop a model of violence development. Future research could use quantitative research to prove or disprove the model.
Finally future research could incorporate information and interviews from other areas related to the men interviewed such as family, friends, prison guards or therapists.

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Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet

TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI
VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

Information Sheet: Development of Violent Offending Project

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What is the purpose of this research?
We are interested in the psychological development of men with a history of violent behaviour. We think it is important to understand what happens to patterns of violent behaviour as men grow from being teenagers into young adults and then mature adults. If you agree to take part, you could be helping us understand what causes people to act violently, and also whether what they do and the causes of it stay the same or change over time. This research will benefit the development of the programme you are in and the men who come into the programme after you. Why? Because psychologists' assessments of men's risk often are based on offending from quite a long time ago. Psychologists need to know whether old offences are alike or different compared to more recent ones in order to better understand how to help men with a violence history.

Who is conducting the research?
We are a team of researchers, students and staff from the School of Psychology at Victoria University. The main researcher is Janneke van't Klooster, who is doing this research for her Masters thesis in Psychology, supervised by Devon Polaschek, and assisted also by Sue Calvert. Devon and Sue are both very experienced clinical psychologists who have worked with men in prison for many years.

What happens if you agree to take part?
We will ask you to sit in an interview room with one or two of us and take part in an interview, which will probably take 60 to 90 minutes. The interview will be recorded (audio only) on a digital recorder.
We will ask you about the kinds of violence you were involved in when you were a teenager and more recently. We will be interested in what you think caused these offences, and whether you can see similarities among different offences you were involved in. We are also very interested in whether there are types of violent offences that you used to do that you are no longer involved in, and so on. We are aiming to get a clear record of the ages at which different violent things happened as you were getting older, and how these things got started.

If you do agree to take part but then change your mind before the interview is finished, you can leave the interview. Unless you tell us otherwise, we will then destroy any information you have provided and you will not be included in the study.

If you take part we will give you a small candy bar as a token of our appreciation for your effort.

What happens to the information you provide?
This study is confidential. The only exception to this confidentiality is if you tell one of us today that you plan to go and immediately and seriously harm yourself or another person in the unit. If you tell us this, we will have to take action to protect whoever is at risk.
Otherwise, prison staff, therapy staff and other inmates will not know your answers to any of the questions you are asked, unless you tell them yourself. We are the only people who will listen to the recording of your interview. We will write down what you say from the recording (just the important parts) and we will store that information at the university on a computer that is password protected and locked in a lab. We will not record identifying information with the interview information.

A copy of your consent form will be stored at the university, separate from your interview information. Another copy will be kept on your prison file, to provide evidence to the Department of Corrections that you consented to take part in the study.

At the end of the study, the recordings will be destroyed but we may retain the consent forms and the notes we made about your interview for a longer period, because these are very valuable data and we want to make the best use of them that we can. But remember, the notes don't contain any identifying information. And anything we don't destroy will be locked securely in a laboratory at the university.

Some of the information you provide will be combined with information from others who also take part, and written up in Janneke's thesis report. We may also publish the overall findings from our research in a scientific journal, or present them at scientific conferences. At no time will it be possible to identify that you took part in the study.

If you do agree to take part, we would like to send you a summary of the main findings of the research, in the first half of 2010. If you would like to receive feedback, please put an address on the consent form.

Remember, this study is not part of the VPU treatment programme. We are independent of the Department of Corrections.

If you wish to contact any of us about the research, you can write to us at the School of Psychology, Victoria University. PO Box 600, Wellington.

Appendix B: Participant consent form

TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

Consent to Participate in *Development of Violent Offending* Study

If you wish to take part in the proposed study, please read the following carefully and sign in the space provided.

I have read the information about the study and I understand what it is about, and what I am being invited to do. I understand that the study is voluntary and that I don't have to take part in it. If I want to stop at any time, I can, and any information collected about me up to that point will be destroyed and not included in the study (unless I say it can still be included).

I understand that the information I give is confidential and will be used only for the purposes of the proposed study, and that I will not be identified (unless I indicate I am at immediate risk of seriously harming myself or someone else). I also understand that the researchers are independent of the prison and the Department of Corrections, and that my involvement or non-involvement will not affect any decisions made about me while I am in prison.

I agree to take part in this study.

Name

Signature

Date _____/_____/20___

I would like a copy of the summary of the results of this study YES / NO

Please send the summary to the following address (please write address below)

_____
_____

_____
_____

_____
_____