

**Hope and the city: a case study of the resiliency adaptations of
British boys of African or Caribbean cultural heritage
attending Year 7 at an urban secondary school.**

**SUBMITTED BY JACK SAMUEL UPTON, TO CARDIFF UNIVERSITY AS A
THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATIONAL
PSYCHOLOGY**

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Submitted: 30th April 2012
Word count: 44 782**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am greatly beholden to my fiancée, who has put up with much over the last three years and always shown patience and understanding, even when I have not been able to clearly explain quite what it was that I was doing. I would also like to thank my future parents in-law who have put up with their house being invaded by myself, boxes of papers and books. Without my parents I would not have ventured on or succeeded on this career pathway and their love and support has been a major part of this process.

I would like to thank the staff at Asbury Park (fictitious name) secondary school for helping me carry out this research and the young people who participated in it. Without the assistance of these people I would have no data and so will always owe them a debt of gratitude. Without exception the young people who took part in this project were polite and enthusiastic and I was amazed by the perspicacity and the precision with which they identified the difficulties they dealt with on a daily basis and where the need for change was located.

ABSTRACT

Black-British young people are, on average, at least four times more likely to be excluded from school and experience significantly lower levels of academic attainment than their demographically matched white counterparts. This research adopts a social constructionist understanding of resilience to explore how ten Black-British students in an urban secondary school cope within their school and community. It is hoped that the case study of their resiliency adaptations will inform primary and secondary prevention.

The interview transcripts were analysed using Grounded Theory methods (Charmaz, 2006). This involved the continuous analysis and comparison of data. This process produced 81 focused codes and 19 memos. These were conceptualised into three categories, which formed 'Hope Theory.' This theory suggests that having educational and vocational aspirations are important in shaping how all young people, not just those of black British cultural heritage, engage in school and in moderating the effects of communities that are perceived as unstable and threatening. Key to hoped-for goals is the ability to identify viable pathways towards their completion and a sufficient sense of personal agency or self-efficacy to attempt them. Comparisons were drawn between Hope Theory and the extant literature, highlighting the Working Alliance as a tool that could help EPs and teachers build social and physical ecologies that support hope and resilience in young people.

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 General information

This chapter will provide an introduction to some of the key terms and issues referred to in this thesis. Specifically, this will include those related to the overrepresentation of Black-British males of Afro-Caribbean and African cultural heritage on the special educational needs (SEN) register, particularly with regards to social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD), disaffection and disengagement from education. The following chapters will first reflect on the assertion that young Black-British students are consistently being failed by the British educational system. A number of accepted discourses will be critically analysed in order to outline what has become an increasingly convoluted and a-theoretical aetiological debate that has become mired in dualistic discourses. Indeed, Gillborn (2008) has alleged that the research effort to date has largely failed to facilitate any real change. The search for clarity and direction in this area has inductively led the author to propose a Grounded Theory (GT) study of resiliency processes in young Black-British males attending an inner city secondary school. GT methods will be explained and the specific method followed in this research set out on a step-by-step basis. From the data analysis a grounded theory called "Hope Theory" will be constructed. It is proposed that this Hope Theory will present a fresh perspective, grounded in the narratives of Black-British students and all young people who inhabit areas characterised by high levels of violence, poverty and unemployment, regardless of their ethnicity. It is hoped that this thesis may inform effective social action via the meaningful application of psychological theory, congruent with the views of the young people whom it most directly concerns.

The United Kingdom is a culturally diverse nation. This may be best illustrated by Caroline Irby's recent attempt to photographically document the presence in the UK of at least one child or young person born in each of the 196 countries of the world (Hoyle, 2010). She found children from 185 countries, suggesting that only a handful of Pacific Islands, San Marino, the Central African Republic and North Korea are typically unrepresented by a child or adolescent in Britain's schools.

Census data (Office of National Statistics, 2001) shows that in 2001 ethnic minorities comprised 7.9% of the total population of the United Kingdom, the largest minority groups describing themselves as Asian or British Asian (50.2% of ethnic minorities, 4% of the overall population) and Black or Black-British (24.8% of ethnic minorities,

2% of the overall population). In 2001 the overall figure for ethnic minorities represented an increase of 53% from the 1991 census. Wohland et al. (2010) suggest that if this trend has continued, combined with generally lower mean ages of Asian and Black populations, then the 2011 Census will record that more than 20% of all students in British schools will be of African or Asian heritage. Wohland et al. (2010) also predict that by 2031 Black-Caribbean groups will grow by up to 31%. Mixed ethnicity groups are expected to grow by between 148-249% and Black African by 179%.

However, these groups have not settled evenly across the country (Cooper, 2006): census data from 2001 reveals that ethnic minorities have generally concentrated in urban commercial centres, including certain London boroughs (making up between 10% and 50% of each borough's population), Leicester (25.8% of the total population of the city), Birmingham (33.3%), Bradford (21.7%), Bristol (11.2%), Leeds (10.2%), Manchester (11.09%) and Sheffield (8.8%). In other parts of the UK, notably Scotland (2%), Wales (2.9%), Northern Ireland (0.85%) and rural areas of England (0.5%), ethnic minorities are significantly under-represented (Office of National Statistics, 2001).

The significance of this geographical distribution is that, although culturally diverse, Britain stops short of being a 'rainbow nation' as it lacks the integration of a truly multi-cultural society. For some educational professionals multi-cultural sensitivity may be a daily necessity, for others it may be purely academic. However, statistics showing that students from certain ethnic minorities, particularly young Black-British males of African and Afro-Caribbean heritage, are significantly overrepresented on the SEN Register (Department for Children, Schools and Families [DCSF], 2008a) are a powerful argument that cultural sensitivity is an essential part of an educational psychologist's (EP's) repertoire of skills and a key part of their distinctive contribution.

The primary purpose of research on resilience is to provide insights into how to help young people (Teram and Ungar, 2009), therefore, for the purpose of this research, cultural sensitivity, or competence, is defined as *the knowledge of how educational and community resources can be optimally aligned with the needs of different cultural and sub-cultural groups*. This includes the effective use of practices that respect the variation of cultural values within and between different cultural groups and between individuals who are members of those groups (Keogh, Gallimore and Weisner, 1997; Nieto, 2008). Diller and Moule (2005) suggest such a stance encompasses a "set of

congruent behaviours, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals and enable that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations” (p.12).

Being able to bridge educational, health, voluntary and social services means educational psychologists (EPs) are in an advantageous position to collaborate with other professional groups. This positioning arguably gives EPs a central role in disseminating culturally appropriate practices and coordinating holistic services to children and young people in their homes, school and communities (MacKay, 2006). They can also employ their collective capacity for research to remain in the vanguard of innovative, culturally congruent special educational provision, informed and reasoned by psychological theory. This potential is neatly summarised by Burden (1997):

It could be argued that few professional researchers are in a better position than applied educational psychologists to investigate and report upon meaningful and socially relevant issues in education. (p. 13).

Burden also joins Goodenow (1992) in calling for EPs to add to the research methods that they have traditionally employed by exploring those that are more suited to studying processes embedded in social contexts and cultures, such as Grounded Theory and Action Research, and so catch up with other professional groups that have embraced these methods. In an era characterised by budgetary austerity and a rapidly diversifying population, it may be argued that the value of organisations able to supply these services will be at a premium. This would make sustaining multi-cultural competence not only an integral part of an EP’s professional practice but a bastion of professional security and integrity as applied psychologists in the 21st century.

Since the Government Green Paper ‘Every Child Matters’ (2004) and the subsequent Act (2004) the student voice has become increasingly central to the way in which schools organise their special educational resources. However, many researchers still feel that students from minority groups and students with SEBD remain among those least heard (Riley, 2004; Ogg and Kaill, 2010; Cefai and Cooper, 2010; Milner, 2007). Professional dialogues remain dominated by privileged, evidence-based ‘adultocentric’ (Ungar, 2004, p. 82) discourses that in reality may poorly reflect what young people experience as good practice (Liebenberg and Ungar, 2009; Cefai and

Cooper, 2010; Gordon, 2010; Kelley, Bickman and Norwood, 2011). For example, adult and child ratings of social, emotional, behavioural and academic functioning are known to be discrepant (Soles, Bloom, Heath and Karagiannakis, 2008; O’Kane, 2008). It is hoped that by taking a phenomenological focus on the voice of Black-British students this thesis will be able to take a tentative step away from the hegemony of such ethnocentric methods and towards research in accordance with the ethical and emancipatory principles of educational psychology, ensuring cultural congruent insights (Tillman, 2002) that “...*treat people as active subjects in the construction of their worlds and experiences, [using] a method based on dialogue across cultures*” (Liebenberg and Ungar, 2009, p. 13). In addition it is hoped that it will inform interventions that are more in line with the increasing international emphasis on strength based, positive psychology and primary prevention (Bartley, Schoon, Mitchell and Blane, 2010; Carr, 2007; Ong and Dulmen, 2007; Toporek et al. 2006), not only within schools but the community as a whole (Cohen et al. 2011; MacKay, 2006; Toporek et al. 2006).

1.2 Relevance of the research to educational psychology

A key purpose of this research is to provide insights and guidance into the psychological theory that EPs may helpfully apply when working with Black-British young people of African and Afro-Caribbean cultural heritage. The context of the study is an inner city secondary school, hereinafter referred to as ‘Asbury Park,’ and the surrounding community. As outlined above, current trends in population growth and immigration suggest that EPs will increasingly be working with young people from minority groups, emphasising the need for cognisance of culturally relevant practices; although there are also likely to be subtle epistemological and ontological differences between individuals who share a cultural background (Moore, 2005), reflecting a general need for EPs to be reflexive in their professional contacts, not just those involving individuals from different cultures. As such, this research represents a shift away from traditional positivist-empiricist paradigms and towards methods that are based in local communities and focused on enabling meaningful collaborations across cultures, schools, communities and other professional groups (Wigford, 2010). This thesis is conceptualised as a naturalistic, illuminative study – a pathfinder to identify the psychological processes underlying resiliency adaptations which can inform successful intervention, prevention and collaboration.

1.3 Key Influences on the author in relation to the research project

A distinctive feature of research allied to post-modernism is that the researcher is conceptualised as an integral part of the research process, directly contributing to a dynamic interaction in which the author's gender, race, social background, assumptions, discursive positioning and behaviour shape the co-construction of any theoretical insights together with those of the participants (Finlay, 2003a; Connolly, 2008; Tillman, 2002). Power differentials between adult and child can also shape the nature and direction of data (Connolly, 2008; Finlay, 2003a; O'Kane, 2008). The acknowledgement of the author as a participant in the research process is in accordance with an increasing appreciation of the need for critical reflection when conducting qualitative research. As an EP, the author is also not a "*value-free*" scientist (MacKay, 2000, p. 32) and the research process will inevitably be shaped by prior experiences, training, social background, assumptions, discursive positioning and behaviour (Finlay, 2003a). Knowledge is never neutral but socially and historically specific and inseparable from social relations of power and control (Connolly, 2008; Burman, 2008). To avoid inadvertently reifying the values of dominant groups, social discourses and dogma it is important that researchers make transparent those factors that shape how they understand, process and influence social interactions and the concomitant negotiations for power and positioning within them. Moore (2005) makes it explicit that a psychologist's decisions about practice and research based methodologies are shaped by underlying epistemological and ontological beliefs. As Usher et al. (1997) reflect, all research, whether natural or social, modern or post-modern, makes knowledge claims and so is based on epistemological assumptions which must be made visible to the reader.

1.4 Positioning the self – the author's story

Qualitative research methods, particularly those incorporating a case-study design, have historically been viewed sceptically in psychology as lacking the necessary scientific rigour and reliability of quantitative methods. Flyvbjerg (2006) suggests this stems largely from a positivist preoccupation with producing context-independent, generalisable knowledge through statistical methods. Flyvbjerg (2006) refutes each of these points in detail, emphasising researcher reflexivity as a key part of how qualitative researchers can translate subjectivity in research into an opportunity to promote insight and understanding of participants' lived experiences.

Finlay (2003a) defines reflexivity in research as “thoughtful, self-aware analysis of the intersubjective dynamics between researcher and the researched” (p. 5) and highlights the need for reflexive process to be inter-woven with the ongoing literature review and analysis of data, not applied on a post-hoc basis or as an afterthought.

As the histories of researchers inevitably shape how they answer questions about epistemology, ontology and methodology (Finlay, 2003b; Moore, 2005), a brief biographical statement is supplied below, in accordance with recommendations by Finlay (2003a), who constructs it as an essential prelude to the research process, and Milner (2007) who locates it as part of a framework for working with people from different cultures.

The author grew up in a rural part of the English countryside with very low levels of ethnic diversity. As a result awareness of different cultural groups was mainly propagated through the media and not from personal experience. The author completed an applied undergraduate degree in psychology, during which a year was spent working in a special school for children with SEBD. Following this three years were spent working in mainstream secondary and special educational institutions with young people showing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Also during this time period a year was spent working as a detached youth worker in order to engage with young people felt to be ‘hard-to-reach’ in the local community. Following these experiences the author applied to train as an educational psychologist. During this training the course philosophy was explicitly focused on facilitating social-constructionist and systemic thinking, as well as on enabling dialogue between different groups in order to take action informed and reasoned by the application of psychological research and theory. These principles are at the core of the Constructionist Model of Informed and Reasoned Action (COMOIRA; Gameson et al. 2003, 2005; Gameson and Rhydderch, 2008) which is used by trainees on the Cardiff course to inform change processes. During training social constructionism became increasingly influential in shaping the practice and thinking of the author, as well as, more recently, narrative therapeutic approaches and personal construct psychology (PCP; Kelly, 1955).

In the light of this grounding in psychology and the increasing emphasis on the importance of reflective and reflexive practice when conducting research, it is

important to note that Gough (2003) conceptualises social constructionism's emphasis on people's actions as being shaped by social forces as potentially problematic for western humanistic themes of agency, choice and responsibility. Specifically, he asks:

How can an individual know which societal and unconscious forces prompted particular courses of action? Similarly, how can a researcher identify subjective influences on the research process? (p. 21).

From this perspective reflexivity becomes both a problem and a solution to conducting qualitative research, as complete removal of presuppositions and pre-understandings is arguably impossible. Finlay's (2003b) re-conceptualisation of herself as both researcher and participant in her interviews goes some way towards accepting this and re-focusing on making relevant theoretical presuppositions as explicit as possible, leaving it to the readers to judge the transferability of any insights to their own cultural context.

The explicit focus on issues related to ethnicity means that it is impossible to ignore the author's ethnicity (the author is a white, young adult male doctoral student), which incorporates a particular socio-cultural ecology of local, cultural and political discursive positioning about race and culture (Moore, 2005; Connolly, 2008). This positioning is characterised by Friere (1970) as being equivalent to one of between 'oppressor' (white) and 'oppressed' (black). Friere also draws a direct line from the legacy of British colonial history to current educational inequalities, fundamentally questioning the ability of schools to educate racially diverse populations without "restricting their humanity, liberation and freedom" (p. 430). The corollary of this is the proposition that white researchers risk contributing to a 'white supremacist ideology,' which has led some academics to fundamentally question whether white researchers can objectively carry out this type of work in the first place (e.g., Tillman, 2002; Milner, 2007). This consideration is underlined by the author's relationship with the system of interest, being notably one of an outsider, culturally, ethnically and geographically.

However, the author does not construct the long-lasting effects of British imperialism as sufficient reason for white EPs to avoid working with families and young people from cultures minorities. To do so would implicitly accept the patterns of inequality that have prompted this research and be counter to the high ethical and moral

standards expected of EPs, both in research and practice. In addition, McQueen and Knussen (1999) suggest that an 'outsider' status can be an advantage in conducting certain types of qualitative enquiry, particularly under conditions which require a 'fresh perspective.' They argue that an outsider may be able to notice things that an 'insider' may take for granted. Indeed, Williams (1999) conceptualises the status of 'outsider' as being an essential precondition to the effective facilitation of change. Friere's (1970) statements may also be viewed as stemming from the faulty characterisation of insider-outsider status as a dichotomous, static and one-dimensional construct. Rather, Dwyer and Buckle (2009) argue that researchers may be understood as simultaneously both 'insider' and 'outsider,' whilst Rabe (2003) identifies insider and outsider status as falling on a continuum that is traversed by researchers throughout their research. She argues that neither outsider or insider can claim privileged access to social truth, rather each offers different and complementary perspectives in the process of 'truth seeking.'

The complexities of the insider/outsider debate means that it is not possible or necessary for the legitimacy of the author's position to be resolved here. Rather, Dwyer and Buckle (2009) suggest efforts may be more productively focused on finding a way to work creatively within the tensions created by the debate and on how researchers position themselves relative to issues of power, knowledge ownership and self-understanding. The author presents this research as having value precisely because an explicit and measured approach to these insider/outsider constructs has been taken. However, it is also important to maintain a post-modernist caution when discussing the value of insights that are underpinned by ontological and epistemological views and assumptions that may or not be shared by the population of interest. The research process is acknowledged as "*...partial, partisan and fundamentally anchored in the social context*" (Finlay, 2003b, p. 114) and the author encourages the audience to be in turn cautious of transferring this research to their systems and context until they are satisfied that the power imbalances implicit in this process have been managed appropriately (Finlay, 2003a, Gough, 2003). To facilitate such transference this thesis has, where practicable, been written to reflect the thought processes of the author, highlight key readings and how they shaped the direction of the research. When this is achieved Rabe (2003) and Dwyer and Buckle (2009) accept that outsiders can make legitimate and meaningful contributions to research. Moreover, Burden (1997) reflects:

... the need for good educational research has never been greater. Increasingly, important decisions about our educational system are being made by politicians and their representatives on the basis of political dogma or current fashion, rather than the consideration of the available evidence... The need, therefore, for in-depth studies of educational practices, which throw light on a broad range of educational issues, is paramount (p. 13).

Given that the exclusion and underachievement of black British boys remains a contemporary issue, the need for research continues and the unique perspective of educational psychology can and should be allowed to contribute meaningfully to this literature. Rather than viewing Friere's (1970)'s critique as a barrier to carrying out research the author adopts Williams' (1999) perspective, in which the status of 'outsider' is framed as a necessary precondition to joining meaningfully with a system and so forms a distinctive part of this thesis's unique contribution and which underscores the value of the researcher's analysis and conclusions.

1.5 Grounded theory and the distinctive contribution of educational psychology

GT is a methodology that is traditionally viewed as being reserved for the open-ended exploration of areas in which there are significant gaps in the research or a lack of clear hypotheses to test. The literature on the Black-British attainment and exclusion gaps will be described below and, while congested, it also lacks the focused application of psychological research and theory, mostly consisting of a-theoretical extrapolations from correlational data. Stern (1980) suggests that GT has a distinctive role in facilitating a fresh perspective and clarity under such conditions and it is hoped that this research will form the starting point for developing further hypotheses which can inform the focus for future research, as well as inductively providing some clarity for EP practice in the present. As such, it is hoped that adopting a GT methodology will provide a vehicle to demonstrate distinctive aspects of EP practice. Cameron (2006, p. 293) highlights these as including:

- a) taking a psychological perspective;
- b) drawing on psychology to explain complex social relationships;
- c) adding clarity to confused situations;
- d) providing evidence-based strategies for change; and
- e) promoting opportunities for positive change and 'big ideas.'

1.6 Social constructionism

There is no single definition of social constructionism (Moore, 2005). Instead it may be more helpfully conceptualised as an umbrella term for a constellation of approaches which Burr (2003) suggests share the following beliefs:

- all knowledge and views of the world are socially constructed and sustained through language within cultural and historical social contexts;
- researchers should take a critical stance towards knowledge; and
- knowledge and social action are inseparable.

This frames all knowledge as subjective and phenomenological and, in research, reflects a tacit move away from positivist-empiricist paradigms that assume that there are objective and quantifiable truths in the world (see Burr, 2003, for a full discussion). This is a post-modernist understanding of knowledge and realities being actively generated through social relationships (Gergen, n.d.). Within this there are no objective realities and truth, or proximity to truth, is not provable (Bitsch, 2005) and so impossible to claim.

1.7 'Black-British' as a term of reference

It may be an irony of conducting research across different cultures that the linguistic tools available to describe the population of interest ultimately reinforce and perpetuate the problematic stereotypes, divisions and inequalities that prompted the research in the first place. Labels such as 'African' or 'Afro-Caribbean' will be shown as being scientifically invalid and inherently divisive, their employment diminishing the ability of policy makers and practitioners to discern and understand cultural differences (Hutchinson and McKenzie, 1995). These labels are, however, also entrenched in scientific discourses (Agyemang, Bhopal and Bruijnzeels, 2005; Hutchinson and McKenzie, 1995) and so, where literature will be reviewed that focuses on Black-British, Afro-Caribbean or African groups, these populations will be described as they are in the research being referenced. However, for the purpose of this study, the group referred to as 'Black-British' refers to British teenagers of Black African, mixed or Caribbean cultural heritage who hold British citizenship.

It appears that since its identification as a problem this issue of imprecise ethnic terminology has been shelved, rather than resolved, with authors continuing to

struggle to resolve the inequities and divisions implicit in and maintained by everyday language (Agyemang et al. 2005). As such, this represents a continued caveat to conducting research across different cultures, since:

...research which does not understand or acknowledge the diversity of [different] cultures will always be viewed with suspicion. Moreover, because it is scientifically flawed, it is likely to yield misleading results. (Hutchinson and McKenzie, 1995, p. 701).

1.8 Summary

This thesis is, therefore, a small part of the broader body of research attempting to bring the narratives of young people of African and Afro-Caribbean cultural heritage to the forefront of research and policy. This has been defined as a primary policy objective by the government for many years but continues to be a contemporary issue. The author hopes that what will make this narrative compelling is that it is centred on young people's stories of hope and resilience and how to use this information to make EP practice more culturally congruent and effective.

Chapter 2 contains part one of the literature review; a defining feature of GT is that the major part of the literature review occurs after data collection, (Charmaz, 2006) and involves comparing and triangulating any analytical insights with the extant literature. As a result part one will extend and elaborate on the themes introduced in Chapter 1 in detail and critically engage with the dominant theoretical debates and disagreements in the field, centring on the dualism that has dominated the aetiological debate. The role of urban poverty, institutional racism and home-school cultural discontinuities will be evaluated, with the author concluding that there is a significant failure in the literature to account for the influence of culture, as well as to listen to the voices of the young people concerned. In order to remedy this failing a GT study of resiliency will be proposed, adopting a social constructionist perspective, as described by Ungar (2004), located in the context of an inner city secondary school. Chapter 3 will outline the design of the study in more detail, with particular reference to grounded theory and its strengths and limitations. The results will be summarised in Chapter 4 and a grounded Hope Theory proposed. This theory will be evaluated in Chapter 5, presenting part 1 of the discussion. Chapter 6 will present part 2 of the literature review and part 2 of the discussion. In this chapter Hope Theory will be compared with the extant literature in order to extend and elaborate on

the concepts and themes identified in the analysis. Part 2 of the discussion will look to consider the applications and implications of these insights and Chapter 7 will present the conclusions of the thesis: that the therapeutic working alliance may be a useful conduit for EPs to cement their place as purveyors of hope and optimism in their work with teachers, parents and young people - a role which, in the current economic climate, may increasingly become a defining part of their work.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW (PART 1)

2.1 Introduction and data sources

This chapter will explore in detail the themes introduced in chapter 1, particularly with regards to defining the achievement and exclusion gaps between white and black British students. The exclusion and achievement gaps will be reframed as being effectively two sides of the same coin and so originating in, and able to be addressed through, common processes. Dominant explanations for the existence and durability of these educational inequalities will be explored before the author suggests that research has, to date, been fundamental skewed by the failure to satisfactorily account for culture and discursive positioning. Resiliency will be advanced as a pragmatic and culturally congruent vehicle for generating new insights to shape helping practices in Asbury Park secondary school.

The key sources to this literature review include:

- ❖ PsychInfo;
- ❖ Questia;
- ❖ Metalib; and
- ❖ Google Scholar.

This review is labelled as 'Part 1' because a second literature review will later be carried out in light of the results section, in line with recommendations by Charmaz (2006) and Glaser & Strauss (1967) for the conduct of GT methodology. Consistent with these principles Part 2 will use the extant literature as a data source that may also introduce and extend new concepts and ideas.

2.2 The achievement and exclusion gaps

British students of Afro-Caribbean and African cultural heritage, notably male adolescents, are consistently over-represented in the population of students with SEN, particularly SEBD (DCSF, 2008a, 2010a). In education SEBD is perhaps most usefully understood as an umbrella term, covering a continuum of issues from relatively mild emotional and behavioural difficulties, sometimes termed 'indiscipline,' to clinically significant disorders (Cooper, 2006). Eastman (2011) suggests Black-Caribbean pupils in particular are almost four times more likely to experience fixed-term and permanent exclusion than the school population as a whole, although German (2010) also extends this statistic to cover all Black-British groups.

Arguably this represents an improvement since the mid 1980s, when Afro-Caribbean students accounted for 14% of children in London schools alone but more than 30% of all exclusions (Gillborn, 1995). Statistics supplied by the government (DfEE, 2000, 2001; DfES, 2002a, 2002b, 2003a, 2004a, 2005b, 2006c; DCSF, 2007, 2008, 2009; DCSF, 2010b, 2011) also confirm that exclusion rates are generally falling across the country. However, within each of these years, Black-British (Black Caribbean, Black African, Black Other and Dual Heritage) students have always been statistically more likely to be excluded than their white peers. This inequality is described by Gillborn (2008) as being one of the most important, controversial and persistent issues in education.

Gillborn (2008) also highlights that between 1989 and 2004, although the percentage of Black-British students achieving at five or more GCSE A*-C almost doubled (from 18% to 34%), this progress did not keep pace with that of white students, whose attainment improved by 25 percentage points over the same time period (DfES, 2005a). As a result, the attainment gap between black and white ethnic groups actually increased from 12 percentage points in 1989 to 21 points in 2004. Statistics show that the gap narrows dramatically after 2005; in 2008-2009 50% of white students and 39.4% of black students achieved five or more GCSE A*-C (a gap of 10.6 percentage points); In 2009-2010 54.8% of white pupils and 48.9% of Black pupils achieved in the 5 A*-C range (a gap of 5.9 percentage points [DfES, 2005a; DCSF, 2010a]). These figures leave the impression that the attainment gap between black and white pupils closed by 15.1 percentage points (72%) between 2004 and 2010. However, this conclusion may be unduly optimistic. Gillborn (2008) notes that this data includes the results for students entered into other forms of assessment, which are counted statistically equivalent to GCSEs but which can lack their status in higher education or employment. Gillborn contends that Black-British pupils are disproportionately entered into these examinations, resulting in statistics that disguise the true extent of the attainment gap. This assertion finds some statistical support from DfES (2003c), which reports that 68% of white applicants vs. 38% of black applicants to degree courses had 2+ A Levels, 13% of white vs. 24% black applicants had GNVQ/BTEC qualifications and 3% of white vs. 14% of black applicants had Access qualifications.

This is consistent with research by Strand (2009), who concluded that 14-year-old Afro-Caribbean students were typically achieving below white groups by the

equivalent of a whole year of academic progress. Gillborn (2008) goes on to predict that, in spite of recent improvements, it will not be until between 2054-2087 that the attainment gap will close naturally and in the absence of systemic "...change on a totally unprecedented scale" (p. 68) in the educational institutions of the UK.

This picture suggests that British students of Caribbean and African cultural heritage are both academically underperforming and significantly more at risk of exclusion than demographically matched white students (Strand, 2009; Gillborn, 2008). These are also historically persistent trends and, as such, have been observed and studied by politicians, sociologists and psychologists since Coard (1971) published his seminal pamphlet "How the West Indian Child Is Made Educationally Subnormal in the British School System: The Scandal of the Black Child in Schools in Britain." Coard was writing shortly after the peak 'Windrush' era of mass immigration from the Caribbean to the UK, which occurred between 1948 and 1970 (Richards, 2008), but as far back as 1905 Hewitt's publication "Ethnic Factors in Education," was critical of American schools for failing to understand and accommodate the cultural backgrounds of immigrant children. More recent history has been punctuated by publications from the government, including the Rampton Report (DES, 1981), the Swann report (DES, 1985), Blair (2001), the London Development Agency (2004) and the DfES (2006b), which have identified continued inequality in education and exclusion rates and contributed towards shaping the public perception of Black-British boys as a "problematic demographic" (Gosai, 2009, p. 2) that falls within the broader discourse of 'failing boys' (Debort, 2006).

Even a brief literature search will highlight a diverse range of explanations and solutions for this situation, some of which are discussed below (see page 19). However, research and policy on multi-cultural issues in the UK have also tended to be shaped by North American research and so have historically favoured an assimilationist framework. This assumes that migrants will adopt the language, culture, values and behavioural patterns of their host country (Quirke, Potter and Conway, 2009). The corollary of this assumption is that knowledge of the languages, culture and history of migrant and minority groups is redundant. Pankhania (1994) argues this has resulted in many educational practices that systematically invalidated the heritage and identity of ethnic minorities. Pankhania suggests that it is only relatively recently that British educational institutions have broken with this tradition and developed inclusive practices that are more respectful of the identity and history of minority groups, such as a culturally diverse curriculum. However, Gillborn (2008)

disagrees, arguing that the language of assimilation remains very much embodied in the rhetoric and immigration policies of the government. However, with the shift in espoused rhetoric, identified by Pankhania (1994), has come a more proactive focus on the low attainment and high exclusion rates of students from different cultures and an emphasis on the importance of cultural competence in educational professionals (e.g., Nieto, 2008). Nationally, attention has generally focused on academic attainment and, as indicated above, although remaining significant, in recent years the achievement gap has appreciably narrowed. However, students bracketed as 'Black-British' remain in the lowest achieving large minority ethnic group in England (DCSF, 2010b).

2.3 Two sides of the same coin

In comparison with concerns over academic attainment, students with SEBD have been neglected in research and policy (Ogg and Kaill, 2010) and the published statistics for young black adolescents receiving fixed term and permanent exclusions have remained relatively high. During the 2008-2009 academic year Afro-Caribbean students were three-to-four times more likely to be excluded than the school population as a whole (DCSF, 2010a), with excluded Black students making up 0.53% of the school population, compared to white students, who make up 0.18% (Weekes-Barnard, 2010).

Although this represents progress from 1985, when Black-British students were on average six times more likely to be excluded (German, 2010), current practices are known to vary widely. German writes that in some local authorities in London there are:

...council wards where Black pupils are 15 times more likely to be permanently excluded than white students. Black children in care are 8 times more likely to be excluded and statemented black pupils 3-4 times more likely than non-statement pupils. A statemented Black child in care is 72-96 times more likely to be excluded than students from any other ethnic group. (2010, p. 13)

Eastman (2011) confirms that on average black pupils are four times more likely to experience exclusionary practices of various types than the school population as a whole. Moreover, Vulliamy and Webb (2003), Ogg and Kaill (2010) and Gillborn

(2008) assert that official statistics could also be viewed as conservative estimates, as schools commonly resort to managing challenging behaviour through methods of internal isolation and unofficial exclusion. Ogg and Kail's (2010) review of educational provisions in London characterises the practice of unofficial exclusions, including internal exclusions and managed moves, as endemic. A more accurate national picture should include these figures. However, these methods are not formally monitored and their absence will have artificially depressed the official statistics to the point where Ogg and Kaill (2010) suggest that the true size of the exclusions gap in Britain is simply not known.

Of significance to this debate are findings that young people involved in the courts have predominantly experienced academic failure, exclusion and school drop-out (Christle, Jolivet and Nelson, 2005). Schiek (2009) adds to this observation with the statistical analysis that the UK prison population is disproportionately both male and black, with twice as many black males in prison as there are attending university. Narey (2001, cited in Wald and Losen, 2003, p. 1), the then Director General of the Prison Service, summarises the pressing need to break in the UK what is colloquially referred to in America as the 'school to prison pipeline' by saying:

The 13, 000 young people excluded from school each year might as well be given a date by which to join the prison service some time later down the line.

While it has long been recognised, both in the UK and USA, that educational and health services need to become more responsive to the specific needs of ethnic minority groups (e.g., Hewett, 1905; Woodson, 1933; Coard, 1971; Gilborn, 1997; Cooper, 2006; Weekes-Barnard, 2010; Nieto, 2008), the gravity of the statistics on exclusion and attainment referenced above is that they follow in the wake of a wave of socio-educational initiatives intended to ameliorate the achievement gap (e.g., DfES, 1999; DfES, 2003b) and reduce exclusions (e.g., Social Exclusion Unit, 1998; DfES, 2006a). The fact that these disparities remain, even when SEN, socioeconomic status, parental involvement, student attitudes and social class are controlled for (Strand, 2009), raises serious questions about the effectiveness of current policy and practice in Britain (Cooper, 2006; Weekes-Bernard, 2010). Indeed, a report by the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH, [2007]) suggests that a properly coordinated and effective response to the achievement and exclusion gaps in Britain will save the economy a minimum of £808 million a year.

However, research and policy have also tended to approach the achievement and exclusion gaps as qualitatively distinct phenomena when, arguably, they may be most usefully seen as 'two sides of the same coin' (Gregory, Skiba and Noguera, 2010; p. 21). Children with learning difficulties tend to be over-represented in school exclusions (Watling, 2004), even with the 'protection' of a statement (Gross and McChrystal, 2001; German, 2010), and exclusions, by their nature, also entail a disruption of education. With excluded students facing waits of up to a year for alternative provisions to be found (Evans, 2010), there are direct pathways that link SEBD and the perpetuation of the achievement gap (Gregory et al. 2010; Ogg and Kaill, 2010). Indeed, these have been highlighted in recent years as schools have often struggled to balance the practices of inclusive education with the demands of the government's Standards Agenda (Vulliamy and Webb, 2003; Skiba and Peterson, 2000). Ogg and Kaill (2010) and Watson (2005) propose that punitive discipline and exclusions are too often the corollaries of a political rhetoric that places contradictory demands on schools for pastoral care, academic attainment, zero tolerance and, ironically, the reduction of exclusions (Briggs, 2010). As such, the achievement gap may, at least in part, be seen as an unintended consequence of an incoherent government vision that skews school priorities away from helping those students most in need and towards protecting their position on the league table (Cooper, 2006; Weekes-Bernard, 2010; Briggs, 2010). As Geiger and Fischer (1999) have suggested, in the end, how schools treat those students most vulnerable to social exclusion may be the most telling barometer of their character and quality.

Educational psychology is already known to make a significant contribution to intervention and support in this area and, with up to 47% of an EP's caseload related to the management of SEBD (Farrell et al. 2006), there is a clear rationale for this research. Abbott (2010) states that correcting the exclusions gap has long been an iconic priority for Black communities but it is now one that Weekes-Bernard (2010) fears is in danger of falling from the agenda of the Coalition government or, in the absence of easy solutions (Hallsworth and Silverstone, 2009), being hijacked by media led moral panics that link guns, knives and a burgeoning gang culture (Hallsworth and Young, 2008; Hallsworth and Silverstone, 2009; Gillborn, 2008). Together these can lead to the premature development of 'helping practices' that are at best ineffective and, at worst, may even be oppressive (Richards, 2008).

To summarise, there is a body of evidence suggesting that students from Black-British ethnic minorities do less well in school and are excluded more often than

would be statistically expected (Cooper, 2006). The exclusions gap has been relatively neglected in the literature and, where it has been targeted, has proven difficult to change. However, Gregory, Skiba and Norguera (2010) have shown tackling the exclusion gap to be a legitimate approach to narrowing the attainment gap and their paper may be seen as a call for a more comprehensive, systematic explorative research effort that incorporates the views of children and young people (Cefai and Cooper, 2010), as well as of adults.

2.4 Explanations for the achievement and exclusion gaps

Whilst applied psychology in this field is generally notable by its absence, a number of theories and hypotheses have been proposed to explain the disparity in attainment and exclusion between black and white students, including socioeconomic factors, teacher expectations and feedback (also termed 'institutional racism'), lack of a culturally relevant pedagogy, lack of appropriate role models – particularly fathers (Sewell, 2010b, 2009) – and the development of alternative anti-educational sub-cultural norms (Quirke, Potter and Conway, 2009). This list does not represent an exhaustive or definitive list of interpretations or explanations of the attainment and exclusion gaps and neither do they represent theories that are particularly unique to black-British young people. There may well be alternative explanations for the barriers to achievement and progress faced by young people from different cultural groups in the UK but because of the restrictions of time and space and also the 'grounded' nature of this research this section has been limited to summarising those most frequently cited explanations.

2.4.1 Socioeconomic factors

Kiser and Black (2005) summarise the risks facing those communities that are located predominantly in urban commercial centres:

Living in urban neighbourhoods creates disproportionate risk for experiencing community, family and individual traumas such as crime, gang activity, family violence and victimisation, incarceration, chronic illness and/or death of a family member. It also increases exposure to social and physical public incivilities, environmental hazards, residential instability and/or homelessness, social isolation, financial instability, lack of employment opportunities with long term joblessness and reliance on public assistance to

provide only a partial lifting of community level stressors. In fact, daily hassles related to poverty and urban life may be as, or more potent, than the experience of major traumatic life events. (p. 727).

Although not unique to, Black-British families, they may be disproportionately exposed to this catalogue of risks mainly because they have tended to settle in urban neighbourhoods. This consideration has shaped the drive towards designing universal interventions, which all students stand to benefit from, such as improving the quality of urban housing, childcare and communities. However, Strand (2009, p. 15-16) proposes that an approach purely grounded in ameliorating the effects of urban poverty is unlikely to be effective:

With regard to disadvantaging factors, relative to White British students, Black Caribbean students on average experience greater poverty, are more likely to live in rented accommodation, to have identified SEN, to be temporarily excluded from school, are less likely to complete four evenings or more of homework and are more likely to attend schools that are more deprived and live in more deprived neighborhoods. In terms of advantaging factors relative to White British students, Black Caribbean students (and their parents) have higher educational aspirations, positive attitude to school, a higher academic self concept and are more likely to be actively planning for the future. However, this extensive set of variables does not provide an explanation of the low attainment of the Black Caribbean group.

This observation rests on Strands (1999) discovery that the Black-White British attainment gap was not eliminated by controls for “. Strand’s understanding is grounded in a longitudinal study of 14, 500 young people from age 11-14. In his research Afro-Caribbean children were highlighted as the only group whose difficulties could not be linked to the effects of socio-economic variables , such as social class, “poverty, age, sex, special educational needs, fluency in English or number of terms of pre-school education” (Strand, 2009, p. 3). However, Strand’s reliance on correlational data means his attempt to explain this pattern is ultimately speculative. There may always be other student, family, school and community factors that have not been included in the analysis, such as parental involvement and educational aspirations and which may better explain the barriers to achievement and progress.

Resolving this issue may be more suited to a mixed methods designs, where the weakness of one paradigm can be offset by the strengths of the other, and which enable researchers to explore and develop hypotheses with the populations of interest, rather than for them and identify variables which may otherwise be missed.

However, Kiser and Black's (2005) analysis suggests that, although Strand (2009) shows an analysis based on socioeconomic factors, such as class, alone is insufficient, it should certainly not be discounted in the final assessment of why Black-British pupils are more at risk of school failure: The Commission for Racial Equality (2006) indicates that up to 30% of Black Caribbean and 45% of Black-African households may be classed as living in income poverty, placing their children at disproportionate risk of experiencing the stressors summarised by Kiser and Black (2005). As Milner (2007) concludes SES (socioeconomic status) does matter but "...does not account for all the inequitable situations in which [ethnic minorities] find themselves" (p. 390).

2.4.2 Teacher feedback practices and institutional racism

Teacher feedback practices have long been recognised as having an influence on learning and behaviour above and beyond that of academic instruction (White and Kistner, 1992; Bear et al. 1998; Bear and Minke, 1996). Education is essentially a social process (Goodenow, 1992) and students with SEBD, independent of ethnicity, have also been found to experience distinct patterns of feedback and interaction with staff (Swinson and Knight, 2007; Pomerantz, 2005). However, It has also been suggested that the impact of teacher feedback practices on attainment may be particularly exacerbated by ethnicity (Sewell, 1997; Coard, 1971, DES, 1981, DfES, 2007c).

Strand (2009) hypothesises that the perceptions of teachers, influenced by moral panics in the media and staff room discourses, engender specific expectations about the behaviour and academic potential of ethnic minorities. This can lead teachers to unconsciously interpret the behaviours of black males more negatively than similarly behaving white or Asian students, leading to them experiencing more corrective feedback, punitive discipline and being set with lower academic expectations (Sewell, 1997). Gilborn (1990) suggests that these processes shape, and are shaped by, the popular myth of a "black challenge to authority" (p.38) creating patterns of teacher-student interaction characterised by greater vigilance, lack of sympathy and

suspicion, although the same processes arguably will operate for all students labelled with SEBD, irrespective of ethnicity (Grieve, 2009). Students are assumed to react to perceived discrimination by becoming de-motivated or confrontational, forming a self-fulfilling prophecy that perpetuates a vicious cycle of disaffection and underachievement (Gilborn and Gipps, 1996; Lewis, Butler, Bonner and Joubert, 2010).

Tennant (2004) adds to qualitative ethnographies by Gillborn (1990), Foster (1990), Pryce (1986), Wright (1992) and Mirza (1992) by providing quantitative observations of this phenomenon in action in the classroom. He found Afro-Caribbean boys interacted more frequently with teachers but mostly for disciplinary and administrative purposes. Correcting such biases has started to be systematically addressed in research (e.g., Grieve, 2009) and policy (Abbott, 2010) but was explicitly at the heart of the most recent major government review (DfES, 2006a), entitled "Getting it, Getting it Right." This report placed the roots of the exclusions gap firmly in the realm of institutional racism, albeit unconscious, and set out an action plan to facilitate change. This included: a) identifying Local Authorities and schools with a high proportion of ethnic students and helping them to be involved in developing suitable strategies and interventions to manage exclusions; b) focused work with relevant organisations to strengthen race equality awareness in school management; c) teacher training; d) production of guidance and effective practice materials on exclusions; and e) sharpening awareness amongst government inspectors. These recommendations are also echoed by an independent report from REACH (2007). However, in 2010, a review of this program by Weekes-Bernard (2010) concluded that little had changed as a result, citing political reluctance to becoming involved in racialised discourses as a root cause in the inefficient implementation of pilot projects, which failed on all counts to meet the targets set out in the original 2006a DfES review.

Conversely, Modood (2003) argues that racism, at least in the overt sense, cannot be a complete explanation for ethnic group differences in attainment, citing the precocious attainment of Asian students as a case in point. This view can be critiqued, as, intuitively, the high attainment of one ethnic minority is not a sufficient rebuttal for institutional racism as a factor in the underachievement of another. Evidence normally taken as proof of institutional racism typically comes from academic tracking that shows Black-British children enter education as 'typically' achieving students but that their attainments steadily reduce as they progress across

the key stages (Gillborn and Gipps, 1996; Gilborn and Mirza, 2000; Tennant, 2004; DfES, 2006a), culminating in them leaving school as the aggregate worst performing large minority group.

Delineating the precise role of racism in perpetuating the achievement and exclusion gaps is an inherently problematic and controversial task that carries with it the inevitable connotations of power, labelling and blame. As a result it can quickly become polarised, as illustrated by the diametrically opposed arguments of two of the leading advocates in this area.

Sewell (2010b) argues that:

What we now see in schools is children undermined by poor parenting, peer group pressure and an inability to be responsible for their own behaviour. They are not subjects of institutional racism. They have failed their GCSEs because they did not do the homework, did not pay attention and are disrespectful to their teachers. (p. 33).

Whereas Abbott (2002) proposes that:

...some young black boys hold fiercely to a concept of masculinity which is about bravado and violence. But with black boys there are the added factors of racism and the extreme unwillingness of teachers and educationalists to face up to their own attitude. (p. 1).

Gillborn and Vieler-Porter (2010) attack Sewell (2010b) for basing his argument wholly on carefully selected illustrative anecdotes and rhetoric, albeit sincere. However, this is a critique that may arguably be extended to both sides of the debate, as it can be generally difficult to discriminate between views based on independent research and those on opinion.

Whilst Gilborn and Vieler-Porter (2010) question Sewell's (2010) evidence base, his article arguably presents a valid series of conclusions, namely that any analysis of Black-British underachievement is likely to be limited if it focuses on a single causal factor. Artificial reductionism is unhelpful in addressing complex multi-faceted phenomena (Nadler and Chandon, 2004) and, as the debate has polarised on the role of racism there is a need to move beyond such confrontational debate if a truly

holistic understanding is to be achieved that examines all possible underlying causes and solutions (Richards, 2008).

2.4.3 Cultural ecological factors

A further category of explanations allows that differences in attainment are at least partially related to cultural ecological factors and home-school cultural discontinuities. To an extent, all students experience discontinuity between home and school cultural values (Ogbu, 1982) but anthropologists have long hypothesised that this is exacerbated amongst ethnic minority groups. Essentially, this suggests that curriculum practices and norms which ethnic minority students are exposed to at school reflect mainstream cultural values rooted in Western or European worldviews that are unaccommodating to any alternatives. For example, the inherent western bias for individualism (the disposition towards autonomy, independence, solitude and possessiveness) and competition (the preoccupation with surpassing the performance of others), conflicts with the preferences of black students, who tend to reflect communal (disposition towards interdependence on others, duty to a social group and the welfare of the community), movement (physical movement, including music, rhythm and particular speech, thought and behavioural patterns) and vervistic (preference for a high level of stimulation, variability and change) learning preferences (Ogbu, 1982; Gilborn, 1997, Tyler et al. 2008). For example, in explaining the relatively high attainment of Asian students, Strand (2009) argues that they have a cultural understanding that prioritises self-reliance and achievement. He suggests that certain cultural traditions facilitate the transmission of high educational aspirations from parents to children and that Asian students derive positive self-esteem from constructing themselves as good students. Analogous arguments have also been proposed to explain the underperformance of Black-British students, namely 'Acting White,' 'Gangsta Culture' and 'Absent Fathers.'

2.4.4 'Acting White,' 'Gangsta' culture and 'Absent Fathers'

Fordham and Ogbu (1986) initially suggested that notions of 'acting White' or 'acting Black' had become polarised, with academic attainment defined as a white prerogative and black students being unconsciously discouraged from emulating 'whiteness' by achieving and behaving at school. Sewell (1997, 2009) also observes that Black males may experience peer pressure to adopt the norms of an urban or street based 'gang' culture. This supposes that, culturally, more status is given to

students exhibiting oppositional behaviour with teachers and antagonistic behaviour with other students, than to high achievement or effort (Haynes et al. 2006).

The 'Gangsta' and 'Acting White' hypotheses have been particularly influential in North American research and policy and are certainly echoed in media-led moral panics about the development of deviant sub-cultural norms among children and young people in the UK (Hallsworth and Young, 2008). However, the logic of applying American research and policy to the systems and context of the UK is questionable, as it is based on only a superficial similarity. Although the UK and USA may be dealing with similar problems (Fenning and Rose, 2007) the UK situation is arguably related to unique patterns of migration and settlement from ex-colonies or labour migrants and socio-political institutions (Quirke, Potter and Conway, 2010). In short, American theories are dependent on a set of specifically American economic and social structural features (Cross, 2003) that means research based in them does not necessarily translate well to the context of the UK and Europe.

The absence of positive male role models at home and school has also been explored (Abbott, 2002, 2010; Felson, Liska, South and McNutty, 1994; Sewell, 1997, 2010). Reynolds (2010) writes that almost two thirds of Afro-Caribbean families are headed by single mothers and Sewell (2010a, 2010b) highlights the feminising impact of living in these lone-mother households, which Seshmi (2010) suggests is exacerbated by schools' neglect of issues of masculinity and self-worth. Without guidance students are then thought to turn to street based gangs in search of accessible male role models, who socialise them to view healthy masculinity in terms of aggression. However, Reynolds (2010, 2002) contends that this is a moral panic and over simplification that owes more to "*myth, folklore and a series of sensationalised media images*" (p. 18) than any factual data. Particularly, she suggests that discourses of 'absent fathers' conveniently neglect the positive involvement of other extended family members and high numbers of undeclared co-habiting households with positive family dynamics (Reynolds, 2002). Hill (1972) also finds fault in arguments that understand black families solely in terms of deficits and so neglect unique strengths that have been culturally transmitted from one generation to the next, including: a strong kinship bond; a strong work orientation; achievement orientation; flexible family roles; and a strong religious orientation.

Given that a substantial rhetorical and financial investment has been made in filling the vacuum left by absent parental role models by promoting a teaching body that

reflects the ethnic make-up of Britain's student body (e.g., Abbott, 2002, 2010), this is a concern. Although providing positive and accessible role models on a daily basis is an important step towards intervention and racial equality (The London Development Agency, 2004), Reynolds (2010, 2002) questions if it will have the hoped for impact. When schools focus on correcting racial imbalances in the teaching staff they may be distracted from correcting the effects of institutional barriers to secondary school staff forming meaningful relationships with students (Wetz, 2009). These include the impact of what may be perceived as an irrelevant and inaccessible curriculum, increases in class size, loss of dedicated class teachers and multiple lesson transitions throughout the school day, all of which have been highlighted as impacting on the development of SEBD (Pianta, Hamre and Stuhlman, 2003; Wetz, 2009; Cefai and Cooper, 2010). In light of this, it is unsurprising that the overwhelming conclusion of the literature concerned with the teacher-student dyad is that, irrelevant of teacher ethnicity, students in the secondary stage of education do not perceive this relationship to be an important or meaningful force in their lives (Lempers and Clark-Lempers, 1992).

Sewell (2010) questions why Black-British boys may not be inspired by all people around them, irrelevant of their ethnicity, and brands attempts to parachute into schools "*great black role models*" as "*desperate and patronising*" (p. 1). Cultural hypotheses also have strong connotations of within child and within community causality, which can be seen as placing the genesis of Black-British underachievement, and the need for reform, firmly outside the school or political gates. Perhaps controversially, Sewell (2010) declares the government has chosen to avoid this by taking the 'easy option' and focusing on within school factors, particularly blaming and devaluing the teaching staff. A reason for this may be that, however well presented in the media, 'Acting White' and 'Gangsta' hypotheses simply lack the explanatory power and support to adequately account for such pervasive underachievement and exclusion across a whole group (Kreager, 2007; Cook and Ludwig, 1998; Tyson, Darrity and Castellino, 2005; Horvat and Lewis, 2003; Broadhurst, Duffin and Taylor, 2008; Ungar, 2000; Hallsworth and Young, 2008). This is more suggestive of a graduated and systemic process affecting all pupils, rather than only a select minority of gang members or children of single parent households.

Sewell (2010) argues that attempts to condense explanations for racial inequalities to the impact of such politically loaded terms as 'gangs', 'racism' and 'absent fathers'

are unlikely to lead to a satisfactory resolution, as they misrepresent the problem and induct black children into the status of victimhood by providing a tailor made set of excuses which they can use to avoid taking responsibility for their behaviour and academic performance.

2.4.5 Home-School cultural discontinuity

Tyler et al. (2008) define this as:

...a school-based behavioural process where the cultural value-based learning preferences and practices of many ethnic minorities, typically those originating from home or parental socialisation activities – are discontinued at school (p. 281).

Some features of school are inherently discontinuous (Ogbu, 1982) but the implicit assumption is that some ethnic groups come from cultures that differ markedly from schools and the white middle class values to which they predominantly subscribe (Tyler et al. 2008). Some encultured behaviours of black students are hypothesised to directly conflict with classroom cultures, such as communicative style (Irvine, 1990) and preferences for a verivistic, communal and movement orientated pedagogy (Tyler, Boykin and Walton, 2006). There is already an extensive literature exploring the impact of culturally relevant pedagogy on attainment and behaviour and Cartledge and Milburn (1996) build on this by calling for culturally relevant social skills instruction to help reduce behavioural difficulties. They argue that this is not to say that culturally different behaviours are equivalent to skills deficits or behavioural disorders but to acknowledge that students are poorly served when their socially learnt behaviours are misperceived and excessively punished according to western standards of behaviour. However, this research is largely focused on American institutions and not enough is known about the culture of second and third generation ethnic minority students in the UK to be able to argue for its application in the systems and context of British schools (Quirke, Potter and Conway, 2009). Indeed, as recently as 2008, Tyler et al. highlighted a lack of evidence to support either the existence of such discontinuities or the assumption that they preceded the academic difficulties of ethnic minority students. This observation was admittedly due to the lack of an acceptably robust methodology to empirically investigate the phenomenon rather than on the observation of null findings. Demonstration of cultural discontinuity will require the simultaneous measurement and comparison of home and school

cultural value based behaviours (Tyler et al, 2008), together with further measures to assess if any cultural discontinuity is associated with negative outcomes. Until this is remedied cultural discontinuities can only be presumed and not verified. This means that other hypotheses may better explain these barriers to achievement and progress.

2.4.6 Parental feedback

Gosai (2009) identifies that research on the impact of Black-British parents on their children's education is incomplete. This situation is compounded by the lack of school data on pupil ethnicity prior to 1983. However, Gosai also argues that the volume of research data that predates this point enables the assumption to be made that the parents, grandparents and great-grandparents of young people currently enrolled in school systems may have spent some of their time in school being "*part of the problem*" (Gosai, 2009, p. 49.). Consistent with this, Reynold's (2010) ethnographic study suggests that black parents can engender an expectation of discriminatory treatment in their children through "*candid conversations*" (p. 154), that shape how young people anticipate and interpret interactions with school staff. This 'inter-generational transmission' is also in line with Sewell's (2010) suggestion that black boys are being encouraged by parents, school staff and the media to adopt a victim mentality that encultures a sense of learned helplessness and denies young people access to agency and control over their lives.

However, Rasekola (1997) evaluates the role of black-parents more positively, suggesting that they are highly motivated to be actively involved in their children's education, although they may lack the necessary knowledge of the National Curriculum to enable them to be effective. The DfEE (1998) also suggests that black parents are more likely to be concerned with lower expectations that teachers have of children from their ethnic group and so try to 'train' their child how to succeed in spite of these patterns of feedback. This resonates with Hill's (1972) earlier suggestions there are five key areas of strength of the black family; resources which Katz (1973) understands as 'resiliency enhancing.' However, the political loaded climate of interactions between parents and teachers can often prevent effective collaboration and utilisation of these strengths. Lasky (2000) suggests that anxieties are often projected onto parent-teacher dyads, irrespective of race, but that this can be particularly exacerbated by cultural misunderstandings on both sides. When Gosai (2009) and Reynolds (2010) investigated this area further they found black-

parents to be more supportive and interested in their children's education whilst being aware of the need to enable them to overcome broader patterns of discrimination. However, at present the impact of black families in training their children in resiliency practices remains an undeveloped area of research.

2.5 A population at risk

These hypotheses present a constellation of perspectives on why Black-British students, male and female (Osler, 2010) are a population at risk of being failed by education systems in the UK. The overall picture is disjointed, with a tendency to focus on factors in isolation at the expense of taking a broader ecological perspective (Richards, 2008). There is also a marked absence of psychological theory informing and reasoning action and, where psychology is applied, a tendency to focus on weakness, deficit and pathology that neglects the importance of positive resources characteristic of black families. This is a significant observation, when a number of a-theoretical strands of literature have been particularly influential in shaping government policy initiatives.

The continued failure to remediate the achievement and exclusion gaps suggests that there remain fundamental barriers to achieving racial equality in British educational institutions and significant gaps in the research. Cooper (2006) suggests this stems not just from a lack of local knowledge among professionals about ethnicity, the makeup of local ethnic populations (Cartledge and Simmons-Reed, 2002) and the essence of culturally appropriate SEN provision (Strand, 2009) but from a failure in research and policy to respect the complexity of facilitating change in these areas and to give students the chance to have a meaningful and influential voice (Cefai and Cooper, 2010). Richards (2008) advocates a shift towards a more ecological and systemic way of thinking about learning and behaviour (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Cooper and Upton, 1990) that is more consistent with current thinking in educational psychology.

Research into educational inequality has also become synonymous with the allocation and partitioning of blame. Brown (2006), by adopting a Foucauldian understanding of the inseparability of knowledge and power, illustrates that research can be broken down into dualistic discourses of blame, accountability and control. Foucault (1980a) states "*Where there is power, there is resistance*" (p. 95) and using a discourse analytic approach (Foucault, 1980b) highlights three main discourses of

culpability which predominate in the literature: 'blaming schools,' 'blaming youth' and 'blaming the culture.' Because modernism is founded on a binary construction of knowledge and power this becomes "*a hindrance, a stumbling-block... a point of resistance and a shared starting point for opposing strategy*" (Foucault, 1980a, p.101), meaning that each discourse of blame becomes a point of contention, provoking polarisation and resistance to change and reform in groups that resent being blamed(Miller and Rollnick, 2002). Oliver (2002) provides three more points against which the research effort may be critiqued, that:

- i) it has failed to accurately capture and reflect experiences from the perspective of young people themselves;
- ii) it has failed to provide information that is useful to policy making and reform processes; and
- iii) it has labelled black students as victims and so robbed them of their resiliency.

Each of these points resonates with those raised in the review so far but at their heart is the idea that the research process has become divorced from the lived experiences of Black-British young people (Gillborn, 2008). This is most notable in the flawed attempt to reduce complex multi-factorial phenomena to the operation of single causal variables; a way of thinking that perpetuate "*relatively crude stereotypes which reinforce powerful deficit images of Black communities in general and Black young men in particular*" (Gillborn, 2008, p. 63). Indeed, Richards (2008) suggests that it is the ongoing categorisation of people by ethnicity that perpetuates a sense of cultural disunity. It is for this reason that the Black African and Caribbean participants in this research are referred to firstly as 'British Teenagers.'

2.6 Ethnicity and culture – Getting it wrong from the beginning?

Ethnicity is not isomorphic for culture (Keogh et al. 1997) and the relatively crude ethnic categories typical of census and most research data disguise cultural heterogeneity within and between these groups (Hutchinson and McKenzie, 1995). For example, immigrants of Afro-Caribbean heritage may originate from Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Barbados, Grenada, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Lucia, Dominica, Montserrat, Anguilla, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Guyana and Belize, locations encompassing a multiplicity of languages and cultures. Africa is also home to over 800 distinct ethnic groups (Richards, 2008),

each with their own cultural traditions. This fundamentally questions the validity of such sweeping macro-categories as 'Black-Caribbean' and 'Black-African' and McLoyd (1998) argues that research exploring the viewpoints of minority groups is predominantly impaired by their insensitivity to cultural contexts. In addition, children of first generation immigrants are thought to see themselves as belonging to a different ethnic category from that of their parents (Malek, 2004), with Richards (2008) suggesting that some students are becoming homogenised into an increasingly homomorphous group, consisting of a hybridity of national cultures and identities that has more in common with a British-pseudo-American sub-culture than the traditions of their forebears. However, Quirke et al. (2009) also admit that relatively little is known about how the culture of second and third generation Black-British young people has developed. Ahn et al's., (2010) use of ethno-linguistic data promises a more sensitive disaggregation of these groups. Although this work is ongoing, Ahn et al.'s preliminary conclusions indicate that previous interventions have indeed been fundamentally skewed by a misanalysis of culture and attainment. They suggest it is actually Black-Africans from Lingali, French and Somali speaking households that are most at risk of underachievement in British schools.

This imprecision was actually recognised as far back as 1997 and 1986, when Keogh et al. and Ogbu respectively argued that contemporary research did little beyond stereotype and alienate individual students whilst reinforcing unhelpful divisions in society. This is an important caveat to conducting cross-cultural research, the resolution of which requires practitioners to acknowledge that culture varies at three levels: "...among ethnically defined groups, within ethnically defined groups and among individuals within ethnic and cultural groups" (Keogh, Gallimore & Weisner, 1997, p. 109).

However, over twenty years after the imprecision of ethnic categories was first recognised they remain the primary method of sorting children and adults of different cultural groups in census, school and research data. This makes it difficult to conduct research across different cultures and sub-cultures without reinforcing these constructs. One solution is proposed by Richards (2008) who cites the reframing of the term BLAK (Black Liberation African Knowledge) as a concept that is more empowering than traditional labels. In scientific research, the language used to describe different cultural groups remains a sensitive and unresolved issue and an understanding of culture is a necessary first step to any hope of resolution.

2.7 Culture

Tillman (2002) acknowledges that culture can be conceptualised and defined differently, depending on one's worldview (Abi-Hashem, 2011) and Cohen (2009) actually highlights the existence of 164 distinct definitions. Tillman (2002), arguing for culturally sensitive research practices, draws on the work of King (1995), Hilliard (2001) and McCarthy (1998) in a synthesis, defining culture as "...a group's individual and collective ways of thinking, believing and knowing, which incorporates their shared experiences, consciousness, skills, values, forms of expression, social institutions and behaviours" (p. 4). Moreover, whilst ethnicity persists over time, culture changes as individuals and groups modify beliefs and practices in a continuous and reciprocal process of environmental adaptation (Keogh et al. 1997). As such, cultural sensitivity may be most appropriately conceptualised as a process, rather than a goal, requiring constant monitoring and reflexive evaluation, locally as well as nationally, to sustain.

It has already been emphasised that educational psychology, and psychology in general, must remain abreast of the emerging cultural diversity in the UK in order to avoid cultural obsolescence. However, culturally sensitive practices must rest on culturally sensitive research (Tillman, 2002) and Ungar (2003, 2004, 2007) has suggested that many quantitative methods essentially struggle to meet this standard. As a result he argues much research is limited by the researcher's own etic (i.e., observations coming from someone who doesn't share their subjects cultural background) Euro-American cultural perspective, which imposes models of adjustment that may be irrelevant to the emic (accounts coming from a person within the culture of interest) perspective of members of minority and marginalised groups. This is consistent with McLloyd (1998) and Tillman (2002), who define culturally sensitive research as that which includes:

- i) *culturally congruent research*, meaning qualitative interview methods or those sensitive to holistic contextualised data;
- ii) *culturally specific knowledge*, highlighting the importance of the researcher separating etic and emic perspectives;
- iii) *cultural resistance to theoretical dominance*, meaning research that minimises the effects of unequal power relations; and
- iv) *culturally sensitive data interpretation*, meaning research that prioritises experiential knowledge.

These points build on the work of Kershaw (1992), who first called for 'Afrocentric research' meaning that which uses qualitative method to create practical insights that acknowledge discrepancies and involve Black participants in the generation of knowledge and new theory that disrupts deficit discourses and beliefs (Milner, 2007). The significance of Afrocentric research for Tillman (2002) is that it represents an opportunity to begin new discourses that have the potential to change lives and communities. Tillman's principles also resonate strongly with Ungar (2003). Ungar argues that in order to understand children's emic constructions of their cultural milieu they must first be enabled to tell their stories and variables be allowed to emerge from these data, rather than imposing culturally predetermined normative standards and hypotheses that, for example, reinforce the stereotypical focus on young black males as socially problematic (Weekes-Bernard, 2010). Tillman (2002) and Brown (2006) also echo the need for methods that allow the narrative co-construction of multiple realities and Ungar (2003) highlights GT as a research method that is suited to meeting this requirement.

Developed by Glaser and Straus (1967), GT is more congruent with Tillman's (2002) principles of cultural resistance to theoretical dominance and culturally sensitive data interpretation, suggesting that it is a legitimate method for producing culturally informed theory and practice - by building theory from raw data it literally encapsulates the knowledge and culture of its contributors. Although it is not traditionally part of an EP's repertoire of research tools, Burden (1997) and Goodenow (1992) argue that GT is well suited to representing the voices of marginalised groups and is, therefore, a useful vehicle for enabling EPs to align themselves more closely with the needs of Black-British students. GT is discussed in more detail below (see Chapter 3).

Ungar (2004) and Tillman (2002) also highlight culture as a socially constructed and socially transmitted variable. Cultural competence, therefore, entails a reflective and reflexive capacity to a) maintain awareness of one's own epistemological worldview, b) be aware of cultural differences and c) have knowledge of different cultural practices and epistemologies. These skills delineate the ability to understand, communicate and interact with people across different cultures. Social constructionism assumes that knowledge is historically and culturally relative (Burr, 1995) and has proven particularly influential in educational psychology. For example, this has led to the development of models of informed and reasoned action, such as

COMOIRA (The Constructionist Model of Informed and Reasoned Action), directly related to resolving the issues that can emerge through cultural discontinuities in communities, educational and multi-professional contexts (Gameson et al. 2003, 2005; Gameson & Rhydderch, 2008). Ungar (2004) applies the lens of social constructionism as an alternative to the 'conventional' analysis of behaviours more commonly thought to be indicative of serious social, emotional and behavioural difficulties but which he argues can also be understood as part of young people's unconventional drive to secure health resources in specific and constrained contexts.

To summarise, the literature concerned with the aetiology and amelioration of Black-British educational inequality presents a diverse range of explanations and solutions (Gosai, 2009), which may have iatrogenically reinforced discourses that locate Black-British students as challenging and problematic to educate. However, the tendency to fixate on the role of racism means that valid scientific points can become lost in the controversy and little change has occurred (Weekes-Bernard, 2010). In addition, the use of imprecise ethnic categories can obscure real and important individual, within and between group cultural differences in how people think, remember, reason and express their ideas (Keogh et al. 1997, p107). Just as Keogh et al. argue for a socio-cultural perspective on children's learning, so too is there an emergent research effort suggesting that this may be an appropriate lens with which to view behaviours that have been labelled as evidence of SEBD (Tyler et al. 2008; Ogbu, 1982).

2.8 Resilience: a new hope?

In order to enable cross-cultural understandings Ungar (2003, 2004) and Liebenberg and Ungar (2007) call for a paradigmatic shift away from the positivist fixation on quantitatively generated universal truths and towards the narrative exploration of socially constructed realities, primarily by carrying out research based in local communities. This is consistent with the growing international focus on the ideal of community-based psychology and strength based intervention. However, to date the research conducted with students from different cultural groups with SEBD could be argued to have been largely tokenistic, incidental or focused on students who have already been, or are about to be, excluded (e.g., Abbott, 2010, Daniels and Cole, 2010; Briggs, 2010). Inviting students to retrospectively make sense of their experiences can be problematic, as autobiographical memories are subject to contamination, revision and degeneration (Brewin, Andrews and Gotlib, 1993; Rivers,

2001). Cefai and Cooper (2010) also highlight a general lack of studies on students local enough to reflect idiosyncratic aspects of culture and even fewer that capture the 'authentic' voices of disaffected children and young people still located in mainstream education.

In order to remedy these failings, Harper (2010), Cefai and Cooper (2010) and Ungar and Liebenberg (2011) agree that the most insightful place for research to focus on is identifying the salutogenic factors that impact on health, stress and coping and which enable students to succeed, in spite of the patterns of risk and adversity outlined above. They argue that it is the narratives of those students who have achieved resilient functioning that may contain the clues to culturally relevant practices and delineate pathways for intervention and primary prevention. Luthar and Zelazo (2008) also make it explicit that in spite of its breadth the field of resiliency research is actually lacking in studies focused on providing a cross-cultural understanding of resilience processes.

2.9 Ecological resilience

Chronicling those protective and vulnerability factors that predict resilient or risky functioning seems to have become the focus of an extensive explorative literature, with most meta-analyses identifying long lists of bi-polar variables, with one pole anchored in risk and the other in resiliency, for example, poor vs. good enough parenting (Houghughi and Speight, 1998). Popular in research, resilience has also proved to be a popular construct in government policy, where it is seen as being a "*practical theory that informs action*" (Liebenberg and Ungar, 2007, p. 21), the assumption being that an understanding of the processes that lead to good outcomes in the presence of risk can inform primary prevention and secondary intervention. However, the type of intervention that resilience informs depends on how it is understood and this makes it a complex construct to apply meaningfully in education and community contexts. This is because although there are many common themes in the field (Luthar and Zazelo, 2008), resilience has rarely been studied consistently (Ungar, 2004; Abi-Hashem, 2011). Cohen et al. (2011) describe how in recent history resilience has variously been studied as a personal quality, a process, an outcome, an outcome and a process, a social construct, a dynamic process and an ecological property. Combined with the problem that resiliency cannot be directly measured, only inferred through a proxy variable, this means that there are many inconsistencies between studies that subscribe to different definitions

of resilience and so target different participants, measures, variables and methods of study (Cohen et al. 2011; Cowen, 2001)¹.

At its simplest resilience is essentially “...*positive outcomes in spite of threats to adaptation or development*” (Ungar, 2004, p. 12). This notion of ‘bounce-back-ability,’ which Cohen et al. (2011) suggest is as sophisticated an understanding as most professional psychologists have of resilience, rests on two judgements (Maesten, 2001): that of exposure to risk (often operationally defined by socioeconomic status, frequency of traumatic life events, low birth weight, etc.) and of outcomes that exceed that what would normally be expected under such circumstances. These outcomes are typically defined with reference to meeting salient developmental tasks, competence criteria or cultural age based expectations but also vary according to the interests of the researcher.

Early interest in resilience grew out of risk focused research paradigms and was fairly narrowly focused on medicalised outcomes in the presence of psychopathology, deficit and trauma, in line with broader discourses on public health and epidemiology. However, resiliency focused paradigms distinguish themselves from those of risk in that they are explicitly focused on positive constructs and outcomes. The first generation of resiliency research was fairly narrowly focused on identifying the characteristics that defined invulnerable children (Anthony and Cohler, 1987) and which made them impervious to harm. However, since the 1990s this focus has shifted towards a more dynamic-systems approach, driven by researchers, such as Maesten (2001), who wrote that the capacity for resiliency is dependent on the uncompromised development of normal human adaptational systems and not on exceptional talents or abilities. This shift in thinking is embodied by Cefai’s (2007) move beyond selective resiliency enhancing intervention and towards examining the macro organisation of schools and communities as resiliency and competency enhancing contexts for all children, not a select minority identified as being at risk.

With a more ecological understanding of behaviour, learning and development the emphasis has moved towards understanding the interplay between individuals, their family and wider social and physical ecologies. The corollary of this is that children’s environments, such as schools, can and should be modified to support and facilitate

¹ Kaufman (1994) illustrates the practical implications of this diversity, finding that between 5-64% of a given sample of maltreated children could be regarded as being resilient, depending on the research method adopted.

positive development and resiliency. With this shift also comes an evolution in the language, as the recognition that resiliency is a property of children's physical and social ecologies makes it theoretically and ethically problematic to identify the presence – or absence – of resilience as an intrinsic reflection of the child (Luthar and Zelazo, 2008). Such a judgement is now a reflection of the child's ecological systems and researchers have moved from talking about 'resilient' children towards children showing 'patterns of resiliency' or 'resiliency adaptations' (Auman and Hart, 2009).

In studies focused on children, young people and education the presence or absence of resilience has been variously defined by the attainment, or not, of five A*-C GCSEs, avoidance of prison, drug use (Steca et al. 2007), alcohol abuse, socio-emotional competence (Cefai, 2004) or the progression to higher education (Shepherd, Reynolds and Moran, 2010). However, there are ethical, technical and methodological problems in defining resilience in this way; students may achieve but still be experiencing difficulties emotionally (Cefai, 2004) and imposing a single variable as an index of resilience is to completely fail to reflect the full impact of school on development. Each new dependent variable may also arguably relate to qualitatively distinct sets of psychological processes that dilute the validity of a meta-construct such as 'resilience.' Tarter and Vanyukov (1999) even question resilience as a useful construct, arguing that non-linear developmental pathways between risk and resilience make it a label that can only really be applied meaningfully on a post-hoc basis and so is of little use as a guide for targeted intervention. Ungar (2004) wryly observes that:

...resilient young people are characterised by a set of individual, social and environmental qualities that have become associated with resilience (p 54).

Indeed, resiliency studies have produced such dense constellations of ecological variables that it may be argued with justification that every child is, at least at some point in their life, 'at risk' (Ungar, 2004; Kiser and Black, 2007) and so could meaningfully contribute to the study of resiliency. Moreover, although there is agreement that certain factors put children at risk and that others are protective, the research has generally failed to identify a universal set of variables that are relevant to all children (Ungar, 2004). Resilience is, therefore, a culturally determined construct and labelling an individual as resilient or at risk can entail an arbitrariness

that can be of little use in shaping the arrangement of resources in schools and communities around young people who do not share that culture.

Caveats to using resilience for targeted intervention do not disqualify it from being a useful construct. Schools are known to be key developmental contexts that can shape and alter developmental trajectories (Kasen et al. 2009). Cefai (2007) asserts that the promotion of resiliency factors in schools stands to benefit all children, including those at risk, particularly during periods of intense physical and psychological change and social role transition, such as adolescence (Kasen et al. 2009). A generalist approach to resiliency also circumvents the problem of labelling, inefficient and inequitable provision of services and resources (Toporek et al. 2006).

The key assumption underlying the conceptualization of resilience within a generalist, universal perspective, is that resilience building can be done by schools through common contextual processes that promote positive social and academic behaviours amongst normally developing children and young persons as well as those who may be at risk in their development. (Cefai, 2007, p. 120).

This study constructs resilience within this 'generalist' perspective, broadening the eligible sample from those Black-British students experiencing SEBD to all Black-British students who experience a particular community and share a cultural background. However, Ungar (2003, 2004, 2006b) returns to the two frequent shortcomings in resilience research, namely the arbitrariness and narrowness of selected outcome variables and the lack of attention to the social and cultural contexts within which resilience occurs. Ungar (2007) goes on to argue that psychologists are yet to understand children's own culturally determined, socially constructed indicators of resilience. In this vein, Ungar provides an alternative definition of resilience, as follows:

In the context of exposure to significant adversity, resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural and physical resources that sustain their well-being, and their capacity, individually and collectively, to negotiate for these resources to be provided in culturally meaningful ways. (2007, p 24)

This moves the focus from identifying ever increasing constellations of binary variables to research focused on understanding the processes through which young people make sense of their own coping behaviour and its subjective sense of utility.

2.10 The social construction of resilience

Ungar (2004) moves beyond ecological interpretations of resilience that are bounded by an ethnocentric and Westernised cultural hegemony. His central thesis is that labelling young people as resilient or not entails an “...*arbitrariness that misrepresents their coping behaviour through methodologically flawed and contextually irrelevant interpretations of their worlds*” (Ungar, 2007, p. 84). Indeed, as mentioned above, in the SEBD literature there has been a chronic absence of the voices of students and how they define themselves. Instead researchers have relied on their own models of adjustment in order to draw conclusions from largely quantitative paradigms. Ungar’s definition of resilience supposes that resilience might be better understood phenomenologically, as the outcome of negotiations between individuals and their environments to maintain a self-definition as healthy, whereas ecological models are dependent on the capacity of the subject to show predetermined health behaviours in the presence of adversity. An explicitly constructionist interpretation enables young people to provide their own self-definitions and the meanings that they attach to behaviours.

When the behaviour of students in schools is reframed in this way it is hoped that it will highlight pathways to intervention that have been hidden by the explorative literature so far, as suggested by Ungar (2006):

In our haste to change our children’s behaviour, we overlook how those behaviours make sense to children themselves. Try as we might as adults to guide children, they will not heed our words of advice until they are confident we understand they are already doing the best they can with what they have. (p. 3).

Boottrell (2007) provides a promising application of this principle, considering the experiences of young people on a public housing estate in Sydney. She suggests that youth resistances, encompassing SEBD, may be advantageously reframed as resilience, i.e., positive adaptation in spite of adversity, that enable young people to

achieve status, positive reputation and a sense of belonging and control of their self-definitions.

Ungar's (2004) work broadens ecological models by conceptualising resilience as a social construction. He argues that it is purely an assumption that all children have access to the resources required to achieve the types of adaptive functioning that have become synonymous with successful coping. For example, Ungar reflects that Mrazek and Mrazek (1987) relate resilience in child abuse victims to processes that include:

- 1) rapid responsivity to danger;
- 2) precocious maturity;
- 3) dissociation of affect;
- 4) information seeking;
- 5) formation and utilization of relationships for survival;
- 6) positive projective anticipation;
- 7) decisive risk taking;
- 8) the conviction of being loved;
- 9) idealisation of an aggressor's competence;
- 10) cognitive restructuring of painful experiences;
- 11) altruism; and
- 12) optimism and hope.

Ungar (2004) points out that how these resilience characteristics are achieved does not have to be via socially acceptable methods. To neglect this is to ignore the functionality of behaviours more commonly framed as 'SEBD' for students who are trying to achieve a healthy sense of self and identity in constrained circumstances with limited resources. Accordingly, behaviours classified in school as 'SEBD' may even be more advantageously reframed as a manifestation of resilient functioning, as students attempt to achieve control and discursive empowerment in an environment they experience as more threatening than benign to their sense of self-efficacy and autonomy. While this is not to excuse difficult or challenging behaviour it is necessary to understand it as having a possibly empowering effect before appropriate interventions can be calibrated to the context.

Ungar (2004) presents a model for a social-constructionist approach to resilience that seeks to explain the ways that young people author self-constructions as

resilient. This identifies the process of discursive empowerment as a protective mechanism that mediates the impact of risk factors, leading to self-definitions by high-risk youth of themselves as 'resilient.' This is the driving force behind behaviours that 'high risk youth' employ to gain control over self-constructions as both healthy and resilient. Denied access to this power they experience 'surplus powerlessness.' Lerner (1986) defines this as:

...conscious though misguided assessments of how much one can accomplish in any particular moment. The set of beliefs and feelings about ourselves leads us to feel that we will lose, that we will be isolated, that other people won't listen and that in turn leads us to act in ways in which these fears turn out to be true (p13).

This is not necessarily an original precept, as it has long been recognised that novel insights may be ascribed by starting from the assumption that behaviour is a rational response to the coercive nature of schools and not evidence of individual pathology. Indeed, it was originally in 1970 that Freire first argued that a vital first step in achieving equality was to explore the construction of reality from the minority party's perspective. Cefai and Cooper (2010) indicate that this advice is yet to be fully implemented.

However, it is Ungar and Liebenberg (2011) who have developed a tool with which to investigate culturally specific pathways towards resilience and healthy development. This takes the form of a mixed method, iteratively designed resiliency scale, the Child and Youth Resiliency Measure (2011). The development of this scale has been as part of an internationally implemented project to study resiliency processes between different cultures. As Afro-Caribbean and African students living in large conurbations in the UK have yet to be represented in this project it is proposed that this would be an appropriate focus for this research. In the development of Ungar's scale he describes nine catalyst questions, which have been used to elicit the stories of children and young people across cultures and circumstances. It is hoped that using this method to elicit the narratives of Black-British young people can provide the contextually rich data to break down simplistic stereotypes and help EPs see and show the resilience in the adaptations of Black-British students and identify culturally congruent pathways to intervention.

2.11 The present study

To summarise, it has long been understood that ethnic minority under achievement and exclusion is an issue in the educational systems and context of the UK. However, providing an explanation of this phenomenon that has sufficient utility to guide intervention and reform has proved more challenging, with the debate stalling on the the precise role of racism. Indeed, attempts to look beyond racism as a causal factor have themselves become synonymous with adopting a racist point of view (Gillborn, 2008). Ungar (2003) provides the means to extricate the debate from opinion, rhetoric and speculation and re-focus the attention of psychologists on the salutogenic mechanisms that allow patterns of resiliency to unfold. As Cefai and Cooper (2010) articulate:

More research may also be carried out on the stories of resilient students who were at risk of developing SEBD but who managed to thrive academically and socially despite the various difficulties they faced. (p. 195).

However, Ungar (2003) suggests that imposing standards of what overcoming adversity entails imposes a selection bias that may prematurely exclude students who achieve resilience in other ways. In addition, as highlighted above, the validity of insights drawn from retrospective research can be questionable (Brewin, Andrews and Gotlib, 1993; Rivers, 2001) as participants may identify constructions which they would not have done had the research been conducted in situ. Identifying participants at risk of developing SEBD in order to work prospectively carries with it ethical and practical implications which make it particularly problematic: Pomerantz (2005) suggests that SEBD may be more advantageously reframed from a social constructivist and interactionist perspective, meaning that challenging behaviour is perceived to be constructed through the interactions that take place between the pupil and teacher in the classroom. As a result, challenging behaviour is not a fixed characteristic of the child and what is seen to be evidence of SEBD by one teacher may not be seen as such by another (Simpson, 1989). In addition, labelling young people as 'at risk of SEBD' carries with it the risk of alienating parental gatekeepers and of initiating a self-fulfilling prophecy - Prus and Grills (2003) demonstrate that one of the most influential steps in the development of a stable pattern of oppositional behaviours is for young people to be labelled as such. Research that

imposes such a label may have negative implications for students' sense of identity and behaviour beyond their participation in the research.

Together, the lack of consistency in identification (Soles et al. 2008) and dangers of labelling raise ethical and practical caveats to conducting research that targets young people 'at-risk' of SEBD. Morrison (2001) also highlights the lack of validity in making accurate predictions about future negative school behaviour based on previous behavioural records. One way to resolve these difficulties is, as mentioned above, to adopt a generalist, non-exclusive model of resilience that approaches it as a social construction relevant to all children. With reference to the presence of risk, Kiser and Black (2005) present a catalogue of risks associated with urban life – risks to which all children who inhabit an urban community are exposed. Consequently, if all young people are capable of resilience than it makes little sense to purposefully exclude students from research on coping and resilience in those contexts.

As Cefai (2004, 2007) advocates, various researchers have called for the development and broadening of the construct of resilience as a useful way to promote the wellbeing of all children and young people. In support of this Ungar (2004, p. 352) states:

Most of the evidence provided for resilience as a distinct construct has been anchored within a pathogenic discourse that supports the view that resilient individuals demonstrate certain capacities and have specific characteristics that are unexpected, given the risks they face and their anticipated development of future problems. The false dichotomy between resilient and non-resilient individuals, to which such a perspective contributes, can be replaced with an understanding of health as residing in all individuals even when significant impairment is present.

This is, therefore, a naturalistic, illuminative study on the processes underlying pupil resilience in schools and communities. It seeks to uncover GT explanations of the mechanisms operating in a school and community in a large city, pertinent to the resiliency adaptations of Black-British students. Research has identified Year 8 as a crucial year in the development of disaffection and SEBD (Wright, Standen and Patel, 2010). Therefore, research located in Year 7 may also serve to foreshadow those issues which are relevant to the development of an anti-school stance in Year 8 and which can lead to young people travelling down a pathway which they find

impossible to change, informing the institutional changes at or before this point which can pre-empt the development of such difficulties.

It is hoped that this research may inform and provide a reason for the application of psychological theory proactively in primary prevention: Maesten and Powell (2003) argue that a resilience framework offers a rich tapestry of potential interventions. Understanding resilience may enable EPs to develop systems and services that understand how Black-British young people cope and provide the resources necessary to enable them to achieve full and happy lives. As a result, if resilience can be viewed in the context of availability of resources, options, culture, politics, constructed meanings and health discourses, a random selection of students may be as likely to provide insights into the everyday quality of resilience as a targeted sample. In the wake of the growing realisation that current discourses on evidence-based treatment for adults and young people are “*at best viewed as premature and at worst misleading*” (Miller, Wampold and Varhely, 2008, p. 12) Gordon (2010, p. 3) summarises an important message that is at the heart of this thesis:

Listening to what students have to say about their educational experiences is the only way of determining the best methods to support their special educational needs and develop inclusive practice.

2.12 The research question

The research question this thesis hopes to answer is “What processes do British young people of African or Afro-Caribbean cultural heritage understand as shaping their ability to behave or act resiliently in their school and community?” By answering this question it is hoped that the researcher will highlight pertinent psychological theory, which can be applied both proactively, in supporting young people from this cultural group, and reactively, in helping those who have already become disaffected and disillusioned within the process of their education. The answers to this question will be constructed from within the interview transcripts using GT methodology in order to produce research that adheres to Tillman’s (2002) principle of cultural congruence and sensitivity to the context of the research.

Chapter 3: THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with describing the sample, method of data collection and analysis that was adopted, in particular, the steps that were followed to identify resiliency processes in the interview transcripts. A short literature review focusing on GT methodology will be outlined and the limitations of GT will be considered together with some solutions. This chapter examines and discusses how issues related to sampling, saturation and piloting were resolved and outlines ethical issues pertinent to this research. The researcher also attempts a reflexive account of the analytic process.

3.2 The Grounded Theory literature review

It is a simple and complex, methodical and creative, rigorous and laissez-faire process in which the researcher is engaged to generate theory from data (Walker and Myrick, 2006, p. 548).

The decision to use qualitative methodology is explained in chapter 1 and guided by the example of Ungar (2003, 2004, 2011), whose method the study seeks to replicate. Grounded theory (GT) is a qualitative research method that acquires its name from the practice of inductively generating theory from research that is 'grounded' in raw data (McQueen and Knussen, 1999). Developed by Glaser and Strauss (1965, 1967), its origins are in sociology and it emphasises the "...importance of developing an understanding of human behaviour through a process of discovery and induction, rather than the more traditional positivist process of hypothesis testing and deduction" (Elliot and Lazenbatt, 2005, p. 49). GT involves following systematic methodological 'steps' for the analysis of qualitative data (Charmaz, 2006). Seen historically, this represents a resolution of different epistemological positions and a solution to broader problems about the perception of the status of qualitatively based knowledge in the sciences (Robson, 2002; Mjoset, 2005) by developing a qualitative method that matches the structural rigour and objectivity of quantitative methods.

The aim of the GT approach is to develop explanatory theory about common social patterns. As Crooks outlines (2001, p. 25), GT "*gives us a picture of what people do, what their prime concerns are, and how they deal with these concerns,*" and so is

well suited to studying the patterns of adaptation that constitute resiliency processes. The emphasis on understanding the emic constructions of participants also meets Tillman's (2002) criteria for culturally congruent research methods.

Traditionally GT is viewed as being most useful when little is known about a particular subject or problem area (Morse, 1992) but Stern (1980) also advocates its use to gain a fresh perspective in more congested areas, especially in those of change or contradiction. Given the fluid, controversial and often contradictory nature of the research field summarised in part 1 of the literature review, it is posited that GT provides a suitable framework for analysing the various factors that may shape Black-British students' adaptations when faced with adversity in their schools and communities. A GT perspective may also provide a fresh lens through which the relevance of existing research can be evaluated against the lived experiences of young people in context. Grounding research in data instead of theory also means that GT can act as an epistemological vehicle for capturing the voice of the child, which has already been framed as a primary objective of this research project.

'Doing' GT is typically characterised by the simultaneous collection and analysis of data (Charmaz, 2006). In a process termed 'theoretical sampling, researchers choose new data sources for their potential to develop and illuminate emergent analytical insights, rather than to aid generalisation. Memos written throughout the study capture the researcher's internal analytic dialogue, prompt reflexivity and become further data for coding and analysis. This is underpinned by the constant comparative method, which involves making comparisons between codes during each stage of the analysis. These insights feed into the GT literature review, which takes place after the data collection (Charmaz, 2006) and involves comparing any theoretical categories with the extant literature (See Chapter 6).

However, there are also different ways of 'doing' GT, with Wigford (2010) highlighting that it has been adopted and adapted by researchers adhering variously to objectivist, positivist and constructivist epistemologies. This diversity notably stems from a very public disagreement between the original authors. Their disagreement includes whether the researcher can set aside theoretical ideas to allow a substantive theory to emerge, being viewed more as a neutral participant, or 'Tabula Rasa,' in this process but ostensibly centres on the use of a coding paradigm to 'force' data, which Glaser (1992) argues force data into preconceived categories, which invalidate their validity (Charmaz, 2006). There are other technical

disagreements which are beyond the scope of this thesis to describe. See Dey (1993) for a full review.

Charmaz (2006) focuses on modernising GT to account for 40 years of “theoretical and methodological developments” (p. 9). She accepts that categories and theory are inevitably the social constructs of the researcher, who is active to the process of analysis. Charmaz’s (2006) post-modern conceptualisation of the role of the researcher is also more in line with general criticisms of qualitative methodologies made by Braun and Clarke (2006). They made the point that it is important to acknowledge that the selection of themes in qualitative data involves the imposition of theoretical positions and values by the researcher that may not correspond to the meanings originally intended by the participant. They question the use of terms such as ‘emergent’ or ‘discovery’ to reflect the development of patterns in the analysis as it creates the false assumption that theoretical insights pre-exist in the data.

If themes reside anywhere they reside in our heads from our thinking about our data and creating links as we understanding them. (Ely et al. 1997, p. 205-206)

This is also more consistent with Finlay’s (2003a) notion of the researcher as a participant, reflected on in Chapter 1. Milner (2007) rejects outright the idea that a researcher can be detached from their research and Hertz (1997, p. viii) also argues that researchers are:

...imposed [on the research] at all stages of the research process – from the questions they ask to those they ignore, from who they study to who they ignore, from problem formulation to analysis, representation and writing.

Therefore, given the same information, different researchers may construct very different themes and theories, shaped more by their own agendas than by the data. This has long been one of the main criticisms of GT, as it is impossible to ‘set aside’ theory from the outset and occupy a truly neutral position. Each researcher is implicitly embedded in a socio-political-historical context and theoretical perspective that needs to be recognised, as it is how the author views and interprets, prompts and questions, that shapes the theory (Hertz, 1997), returning tautologically to the importance of the researcher providing a reflexive account of the research process.

However, Charmaz (2006) presents a methodology explicitly aligned with this social constructionist understanding – that any theoretical insights should be understood as interpretive portrayals of the studied world and not an exact picture – and it is felt that her method is most consistent with the social constructionist epistemology of the study. She also presents a modernised method of ‘doing’ grounded theory, involving the following:

1) Initial Line-By-Line Coding

This is the first step and involves coding the data for actions by naming each line of the transcripts in order to separate them into categories and processes.

2) Focused Coding

Charmaz (2006) describes this as the second major phase of coding. This involves synthesising the data by selecting the most frequent and/or significant themes within the data and developing them into categories.

3) Axial Coding

Developed by Strauss and Corbin (1990) this involves reassembling the data into major categories. Refining the relationship between major categories and sub-categories involves organising the sub-components into conditions, actions/interactions, consequences, strategies and causal conditions.

4) Memo Writing

Described by Charmaz (2006) as “the pivotal intermediate step in grounded theory” (p. 188), memo writing actually occurs throughout the analytical process. It involves producing defining codes by their analytic qualities and using these insights to inform further data collection.

5) Theoretical Sampling

This involves seeking further data from sources that are informed by the analysis to date. These sources are identified by their potential to contribute to the development and refining of conceptual categories and continues until theoretical saturation occurs, i.e., until no new insights emerge.

6) Sorting and Restructuring Memos into Categories

This involves the theoretical integration of categories in order to develop a theory.

7) Returning to the literature

This involves carrying out a literature search in light of the grounded theory and using it to inform the critique and make comparisons within this material.

3.2.1 Limitations of grounded Theory

Notably, critiques of GT have come from the positivist tradition of research and have centred on the contextual specificity of GT, which make it difficult to endorse in terms of the positivist concepts of generalisability, reliability and validity. As highlighted by Charmaz's (1990, 2006) methodology, accepting and reflecting on the researcher as an active component or participant (Finlay, 2003) to the analysis necessitates the researcher, accepting and acknowledging bias, with the concomitant reflective process making the process of data analysis transparent. Following Teram and Ungar (2009) and Ungar (2004), it can be argued that this changes the focus of the researcher, from producing generalisable theoretical insights to facilitating transferability, in which any insights are grounded in a local context. The audience is given the authority to judge for themselves the value of applying any analytic insights in their systems and context. No prior claims are made to the universality of any insights. Instead their contextualisation and specificity is embraced and explored as a unique feature of the research.

Mjoset (2005) also argues that GT is fundamentally concerned with generating knowledge at the mid or lower level, meaning that it is pragmatically focused on gaining knowledge within broadly specified contexts: It simply does not aspire to high-level theorising and identifying "law-like regularities" (Mjoset, 2005, p. 384) that go beyond the context of the research problem. Ungar (2004) allows that while this may lead to research which lacks the breadth of the 'master discourse' it can also produce insights that carry the 'depth and immediate relevance' that comes from understanding the minute dynamics of understanding resilient practices within a particular context.

However, the specificity of GT means that it is impossible to test a GT by recreating the original conditions of its inception. Strauss (1990) answers this criticism by arguing that reproduction may be replaced by verification, by using a GT to inform hypotheses which can then be tested empirically. It is also worth noting that no research is produced 'free' of context, making this an unfair standard against which to critique a GT. As Corbin & Strauss remark (1990, p. 424) "...probably, no theory that deals with a social psychological phenomenon is actually reproducible insofar as finding new situations or other situations whose conditions exactly match those of the original study."

When whole transcripts are broken down into line-by-line or word-by-word codes it can also be difficult to retain the 'big picture,' and Allen (2003) admits that the sheer scale of the data analysis can be particularly time consuming. However, these practical concerns are more likely to be an issue when the data analysis is carried out only after the data have been collected and not continuously using the constant comparison method (Charmaz, 2006). When the analysis is constant it is arguably easier to be more discerning in coding and parsimoniously refine key themes and categories that also enable the researcher to retain a holistic viewpoint. However, the time required to complete theoretical sampling and achieve saturation is potentially problematic in the time-limited context of research for a doctoral thesis and requires careful planning and easy access to samples to successfully complete in a time-limited period.

Allen (2003) also acknowledges tension between employing GT and case study research. By definition a case study design is purposive and this reflects the prior development of theoretical propositions that guide data collection and case selection. However, this critique stems from a misunderstanding of Glaser and Straus's (1967) insistence that researchers set aside their theoretical ideas. This directive refers to the data analysis and not the literature review or case selection. Allen (2003) also finds a synergy between GT and case study designs in their use of interview methods and proposes that employing GT methodology in a case study design can actually help minimise the limitations of each method when used individually.

3.3 Data collection

Data collection occurred between June and October 2011. Of the ten interviews, five were carried out between June and July 2011. Five were carried out between September and October 2011. Further details regarding the approach taken to the interviews can be found in section 3.4.7.

3.4 Sampling

This section outlines the rationale for adopting a case study approach and provides specific details of the case context in which the research occurred, as well as of the participants who contributed to the data.

3.4.1 Case study

As outlined in Chapter 2, culture is highly variable and so requires methodologies that can accommodate differences within and between groups and individuals, as well as be attuned to locally idiosyncratic aspects of the context of the research. This is an important caveat to research focused on such social constructions as 'resilience' and 'culture,' particularly when they include young people from cultures different to that of the researcher. As a result, researchers working with members of different cultural backgrounds have to fundamentally question how it is possible to take account of cultural and ethnic diversity without stereotyping individual students when theoretical insights are applied as helping behaviours (Keogh, Gallimore and Weisner, 1997; Ungar and Liebenberg, 2007).

However, Cefai and Cooper (2010) highlight a lack of studies local enough to reflect idiosyncratic aspects of culture and fewer still that capture the authentic voices of disaffected adolescents still located in the context of mainstream education. Ungar (2004) suggests this may be related to the positivist preoccupation with quantitatively generating universal truths that generalise beyond the population of study. It is proposed that a case study based in a single school and community would best enable the researcher to accommodate the need for such subtlety and to reflect idiosyncrasies of the local culture of the community, educational and other institutional systems:

The case to be studied is a complex entity located in a milieu or situation embedded in a number of contexts or backgrounds. Historical context is almost always of interest, but so are cultural and physical contexts. Other contexts often of interest are the social, economic, political, ethical and aesthetic (Stake, 2005, p. 449).

Case study research is used when researchers want to understand the contextual conditions of the case under study (Flyvbjerg, 2006), such as interactions between young people and their environment. It also lends itself to developing deep, rather than broad, theoretical insights that, for example, have immediate relevance to understanding the dynamics of resiliency processes in the context of the case study. These help links to be made between theoretical insights and new practices (Ungar, 2004; Teram and Ungar, 2009) that may be less applicable to culturally, historically and geographically disparate groups that do not share the context of the research.

The context of this case study was Asbury Park secondary school, a school located in a large inner city, and the community surrounding it. The cases of study are identified as the resiliency processes espoused by ten Black-British teenagers who attend Asbury Park in Year 7. Unfortunately, due to the limitations of time and resources, the views of teachers and other ancillary staff, and parents, were not included in this study, meaning it is some way from the holistic case, incorporating these views, that is recommended by Teram and Ungar (2009) as an ideal.

3.4.2 Case Context

The cases selected for study are the resilience adaptations of Black-British male students of 12 years of age, enrolled in the systems and context of an inner city secondary school and its surrounding community. In 2010 the school population consisted of 1110 students, 75.9 percent of whom came from ethnic minorities (See Table 1), and had a school deprivation indicator of 0.47. Year 7, the group that contributed to this study, consisted of 191 students, 84.8% of whom were from minority groups. These groups are broken down in Table 1:

Table 1 – Comparison of the ethnic makeup of Asbury Park to the national average. **

Ethnic Group	Asbury * Park %	National %
White - British	19.4	74.1
White - Other	4.9	4.1
Black – British (Caribbean, African, Other)	61.2	4.5
Asian or British-Asian (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Other)	2.4	8.4
Chinese	0.5	0.4
Mixed– White & Black Caribbean or African	3.2	1.6
Mixed – White & Asian	0.7	0.8
Mixed - Other	2.5	1.3
Missing/Parent preferred not to say	5.3	4.6

**Figures are rounded and so may not add up to 100.*

***The data source is not referenced in order to protect the anonymity of the school.*

3.4.3 Participants

Resiliency processes were explored by recruiting an opportunistic sample of ten students from Asbury Park, Year 7. This was achieved by sending out parental consent forms to parents of Black-British boys of African and Afro-Caribbean cultural heritage, attending Asbury Park in Year 7. This gender and year group was chosen because the literature review (Part 1) had focused on data concerning males and because research on issues related to SEBD suggests that Year 8 is a crucial year in the development of behavioural difficulties. This suggests that a focus on the constructed experiences of Year 7 pupils may foreshadow those factors that will play an important role in young people experiencing difficulties in later schooling. An understanding of these may enable educational services to work more proactively to keep students engaged. In answer to Rollock (2007), this is not to ignore Black British females but it was felt that it would be more appropriate to conduct a replication of the study focusing on females, as research has also shown gender to be an important determinant of coping and resilience (Henning-Stout, 1998; Rollock, 2007; Tamres, Janicki and Helgeson, 2002; Stroud, Salovey and Epel, 2002). In total 82 consent forms were sent to the parents of each Black-British male student in Year 7.

Of the 82 consent forms 11 were returned (return rate of 13%). Of this group one student choose not to participate in the research. The final sample represents 12.3% of Black-British male students enrolled in Year 7 at Asbury Park. All participants had an age range of between 12.2-12.9 years at the time of the interview. Interviews lasted from between 31 minutes to 2 hours, 7 minutes, with an average of 1 hour, 17 minutes and 38 seconds. This gave a total of 11 hours, 41 minutes and 56 seconds of interview data. Participant ethnicities included young people of Black-Caribbean, Black-Ghanaian, Black-Nigerian and Black-Ugandan cultural heritage. All participants spoke English as their first language.

3.4.4 Saturation

The low response rate (12.3% of students asked) raised the question of whether theoretical saturation could be achieved with the limited availability of participants. In GT terms saturation occurs when continued analysis no longer leads to any new insights, suggesting that all relevant dimensions are contained in the theoretical categories. This is seen as an important point in the development of theory (Denescombe 2003) and, practically, this judgment has largely been left to the

discretion of the researcher. However, Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) provide some guidance, suggesting that basic elements for meta-themes may be found in as few as six interviews, with saturation potentially occurring within the first twelve interviews. This suggested a minimum sample size of between six and twelve students can be sufficient to construct a grounded theory. This is in accordance with the sample size of the present research, although Dukes (1984) also suggests that as few as three interviews can be sufficient in qualitative research focused on developing in depth understandings.

The lack of available participants did, however, impact on the ability of the researcher to carry out theoretical sampling. Because of the low numbers of participants and lack of time and resources it was not possible to return to Asbury Park and develop categories by identifying participants suited to illuminating and defining the boundaries and relevance of the categories (Charmaz, 2006).

3.4.5 Piloting

The methodology included using two students in a piloting phase. As no changes were made to the methodology following these initial interviews it was decided to include the interview transcripts from these students in the raw data. However, Wigford (2010, p. 65) also remarks that all grounded theory interviews are arguably pilots for those that follow, making piloting “less about altering the method and more to do with fine-tuning interviewer technique.”

3.4.6 Description of instruments

Ungar and Liebenberg (2007) have developed a mixed methods research tool called the Child and Youth Resiliency Measure (CYRM; most recent edition Ungar and Liebenberg, 2011). This was created as part of the International Resilience Project, a multi-site organisation set up to study resilience by identifying culturally dependent understandings of positive development under adverse circumstances around the world. The purpose was to contrast conventional understandings of resilience developed in the West with those in non-Western countries and marginalised people living in the West.

In the qualitative phase of the CYRM nine catalyst questions are used to inform discussion in community and youth focus groups. Ungar & Liebenberg (2011) have

also used these questions in 1:1 interview methods in their research and when developing the CYRM. Interview methods have been chosen for this study because the presence of peers in group-based methods can lead to self-censorship (Teram and Ungar, 2007). It was felt to be more important that students were able to tell their stories independently and it is for this reason that interview methods were felt to be more appropriate. Ungar and Liebenberg (2011) suggested that interviews following this method could last from between 30 minutes to 2 hours and this detail was included in all parental consent forms.

3.4.7 Approach to the interview

The interviews were conducted in a manner intended to minimise the impact of power differentials between researcher and participant and to help the young person feel comfortable with the procedure. Each interview started with 'free talk,' including introductions and conversation designed to engage young people in a natural dialogue. Young people were also allowed to choose from a selection of soft drinks and snacks and given time to settle and ask questions. Following this, the interview procedure was outlined and the young person's rights to confidentiality, to make a complaint and to withdraw data were discussed. In particular, it was made explicit that any information provided would be held in confidence by the researcher but that if it was felt that they, or any young person they referred to, might be at risk then the researcher would have to stop the interview and speak to their Head of Year, who was also their designated point of contact should they wish to withdraw their data. Each young person was told that should the researcher decide it was necessary to break confidence that this would be done with their full awareness. Each young person was then told they were free to withdraw at that or any point in the study without giving a reason. Only one young person decided to withdraw from the study at this point.

The digital dictaphone was shown to the participant and placed in a visible place on the table. Its use was explained and consent was sought in order to record the interview. It was explained that participants would have a period of two weeks following the interview to change their minds and request, via their Head of Year or parents, for their data to be withdrawn. No participants exercised this right. At the end of the interview the recording equipment was switched off and the young people were thanked and debriefed before returning to class.

Following guidance from Wigford (2010), the interviews were conducted in a manner congruent with Rogers' person-centred approach (Rogers, 1961) and Personal Construct Psychology (PCP; Kelly, 1955). Rogerian conditions of genuineness, empathy and unconditional positive regard on the part of the interviewer were thought to be important in ameliorating power imbalances, stemming from age and cultural differences, and to support the development of rapport.

Complementary to this, the adoption of Kelly's "*credulous approach*," as described by Butler and Green (2007, p. 14), was felt to be important. Wigford (2010) understands these as a method of re-aligning the traditional power relationship between therapist and client and involves conveying to the client that they are always being believed and taken seriously. Wigford also argues that the success of the interview can be thought of as the degree to which the interviewer develops Kellyan 'sociality' in the young person. Sociality means the extent that the interviewer understands the young person's constructs and their process of construction. Although the limitations of time and rapport development make it doubtful that the researcher was able to achieve sociality, it is an important guiding principle and emphasises the need to understand young people's thoughts and feelings. As part of this a 'not-knowing' technique was adopted, by where each young person was framed as the expert in their own life, educating the novice but curious researcher.

Each interview may also have been shaped by the level of skill and confidence of the researcher, which inevitably developed as the interviews progressed. Other factors which also may have affected the data, include the young person's mood, motivation, physiological factors, how they felt about being interviewed and the rapport developed with the researcher. It was hoped that allowing young people to control the pace and direction of the conversation, with as little input from the author as possible would help them feel more comfortable with the research process but it is equally possible that it discouraged participation.

These strategies can be framed as part of a drive to ensure the young person's voice is recorded as 'authentically' as possible. However, Connolly (2008) suggests that the popular preoccupation with achieving authenticity in research may be misplaced. Children and young people's voices inevitably reflect the unique context and set of relations of the interview and the resulting negotiations of attitude, power and identity within them. There is, therefore, no single authentic, or 'true' account but a polyvocality of accounts, each equally authentic in that they are subject to and

shaped by the context in which they originate and so cannot claim superordinate 'authentic' status. By accepting Connolly (2008) researchers are liberated from the positivist preoccupation with authenticity, as long as, as Mayall (2008) suggests, the data are 'good enough' to inform policy and the context is made sufficiently visible for readers to make their own decisions about transferability (Ungar, 2007).

3.4.8 Interview techniques

Techniques used throughout the process included asking young people to provide three responses to the main questions. Butler and Green (2007) describe this technique as useful in encouraging the young person to provide a more comprehensive answer to some questions. In addition, asking for three responses indirectly alerts the young person to the fact that there is not just one single 'correct answer' and so encourages a response. Also used in the interviews were the method of pyramiding and laddering, also outlined by Butler and Green, which were used to gain an understanding about the core, superordinate, constructs which shape how each young person looks at the world, as well as identifying subordinate constructs, as outlined by Kelly (1955). It was hoped that these methods would respect young people's cultures of communication and provide the space in which they could raise whatever themes and issues they wished to discuss. As Mayall (2008) acknowledges, informal conversations provide important insights into children's knowledge and experience by providing relative freedom to discuss what they wish, as an integral part of trust and rapport (Connolly, 2008)

3.4.9 Interview questions

In addition to the nine catalyst questions designed by Ungar et al. (2011), two were added to encourage young people to highlight pathways to intervention which may make a difference in their lives, as well as to provide an opportunity to highlight any issues that they wished to discuss with the interviewer. These are listed as questions 10 and 11. The interview questions were as follows:

Question 1

If I were a young person today what would I need to grow up well in your community?

What does success look like in your community? How would you know when you have grown up well/done well for yourself?

What skills/resources/what would help me grow up well?
What would I need to do well at school?
What would school be able to help with?
Is there anything school couldn't help me with?

Question 2

How do you describe people who grow up well here, despite the many problems that they face?

What words would you use?
What would you call doing well?
What about people who do well at school? What words would you use to describe them?

Question 3

What does it mean to you/ to your family/ and to your community, when bad things happen?

When bad things happen in the community? When bad things happen at school?

Question 4

What kinds of things are most challenging for you growing up here?

In your community? In school? What makes things difficult?
What makes it difficult to do well in school?
What kind of barriers do you face to doing well at school?

Question 5

What do you do when you face difficulties in your life?

How do you cope with difficulties?
How does (name of behaviour) help you succeed?
What are the consequences of this way of coping?
Who notices the strategies you use to cope? Do they approve or disapprove? Does this matter to you?

Question 6

What does being healthy mean to you and others in your family and community?

What do you understand by the term resilience?

What about mental health? Physical health? Emotional health? Spiritual health?

How would you know you have X health?

How would other people know you are healthy?

Question 7

What do you do, and others you know do, to keep healthy mentally/ physically/ emotionally/ spiritually?

How does that help?

How does that help you in school? How does it impact on school?

Can school help with that?

Question 8

Can you share with me a story about another student who grew up well in this community despite facing many challenges and difficulties?

Can you tell me a bit more about that?

Question 9

Can you share a story about how you have managed to overcome challenges you face personally, in your family, outside your home in your community? In your school?

What about when you have overcome a difficulty in school?

What helped you do that?

In addition the questions below will be used to prompt students to reflect on concrete and practical ideas for services, based on their past experiences:

Question 10

If you were in a powerful position where you could change things or create new services in schools and communities, that could be of support and help for yourself, or other young people like you, what would you come up with? What ideas would you have?

Question 11

Would you like to add anything else?

This will invite young people to express their views on anything else they would like to pinpoint.

3.5 Method

The method followed the GT process outlined by Charmaz (1990, 2006) which is illustrated in Figure 2 (page 64) and described below:

Step 1: Line-by-Line and Focused Codes

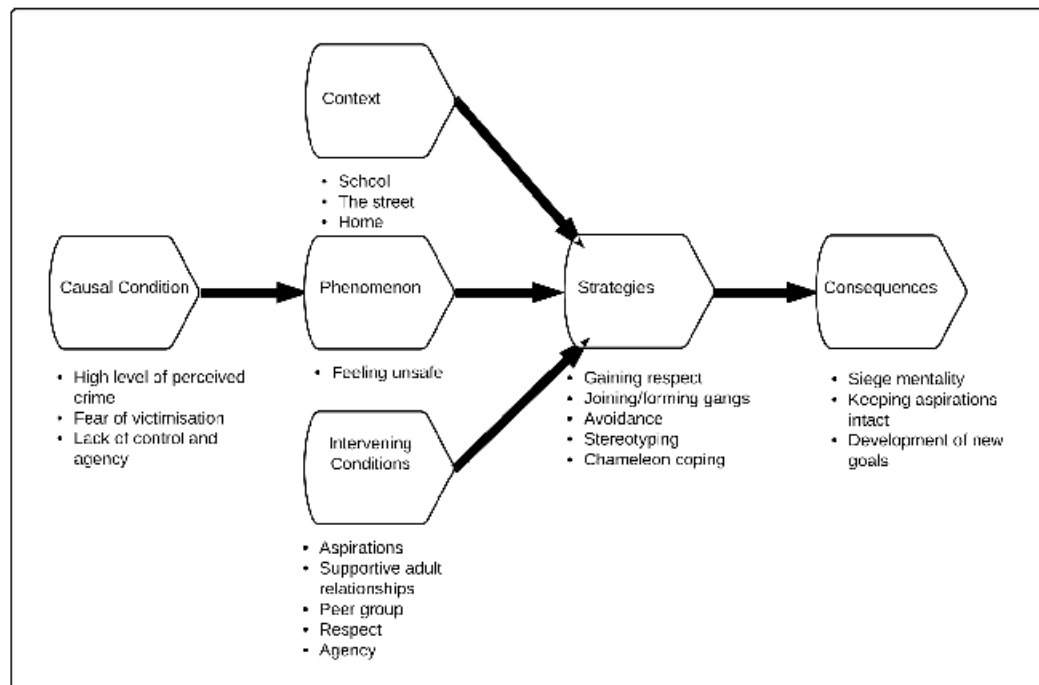
In this process line-by-line coding was carried out after the initial interviews. This was done by “reading through the transcripts in order to construct in each line a short provisional name that encapsulated or summarised the idea or gist of what the young person had said” (Wigford, 2010, p. 85). See the results section for sample excerpts with line-by-line codes (Table 2, page 70). These were used to look at the data critically and analytically before creating Focused Codes.

Focused Coding involves using the most significant and frequent line-by-line codes to start to categorise the data. This was done by looking for common themes that united groups of line-by-line codes at a more abstracted level. These categories were used as a guide for later interview questioning (see Appendix C) and analysis whereby transcriptions were analysed by applying the list of focused codes. The final list of focused codes (Table 3) is presented in Chapter 4. The focused codes were then used to link into memos and to illustrate them.

Step 2: Axial Coding

Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) identify axial coding as a method of relating categories to subcategories. This step specifies the properties and dimensions of a category and helps reassemble data that have been broken down during initial coding. This was used to explore new ways of organising the data to develop theoretical insights by looking for conditions (circumstances or situations), actions/interactions (participants’ routine strategic responses to issues), consequences (outcomes of actions/interactions). The focus on ‘what happens’ enables researchers to highlight processes in the data. Using this procedure, the key factor structure of ‘Living with Fear’ was identified:

Figure 1 – Axial coding for the effects of living with fear



Step 3: Writing Memos

Termed “the pivotal intermediate step” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 72) in a GT analysis, memo writing is a way of catching the thoughts, comparisons and connections in the form of analytic notes and dairy entries that advance the thinking of the researcher. All memos are grounded in focused codes (see Table 4, page 76) and are gradually advanced and refined throughout the research process, eventually forming narrative statements that identify which memos can be elevated to theoretical categories.

Step 4: Theoretical Sampling

Charmaz (2006) outlines theoretical sampling as deliberately searching for data which can illuminate an emerging theory and clarify and complete memos and categories. New participants are recruited on their ability to contribute and clarify meaningful insights, informed and reasoned by the researcher’s contiguous analysis. Charmaz (2006) provides the example of returning to ask participants further questions or recruiting new participants, informed and reasoned by earlier analysis.

Although the questioning method was adapted in light of the development of memos 1-7 following interview 6, it was only after Interview 10 that the author felt ready to

attempt theoretical sampling. This meant that it was not possible to incorporate theoretical sampling into the current thesis, as the possibility of recruiting new participants based solely on their ability to contribute to the theory development fell outside of what could be achieved given the time, resources and participants available to the author. It is for this reason that the project may be best regarded as 'using GT methods' than as a 'Grounded Theory' per se.

Step 5: Sorting

This is an important step in identifying codes as having overriding significance and raising them to a more abstract theoretical level. The most significant theoretical categories become the concepts of the grounded theory. This involves sorting and comparing different codes, often through diagramming (see Figure 3, page 77), to develop an understanding of significant categories that creates "the best possible balance between the studied experience, your categories and your theoretical statements about them" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 117).

3.6 An outline of the process

All interviews took place in the same room, with participants sat on a chair near the door. All interviews were recorded using a dictaphone and then were transcribed. Notes were taken throughout the interview to keep track of topics of interest on which to request elaboration. As shown above, interview length ranged from 31 minutes to two hours and seven minutes with an average of one hour and seventeen minutes.

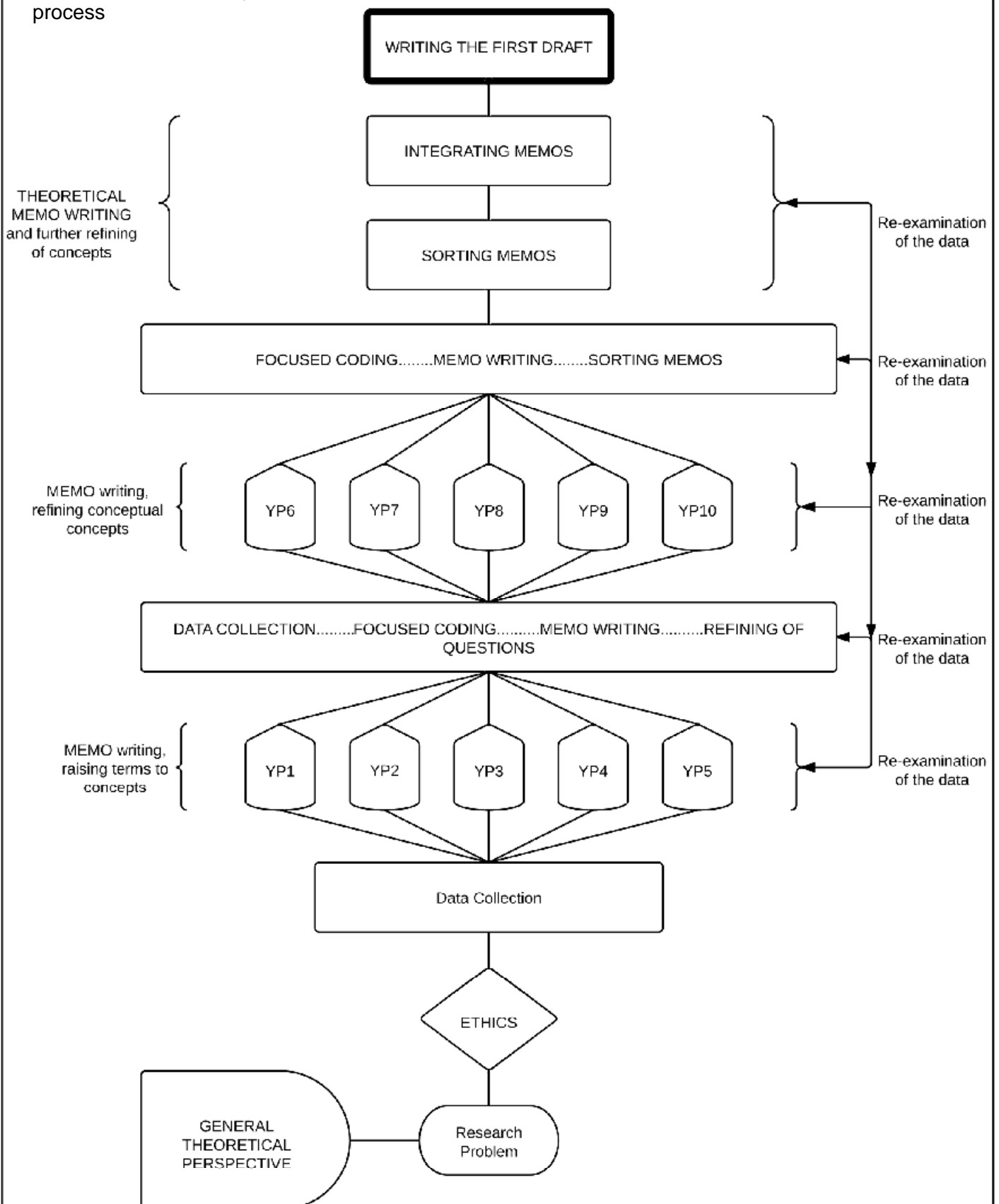
The research process was as follows (See Figure 2 for an illustration, page 64):

1. The first five interviews were carried out between June and July 2011. The first two were completed and transcribed before any initial analysis was carried out. Coding of these interviews led to the construction of Question List 2 (See Appendix C), which was used in interviews five and six, which took place in July 2011. The questioning techniques and methodology were kept the same for each of these interviews.
2. When appropriate, a Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) approach was adopted, with the aim of providing an increased depth of interview. Laddering and pyramiding questions, as described by Butler and Green (2007), were developed in order to elicit clear constructs.

3. The first interview was analysed to identify line-by-line codes, as described by Charmaz (2006). These were then grouped into tentative focused codes (See Table 3, page 73). This is an online white board that enables ideas and concepts to be easily grouped and organised. This identified 41 focused codes. Each grouping was given a title and relationships were demonstrated using arrows and lines. This was in order to identify ideas and themes as separate entities and look at how they might be inter-linked.
4. Interviews 2-5 were then analysed in the same manner. Focus codes were compared with those found in Interview 1. Sixty-eight were identified, 39 (57%) of which had been identified the first interview.
5. An initial list of focus codes was then created from the analysis of interviews 1-5. This list was used to inform interviews 6-10 by informing revised guidelines. These areas of focus included:
 - Aspirations;
 - Gangs;
 - Masculinity;
 - Punishments in school;
 - Authority figures;
 - Streetwise;
 - Friendship;
 - School relationships;
 - The effects of fear;
 - Attributions;
 - Identity;
 - Dichotic thinking;
 - Stereotyping;
 - Identity; and
 - Respect.
6. Memos 1-7 (see Appendix E) were started at this stage, although topics were noted as they came to mind and were continuously developed throughout the remainder of the research, with frequent returns to the initial interviews to compare and contrast new insights. These initial memos were covered:
 - Gangs and Gang Talking;
 - Living with Fear;

- Crime;
 - Safety;
 - Relationships with key figures;
 - Perceived adequacy of teachers' professional skills; and
 - Expectation of discrimination.
7. Interviews 6-10 were carried out between September and October 2011.
 8. In light of interview 7, Memos 1-6 were reviewed and Memo 8 and 9 (see Appendix E) added.
 9. Interviews 9-10 were conducted and transcribed.
 10. The original focused codes list was then refined by comparing focused codes from interviews 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.
 11. The memos were then reviewed and additions made. Following the method described by Wigford (2009) it was decided to analyse the data at two levels. Firstly, at a grounded emergent theory level and, secondly, to illuminate that analysis with psychological interpretations of the ideas that were being constructed from the data. *"The aim of this was to provide an EP's perspective and to deepen the analytical interpretation of the data"* (Wigford, 2009, p. 34). The perspective of the EP is characterised by a focus on the impact of developmental pressures on young people and also on the many aspects of learning relevant to people's physical and social ecologies (family, friends, school and the environment).
 12. The Focused Code list was then used to investigate Interviews 5, 8 and 9. By reviewing these interviews and comparing them, the list was refined and developed with many points added, and some clarification of focused codes completed. Focused codes were numbered and the potential for specific relevance to EPs was noted when it was particularly salient. This revised list contained 72 Focused Codes.

Figure 2. Pictorial illustration of the Grounded Theory process



*Adapted from Charmaz (1990, 2008)

13. The Focused Code List was then reviewed in the light of all of the interviews. An attempt was made to note as many cross-links between focused codes as could be found in the data.
14. Axial coding was attempted, as described by Charmaz (2006). The codes were organised into conditions, actions, interactions and consequences. This was in order to judge the development of the theory and develop a coherent narrative. This identified 'Safety' as a central phenomenon and 'Fear' as a primary motivator to the resiliency adaptations of the young people. Teaching relationships were highlighted as important resources for young people, particularly in the identification and mediation of goals and aspirations. From this insight 'Hope' was constructed as a core category, uniting the resiliency adaptations and aspirations of young people working towards a hoped for goal. This was refined as "the ability to effectively juggle hoped for long term goals with the need to adapt and change in the present."
15. At this stage the memos were reviewed and added to, as the data were considered again. The following 19 memos were tentatively constructed (see page 71)
16. At this stage, no more consent letters had been received and there was insufficient time to follow up these insights with theoretical sampling.
17. In order to gain a measure of the frequency of the focused codes, a table was created to show the incidence of the focused codes in the interviews. The analysis showed that twenty-one out of eighty-one (25%) of the codes were found in at least 8 of the interviews and 45 (55%) were identified in at least half of the interviews. It should be noted that frequency does not measure the importance of focused codes, as GT allows that a code that appears in only one interview may be given greater theoretical significance than codes that appear in more interviews (See Appendix E).
18. As the memos were reviewed, the focused codes that appeared to be connected to each memo were identified and added to them.
19. Diagrammatical sorting of the memos identified three superordinate categories.
 - a. Constructing hope for a better future.
 - b. Choosing from different pathways.
 - c. Availability of opportunities to exercise personal agency and empowerment.
20. These fed into the core category:

3.7 Taking two steps back

In continuation of the reflexive process begun in the Introduction, and so that reflexivity is not just occurring on a post-hoc basis but is contiguous with the collection and analysis of data, the following points were noted throughout the research process.

- Robson (2002) writes that researchers are inevitably limited by their capacity to keep data 'in mind' as well as by a tendency to follow and have subsequent analysis shaped by first impressions. These limitations will have played a role in the construction of this grounded theory.
- Fine (1994) has noted that researchers attempting qualitative research should flex their reflexivities and make explicit their subjective biases that may contribute to the findings – a step termed taking two steps back from research (Bourdieu, 1990); one to evaluate the data and the second to understand the researcher's role in and contribution to its generation.
- Indeed, such are the fears of subjective bias interfering with scientific rigour that Flyvbjerg (2006) suggests that this has often led to the dismissal of qualitative research, and case studies in particular, as a valid tool of scientific enquiry. This is also evident in research with ethnic minorities, with Tillman (2002) questioning the validity of white academics conducting research with participants who come from a culture that they cannot understand. As described above, the researcher admits to being constrained by ideological, organisational, professional and personal biases and so does not make any claims that the following analysis reflects anything other than the author's construction of participants' experiences and theories. Accordingly:

...if the findings transfer, it is the responsibility of the reader of the inquiry report to make that determination, since it is only the reader, not the inquirer who can be familiar with the time and context in which transfer of the findings might be possible. (Rodwell, 1998, p. 31-32).

It is hoped that the thick description of GT will enable those who are interested in transferring this research to reach an independent conclusion on whether this is possible and appropriate in their unique systems and contexts.

- On several occasions the researcher's identity as a white male was explicitly acknowledged, suggesting that the results were shaped by the presence of the researcher. For example, this may have led to reluctance to talk about issues arising from race in school, and so attack a system of which participants perceived the author to be a member.
- One area of note that particularly merits reflection next to the scarcity of discourses on race is the predominance of discourses on gangs. As indicated by Connolly (2008), the introduction of such adult themes can be seen as an effective way for young people to challenge and re-negotiate their subordinate discursive position as young people. 'Gang talking' was acknowledged by participants as carrying status within their peer groups. Reproducing it with an adult may be a method for young people to demonstrate their adult competence and engage with the researcher as equals. Equally, young people may have described what they thought the researcher believed and would positively value and respond to, both as a white male and as a researcher, rather than what they believed. As a result it is possible that they repeated certain 'mainstream' discourses, which they would not otherwise have endorsed or which they have internalised through the media. The lack of racism as an overt theme may have reflected their view that it was not a legitimate theme to raise in the presence of a white researcher, especially as, by being an adult in a school the author was implicitly assuming the power and status of a teacher. As a result participants may have been conforming to dominant discourses, rather than feeling legitimately able to challenge them. The researcher attempted to counteract this by organising the interview space and adopting an interview manner meant to minimise the effects of authority and control (described above). However, it is unlikely that the effects were eliminated completely and must be acknowledged.

3.8 Ethical issues

In order to carry out an ethical piece of research it was important that young people and parents fully understood that they had the right not to take part in the research and that the young person could withdraw at any time. The author attempted to ensure that this was fully explained to the young people and their parents/carers in straightforward language in the consent form (please see Appendix A), which was reviewed with each young person before signing it. The author also ensured through detailed discussions that the Head and Head of Year understood that informed consent was necessary before the process began.

In order to satisfy ethical considerations the following precautions were taken.

- Only interviewing students who had given consent.
- Emphasising students' rights to withdraw from the process at the beginning of, and at intervals throughout, the interview. A debriefing of the purpose of the research was provided following the interview.
- Storing all data anonymously and securely. Once audio files had been transcribed they were destroyed. All transcripts were fully anonymised. There were no identifiers on any transcripts.
- Where participants refer to specific events that may enable their identification these identifiers were substituted with semantically similar references. These steps were intended to make it impossible for anyone outside the Local Authority (LA) to identify the individual students from details on the transcripts.
- Young people were informed that a limited number of people would know the identity of the school on which the case study was based and that a limited number of people in the school would know the identity of any participants. This was because of their head of year having to identify them as suitable candidates or because their absence from lessons might be noted during the interviews. It was explained that although people could know which students participated in the research it would be impossible for them to identify what they had said. As a result it was impossible to provide students with full anonymity inside the LA and their participation in the research was described as being confidential, although their data would be held anonymously.

- All students were able to ask for their data to be removed up until their transcript had been anonymised and the audio files destroyed. It was made clear that each student had two weeks to make this decision.
- All students were given the name of a pre-nominated member of staff, who they were able to contact in order to arrange the withdrawal of their data or if they had any complaints or questions about the research.
- All students were informed about the limits of confidentiality – i.e. that if they disclosed anything that led to the author having concerns for their safety that it would not be possible to maintain confidentiality.

Chapter 4: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two parts. Part one will outline the focused codes collected during the analysis of the data and their hierarchical relationship to the sub-categories and core category. Part two will provide a qualitative description of the grounded Hope Theory through the memos from which the categories were generated. See Appendix G for a list of the focused codes together with illustrative excerpts from the interview transcripts.

4.2 Part one

In GT, data collection and analysis occur contiguously and throughout the research process (Wainwright, 1994). This was carried out using the constant comparison technique, as outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990; see Chapter 3) and advocated by Charmaz (2006). The data were systematically analysed by following the procedures outline by Charmaz for line-by-line coding (see Table 2), then axial coding (see Figure 1) and finally by sorting (see Figure 3). Theory development occurred in the sorting phase of the analysis, through which theoretical concepts were identified and their properties and dimensions developed through the data.

Table 2 – Sample transcript excerpts with line-by-line codes

Sample Exerts	Line-by-Line Coding
J: You say friends are important in helping you. Could you tell me a bit more about that? YP1: Umm... mmm... yeah. Cos your surroundings help you if umm... like your future.., if you've got people that are bad around you do bad things get you into trouble then like they set you up for bad things.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The environment is instrumental- Being influenced by other people- Actions have consequences- Systemic thinking
J: Hmm... is just coming to School enough to feel safe? YP9: Yeah because when you feel safe because there's a lot of people there, like if there's an incident that happens with you there's a lot of people there so...you know that nothing bad can happen to you because it's a lot of people there, although you may not talk to them it kind of feels that they care for you in a way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Finding safety in numbers- Mutual protection- School as a buffer zone- Shared identity- Sense of belonging

<p>J: Okay, umm...okay...How would you describe people who grow up well in your community, despite facing a lot of difficulties?</p> <p>YP6:Umm like...they don't really like hang out with other people, they just go straight home or like if you, if you're like a bad boy and after you want to change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avoiding social interaction - One-track-mind - People can change - Not hanging out on the streets - Peers are an important influence
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By the end of the coding process 79 focused codes were identified. Please see Table 3 for the full list and Appendix G for a complete breakdown. From this list 19 significant concepts were identified and developed as memos, including:

- a) Living with fear;
- b) Making judgements about integrity;
- c) Coping dilemmas – how to adapt?;
- d) Trust vs. betrayal and paranoia;
- e) Making compromises in life;
- f) Mercenary motivation;
- g) Having access to money and resources;
- h) Power, choice and control;
- i) Significant relationships;
- j) Hardiness;
- k) Core values and beliefs guide action;
- l) Bullying;
- m) Safety;
- n) Aspirations (planning for the future);
- o) Gangs and gang talking;
- p) Expectancy of discrimination;
- q) Consequences, consequentialism and utilitarianism;
- r) Religion; and
- s) Perceived adequacy of teachers' professional skills.

Sorting was used to refine this list of concepts into theoretical categories (See Figure 3, page 77). The major concepts were identified as Making Compromises in Life, Aspirations (Planning for the Future) and Power, Choice and Control. These were reframed to accommodate their links to minor codes, creating three sub-categories

The core category that was constructed from this data was young people struggling with “Maintaining hope whilst balancing goals with present realities.” It became evident to the author through the course of the analysis that young people having aspirations that were perceived as being congruent with academic achievement shaped how they engaged in school and the coping strategies they relied on to navigate safely through dangerous communities and rigid school social hierarchies.

Table 3 – Focus Codes

	Focus Code		Focus Code		Focus Code
1	Dichotomous thinking guides decision making	22	Staying streetwise	43	Events escalate rapidly out of control
2	Stereotyping can be double-edged (protective)	23	Chameleon coping – managing identity	44	Regulating behaviour and emotions is a sign of strong-mindedness
3	Decisions are based on second and third hand information	24	School is a buffer zone	45	Choices lead to outcomes (Choice Theory)
4	Mindreading/ Mentalisation	25	Awareness of unfair treatment (just world and social justice)	46	Isolation can limit coping
5	Gang talking and gangs	26	Staying strong minded/ Heavy minded	47	Showing weakness leads to victimisation
6	Consequences are felt to be ineffective	27	Sense of inevitability and powerlessness	48	Individualism vs. communalism
7	Hypocrisy undermines relationships	28	Systemic thinking	49	Fighting over 'Ends'
8	Trust is at the heart of relationships	29	Behavioural control and parental supervision	50	Retreating into a siege mentality
9	The media shapes discourses	30	Having access to money and resources	51	Grinding
10	Listening builds trust	31	Respect is an important social goal	52	Having a philosophy of life that guides behaviour
11	Religion influences behaviour	32	The extended family play an important role	53	Having good health
12	Reliance on avoidant coping	33	Power, control and choice	54	Experiencing discrimination
13	Knife crime is felt to be rampant	34	Externalising responsibility minimises need to change	55	The appraised meaning of immigration
14	Living with fear	35	Reputation limits options	56	Experiencing bullying
15	Need to feel safe	36	Perceived content and pedagogical knowledge is important in cognitively engaging students	57	Relationships with staff and authority figures
16	Having aspirations (planning for the future)	37	Parents play an active role in pupil's education	58	Peer pressure is a constructed explanation
17	Need for challenge	38	Friendship groups are an important coping and change resource	59	Responding to mistakes positively
18	Crime is prevalent in the community	39	Relationships have instrumental value	60	Protecting freedom
19	Having access to authority figures	40	Self-belief is an important meditational target	61	Engaged and focused cognition and reflective capacity
20	Being motivated by money (Mercenary)	41	Utilitarianism	62	Self-efficacy shapes self-belief
21	Extorting funds	42	Low-level disruption is resented as it disrupts education	63	Disengaging (not caring)

24	School is a buffer zone				
25	Awareness of unfair treatment (just world and social justice)				
26	Staying strong minded/ Heavy minded				
27	Sense of inevitability and powerlessness				

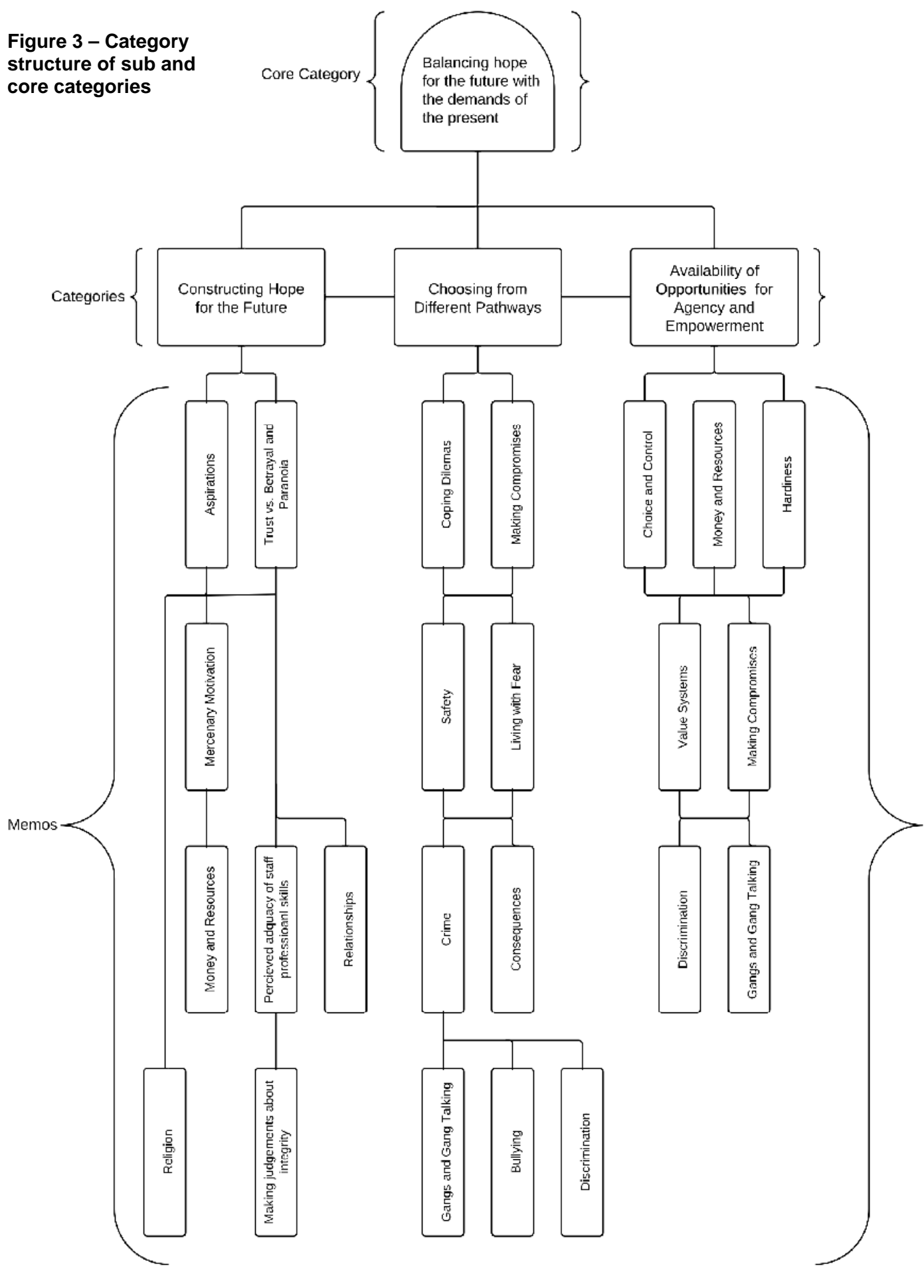
64	Lack of faith in adult decision making
65	Having a personal philosophy that guides behaviour
66	Mental health is poorly understood
67	Framing multiculturalism as opportunity
68	Sense of alliance with staff
69	Cultural gender expectations
70	Socialization
71	Discipline – “Learning Hard”
72	Reverse migration
73	Paranoia
74	Social goals compete with academic goals
75.	Reflexive capacity
76.	Learned helplessness
77.	Belonging
78.	Classroom management

Table 4: The relationship between focused codes, memos and categories

Core Category: <i>Balancing hope for the future with the demands of the present</i>		
Focused Code Number	Memo	Sub-Category
79, 30, 17, 74, 37, 21, 68, 19, 78, 31, 32,	Aspirations	1. Constructing Hope for the Future Hope is created when students are working towards a goal, have the motivation to reach those goals and an understanding of how they may be achieved. Hope is moderated by the goal's perceived congruence with student's social and physical ecologies and is shaped by the interactions and negotiations within them.
36, 78, 57, 64,	Perceived adequacy of staff professional skills	
4, 7, 71, 20, 68, 8, 4, 33, 59, 17, 25, 26,	Making Judgements about integrity	
64, 10, 4, 7, 8, 73, 5, 68, 78, 75,	Trust vs. betrayal and paranoia	
12, 16, 33, 51, 20, 21,	Money and resources	
30, 51, 65, 21, 41, 20, 39,	Mercenary motivation	
38, 57, 68, 19, 10, 8, 7, 39, 32, 37, 19, 38,	Significant relationships	
65, 52, 11, 19,	Religion	2. Choosing Amongst Different Pathways Fear of victimisation leads to young people having to choose between different methods of coping, which may be incompatible with the attainment of hoped for goals. Young people who have a sense of how to balance these demands and attain their goals are better able to sustain hope under these circumstances.
5, 51, 3, 14, 59,	Gangs and gang talking	
9, 13, 29; 5, 31, 74,	Making compromises	
56, 21, 76, 49, 51, 25, 23, 22, 20, 18, 63, 74,	Bullying	
14, 22, 33, 18, 50, 48, 49, 9, 3, 13, 5, 27,	Living with fear	
1, 23, 12, 58, 26, 45, 60, 23, 2, 3, 22, 73, 29, 4, 21, 74, 13, 29, 52, 19, 38,	Coping dilemmas	
51, 49, 21, 13, 5, 18,	Crime	
76, 47, 50, 46, 48, 60, 31, 63,	Consequences	
31, 24, 14, 13, 1, 2, 18, 15, 3, 6, 5, 9, 12, 16, 28, 30, 43, 50, 49,	Safety	

2, 4, 25, 54, 56	Discrimination	
2, 25, 4, 54, 56	Discrimination	
5, 51, 49, 6, 21, 22, 27, 24, 47, 49, 73, 76, 77, 64, 2/. 29, 33, 14, 13, 18, 6, 39, 58, 63, 9, 3,	Gangs and gang talking	3. Availability of Opportunities for Personal Agency and Empowerment This entails a sense of ability to negotiate for resources and be self-determining. Having a sense of agency means that young people evaluate their ability to meet their goals favourably and feel supported in their ability to do so.
60, 70, 41, 77, 20, 33, 25,	Value systems	
26, 73, 44, 53, 71, , 38, 23, 67, 29, 62, 16, 17, 36, 22,	Hardiness	
9, 13, 29; 5, 31, 74,	Making compromises	
12, 16, 33, 51, 20, 21,	Money and resources	
58, 45, 27, 1, 54, 2, 9, 28,	Power, choice and control	
Key 1. Dichotomous thinking guides decision making; 2. Stereotyping can be double-edged (protective); 3. Receiving second and third hand information; 4. Mindreading/ Mentalisation; 5. Gang talking and gangs; 6. Consequences are felt to be ineffective; 7. Hypocrisy undermines relationships; 8. Trust is at the heart of relationships; 9. The media shapes discourses; 10. Listening builds trust; 11. Religion influences behaviour; 12. Reliance on avoidant coping; 13. Knife crime is rampant; 14. Living with fear; 15. Safety is a core construct; 16. Having aspirations (planning for the future); 17. Need for challenge; 18. Crime is prevalent in the community; 19. Having access to authority figures; 20. Being motivated by money (Mercenary); 21. Extorting funds; 22. Staying streetwise; 23. Chameleon coping – managing identity; 24. School is a buffer zone; 25. Awareness of unfair treatment (just world and social justice); 26. Staying strong minded/ Heavy minded; 27. Sense of inevitability and powerlessness; 28. Systemic thinking; 29. Behavioural control and parental supervision; 30. Having access to money and resources; 31. Respect is an important social goal; 32. The extended family play an important role; 33. Power and control; 34. Externalising responsibility; 35. Reputation limits options; 36. Perceived content and pedagogical knowledge is important in cognitively engaging students; 37. Parents support pupil's education; 38. Friendship groups are important coping resources; 39. Relationships have instrumental value; 40. Self-belief is an important meditational target; 41. Utilitarianism; 42. Low-level disruption disrupts education; 43. Events escalate rapidly; 44. Regulating behaviour and emotions is a sign of strong-mindedness; 45. Choices lead to outcomes (Choice Theory); 46. Isolation can limit coping; 47. Showing weakness leads to victimisation; 48. Individualism vs. communalism; 49. Fighting over 'Ends'; 50. Retreating into a siege mentality; 51. Grinding; 52. Having a philosophy of life that guides behaviour; 53. Having good health; 54. Experiencing discrimination; 55. The appraised meaning of immigration; 56. Experiencing bullying; 57. Relationships with staff and authority figures; 58. Peer pressure is a constructed explanation; 59. Responding to mistakes positively; 60. Protecting freedom; 61. Engaged and focused cognition and reflective capacity; 62. Self-efficacy shapes self-belief; 63. Disengaging (not caring); 64. Lack of faith in adult decision making; 65. Personal value systems; 66. Mental health is poorly understood; 67. Framing multiculturalism as opportunity; 68. Sense of alliance with staff; 69. Cultural gender expectations; 70. Socialization; 71. Discipline – 'Learning Hard'; 72. Reverse migration and sense of transnationalism; 73. Paranoia; 74. Social goals compete with academic goals (e.g. popularity and status); 75. Reflective capacity; 76. Learned helplessness; 77. Belonging; 78. Classroom management sends messages to young people; 79. Aspiring to the 'Good Life'		

Figure 3 – Category structure of sub and core categories



4.3 Part 2

This section will provide an overview of the grounded Hope Theory developed through the analysis and synthesis of the focused codes. The memos which constitute each category will be presented together with an outline of that category. The core category will be qualitatively and diagrammatically described (see Figure 4, page 79).

4.4 'Hope Theory'

Maintaining hope whilst balancing goals and present realities

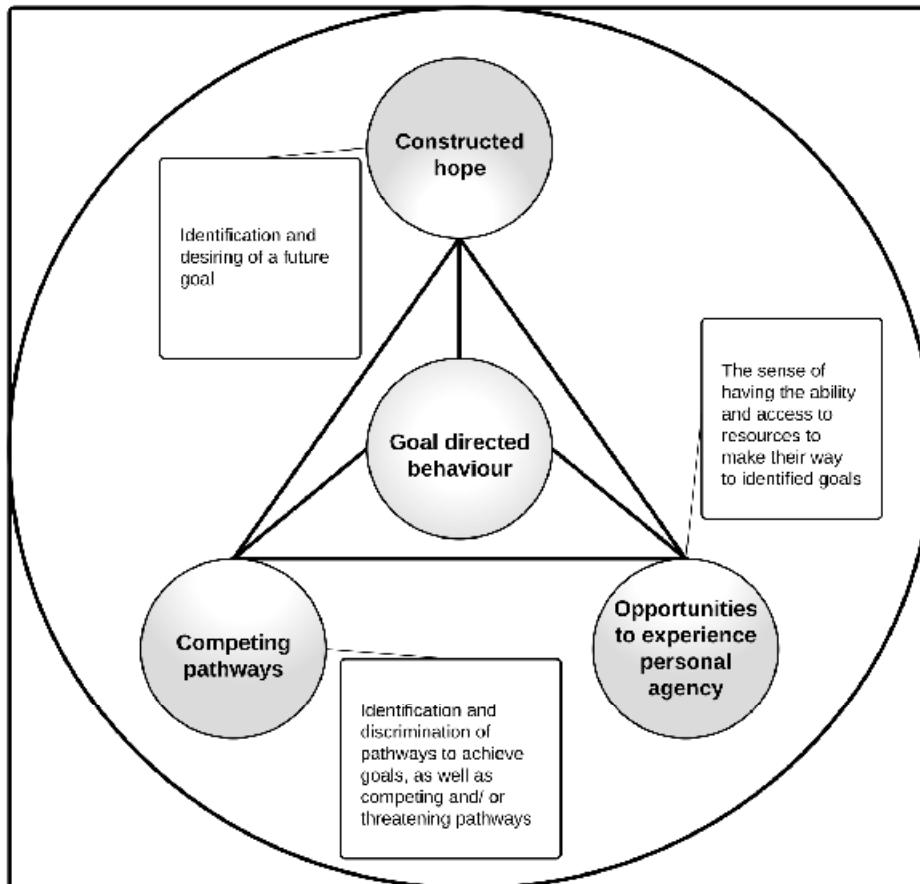
Following the analysis and consideration of the memos, Hope Theory was constructed as representing a significant idea about the processes identified within the data. It is not intended as a theory that is specific to black-British boys as it contains ideas that are arguably transferable to all young people that face the issues and problems described by the participants.

Central to the understanding of this grounded Hope Theory is the idea that young people hope for specific positive future outcomes, or goals, which are identified through negotiations with their physical and social ecologies and moderated by the operation of three additive and reciprocally interlinked core components – each of which are embedded in the young person's socio-cultural temporal context. These include 'Competing Pathways,' which encompasses interference from other goals (i.e. the need to juggle several possible incompatible goals) and the ability of the young person to identify a relevant route towards achieving their goal. The availability of opportunities to experience agency also determines the young person's sense of determination and together these interactions determine the nature of the goal, the ability of the young person to sustain effort working towards that goal, the young person's ability to 'juggle' competing goals and the sense that the resources are available to be able to do this successfully.

Hope stems from the identification of and desire for a specific goal, together with the appraisal that it is both possible and congruent with current and potential resources (social and physical) available to the young person. A hoped for goal is any outcome that is desired, with the identification of specific goals occurring in negotiation between a young person and social and physical ecologies. For example, parents and teachers may highlight the importance of good examination results in achieving

a hoped for job. Peers may place more emphasis on reputation or immediate financial gain.

Figure 4 – Grounded Hope Theory



4.4.1 Category 1: Constructing hope

How young people view the congruence of their goals with the support available in school shapes how they engage with school. Those who can see the point of academic attainment and prioritise academic attainment are likely to persevere and adopt coping strategies which preserve their ability to work towards academic success. The resources available to pursue these goals are in turn moderated by competing pathways, such as the need to ameliorate the threat of victimisation, the desire for immediate gratification and the sense young people have that they are efficacious; together with having sufficient competency and agency to pursue and accomplish their goals.

4.4.1 a) Aspirations (planning for the future)

This was generated from all participants talking about prospective employment, ranging from 'dream jobs' in music or professional sport, to more modest aspirations for gainful employment and the establishment of a nuclear family, termed "the Good Life." Parental aspirations heavily shaped young people's goals, both directly through behavioural control and indirectly, as role models.

Participants tended to show a general awareness of the importance of getting a good education but most were unable to identify specific skills or subjects which were relevant to their aspirations. Inherent to this category was a theory that young people who did not understand the role of school were less engaged in the 'point' of their education and more likely to be focused on attaining more "truncated" aspirations, such as achieving money in the here-and-now, status and power, rather than deferring this urges for the time it takes to progress through the education system and achieve them through employment. As a result, a crucial ability to shape educational goals was that of tolerating deferred gratification and the ability to map the goals of education onto the employment or financial goals of the young person.

Young people perceived that a key obstacle to their ability to make progress in education was the streaming of classes by ability, which could impose a glass ceiling on their potential to succeed in the streamed subjects in school. It was stressed as being important to avoid being placed in lower sets and central to avoiding this fate was the need for personal effort and focused thinking, in order to make progress in education. Participants tended to explain other young people doing badly at school with reference to cognitive deficits, rather than as a result of structural inequalities. This was contrasted against the tendency to externalise blame for personal difficulties onto the perceived pedagogical, subject content and behavioural management skills of the teacher.

4.4.1 b) Perceived adequacy of staff professional skills

Teachers were identified as critical influences on the ability of young people to make progress and achieve their aspirations. This rested on the young persons' perception of teachers' professional skills, meaning their subject content, pedagogical and behaviour management skills, as well as on whether they were liked or not. These properties were seen as central in teachers enabling students to work within their

Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1963) and mediate a sense of self-belief and efficacy that educational goals were achievable.

As such, perceived adequacy of professional skills was distinct from affective appraisals of 'liking' and delineated the sense that a teacher's authority was legitimate. All young people were conscious of being located in a hierarchy, with teaching staff accorded high levels of coercive power by virtue of their superordinate position and the school reward/sanction system. It may be that when young people's behaviour is reframed as an expression of the perceived legitimacy of power relations, it can be understood as a strategy for challenging perceived illegitimate/unjust power differentials and re-negotiating their discursive position, relative to the authority figure. Young people were more likely to defer to teachers whose professional skills they trusted and valued.

The tendency to judge the adequacy of staff professional skills may reflect a tendency to externalise blame for their own behaviour onto staff who are perceived to lack those skills, where the preliminary steps to establishing good relationships are defined by the testing of boundaries and the ability of the member of staff to control them. Whilst this may establish an antagonistic dyad it can also lead to the teacher being allocated legitimate superordinate status. As a case in point, a number of young people were particularly concerned by some teachers who became drawn into 'fire-fighting,' focusing on young people misbehaving at the expense of the class contingent that was motivated to learn.

Related closely to this is the role of the parents and extended family, who participants often identified as taking an active role in supplementing their formal education at home. This may be a focus for intervention for schools, as ensuring that families and extended families have the curriculum based knowledge and tools to fulfil this role is important, especially in the light of the point raised in part one of the literature review regarding the need to ensure the adequacy of parental curriculum knowledge.

4.4.1 c) Making judgements about integrity

The perceived adequacy of professional skills was linked with the tendency for young people to confidently make judgements about the values and beliefs of staff, inferred from observations of their behaviour. A key question appeared to be if young people

felt that the adults were genuine – whether they can be trusted or not – and this is based on an appraisal of their integrity. Integrity falls across a continuum, from staff judged to be ‘Mercenary’ (only to be teaching for the money and not to have young people’s best interests at heart, unlikely to bother to follow up on sanctions or invest the energy to instil discipline and boundaries in their class) to the ‘Grafter’ (constructed as teachers willing to go the ‘extra mile’ and follow up on sanctions, whom worked hard and cared for students). Although this may be understood as simply being ‘good practice’ the key to this category of teacher was that young people understood this behaviour as being in their best interests. A possible third category was that of the ineffectual teacher, who may be regarded as a teacher who is motivated and works hard, and so has integrity, but lacks the pedagogical, content, behaviour management or relational skills to be effective.

4.4.1 d) Trust vs. betrayal and paranoia

Appraisals of trust and integrity are interlinked, as students who judge teachers to be worthy of trust are also generally likely to have made a decision regarding their integrity. Trust is integral to the development of positive relationships and can be deconstructed across teachers that:

- ❖ show, or are judged to show, integrity;
- ❖ listen to students;
- ❖ are seen to act fairly; and/ or,
- ❖ show respect for confidentiality.

The opposite pole of this binary construct is feelings of betrayal, which occur when attachment figures previously appraised as being trustworthy (peers or adults) were found to be wanting, or were perceived to have betrayed them by violating trust or acting maliciously.

The sense of alienation inherent to the discovery that certain people cannot be trusted seemed to feed a sense of generalised distrust and paranoia, i.e., that all people are essentially self-interested and exploitative. This in turn led to withdrawal from the community and the development of a ‘siege mentality’ that means young people are more focused on their personal goals and less on those of the community.

4.4.1 e) Having access to money and resources

Of benefit in facilitating the fulfilment of hopes and dreams was the perceived availability of the money and physical resources to support their attainment. Financial resources were viewed as a major asset that parents made major sacrifices to secure. However, a need for parents to concentrate on earning money and resources was also associated with a lack of perceived parental supervision and behavioural control. This could lead to young people being given more opportunities to become involved in gangs and misbehaving. "Grinding" (in-vivo term for criminal activities that earn money), extortion and gang-based activities were perceived as routes young people took to secure additional resources to supplement inadequate personal finances.

4.4.1 f) Significant relationships

The relationships that formed the young people's formal (and informal) support networks are the conduit through which important messages are disseminated. They are also figures that the young person will listen to and take advice from. These networks encompass all those figures who play a meaningful role in the lives of young people in Asbury Park, illustrating the importance of having significant respected adults and peers available to them, ie:

- ❖ teachers and the Head Teacher;
- ❖ parents;
- ❖ police;
- ❖ religious leaders;
- ❖ peers; and
- ❖ extended family.

These figures form a formal and informal support network which can guide the decision making of each young person. They also have a direct influence on the goals identified by young people and can shape the direction in which the goals of the young people are taken. For example, educational goals can be imposed by teachers on young people but are more effective if they are identified collaboratively.

4.4.1 g) Mercenary motivation

This is when the primary motivation that prompts young people's behaviour is the securing of money and resources, rather than any intrinsic sense of morality, interest or intrinsic drive for self-actualisation. Mercenary motivation can be focused on outcomes in the immediate or in the long term and so can effectively lead to young people engaging in school as a pathway to a good job. If the focus is on immediate gratification this can also lead to a lack of planning for the future as attention becomes focused on achieving financial gain in the here-and-now. In the presence of deferred gratification, education is more likely to be framed as a route to well-paid employment.

When young people are 'mercenary' the value of actions are determined by their monetary utility. An associated risk factor is becoming involved with "grinding" and illicit activities that can make it more difficult to engage with educational activities but provide immediate access to funds. Young people also report that older students can use school as an opportunity to secure further streams of income, through extorting money from younger students.

4.4.2 Category 2: Choosing from competing pathways

Central to this category is the need to balance attaining goals in the future with the need to survive and manage in the present. Young people can choose from many possible pathways which can lead towards hoped for goals but can lack the resources to pursue them all contiguously. This category, therefore, entails an executive function, which prioritises those pathways seen as being most congruent with the hoped-for goal. At any one time there are numerous goals that compete for attention and those that are seen as the most relevant will generally be chosen. As a result mediating pathway clarity is an important part of prioritising a goal. For example, where educational pathways lack clarity they may be supplanted or sacrificed in favour of other clearer goals and pathways.

Alternatively, if pathways to attain goals are clear young people feel able to navigate towards their preferred goals, while having a sense of how to balance the demands of adaptation in the present with the attaining of their hoped for futures. Fear and

anxiety drain the cognitive resources needed to sustain this balance and can lead young people to narrow their attention to focally relevant threats, such as the prevalence of knife crime, at the expense of more distal goals and aspirations that are less relevant to immediate survival.

4.4.2. a) Bullying

Bullying is exposure to a relatively common set of adverse experiences, typically defined by physical and or verbal aggression. Bullying occurs when the target is perceived to be weak and so is a legitimate target. Bullying is an expression of power, or occupation of a particular place in the social hierarchy. Certain groups of young people may be targeted, such as those who dress 'Moist,' meaning those who dress according to school rules and try to excel academically. A further manifestation is the experiencing of blackmail, theft and practices of extortion. These are viewed as methods for making money and are felt to carry semi-legitimate status among the older students, with pupils interviewed describing them as being borderline 'rites of passage.' (sic).

4.4.2. b) Living with fear

The experience of fear is provoked by the appraisal that the young person is under threat and can motivate the activation of coping adaptations and avoidance strategies. These can be active, problem-focused adaptations or relatively passive avoidance based coping methods. Fear is also mediated by the appraisals of the people who constitute the young person's support network. Fear can be characterised by a reliance on avoidant and autoplasic coping responses, as well as a truncated focus on attaining the necessary status and popularity to moderate risk of victimisation. The latter option is also not available to everyone and, in a community where the risks of violent victimisation are perceived to be high, avoidance based strategies may well be more effective but can also result in a breakdown of community values and increasing insularity.

4.4.2. c) Consequences, consequentialism and utilitarianism

Participants perceived the range of sanctions available to society today to be inadequate, and although reward and punishment contingencies in school were felt to be motivating to individuals, society is seen as being unable to alter the

trajectories of young people committed to a life of violent crime. The concomitant sense of powerlessness feeds a resignation and sense of hopelessness about the possibility of change.

The unintended negative consequences of coping in a particular way encompass the breakdown of community and tendency to retreat into a siege mentality when young people rely on avoidant coping strategies. Mercenary motivation can also be a result of focusing on money and resources and lack of deferred gratification.

However, it was also noticed that young people did not tend to reference any intrinsic sense of right and wrong in their decision making, rather referring to the outcome of the act as being the chief determinant of its advisability. This consequentialism is consistent with the growing awareness some young people showed of peers who were willing to commit delinquent acts in exchange for money. In some cases it may be that the monetary utility of an action can dictate its advisability, rather than any intrinsic sense of right and wrong.

4.4.2. d) Safety

Safety is a core construct, the violation of which leads to the experience of fear. The understanding that they are safe enables young people to focus on pursuing more distal goals, such as self-actualisation and education. School is commonly perceived as being a safe location but risks are understood to exist during transition to and from school (which are, for example, removed by the availability of private transport). Fear is the experience of the violation of this construct of safety and motivates the adoption of coping strategies to take control of and ameliorate the sensation. The appraisal of safety is consequently an important component of the decision about which goals to prioritise.

4.4.2. e) Religion

For young people who regularly attend church, religion provides a code of ethical and moral conduct, which they try to carry over into their everyday lives. These are evident in credos such as to 'treat others as you would like to be treated.' Religion can also have a cognitive influence, with a number of young people attributing their ability to stay calm and self-regulate to their faith in God, with several young people

forming a link between their attending church and ability to sustain behaviour in other systems and contexts outside of church.

The failure to carry over codes of behaviour that originate in church to school highlight an inconsistency which young people feel distinguishes 'fake' from 'true' Christians. Young people who show such inconsistencies are viewed disparagingly by young people who feel they are able to be more consistent with their religious principles. This distrust is also evident in perceptions of : "social chameleons" – people who change according to the demands of the situation. This malleability leads them to be viewed disparagingly by other young people who see past the changes and mistrust them, whilst taking pride in their own consistency.

4.4.2. f) Discrimination

Young people did not describe an overt level of racism present in school but acknowledged that it could be more prevalent outside of school, notably from the police and between different ethnic minority groups. Where racism was prevalent in their discourses it was in acknowledging the increased likelihood of violent victimisation in the community, which was seen as being directly related to their ethnicity. This theory had been constructed in part from the frequent reports in the media and in part from the shared experiences and constructions of other students. A number of young people also reflected this was a function of where they lived, with white people being less likely to be stabbed because they were more likely to live in peaceful communities.

In the community, it was noticeable that participants felt that it was their identity as young people which led to them being vulnerable to discrimination, rather than their identity as a Black-British teenager. However, they were also aware of being more visible to the police because of their skin colour and on a number of occasions complained of unfair treatment, such as being asked to leave public transport.

Whilst young people were sensitive to the experience of being stereotyped, they also admitted to basing their own judgements of others on similar heuristics, saying it was adaptive to avoid young people in groups who wear hoods or baggy trousers and so may have gang affiliation. It was not necessary for the young people themselves to have experienced racial discrimination. The expectancy could also be engendered

through the experiences of their parents or by the experiences of similar young people represented in the media.

4.4.2. g) Gangs and gang talking

Young people are acutely aware of gangs and their role as drivers of crime in the community. However, talking about gangs can also be a legitimate pathway to achieve status and power in peer networks. Failing to show knowledge of gangs was referenced as a factor in opening oneself to mockery and bullying. This serves to maintain the status of gangs as a threat. Young people are attuned to the media and events in the community, as they are directly relevant to their ability to stay safe. As a result young people actively scan different media channels for information relevant to their ability to 'stay safe.'

There is, therefore, a paradoxical drive for young people to be knowledgeable about gangs and an acknowledgement that they are dangerous and potentially lethal. Young people were found to lack first hand experience of gangs and to base their theories on the disclosures of friends, the media and of their parents. This, however, did not stop gangs being accorded almost omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent status, with young people feeling that they may be constantly under supervision from, and can be pressurised into joining them. Whilst the extent of these beliefs may be related to paranoia and driven by the processes of deviance amplification, it may be that such suspicion is highly adaptive in a community where the risk of sudden and violent crime is well established as a statistical reality. As a result it would be unwise to label behaviours negatively which seem to make a great deal of sense to the young people who adopt them.

4.4.2. h) Making compromises

It may be telling that, even at this early stage in their education, young people were aware of how their reputations were shaping their educational experiences, suggesting that their relationships with staff were becoming characterised by a vicious cycle, which they did not feel able to break. This is underwritten by the perceived need to focus on consolidating a 'reputation' and popularity, entailing behaviours which are incompatible with academic success. Oppositional and challenging behaviours are a way to construct and consolidate reputation and status and to exert influence on other peers. When masculinity is also constructed in this

way, young people can revere 'hardness' and 'coolness' and disparage young people who deviate from this standard of behaviour. Although academic and sporting success are legitimate ways of building respect, they are not attainable to everyone and some young people may view bad behaviour as being easier and more fun.

The demands of hanging out with friends and maintaining a reputation can take precedence over academic work. This can also be understood as a self-fulfilling prophecy that reduces young people's ability to define themselves in other way by crossing off their options. In this way, consolidating a secure position in the here-and-now can entail the sacrifice of future goals and aspirations. This follows a dichotic way of appraising choice –with binary choices between 'being-cool' on one hand and 'working hard' on the other meaning that they are viewed as 'all-or-nothing' or mutually exclusive choices. Young people are increasingly imprisoned by rigid binary constructs (e.g. Good vs. Bad), which restrict and dictate certain behaviours, sacrifices and compromises.

Although school was not constructed as being as dangerous as the streets, the 'Bad-boy' masculinities can be attractive and young people may be reluctant to give up behaviours they have adopted as legitimate survival strategies but which are also a source of enjoyment, friendship, power and status. Adopting an alternative identity could be seen as adopting pretensions that are inconsistent with the values and morals of the individual young person or "the street."

4.4.2. i) Coping dilemmas

Coping dilemmas involve a number of choices young people have to make about how they respond to threats and danger in the school and in the community. There are a number of options available. Transiently, these are relatively benign and outline what could be defined as "streetwise" functioning. This may be thought of as a constellation of strategies, including:

- i) knowing who to avoid;
- ii) knowing what areas to avoid; and
- iii) knowing when it is safe to be yourself.

When these become more stable proclivities they have short and long term implications that can shape how a young person experiences school and the

community and can enhance potentially harmful behaviours and consequences. At this extreme they may be best understood as 'Survival Strategies,' which young people feel are imperative for their continued psychological and physical wellbeing. Specific coping strategies identified within the transcripts will now be presented below.

Avoiders vs. Chameleons

Avoiding

This was the predominant form of coping available to young people in response to problems in their community. Avoiding means staying away from hot spots and people who are regarded as being 'trouble.' Avoidance is a way of minimising the risks of arbitrary victimisation and providing a sense of control and personal agency in the face of increasing uncertainty about the safety of young black males on the street.

Coping in this way means young people become adept at recognising and navigating away from difficulties but become more insular and self-focused as their immediate horizons become ever more truncated by self-imposed boundaries and a developing 'siege mentality.' This can be supportive of engaging in school, as they become focused on achieving the more distal goals of paid employment but is also associated with an insularity and sense of isolation that can impede the ability to feel part of a community. Framed in this way avoidance may be understood as tacit acknowledgment of powerlessness and part of a broader public discourse of threat that leads to autoplasic responses to dangers in the community. Such resignation also fosters a vigilance to focally relevant information as it is presented in the media, such as reports of gang based activities and violent crime, to inform and direct their seemingly ever more precarious pathway towards safety and security.

Chameleon

Living as a chameleon enables young people to blend in and adopt different personas to suit different situations. This is an identity based coping strategy and manifestation of autoplasic responding, wherein young people adapt to different situations by changing their identity to fit in. This can involve sacrificing more distal goals, such as educational opportunities, in order to ensure that more proximal goals, such as safety, power and social prestige are met.

Students who eschewed this coping style reported an inherent suspicion of chameleons, viewing them as unreliable and lacking in integrity. Coping as a

chameleon means that the regulation of identity is an active and ongoing process, wherein students calibrate themselves to the peer group. This can, for example, enable young people to move from one location to the other with reduced fear but can also come with a cost, which, in extreme cases, falls under the umbrella of mental health. Mental health issues occur when people lose their grip on reality and become 'lost' in identities that are no longer convincing or adaptive but which they are unable to change.

Peer Pressure vs. Strong Mindedness (Hardiness)

Peer pressure exists as a post-hoc theory applied to explain self and other behaviours that involve conforming to the expectations of peers. As a result, peer pressure may be thought of as a more ephemeral phenomenon than is traditionally represented, exerting far less power over the decision making of young people. Instead young people choose to conform to the expectations of their peers as part of a strategy to enhance their sense of personal well-being and blend in and consolidate their standing. Conversely, strong-mindedness is characterised by confidence in their self-definition. Strong minded individuals present themselves as they are and do not seek to adopt other strategies and identities that may lead to them being more socially accepted but entail sacrificing their own integrity. Students who show such hardiness can view chameleons with suspicion, viewing people who are willing to change as untrustworthy, unreliable and suspicious.

Seeking and sharing information

Students are involved in actively seeking information that is focally relevant to their ongoing survival, scanning the news and other media for reports that inform them as to the risks they face in the community. In this way the media shapes the constructed realities that each person lives in, as few admit to direct experience with knife crime or gangs but reference the media or information shared by their peers or parents as the evidence on which they base the need for their chosen coping behaviours. Knowledge of and affiliation with gangs is also a route to securing prestige and status, leading to students feeling that they should confess gang affiliation or knowledge in order to consolidate their own position in a social hierarchy in which this can be a route towards respect and security.

As such, the media exerts a powerful influence in dictating the discourses of blame of young people and on those subscribed to by children and young people, as well as fuelling the societal expectation that young people will know of and be affiliated with gangs. These form the basis of a deviancy amplification spiral, which could lead young people to construct the risks of victimisation beyond their objective probability. However, given that during the time it took to collect the data there were three recorded fatal stabbings of young people in the community surrounding Asbury Park, this may well be a fairly adaptive process. However, the media and social networks provide a limited and negative representation of life in the community surrounding Asbury Park. Within these informational channels lies a predominantly negative representation of the community and young people. Whilst young people are sensitive to stereotypes and are angry when they feel limited by the general constructions drawn on by adults, they also stereotype themselves in order to be able to navigate the streets safely.

Seeking Safety in Numbers

As a consequence of the perceived risk of victimisation a strategy that young people adopt is to move around in large groups, which can create the illusion of gang activity. It can also lead to gang formation with the naming and formal structuring of the friendship group.

4.4.3 Category 3: Availability of Opportunities to Experience Personal Agency and Empowerment

This category constitutes the experience of a sense of agency and self-efficacy and the belief that the environmental resources are supportive of the ability of young people to pursue and attain goals that are important to them. To have the power to pursue relevant goals means to have experienced the environment as being congruent with those goals and this underlies the belief that individual skills are appropriate or sufficient to acquiring the desired outcomes. To experience Personal Agency is to expect that things can be resolved and to have the power to be able to overcome obstacles to those goals. It encompasses the reservoir of effort, or determination, that is available to pursue and persevere with goals and belief in having the ability to direct that effort efficaciously.

4.4.3 a) Discrimination

See above Section 4.4.2. f). In addition, this category was generated from comments about the experience of discrimination and defines the extent that young people anticipate their ability to be self-determining and shape their environment to be blocked by the stereotyped reactions of those around them. Being treated differently because of their status as a young person was seen as being common but young people also felt their ethnicity placed them at greater risk of being stabbed. However, Black young people are also seen as more likely to become victims of violent crime and institutional discrimination from the police. This is balanced against the propensity of students to stereotype in their turn as a heuristic based guide as to when to employ avoidance or chameleon like coping in response to perceived threats.

4.4.3. b) Gangs and gang talking

See above 4.3.2. g). In addition, gangs and gang talking can be seen as being used strategically to increase the availability of the resources and support that lead to a greater sense of self-efficacy. This is, however, a two sided coin and can also detract from the sense of personal agency if gangs are constructed as being a threat.

4.4.3 c) Core values

This includes the ethic code of morality which guides the decision making of each young person, as well as the core constructs which are a key feature of how they evaluate the behaviours and desires of others. Personal value systems were most influentially shaped by religious sources. The values espoused by young people encompass the quasi-religious motivation to 'treat others as you would like to be treated' but also includes the core constructs of:

- staying safe;
- social justice;
- personal freedom; and
- individualism vs. communalism.

These can guide young people's thinking when negotiating ethical and moral dilemmas, as well as forming the basis for how they understand the world around them.

4.4.3 d) Hardiness

Hardiness is a macro-construct that subsumes a number of health (physical, mental and spiritual) and dispositional variables. As students did not seem to understand or relate to the idea of resilience, this term seemed suitable as a substitute that is more reflective of their daily experiences of healthy and resilient functioning. Hardiness is composed of a sense of self-efficacy and personal control, wherein young people feel they can experience mastery in a particular area. An important part of this is self-belief, which underwrites young people's ability to reach high levels of performance.

Hardiness can also be the refusal to conform to the world around and instead to stay true to personal values, identity and friendships. The need for challenge is also a positive facet of hardiness and corresponds to the belief that change and failure can be a normal part of everyday life and necessary for personal growth. It is underwritten by an openness to new experiences and cognitive flexibility and tolerance of ambiguity.

Belonging is also reflected in Hardiness, in that a sense of belonging (claiming affiliation to a group) provides self-esteem, status and solidarity and can be a powerful source of support and encouragement. Peers are viewed as one of the most potent socialising groups, and a sense of belonging is a powerful conduit through which socialisation of values occurs. Conformity is a choice made by young people to maximise their acceptance and reduce the chances of rejection and isolation. Again, this makes a great deal of sense in communities and streets where the primary means of traversing them safely can be through safety in numbers.

4.4.3 e) Making compromises

This relates to the extent young people felt they had to sacrifice their ability to be autonomous and self-determining in order to gain affiliation and belonging, as well as the extent to which long-term goals have to be sacrificed when it is necessary to prioritise short-term safety and survival.

4.4.3 f) Power, choice and control

This relates to a perceived lack of control of the risk of victimisation and the concomitant sense of powerlessness in the community. There is a strong sense that

victimisation can be arbitrary or/and inevitable, and being in the wrong place at the wrong time can be sufficient to become a target for violent crime.

4.4.3 g) Having Access to money and resources

See above section 4.4.1 e). Having access to money and resources is inevitably an advantage in securing opportunities for further personal development and security.

Please see appendix E for a full breakdown of each memo.

4.4.4 Core Category: Balancing hope for the future with the demands of the present

The core category that was generated from the data was that of 'Balancing hope for the future with the demands of the present.' It was evident throughout the analysis that the young people held goals for the future that transcended their current location and horizons. These originated from a number of different sources (e.g., parents, peers and teachers) and the extent to which they engaged in school was a function of the extent that they perceived education as congruent with the attainment of those goals. It was evident that hope for a better future was a core motivating construct, both for them and for their parents, resulting in an emphasis on the importance of academic attainment and on strict levels of behavioural control which the young people relied on, together with favoured teachers. However, young people tended to feel that they had to juggle this hope to transcend their immediate horizons with the need to adapt to the demands of the present, namely the risk of sudden and arbitrary violence in the community and the negotiation of a strict school hierarchy. These result in levels of fear and the need to adapt, which can become inconsistent with academic success and force the young person into compromises which lead to hopes either being supplanted or removed. Teachers have a crucial role in mediating hope. They are acknowledged as being among young people's most potent resources and assume a relevance beyond that of educational instruction in relation to the young people's ability to successfully negotiate their environment in a manner which is congruent with their ability to sustain and maintain academic success.

Chapter 5: DISCUSSION (PART 1)

5.1 Introduction

The discussion is divided into two parts. Part one is concerned with the evaluation of the grounded theory against criteria provided by Charmaz (2006). Part two is focused on the discussion of the theory with particular reference to its applications and implications for EPs and other educational professionals and is situated after the second part of the literature review.

5.2 Evaluating grounded theory

Hope Theory has been constructed as a theory that EPs and school staff can use to help align educational resources with the needs of Black-British young people attending Asbury Park. However, it is not constructed as being specific to this population and may be transferred to all young people who face similar problems and obstacles, particularly those located in large urban secondary schools.

The criteria against which to review whether GT methodology has been sufficiently rigorous are not fixed, making it unclear what criteria should be applied to evaluate its quality (Elliot and Lazenbatt, 2005). Indeed there are major unanswered questions in the literature as to what constitutes a GT, as well as the criteria against which a GT should be evaluated (Egan, 2002). Charmaz (2006) acknowledges that criteria can vary depending on the discipline, purpose and intended audience of the research. However, Charmaz also proposes the following criteria as being the most useful to apply to the evaluation of GT:

- credibility;
- originality; and
- usefulness.

5.3 Credibility

Guba and Lincoln (1989) provide six techniques to ensure credibility, which is a term meant to describe the trustworthiness of the researcher's insights and the extent they accord with their informants testimony: a) Prolonged engagement, b) persistent observation, c) peer debriefing, d) negative case analysis, e) progressive subjectivity and f) member checks. Bitsch (2005) also adds a seventh, g) triangulation.

5.3.1 Prolonged engagement. This concerns whether the researcher has spent enough time on the site to build the trust necessary to find local constructions and understand the context and culture of the research, as well as separate 'misinformation' from genuine insights.

Whilst this thesis lacks the perspective of longitudinal research, the choice of a case-study design was intended to mitigate against the difficulties of accounting for localised cultural idiosyncrasies. Steps were also taken to build a rapport with each participant and help them feel at ease and able to talk to the researcher. The total time spent in interviews amounted to 11 hours 41 minutes, which must be regarded as insufficient evidence of prolonged engagement. It was, however, all that could be achieved in the limited time frame of the study.

5.3.2 Persistent observation. This questions whether the researcher has done a sufficiently in-depth study to gain detail and so define the relevant characteristics of the problem under study.

Whether a sufficiently in depth study has been carried out or not can only be defined by the young people who participated in the research and the degree that Hope Theory resonates with their experiences. Transcripts have been provided (See Appendix G) for readers to assess the extent that sufficient detail was gathered. However, the lack of theoretical sampling suggests that at present this research lacks the detail to be sufficiently robust.

5.3.3 Peer Debriefing. This concerns the extent that the researcher has engaged in an ongoing discussion with peers who are not involved in the research process in order to test findings against others' perceptions.

This research was carried out by the author over a limited time frame and so the chance for peer debriefing did not arise. Supervision was carried out in accordance to the guidelines provided by Cardiff University.

5.3.4 Negative case analysis. This looks at whether hypotheses have been refined to account for all known cases and whether the grounded theory fits a reasonable number of cases.

This research incorporated into its design several stages of revisions using the constant comparison method. During these stages the previous transcripts were re-read to make sense of the developing theory and check its continued relevance. An illustration for the fit of the theory to the data is provided in Appendix E and Table 3, indicating how embedded each focused code is in the interview transcripts and how each category is reducible to its constituent codes.

5.3.5 *Progressive subjectivity.* This focuses on monitoring bias and whether the researcher's conceptions changed during the process.

Specific precautions against bias have been taken by incorporating reflexive sections into the body of the thesis. Although it is impossible to eliminate bias, this research is also framed from a social constructionist perspective where the account reported is one contextualised account among many that are possible. The thesis developed from the belief that a resiliency perspective would inform strategies to ameliorate the Black-British exclusion and attainment gaps, from which the emergence of a new theory was particularly unexpected by the author.

5.3.6 *Member Checks.* This asks whether data and interpretations have been re-checked with the participants and includes the extent they agreed with the findings as resonating with their experiences.

Unfortunately this step fell outside what could be completed in the time frame allocated for the completion of the thesis. It is, however, an important next step in the continued development and application of Hope Theory. However, Layder (1998) critiques GT approaches that are limited by data, rather than guided by them, and so the lack of member checks should not necessarily be construed as detracting from the present analysis.

5.3.7 *Triangulation.* This looks at how the study has made use of a) a variety of data sources, b) more than one researcher, c) the extant literature to compare and contrast findings, and d) a number of different methods to counterbalance the weaknesses of one method against the strengths of another.

This research made use of only one type of method and data – interview data – and it was not possible for any other researchers to view the transcripts. The lack of triangulation in grounded theory research has led Benoliel (1996) to suggest that a

significant percentage of published GT papers are not in fact GT – although Robrecht (1995) suggests that such a preoccupation can lead to researchers fixating on looking for data, rather than at them. However, Bitsch (2005) and Charmaz (2006) allow that published literature can also constitute data, and this project incorporates an extensive comparison between the insights gathered in the interview data with those from an extensive literature search in light of them. Please see Chapter 6 for a comparison of Hope Theory with the extant literature.

5.4 Originality

This is concerned with the extent that the categories offer a fresh insight into the problem of interest and the extent to which the new theory challenges, extends or refines old thinking, concepts and practices.

Although Literature Review Part 2 (below) highlights the pre-existence of a ‘Hope Theory’ that is conceptually similar to this grounded theory, the analysis does provide fresh insights into the dilemmas and struggles facing young people and the psychology that can be applied to help them. Previously the literature has predominantly been made up of a-theoretical documentation of the extent of the problem and so research with psychological theory explicitly at its heart, it can be argued, has the potential to provide impetus and direction in a field that is divided and lacking in practices informed and reasoned by psychology.

With reference to the existing Hope theory, it is argued that the present theory provides a far more contextualised understanding of the stresses and strains young people are under in Asbury Park. The need to juggle educational aspirations with the immediate dangers of possible sudden violent victimisation elevates this debate from one of academic curiosity to one that, in the eyes of the participants, could potentially be concerned with life and death.

5.5 Usefulness

This is focused on the extent that the research is able to offer applications that can be used in every day practice and make a useful contribution to scientific knowledge.

As highlighted in the literature review, there is a distinct lack of studies that represent the voice of Black-British young people at a point before disaffection and exclusion have occurred. The literature search did not highlight any other GT studies in this area, suggesting that this project has the potential to make a unique contribution to the direction and nature of ongoing debate. In addition, EPs are, by virtue of being applied psychologists, concerned with 'usefulness' and the applications of this research will be made clear in the second part of the discussion.

Chapter 6: DISCUSSION

INCORPORATING LITERATURE REVIEW (PART 2) AND DISCUSSION PART 2

6.1 Literature review (part 2): introduction

This section concerns the second part of the literature review. In this section a comparison is made between the grounded theory and the extant literature in order to critique and evaluate the theory and extend insights regarding its potential applications and implications. It is also an opportunity to carry out a form of theoretical sampling using the extant literature and triangulate this grounded Hope Theory using the results.

6.2 Comparison of findings to the extant literature

Following the construction of this grounded Hope Theory a literature review was conducted in light of the themes constructed in the final analysis to contribute towards the development of the theory. This is consistent with the GT principle of using the extant literature as a new data source (Onions, *n.d.*) but because of the limitations of time the GT methodology of coding and sorting are not attempted. The literature search involved making use of the following search engines:

- ❖ PsychInfo;
- ❖ Questia;
- ❖ Metalib; and
- ❖ Google Scholar.

During this literature search word strings involving combinations of the following were used: Hope; Goal-setting; Relationships; Alliance; Schools; Educational Psychology; Threat; Challenge; Coping; Development; Gangs; Teachers: Students: Trust; Hardiness; Respect; Avoidance; Agency; and Culture.

Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine in detail all research pertinent to all 79 focus codes, 19 memos, 3 sub-categories, and 1 core category it is hoped that this literature review will clarify the most salient ideas and findings that seemed to resonate most with the narratives of the young people, as well as the role and application of educational psychology. As part of this process, the current status of research on hope will be summarised, together with that of the Therapeutic Working Alliance (TWA), and the prevalence of Gangs, Aspirations and Peers. A synthesis will be proposed that adopts the TWA as a pantheoretical model through

which teachers and EPs may instil and facilitate change through hope, both with individual young people and by coordinating an inclusive school and community culture from which all can benefit. As such, it is proposed that the TWA may become the basis for a hope building, relational pedagogy and intervention program, which EPs are well placed to promote and disseminate.

6.2.1 Hope (ful) Research

Few things more poignantly reveal our remarkable capacity for resilience as our ability to sustain hope in the face of vulnerability, pain and loss. (Ong, Edwards and Bereman, 2006, p. 1263)

Hope is both the earliest and the most indispensable virtue inherent in the state of being alive. If life is to be sustained hope must remain, even where confidence is wounded, trust impaired (Erickson, 1964, p. 115)

The study of hope does not begin with this thesis – it is a tradition that has been established for thousands of years. Philosophers have written about hope as an indispensable facet of health and quality of life, central to notions of human being and experience (e.g., Kant, 1781; Dickenson, 1891; Marce, 1951, cited in Pilkington, 1999). There is also a Judeo-Christian perspective that is in turn predated by the mythological story of Pandora's Box (Worthen and Isakson, 2010) that views hope, faith and love as spiritual gifts (Pilkington, 1999). However, the study of hope is less well established in psychology and the social sciences, where it has generally been neglected in favour of other positive psychological correlates, including happiness, joy and optimism, the last of which is commonly treated as being a virtual synonym of hope (Bruininks and Malle, 2005).

Maglaletta and Oliver (1999) addressed the extent that hope is distinct from optimism. They concluded that hope can explain unique variance in positive outcomes, quantitatively distinct to that of optimism. So, although the two constructs share a sense of positive expectancy, hope and optimism should not be conceptualised as being identical. Snyder (1994), in particular, argues that hope and optimism are distinct in that optimism does not involve any critical thinking, being more a generalised disposition or personality trait, while hope is directed towards specific goals. Hope is also conceptualised as being a more powerful psychological

asset in challenging environments that require resilient coping (Bruininks and Malle, 2005; Averil, 1994; Frankl, 1959).

Where hope has been researched it has been identified as a critical element to successful therapy (Worthen and Isakson, 2010; Frankl, 1959; Cieslak, 2009) and, also in the classroom (Hands, 2009). However, it has rarely been conceptualised or measured consistently. For example, Schrank et al. (2008) reviewed 49 published articles on hope, finding 32 different measurement tools. Despite this diversity, Pilkington (1999) delineates two general perspectives: the psychodynamic (e.g., Erickson, 1964b) and the cognitive-behavioural (e.g., Stotland, 1969), with Snyder (1994) advocating a compromise between the two, although Averill (1994) arguably adds a fourth affective perspective.

Erickson (1964) traces the origins of hope to early development, stemming from the successful resolution of the psychosocial stage of trust vs. mistrust. This arises out of the attunement of infant and caretaker relationships, where the young person consistently experiences a caregiver as being reliable and nurturing. Following this, Erickson dramatically defines hope as *“the enduring belief in the attainability of fervent wishes, in spite of the dark urges and rages which mark the beginning of existence”* (Erickson, 1964, p. 118).

Alternatively, Stotland (1969) and Snyder (1994) advocate a cognitive-behavioral perspective on hope, defining it rather more mundanely as an expectation greater than zero but less than a certainty of achieving a goal (Snyder, 1994). As such, hope is distinct from wishing or ‘false-hope,’ which is based on illusions rather than reality (Nakagami, 2009). Stotland(1969) views the determinants of hope as arising from i) the appraised importance of the goal, and ii) the expectation of achieving it, with hope demonstrated by overt and covert action toward the goal and selective attention to instrumental aspects of the environment. This theme is strikingly congruent with the emphasis placed in the current research by participants on the instrumental nature of the media, parental, peers and teacher relationships in providing information that informs coping.

This was enlarged upon by Snyder (1994), who mirrors the current research by defining hope triarchically as a ‘cognitive set’ based on a reciprocally derived sense of a) agency (goal-directed determination), b) pathways (finding ways to meet goals) and c) the clear conceptualization of goals. Within this conceptualisation hope is

framed as the motivation to attach oneself to positive outcomes or goals which the subject has the will to work towards and the ability to identify, negotiate and traverse relevant pathways leading to that goal's accomplishment. Snyder's (1991) Hope Theory can, therefore, be framed as a goal-setting framework, where hopeful individuals are a) determined to get what they want and b) can figure out how to do so (Bruininks and Malle, 2005). Snyder (1994) argues that this gives his theory a utility that distinguishes it from "*nebulous, immeasurable, philosophical notions*" (p. 25) of hope and other psychological constructs, including goal theory, optimism, self-efficacy and problem-solving, as each of these gives differentially weighted emphasis to goal, pathways or agency, whilst Hope Theory gives equal emphasis to all three components. Snyder (1994) also argues that hope transcends different cultural groups, as goal pursuit is a fundamental state of being human.

While there remains controversy in the extant literature over the precise role of affect and cognition (Averil, Catlin and Chon, 1990; Bruininks and Malle, 2005), the results of this thesis are congruent with the field in many areas. Nearly all definitions of hope have included the notion of a positive future orientation (Nakagami, 2009) and this is a central component to the core category of this thesis. Indeed the emphasis on having future aspirations, the agency and efficacy to achieve them and a sense of how to achieve them is strikingly consistent with Snyder's (1994) three-dimensional model.

The high degree of GT model similarity to Snyder's (1994) model on one hand can be seen as providing the triangulation that is missing from the current research method and design but on the other hand dilutes the uniqueness of the current GT's contribution. However, a comparison of the two models highlights several discrepancies, which support the ability of the current research to extend the literature. These arguably stem from the contextualization of GT within the case of Asbury Park, which has resulted in a model far more calibrated to the local context. In particular, the focus in this research on how young people contemporaneously balance competing demands for their attention with the need to traverse pathways towards their goals is a unique feature of this theory and suggests a level of stress, fear and resilience which is missing from Snyder's generalized model. It may be that in different contexts unique features of the environment interact with the components of Hope Theory in unique ways to shape hopes, agency and coping. With regards to Asbury Park, it appeared that educational and vocational aspirations and goals were two of many pathways available to the young people. Status, respect and money

were also goals that could lead young people to follow different pathways, depending on how best they viewed them as being achieved. The participants' situation is, however, complicated by the high level of fear they have to live with on a daily basis, coping with the ever-present perceived threat of gangs, knife crime and extortion. Within the current research this need for malleability is represented by their ongoing dilemmas about how best to cope and reflects the need to make compromises in order to successfully pursue hoped for goals and adapt to a seemingly dangerous community.

The methods of coping which young people feel forced to adopt in response to these threats can undermine their ability to work towards educational goals, or, in the case of avoidant coping, lead them to sacrifice the ability to move freely in their community or to spend time with their peers, in order to sustain them. This highlights a further contribution the current research can make to the extant literature: traditionally, avoidant coping has been regarded negatively in research, being typically framed as evidence of poor coping and a lack of resilience. This is, however, a de-contextualised understanding of avoidance. Seen in the context of sustaining the ability of young people to work towards a better life through academic success, avoidant coping can be reframed as a manifestation of resilience. Indeed, it may be a far more sensible and safer way of coping than more active and confrontational methods (Stewart, Schreck and Simons, 2006).

However, it is also evident that such adaptation has a cost. For example, in avoiding the street, young people sacrifice spending time with their peers or the freedom to play outdoors. Conversely, by focusing on achieving respect and status they can sacrifice educational goals. Sacrifice is a theme that is congruent with the extant literature, with Perry (1997), Tolan (1996) and Teicher et al. (2003) documenting the idea that every adaptation comes at a cost at the neurological level. They conclude that prolonged exposure to stress and fear provoking environments can trigger a cascade of neurological adaptations that can leave the young person in a hypervigilant state of fight-or-flight. In a violent, unpredictable community this can lead to short-term gains but when protracted this can take a toll and lead to persistent hyperactivity, anxiety and hyper arousal. As a result, Perry (1997) argues that children and young people are malleable, not resilient – able to adapt and change to suit their environment but unable to sustain this indefinitely without reaching a breaking point. This is a poignant reframe of resilience that would be worth exploring in future research.

That hoped for goals are negotiated in interactions between young people and their physical and social ecologies is also a distinctive emphasis of the current GT. These interactions are fluid and ongoing, meaning that hope is similarly a dynamic, malleable and ecological property. As a malleable quality, hope is amenable to intervention and can be strategically shaped through the arrangement of school and community resources. As an ecological model the GT hope theory is, therefore, a useful addition to Snyder's (1994) model, introducing the prospect of EPs facilitating far more wide reaching change by using systemic principles to create hopeful ecological systems.

As a goal setting construct, the current Hope Theory also maps well onto the goal orientated function of education and the teacher-student dyad. In increasing the core cognitive elements of mediating a sense of academic competency (Altermatt and Pomerantz, 2003), content, pedagogical knowledge and behaviour management are every bit as important in shaping young people's ability to pursue educational goals as are relationships. Goals shape the context in which goals and relationships are negotiated, selected and updated. However, the close parallel with Snyder's (1991) theory also opens this grounded theory up to Snyder's main failing: that it fails to account for the experience of hope in situations where there is little, if any, perceived control (Bruininks and Malle, 2005). This critique may be sidestepped by appealing to the operation of the self-serving positivity bias (Mezulis et al. 2004), which suggests that people are always likely to attribute a degree of probability to unlikely outcomes that are desired, such as becoming a rockstar or a professional sportsman; when it comes to hoped for goals psychology has found that humans are not objective analysts (Tversky and Kahneman, 1974,). In more extreme situations² Frankl (1983) also describes a 'tragic optimism' as the ability to sustain optimism in spite of pain, guilt and death. Tragic optimism is dependent on finding a reason, or goal, to persevere, no matter how remote it may be:

...they died less from lack of food or medicine than from lack of hope, lack of something to live for. (Frankl, 1959, p. 4).

Hope is, therefore, in the eyes of the beholder and not a probabilistic calculation. From his experiences Frankl developed the psychoanalytic movement of

² Frankl wrote extensively following his experiences in the Holocaust, during which he was imprisoned in Auschwitz.

logotherapy, in which he located the search for meaning as a core motivator of human activity. This resonates strongly with the proclivity of young people to extrapolate meaning from their observations of staff and peers. Frankl (1983) himself draws a parallel between this need and the hopelessness experienced by young people he defines as the “*no future generation*” (p. 2). This particularly resonates with the prominent role given to goals and goal setting in this grounded Hope Theory, as well as the broader context of the current economic recession and record levels of unemployment. Fostering young people’s aspirations, or hopes, seemed to be associated with both an academic resilience and the adoption of short term coping styles more congruent with long-term academic success. Lacks of long-term aspirations, whether intrinsically or extrinsically motivated, were more associated with coping styles that could become incongruent with scholastic success.

Goldstein’s (2008, p. 1) quote is particularly congruent with the narratives of the young people who participated in this research, who themselves also strongly identified self-belief and positive self-talk as integral in working towards hoped for goals:

...hope is cultivated when we have a goal in mind, determination that a goal can be reached, and a plan on how to reach those goals. Hopeful people are like the little engine that could, [because] they keep telling themselves “I think I can, I think I can.”

In education, hope is not a trivial construct and has been identified as predicting and influencing students’ academic attainments (Snyder et al. 2002), school drop-out and athletic performance (Curry et al. 1997), health behaviours (Berg et al. 2011), interpersonal relations (Snyder et al. 1997), buffering against the effects of stress (Kratz, 2004), and facilitating adaptive coping and physical and mental well-being (Herth, 1993). Hope has also been established as a motivator of behavior as well as contributing to increased life expectancy and recovery from illness, insult and injury (Snyder, 1994). Its absence has been linked with numerous forms of social and vocational dysfunction, including avoidant coping (Lysaker et al. 2001), suicidal intent, depression and chronicity of illness. It is, therefore, a valid locus for intervention that can be considered by EPs, helping teachers and pupils to work together to identify important goals and facilitate the sense of efficacy needed to achieve them.

6.2.2 Mentalisation

One of the imperatives of conducting this research was to ascertain the views of Black-British young people and begin to break down some of the problematic stereotypes that have developed around them. As such, this emphasis is consistent with the aims of Personal Construct Psychology (Kelly, 1955), a fundamental tenet of which is that to understand people's behaviour it is important to understand the constructs they use to make sense of the world around them (Butler and Green, 2007). The root metaphor of this approach is that of the young person as a scientist and active participant in the construction of their own reality, who is directly attuned to those instrumental aspects of the environment that can aid in the interpretation and divination of patterns of behaviour. In this research young people's attempts to understand the private motivations and beliefs of peers and staff were interpreted by the author as attempts to make sense of and predict their future behaviours, with the resulting constructs shaping the development of teacher-student or peer-to-peer dyads. Just how much young people were willing to read into relatively innocuous teacher behaviours was both remarkable and supported to an extent in the PCP literature – although this is less surprising when it is acknowledged that PCP construct elicitation techniques were an integral part of the author's interviewing techniques (See Chapter 3).

Young people also showed a propensity to reason dichotomously, sometimes appearing to be trapped in rigid habits of categorising the world into exclusive binary groups (e.g. good vs. bad), at other times making use of these as heuristics that guided the need for adaptation. Young people's drive to extrapolate meaning from the world around them is also consistent with the core tenet of Frankl's logotherapy - that people are fundamentally concerned with the search for meaning. PCP and logotherapy may, therefore, share a common understanding of the importance of meaning and together reframe young people as meaning focused, relational scientists with the personal construct as the basic unit of analysis. The rigidity of young people's constructs suggests that teachers may stand to gain if they are given enabling strategies that allow young people to convey the constructs they rely on to make sense of the world and their relationships with learning and adults (Butler and Green, 2007).

From this, the behaviour of young people is reframed as an experiment, designed to test out and question the validity of underlying constructs. Constructs are not viewed as being right or wrong, as they are based on previous experience and so cannot be criticised. The findings of this study are in line with PCP, suggesting that young people are striving to make sense of staff motivations and that their extrapolations shape the nature and quality of any relationship that emerges. Tellingly, one of the main barriers to the development of more equitable practices in secondary school identified by Cefai and Cooper (2010) was that it was necessary first for teachers to see the significance and value of eliciting students' views as an integral component of effective teaching and behaviour management. A PCP perspective provides that rationale, as does the evident ramifications of the young people's constructions of teacher motivation in shaping vicious or virtuous cycles. It may be that EPs have an important role to play in raising teacher awareness of PCP in inset training and enhancing teachers' ability to apply construct elicitation techniques in the classroom by making this psychology explicit to them.

This is, however, not a unique conclusion. As far back as 1981 Pope and Shaw recognised the potential of PCP to be utilised by teachers in education to create positive change. More recently, Hardman (2001) and Ravenette (1996, 1999) have also emphasised the need to apply PCP when working with teaching staff but fail to provide documentation of such initiatives, focusing more on direct work with children and young people. Higgins et al (2009) provide an interesting write up of their integration of PCP with work in schools at a systemic level. However, they focus on using specific PCP techniques to make sense of teacher's constructs and not enabling teachers to make sense of the constructs of young people themselves. Burnham (2008), however, explicitly writes of his desire to see more people using PCP, targeting "anyone who'd like to hear and understand children a little better than they currently do" (p. 3). Burnham's book is therefore consistent with the conclusions drawn from this research about broadening the number of professionals able to apply PCP in their everyday interactions. The literature already contains a number of references which describe the successful use of PCP with parents, young people and teaching staff (e.g. Pcaputi et al, 2006; Ravenette, 1996, 1999).

6.2.3 Aspirations

Congruent with the data from the current study, the extant literature indicates a correlation between young people having educational and vocational aspirations and

the way in which they engage with school. Raising young people's educational and vocational aspirations is formalised in this grounded Hope Theory as being synonymous with goal setting and a key part of raising hopes which shape how young people engage in school and the community. In the literature Schoon and Parsons (2002) suggest that young people's aspirations typically shift during Key Stage 3 (age 11-14) from being idealistic to being more realistic, with those from more disadvantaged backgrounds becoming more aware of barriers to their accomplishment (Gottfredson, 2002). Participants' aspirations inevitably varied according to their background and plans, ranging from glamorous careers in football or music to more modestly following in their parents' vocational footsteps. However, given that vocational guidance is predominantly provided towards the end of young people's time in school it may be that educators, and EPs have much to gain by mediating vocational experiences, and thus the meaning of education (Thompson and Barton, 2007), earlier in young people's secondary school careers.

Participation in education has been predominantly studied from a rationalistic perspective (Archer and Yamisha, 2003), where it is assumed that it is a logical decision to hold educational aspirations because of the eventual social and economic benefits (Thompson and Barton, 2007). From this perspective, non-participation is viewed from a deficit model, linked with a lack of knowledge, understanding or dysfunction; the corollary of this being that initiatives aimed at raising awareness and providing information will be sufficient to induce change. This research, however, hints at a more complex picture – young people may be committed to the attainment of money through non-academic pathways or ensuring their physical or social survival by focusing on consolidating status and respect. Any of these are legitimate hoped-for goals that may eclipse or supplant educational or vocational aspirations in the distant future. Merely highlighting the importance of education is unlikely to lead to change. Young people may also feel forced to adopt certain methods of coping that can be seen as incompatible with academic success but which support their ability to stay safe in the present. Similarly, efforts to sustain academic and vocational hopes may entail them sacrificing of status, respect and freedoms in the present.

This research supports Archer and Yamisha (2003) in suggesting that the aspirations of young people growing up in urban communities are no different from those of others, ranging from the idealistic to the realistic. However, as illustrated in Hope Theory, having a goal does not guarantee success, as it is dependent on the young

person's sense of agency and perception of relevant pathways which can be traversed. i.e., aspirations are necessary but insufficient conditions for hope and need to be accompanied by a concomitant sense of self-efficacy and pathway knowledge. However, most complex organisations also have ambiguous and conflicting goals (Weick, 1979) and it may be that the goals of school are similarly opaque to young people. A number of participants acknowledged the importance of getting a good education: Levine and Sutherland (2008) suggest young people were frequently told of the importance of school but lacked the ability to map the relevance of school subjects onto future life opportunities. Consistent with this, some young people perceived not seeing the relevance of school as a factor in shaping disaffection or had only a hazy notion of how their education would be helpful for them.

Weick (1979) suggests that mediating sharper goal definition is an important way to build motivation in such contexts and Levine and Sutherland (2008) provide a more up to date example of such an intervention. They found that a formal career development program, targeting academically at-risk students by allowing them to experience different career choices early in their school careers, produced greater academic resilience by increasing intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to engage in school. The program also acted as a catalyst to foster discussion about career choices between home, school and students and help students to frame school as a meaningful and motivating context for learning:

Career Trek engages children in meaningful career exploration activities that encourage them to actively think, grow, experience change and develop by creating the life they want to live, the work they want to do, and the means by which to achieve their goals. (Levine and Sutherland, 2008, p. 211).

The program specifically targeted the active involvement of families and school, creating a sense of alliance between the three groups and a forum from which the common identification of goals, mediation of self-belief and delineation of relevant academic pathways to success could occur. These concepts are particularly significant given that a key theory alluded to in the transcripts was that of the alliance between student and teacher.

6.2.4 The working alliance

The success of the Career Trek program and the teacher-student relationship may partly be due to the operation of a successful collaborative alliance between school, home and the young person. The Therapeutic Working Alliance³ (TWA) has enjoyed popularity over recent years, not least because of its robust, moderate association with therapeutic outcomes, independent of practitioner' theoretical orientation (Barber, Connolly, Critis-Christoph, Gladis and Siqueland, 2009). Indeed, in a field with 286 categories for mental dysfunction (Hubble, Duncan and Miller, 1999), bifurcated by more than 200 therapy models and over 400 therapeutic techniques (Lemay and Ghazal, 2001), that a single pantheoretical model can account for change process common to all in adults (Green, 2006; Martin, Garske and Davis, 2000) and young people (Shirk and Karver, 2003) is remarkable.

In clinical psychology the TWA conceptualises the relationship between client and therapist as encompassing three interrelated components: Bond (positive affective bonds, including liking, trust, respect and caring), as well as more cognitive components, including consensus about and active commitment to the goals of therapy, termed Goal Agreement, and the means by which these goals can be achieved, called Task Agreement (Bordin, 1979).

Where the term 'alliance' is employed there is also generally a sense of positive partnership, in which practitioner and client are acknowledged as both being actively committed to the therapy and believe the other is engaged likewise in the process. This language of active involvement echoes recent commitments by schools to active learning and teaching techniques which place greater emphasis on the centrality of the relationship between teacher and student, as their success is more dependent on the ability of staff to engage and motivate their students, than on traditional pedagogical methods (Lynch and Cicchetti, 1997).

A review of the literature regarding teacher-student relationships in secondary education highlights the lack of meaningful connection as a frequent problem,

³ The Therapeutic Working Alliance is synonymous with the terms 'therapeutic relationship,' 'therapeutic working alliance,' 'helping alliance' and 'working alliance' (McGuire-Snieckus et al., 2007). Hereinafter, the term shall be described as the Working Alliance, abbreviated to WA, with reference to education and as the Therapeutic Working Alliance (TWA), with reference to research grounded in therapeutic studies.

particularly in the development of SEBD. Entry to secondary education may be seen as a tipping point in how young people regard teaching staff (Cefai and Copper, 2010). Indeed, Lempers and Clark-Lempers (1992) found that students in the secondary stages of education generally did not perceive the relationship with their secondary school teacher(s) as particularly important or meaningful. They linked this negative evaluation with the increase in institutional barriers (e.g ,larger class size, no fixed class teacher, faster paced curriculum. Wetz, 2009).

However, the current GT research somewhat contradicts the extant literature in this area. Participants clearly valued teachers they perceived as having the necessary subject content, pedagogical and behaviour management knowledge to enable them to achieve in school, as well as those who showed them respect by listening to what they had to say. The three components of alliance are essential in enabling teachers to negotiate task and goal agreement in students. Research has already documented the role of teachers and parents in shaping a sense of academic self-efficacy and Brossart, Willson, Patton, Kivlighan and Multon (1998) and Ursano, Kartheiser and Ursano, 2007), suggest that the processes involved in therapy are analogous to those involved in teaching and learning. Sharing insights across these professions is, therefore, a natural development, within which the construct of the Therapeutic Working Alliance particularly stands out in light of this thesis. Additionally, a central theme to the success of the Career Trek program, referenced above, was the construction of a sense of alliance between young people, home and school by mediating a sense of agreement over career aspirations and the relevance of school in achieving them. This is encapsulated in research by Toste (2007), who used an adapted version of the Working Alliance Inventory (WAI; Hovarth & Greenberg, 1986) to contemporaneously explore teacher and student perceptions of alliance. She found that children's perception of goal agreement was the component of alliance most strongly related to academic achievement. With this in mind, It may be illuminative to conduct a longitudinal study of the development of alliance in the classroom and clarify precisely how the different components of alliance interact with academic attainment over the course of the academic year, as well as with the culture of teacher and student.

Rogers (2009), Toste (2007), Ursano, Kartheiser and Ursano (2007) and Robertson (1996) form a small group of researchers who have published articles explicitly outlining the potential inherent in the WA for educators and students. However, the TWA's progenitor, Bordin (1979), always intended his model to be a trans-

disciplinary construct, particularly emphasizing its potential in teaching, learning and mentoring. Rogers (2009) suggests that the legitimacy of this transfer is underlined by common goal-orientated, educational pathways, in which all teaching and learning activities can be assumed to constitute embedded working alliances. However, given the prominent role in this thesis allocated to parents and extended families in supplementing the education of each student, it would be of interest to explore extending the concept to encompass the professional relationship between teacher and parent and EP and teacher. Toste (2007) herself remarks on the possibility of a model of consultation based on the WA and, given Hill's (1972) identification of the unique strengths in black families (strong-kinship bonds, a strong work orientation, adaptability of family roles, high achievement orientation and religious orientation), many of which resonate strongly in the transcripts of this research, it makes sense for EPs to focus on finding innovative ways to enhance this relationship. This is particularly important given Gosai (2009) and Reynold's (2010) concerns that Black-British parents' views of education and educators may be skewed by their own possibly negative experiences. A good WA may be a prerequisite to breaking down barriers and enable Black-British cultural groups to feel respected for their strengths.

A key alienating factor in the current research was found to be the unfair application of behavioural consequences. Newmann (1989) has identified the over-reliance in schools and society on coercive power as major sources of disaffection and alienation (Kasen et al. 2009;). The diametric between coercion and alliance is evident, just as was the transformational nature of a positive adult relationship in school, supporting the idea that one of the most effective resiliency resources available to young people is a good relationship with at least one adult, particularly in the absence of available parental relationships or deviant peers. However, simple 'liking' was only one factor relevant to the formation of alliance. The ability of the teacher to successfully mediate learning opportunities within their zone of proximal development, enabling students to find autonomy and meaning within their education was also central, as was the negotiation and identification of educational goals, or aspirations.

Noordsy et al. (2002) suggests that a strong working alliance is a precondition to the development of motivation, with motivation being the precondition of action. As such, the WA represents an elegant synthesis that transcends traditional theoretical, cultural and technical divisions (Rogers, 2009). The concept resonates strongly with the dominant themes of the current research: that the relationship between teacher

and student is seen by young people as a crucial academic and social resource that is transformational in its potential. It is, however, based on more than just 'liking,' encompassing a number of cognitive and motivational dimensions which are congruent with the grounded Hope Theory, including the perceived adequacy of teacher professional skills, understanding the 'point' of education and holding aspirations for the future.

The WA literature is currently unable to specify the precise mechanisms which underlie a successful alliance and mediate change (Kazdin and Nock, 2003). However, there is a growing body of research exploring WA's relationship with Hope, with Nakagami (2009) suggesting that the effects of WA are mediated through hope, providing an unexpected level of cohesion to this analysis that is encouraging and supportive of its validity (See below). It is this perspective that the closing portion of the discussion addresses. The WA is all the more significant in the light of research indicating that alliance can develop effectively in ethnically and culturally dissimilar therapist-client dyads (Erdur, et al. 2000). If this can be shown to be so in the classroom, as well as in therapy, then this construct may challenge the widespread belief that Black-British young people achieve best when paired with culturally similar teachers, and lead to an emphasis more on the alliance building skills of the teacher, irrespective of ethnicity, and less on "parachuting in" black role models (Sewell, 2010b). Given what is known in the extant literature and what young people reflected in this research, the alliance between teacher and student may be most properly conceptualised as the decisive element in the classroom - one that Wetz (2009) feels is yet to be fully utilised in secondary education and is unlikely to be without systemic changes. In the meantime the WA and Hope literature may provide some direction as to how EPs can help in ameliorating this limitation.

6.2.5 Gangs

Gangs were espoused as a key referent point for young people in their efforts to explain community wide patterns of violence, victimisation and crime. Echoing conclusions by Hallsworth and Young (2008), the interview transcripts leave the overwhelming impression that these young people inhabit a world where the possibility of sudden, arbitrary violence and victimisation is "*never far away*" (p. 181) and that gangs are the primary cause of this. Within this school is viewed as something of a 'buffer zone,' offering respite from the feeling that they have to constantly navigate a pathway between safety and sudden violent attack. However,

transition to and from school presented an increased risk of victimisation that was seemingly most effectively moderated by the availability and use of private means of transportation.

It was evident that the high recorded frequency of fatal stabbings and shootings in the community provided an apparent evidence base for these assertions, reinforcing the suggestion that gangs are lethally active across the city (Hallsworth and Young, 2008) and around Asbury Park in particular. However, it has long been argued that speculations by the media leave an amplified sense of the risks of victimisation and Hallsworth and Young suggest they may be the primary drivers behind the public perception that the UK is in the grip of a 'gang epidemic.'

This media focus has been reflected by the government where much of the rhetoric and practice recommendations have been recycled from the USA, where gang activities are notoriously widespread in schools and across communities (Hallsworth and Young, 2008). Exposure to community violence is an established risk factor for negative developmental outcomes (Patchin, Huebner, McCluskey, Varano and Bynum, 2006) and, in a culture of 24-hour news, all children, young people and adults are arguably exposed to such events. As a result Patchin et al. (2006) suggests there is a need to extend the use of the term "victim" beyond those immediate targets of, or witnesses to, violent crime. This is not to make victims out of every member of a community but to acknowledge that the effects of a violent crime reach beyond its immediate witnesses. This broader understanding of victimisation was evident in the attitudes and behaviours of the young people in this research. They were particularly vigilant to informational aspects of the environment, ranging from the media to the disclosures of peers and parents about gang activities, using this feedback to calibrate their movements and cue coping strategies to the perceived risks in the community. It may be that preoccupation with these processes could impact negatively on their ability to focus on educational goals and vocational aspirations, particularly when status and respect were seen as important moderators.

Negative emotions, such as anxiety, are known to narrow and restrict cognitive processes, impacting particularly on working memory (Darke, 1988). This is only one of the pathways through which living in a culture of fear can impact on a young person's ability to do well in school. Oatley (1987) provides a framework against which the impact of emotions on goal setting can be more completely understood. He suggests that emotions provide a solution to problems of transition between plans in

systems with multiple goals. They occur at junctions of social plans and so can direct and shape a young person's ability to work towards hoped for goals. This provides another pathway through which fear can impact on a young person's ability to sustain hoped for goals.

Fear of victimisation may be exacerbated by frequent misattributions in the media (Hallsworth and Young, 2008; Antrobus, 2009), where the well-documented processes of deviance amplification operate to help maintain the fear of gang related victimisation out of proportion to the objective reality. However, there is not an established tradition of gang research in the UK, meaning that relevant data are not routinely collected to evaluate the objective risks (Hallsworth and Young, 2008). This makes it unsafe to suggest conclusive links between gang activity and crime in the community around Asbury Park, much less for EPs to use it as a construct to make sense of the behaviour of Black-British students in this area. However, setting aside the methodological implications of non-standardised research, a meta-analytic review suggests active gang membership in the UK occupies no more than 3-7 percent of young people in cities (Hallsworth and Young, 2008). It may be that gang members disproportionately account for violence in schools and communities but it is more likely that their impact on these statistics is minimal: gang members in Britain have been most commonly associated with non-violent delinquent activity (Hallsworth and Silverstone, 2009) and are highly likely to self-exclude from school (Hutchinson and Kyle, 1993). Moreover, Hallsworth and Young (2008) emphasise that "not all violence committed by gang members is gang related. Violence may be committed by gang members, but it is not gang related if it is not enacted as part of a gang's efforts to further its own achievements..." (p. 179). They concluded that the majority of violent crimes are committed by violent individuals acting independently and who may or may not have gang affiliation.

This picture raises an interesting discrepancy between the statistical reality and the fears disclosed by the participants in this research, who often accorded gangs borderline omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent properties. This fear outstrips even the most extreme estimates of gang prevalence and was a significant factor in shaping the adaptations of the students who held them. This is pertinent to EPs, as one of the effects of preoccupation with gang related danger is that young people's aspirations become increasingly limited to the matter of daily survival, at the expense of the more distal targets of self-actualisation, academic attainment and gainful employment.

This is supported by Broadhurst, Duffin and Taylor (2008) in their independent review of gangs, gang culture and schools. They found little evidence of violent gang related behaviours, even in critical case schools. Gang influence may, therefore, be more a question of perspective than evidence-base, with this research suggesting that its pernicious influence is shaped by a number of drivers, i.e:

- ❖ the high visibility of gang themes in youth culture;
- ❖ a high incidence of violent crime leading to gang-based speculations by the media, which shape the constructed realities of young people, parents and peers;
- ❖ gang knowledge being constructed as a legitimate strategy to attain respect and status;
- ❖ young people moving in groups that resemble gangs as a 'safety in numbers' response to the appraised dangers;
- ❖ a burgeoning gang culture, where the trappings of gang life are adopted by individuals who view them as part of their cultural identity but who are not necessarily affiliated with gangs; and
- ❖ young people talking amongst themselves, volunteering knowledge of gangs in order to scare / gain status and prestige / protect themselves.

This is not to deny the existence of gangs but to highlight the discrepancy between the high recorded fear of gangs in this research and the self-reported lack of any first hand experience by the young people who participated in this research. Young people are relying on the second and third hand accounts of their peers, parents and the media to shape their understanding of the causes of crime in their communities. This point resonates strongly with Halsworth and Young's (2008, p. 192) concluding comment:

Unless you have good reason:

Refrain from doing gang talk to your friends

Refrain from doing gang talk to your enemies

Refrain from doing gang talk to yourself.

It is the frequency of gang talk that may lead to an exaggerated sense of their prevalence. For EPs the gang may be a legitimate lens in explaining the adaptations of young people who live in fear of them, and the high-risk behaviours that can follow. However, in enacting Hallsworth and Young's closing advice, EPs may be

better placed to help schools confront these phenomena obliquely (Kay, 2010). This may be achieved by studying the reciprocal processes that cause youth sub-cultures to develop norms and values that clash with the official school culture, as well as in helping provide young people with something else to talk about by helping schools align themselves more closely with young people's hopes and ambitions. In the meantime gangs will remain tempting because they offer respect, status and security, as well as power (Knox, 1994). In this case the question is not how best to suppress gangs but how best to substitute another method of meeting these needs that is more congruent with academic and economic success and stability.

6.2.6 Peers

There is a discrepancy in this research between the emphasis young people placed on personal agency, adaptation and autonomy and a tendency to explain challenging behaviours as being a function of peer pressure. Traditionally the notion of peer pressure assumes that people enter an agentic state where they become vehicles for the morals and values of other people (i.e., can be pressured into acting in ways different to how they would act in isolation). However, within the interviews it appeared that peer pressure was more a theory that was constructed and applied on a post-hoc basis, explaining behaviours with reference to the pressures for conformity exerted by other people. This was also at odds with the level of choice and autonomy in the adaptations espoused by the participants.

Understanding the processes underlying peer affiliation and influence is important, as association with deviant peers is the strongest predictor of externalising behaviours (Dekovic, 1999). This research suggests that young people espouse a high degree of personal agency in their decision-making but are also paradoxically likely to explain those same decisions in terms of peer pressure. This discrepancy may be resolved in the extant literature by referring to Ungar (2000), who found that young people also tended to view their conformity to group norms as a consciously employed strategy to enhance personal and social power. If conformity and agency are compatible than this suggests that conformity entails a level of agency that has been largely unrecognised (Ungar, 2000) and so theories and models that permit this level of choice may provide a useful framework from which to facilitate change.

One of the primary pathways through which this is perpetuated is also school-based, through peer group networks. As a case in point, virologists have long illustrated how

germs can spread exponentially through networks and Christakis and Fowler (2009) suggest behaviours and attitudes may be transmitted in a similar way through hyperdyadic propagation. This means behaviours can be reciprocally shaped by people who are geographically, culturally and historically removed, allowing attitudes originating in one group to spread contagiously through diverse social networks, including peer groups, classrooms, schools and communities, forming a common culture to which all young people voluntarily or involuntarily subscribe by virtue of their interconnecting relationships (Christakis and Fowler, 2009). Peer groups can also serve as referents for young people who do not belong to them but who may identify with or emulate their behaviours in an effort to join them or achieve status (Kreager, 2007). However, they may not be aware of parallel psychological processes by which behaviours can spread independently, not just of an individual's own values but of their conscious awareness (Christakis and Fowler, 2009).

Humans are biologically primed to automatically mimic the people around them (Lakin, Jefferies, Cheng and Chartrand, 2003); an evolutionarily significant reflex that can ease the development of rapport, affiliation and relationships with peers (Bavelas, Black, Lemery and Mullett, 1986). In mirroring others' behaviours humans reproduce their internal emotional states through afferent feedback loops. This can produce a ripple effect, or emotional contagion (Barsade, 2002), as emotions spread through the reproduction of their behavioural components. Christakis and Fowler (2009) suggest that behaviours spread through similar processes, as systems of 'mirror neurons' internally reproduce observed behaviours. This neurological practice makes it easier for people to reproduce these behaviours themselves, even if they conflict with their own value systems (Sage and Kinderman, 1999). These mechanisms mediate the spread of emotions, norms and behaviours, such as fear or happiness, low level disruption or even the fear of gang based activities, through social networks.

Economists, criminologists and sociologists have already successfully applied network models to explain diverse social events. Now the implications of shared group social processes are increasingly being recognised in psychology. The ripples of a social action may similarly describe causal chains that lead young people to cope in certain manners or adopt certain goals and aspirations. From a theoretical perspective, social network theory may be regarded as a logical extension of systems theory, but providing a more promising mathematical and empirical basis for successful intervention (Warren, Frankling and Streeter, 1998). Large social

networks, such as schools, encompass a broad group of diversely interconnected adults, children and young people and as such form a hyperdyadic canvas across which behaviours, such as low-level disruption, may ripple (Christakis and Fowler, 2009).

Such networks could be manipulated in terms of the patterns of connections or the process of contagion, to foster more positive individual and collective behaviour (Barry and Wentzel, 2006). If network ties could be discerned on a school wide scale, it would be possible to target influential individuals, or those most at risk of being affected by the interpersonal spread of behaviours for the development of alliance. Moreover, it would be possible to develop interventions that collectively target groups of people, and change not only behaviours, but the cultural context in which they occur.

The sociogram, as the tool that describes the architecture of social networks, may then be utilised by EPs in mapping the paths through which behaviours travel. Their use in the study of sexually transmitted epidemics highlights this potential, showing group behaviours may be driven by the actions of a handful of people who are densely embedded in their networks. The importance of developing good working alliances with these young people may, therefore, help teachers tactically create cultures of collaboration. Similarly, mediating a particular aspiration with these young people may lead to its propagation throughout a class, with obvious implications for shaping the positive behaviour of young people with behavioural difficulties (Farmer and Farmer, 1996).

As mentioned above, the ripple effect of behaviour provides a pathway for the potential application of mathematical systems perspectives in the study and prediction of behavioural change. For example, the concept that small changes in the initial state of a system, such as a dyad, can lead to large changes in the end state of a super-organism, such as a school culture, provide pathways through which teachers may strategically deploy the working alliance construct and enhance the resiliency-enhancing potential of the school.

However, at present there is little research providing the evidence to substantiate these extrapolations. In one of the few studies, Christakis and Fowler (2009) documented the spread of behaviours that reinforce obesity. They found that weight gain can spread through social ties but not as a unicentric phenomenon, as

suggested by chaos theory, but as a multi-centric pandemic: there was no single cause, which indirectly shaped the weight of a whole social network, but multiple influences that combined and created a culture and influence out of all proportion to the effects one might have had alone (Gladwell, 2002).

In analogy this suggests that in order to shift a culture one must pay attention to the multiple influences that reinforce behaviour. Claxton (2008) draws attention to the importance of aligning not just the espoused rhetoric, but the embodied practice with the official school culture to deliver positive messages about behaviour and learning. He suggests it is the everyday 'student-teacher' and 'student-student' interactions that signal this coordination and which are the most potent influences on cultures of learning and behaviour. For example, he lists the messages contained in the school reception area, work displays, school councils and the structure of assemblies as some of the fora where messages about behaviour can be strategically interwoven into the school culture. Simple changes to the presentation and structuring of this information can make them more contagious and produce a multi-centric bombardment that can help change not just what young people do, but what they think.

To summarise, it seems that in the UK the term 'gang' has been over-extended. This is understandable as it is appealing to use simple labels (Hallsworth and Young, 2008) to reduce complex social problems, such as the exclusions gap, to reductionist solutions. However, social reality can rarely be understood with reductions and gang related crime seems to be a classic illustrations of this dictum, both in school and the wider community. However, these misattributions are shaping the understanding and behaviour of the young people who inhabit these communities, leading to cultures of fear that precipitate coping strategies that can become incompatible with academic success.

Firmer foundations for EP practice may be found by focusing on the forces that create youth sub-cultures that permit anti-school norms, manifesting in climates of low-level disruption and school disengagement. School systems may be at a cross roads in the recognition of these processes, and interventions aimed at the overall school climate may be more effective than exclusion. Extensive attention to the context in which behaviours occur may be the most ethical pathway to creating a multi-centric bombardment of young-people with positive behavioural messages. This will help change not just what young people do, but what they think and talk

about as well. If properly managed this will help EPs and schools avoid the misappropriation of time and resources on popular theories that may be better spent developing the expertise of teachers in creating meaningful alliances with young people and parents. For EPs, systemic principles should be maintained at the heart of this work and of their everyday practice, informed and reasoned by the application of psychological theory. Through this they may assist schools to work more proactively and travel more hopefully on a journey where the forces facing them may otherwise seem insurmountable.

6.3 Future applications: an unexpected synergy?

*As social creatures, we need to confide in someone
about our dreams and goals
(Rodriguez-Hanley & Snyder, 2000, p. 46).*

Hope and WA are intriguing concepts for EPs concerned with identifying positive and practical psychological constructs to apply in their research and practice, not least because both have been robustly associated with change but because both are seen to be malleable and, therefore, amenable to intervention (Lopez et al. 2003). In clinical psychology they have also been shown to be effective in culturally dissimilar client-practitioner pairings. Although applying these constructs in school may be premature, the review so far has hinted at parallels between the two structures. Only one study by Magyar-Moe, Edwards and Lopez (2001) has explicitly explored a synergy between hope and WA and recommended the development of alliance as an important method of accentuating hope (Lopez et al. 2003).

According to Lopez et al:

...hope flourishes when people develop a strong bond to one or more caregivers, allowing the person to perceive themselves as having a sense of control in the world. Thus, it seems that for both the therapeutic alliance and for hope to develop, a supportive environment is needed in which people receive basic instruction in goal pursuits from a positive model (2003, p.10).

Raising hopes by working with young people using WA principles may be logical, particularly as Magyar-Moe et al. (2001) found a high degree of shared variance between the two models, suggesting that interventions in one will be likely to affect

the other. However, Nakagami (2009), albeit investigating the relationship between TWA, Hope and outcomes in the treatment of adult patients with schizophrenia, concluded that hope was the mechanism through which alliance affected outcomes. Ringl (2001) also suggested that males with high dispositional hope and trait hope tended to have goals that were generally unrealistic and without strategies toward achievement, concluding that value can be gained from consulting with students regarding long and short term goal setting and developing strategies to achieve them. This is also consistent with findings by Toste (2011), who found students' perceived goal agreement was most predictive of academic performance.

The direction of this relationship suggests that building a good WA is a crucial method of facilitating, or harnessing, hope. However, Lopez et al. (2003) acknowledge that the models share so much similarity that to talk of one without referring to the other is almost impossible, proposing the noun "*Hopeful Alliance*" (p. 9) as a bridging term.

Semantics aside, the current Grounded Hope Theory joins Snyder's (1994) in emphasizing the importance of educational and/or vocational goals in helping Black-British young people stay engaged in school. A hopeful WA provides the context for this sort of discussion (Snyder, 2000). Taken together, the working alliance and hope literature suggests that building a hopeful alliance involves: (1) respectfully negotiating flexible therapeutic goals; (2) generating numerous and varied pathways to goal attainment; and (3) translating the sense of connectedness between therapist and client into the mental energy necessary to sustain pursuit toward therapeutic goals. Lopez et al. (2003) go on to propose an in depth list of strategies for accentuating hope, namely, i) Hope Finding, ii) Hope Bonding, iii) Hope Enhancing and iv) Hope Reminding (see Lopez et al. 2003, for a full description). It should be noted that these terms cannot be thought of as being unique to the target population of Black-British young people but as generally useful constructs when working with all young people.

However, this conclusion is tentative and based on little research. Also, although guided by the current thesis, it goes beyond that which can be reasonably inferred on the strength of these data. It is, however, a key element of developing a grounded theory that it informs and shapes future research and there is certainly a need for more research to elaborate the nature of the relationship between Hope and Alliance and more so to explore the application of these principles in the classroom. This may

be a meaningful application of EP time and effort. In the meantime, interventions targeting WA and or Hope can be incorporated into models of consultation. However, at present the educational research in this field is pending and the clinical literature is composed of small-scale studies with specific clinical groups and methodological flaws. As a case-in-point, Kratz (2010) found a null-relationship between alliance and outcomes, although a significant one for hope suggesting that there remain unanswered questions which can be the target for research. However, interventions targeting Alliance and/or Hope are legitimate targets for EPs and may be incorporated into the basis of models of consultation delivery, intervention and primary prevention.

6.4 Discussion (part 2)

I have come to a frightening conclusion... As a teacher I possess tremendous power to make a youth's life miserable or joyous. I can humiliate or humour or heal. In all situations it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or deescalated, and the youth humanised or dehumanised.

Ginott (1972, p. 5)

6.5 Introduction

This chapter will discuss Hope Theory and develop its applications and implications for EPs and other educational professionals. The limitations of the research will be discussed and avenues for future research introduced.

6.6 Discussion

The starting point for this research was to study the resiliency adaptations of Black-British students in Asbury Park in order to inform and calibrate EP practices and SEN resources with the accounts of what they value and appreciate. As such, the original intent was not theory development but the extension of a useful construct – resilience – to make sense of a confused area in research and policy. However, the analysis of the transcripts of ten young people led to the construction of 79 different Focused Codes, which fed into 19 Memos. From these the author constructed a grounded Hope Theory, which identified Hope as the most salient and powerful theme across the interviews. The analysis highlighted that there were many different routes into resilience or risk for Black British young people in Asbury Park, making it difficult to know which should be prioritised for intervention. This is not a new problem for those interested in the resiliency enhancing properties of people's physical and social ecologies (Fongay et al. 1994). Neither are these conclusion unique to black British boys. Rather, this research underscores resiliency's status as a construct that offers a rich tapestry of interventions to those willing to persevere with its application for all young people, not just those of a particular cultural background (Maesten, 2003).

The evident equifinality suggests that resilience building is unlikely to be achieved uncentrically – resilience is not reducible to a single magic bullet or panacea but a process made up of multiple influences that combine and create a culture of resiliency out of proportion to the effects that any one factor has alone (Gladwell, 2002). Applying resilience in a meaningful and helpful manner in the lives of children

and young people, irrespective of their culture, requires cognisance of these interactions. However, it also means for staff and concerned professionals that resiliency can mean something more – the belief that, no matter how small, something can always be done to facilitate change.

This grounded Hope Theory was constructed from a triad of categories: 'Constructed Hope,' encompassing those factors which shape the identification of hoped for goals; 'Opportunities to Experience Agency,' including those factors relevant to young people's sense that they are able and have the will to pursue hoped for goals; and 'Competing Pathways,' which described young people's knowledge of what they need to do to achieve their goals, as well as their ability to balance the demands of other competing goals and threats, which can impact negatively on their ability to focus on academic or vocational aspirations. This adaptation delineates a malleability, consistent with the extant literature, which suggests that Black-British young people are living in a constructed climate of fear and struggling to make sense of and work towards a better life.

The results of this study provide insight into the lived experiences of Black-British young people in secondary school. Few studies have specifically explored the experiences of this group while they are still enrolled in mainstream education and before they have experienced exclusion. This study serves to provide a thick description of the factors felt to be important to the resiliency processes and coping of ten Black-British students attending Asbury Park and living in the community surrounding it. As such it updates the academic field and provides some insight into the psychological theory which EPs can apply in a helpful manner in this area. The constructs of Hope and Alliance were identified as being especially congruent with the narratives of the participants. Following a review and comparison with the extant literature, the author felt that development of the term 'Hopeful Working Alliance' was a useful application of this research and that EPs could work with teachers to develop this concept as part of their pedagogical skill set.

The research cannot comment on the extent to which Black-British young people in Asbury Park have a different experience to white young people. Although institutional racism is a predominant theme in the extant literature, it was not commented on to a significant extent by the participants in this research. As already highlighted, it may be that young people did not feel this research was a context in which they could legitimately talk about this theme, although the fact that several students directly

referenced the author's ethnicity suggests otherwise. Rather than prematurely reading too much into this, it would be sensible to make it the focus of further theoretical sampling.

However, with regards to the tendency in the extant research to advocate the provision of black role models as a primary element of intervention, this research did not highlight a particular preference among students for teachers of a particular ethnicity. Rather, it suggests that investing time and resources in expanding teachers' ability to initiate, maintain and repair hopeful alliances with students may be a fruitful focus for time and energy. This is not to detract from the need for positive black role models but to acknowledge that all have a part to play in shaping young people's resilience, irrespective of their ethnicity. Building the resiliency fostering abilities of systems may be a more effective way of realising this principle.

The participants draw attention to the importance of aligning not just the espoused rhetoric of staff but their embodied practices with the official school culture in delivering positive messages about behaviour and learning, although this was not triangulated through classroom observation at Asbury Park. Claxton (2008) endorses this message, arguing it is the everyday 'student-teacher' and 'student-student' interactions that signal this coordination and which are the most potent influences on cultures of learning and behaviour. This is certainly a message consistent with the emphasis placed by participants on their social networks and their sensitivity to any perceived hypocrisy in important adult and peer relationships. An alliance between teachers, students and parents formalises this observation and provides a framework that can be used to initiate, repair and maintain collaborative relationships. This is especially pertinent given the 'Mercenary,' 'Grafter' and 'Ineffective' teacher categories which young people delineated.

The prominent role that young people allocated to members of their social network (peers, parents, religious leaders and police) introduces the language of social networks to resiliency and creates a world where radical change is possible when attention is paid to coordinating a multi-centric 'bombardment' of messages in young people's social and physical ecologies and how these ripple through schools and communities. This potential for small initial changes to grow and facilitate larger changes is congruent with the core category that was constructed from this research – the development and maintenance of hope: for young people this represented the belief that they could work towards goals that were important to them personally.

Comparisons with the extant literature identified the WA as a method for building relationships with young people. However, the emphasis placed on social networks above and beyond the teacher-student dyad suggests that it may be useful for EPs and school staff to extend the concept of alliance to encompass all members of a student's social ecology. For EPs, who more frequently have the opportunity to bring together members of a young person's social ecology, using the WA as an explicit model for consultation may be an intriguing concept to explore further.

To summarise, interviews with ten Black-British teenagers identified a heterogeneous number of pathways relevant to health related behaviours. The list of 79 Focus Codes encompasses a number of school and community based processes. This means coping and resilience does not start or end with education or time in school. It arguably necessitates EPs to elevate community based psychology from a rhetorical ideal to a reality of everyday practice if they are to be able to help coordinate change in young people's physical and social ecologies. The concept of a hopeful working alliance may provide a framework to help address this need.

6.7 Implications

Findings from the present study are in line with a growing trend in the research to study the relationship between WA, Hope and positive outcomes (e.g., Nakagami, 2009; Lopez et al. 2003). How distinctive the WA and Hope constructs are remains questionable, with a high degree of shared variance (Magyar-Moe, Edwards and Lopez, 2001), indicating that, at the very least, interventions directed at one will also influence the other. As mentioned above, the development of the term 'Hopeful Alliance' may be a useful concept for EPs to apply until research can be conducted that clarifies these theoretical distinctions. It is possible, however, that a sense of WA is reducible to a sense of inter-subjectivity regarding hoped-for goals. However, the extent that these mechanisms tap distinct change processes remains unresolved in the literature, although Nakagami (2009) does suggest a linear relationship with the effects of WA being mediated through Hope. This is a topic for further investigation in the classroom but, in the meantime, the concept of the Hopeful Alliance is accepted as a useful bridging term (Lopez et al. 2003), as it seems arguable that in school re-engaging disaffected students is best achieved through an encouraging and supportive relationship focused on goal setting.

For EPs it may be that their role as hopeful practitioners needs to be more explicitly acknowledged but their ability to facilitate hope may be dependent on their ability to be cognisant of other sources: spirituality, self-efficacy, important and supportive relationships, as well as autonomy and academic and vocational goals are important sources that were highlighted in this research. More negatively, young people shared their concerns regarding the perceived unfair application of school consequences, the experience of discrimination in the community and of a dominant gang culture in the community surrounding the school.

6.8 Limitations

This study should be interpreted in light of its limitations, and so must be regarded as little more than a tentative step that awaits the triangulation and support of longitudinal research and further cycles of theoretical sampling with relevant populations. There is a need to check that the category of hope resonates with the lived experiences of young people situated in Asbury Park and is not just an imposed etic construction of the author. Until then, this research represents only one contextualised perspective from a number of different possible interpretations. It is not an exhaustive or absolute account of resiliency processes for Black-British young people in Asbury Park, particularly as it fails to account for the effects of gender, age and socio-economic status.

The low rate of return of parental consents means that there is also likely to be a selection bias in the sample, which consists only of those young people whose parents wanted them to participate in the research. Steps have been taken to clarify the analytical procedure followed by the author and so enable readers to retrace those steps and draw their own conclusions as to the validity of the analysis. This will determine whether they view these insights as applicable in their own systems and context.

With regards to the position of this grounded Hope Theory relative to the extant literature, its uniqueness is somewhat diluted by the close congruence with Snyder's (1997) model. Whilst this to an extent provides some triangulation of the author's conclusions, the present study arguably goes one step further in its application of the construct to schools and communities and by its greater emphasis on the need for young people to balance competing demands in their community with their high educational and vocational aspirations. It also introduces an ecological perspective

which may be far more conducive to effective systemic intervention. The ability of young people to focus and achieve can be compromised by contextual factors which force them to be more mindful of every day adaptations – living day by day – and lose sight of the more distal goals of educational and vocational achievement. This grounded Hope Theory is, therefore, contextualised in the communities the young people could perceive as violent and unstable. It may be that applying Hope Theory in a different context will result in a different category being emphasised.

Although causal relationships have been queried in this study, it is impossible to make definitive statements regarding their existence. The impact of hope on school processes awaits further exploration through well designed studies that make use of a mixed-methods design before these suggestions can be supported by data. Toste (2007) provides an analytic tool – the modified WAI – with which the WA may be studied together with hope and resilience.

On a number of occasions, young people explicitly referenced the ethnicity of the researcher, suggesting that this discourse may have been shaped by the context of the interview. As a result it would be speculative to read too much into the relative invisibility of race-based discourses in this research. However, it does seem legitimate to observe that young people were more sensitive to discrimination in the community according to their status as young people than their status as being Black-British. Where race was prevalent was in their belief that it increased their risk of violent victimisation, rather than in institutional discrimination. The paucity of data in this area means that any further analysis would be little more than speculation, suggesting that this should be a topic for further research. It would, therefore, be an important step to conduct a further series of interviews with an explicit focus on the perceived differences between the experiences of black and white pupils in the community and in the school.

The lack of a sufficient sample size to conduct theoretical sampling was a significant limitation of this research. Theoretical sampling is a central feature of grounded theory methodology (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and a number of groups can be identified as being worthwhile inviting to contribute their resiliency perspectives and extend this search:

- Information-orientated samples: Black-British young people on the gifted and talented register; Black-British young people who have been excluded from

school; Black-British young people who are about to complete the transition from their primary school to Asbury Park;

- Parents of Black-British young people in each of the above groups;
- Teachers, police, youth leaders, religious leaders and other members of formal support networks. This investigation should include not only those who students listen to but those who they choose not to listen to, or frame as giving bad advice;
- Peers of young people who participated in the research;
- Black-British students who are involved in the youth courts;
- Resilience is a process. As such it must be studied longitudinally and there is a need to follow young people through their school careers in order to map how resiliency adaptations unfold over time; and
- Conducting a replication involving female Black-British students, in accordance with the imperative outlined by Rollock (2007).

Until representatives of these groups have been recruited to participate in theoretical sampling this research falls short of being a truly holistic case study and remains a study using grounded theory methods, rather than a grounded theory per se.

Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasise that it is important to acknowledge that the selection of themes involves the imposition of theoretical positions and values that may not correspond to the meanings originally intended by the child or young person. A solution to this may be to conduct a second round of interviews in which the themes are queried and discussed with participants, inviting them to take a more active role in the interpretation of the information they have contributed. In the context of this study this would have involved returning to share the author's interpretation with the young people and determine the extent that it resonated, or not, with their constructions. This step was not taken because of the lack of time and resources but should not be construed as detracting from the validity of any insights; as highlighted by Connolly (2008), this research represents one possible contextualised story amidst a range of possible contextualised stories, none more valid than another. As such it is no more or less valid than a story elicited in a different context. The comparison of the theory with the extant literature to an extent makes up for this lack and provides an opportunity to extend the insights of the study, guided, not limited, by the data.

6.9 Applications

In closing, a successful GT is also evaluated in terms of how it informs practice. As EPs are essentially applied scientists, it is important to consider the applications of this research in the context from which it initiated. The author proposes the following practical implications.

1. The need for holistic services in which the EP will seek to address the psychological needs of the whole young person by applying psychology across a variety of contexts, including the home, school and community. Promotion of resiliency may be a useful over-arching construct to coordinate these efforts and the WA a central tool.
2. Using a social constructionist lens to make sense of challenging behaviour. Through this resilience is not seen as something EPs look to build but a fresh way of looking at and reframe current behaviours and highlighting more culturally congruent pathways towards change.
3. The delivery of inset and training for school staff in PCP, in accordance with the examples provided by Burnham (2008) Ravenette (1996, 1999) and WA development, maintenance and repair, as indicated by Toste (2007).
4. An increased emphasis on career development programs to increase and enhance aspirations of young people at the beginning of their school careers, rather than towards the end.
5. The implications of this research have a slight discrepancy with some of the conclusions already described in the literature: namely that schools should shift their focus from classroom management techniques towards establishing consistent, supportive and positive relationships between teacher and student. Whilst this is important, it is clear from this research, and the WA construct, that content knowledge, pedagogy and behaviour management skills have a valid contribution to make in improving relationships and so should not be neglected in favour of interventions that focus exclusively on what is essentially the 'bond' component of the WA. EPs must ensure that a balanced approach to SEBD is adopted by schools and that the focus on the young person's behaviour does not lead to the neglect of the ability to access and grasp the relevance of the curriculum.

Chapter 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 Conclusion

Whether the lived experience of hope in schools can be facilitated through the operation of a well-structured hopeful working alliance is a topic for further research. It was the point of this thesis to extend knowledge and highlight future pathways to the application of psychology which EPs can continue to investigate. Hope and alliance are arguably constructs that are well established in the literature and may now be linked with the facilitation of resiliency adaptations. They are also theoretical structures that are well within the competency of EPs to apply in a meaningful and helpful manner to support Black-British young people and those educational professionals who work with them.

The application of this psychology should not begin in secondary school. Disaffection is not an isolated outcome but, like resilience, unfolds over time. A holistic perspective is not restricted to a young person's functioning in secondary school and an attempt to apply resiliency meaningfully in secondary schools must encompass its development prior to this transition, particularly as young people's expectancies of alliance have been shown to be important predictors of how they unfold. Interventions targeting the development of alliances and career aspirations around the time of transition to secondary school may be important ways of buffering against the development of the attainment and exclusion gaps.

This thesis was intended as a naturalistic and illuminative study of the processes underlying pupil resilience in Asbury Park for ten Black-British Year 7 students. In the face of a divided research field it was felt this was the most promising avenue to divine psychological theory to apply in EP practice and inform policy, intervention and primary prevention. Reassuringly, the grounded theory highlighted a number of surprisingly mainstream theories within the skill set of EPs. Their application will support EPs to work in an ethical and emancipatory fashion with cultural groups they encounter - should they choose to transfer the implications of this research from Asbury Park to the communities and schools they support.

This study represents a tentative punctuation mark in the development of a more salutogenic narrative and in the application of hope psychology. There remain a number of steps to be taken before it can attain the status of a Grounded Theory, rather than a piece of research that applies grounded theory methods. As such it

represents the first steps towards making sense of an otherwise discrepant field of research. The need for a cohesive platform has been partly met but without a longitudinal perspective this research represents a snapshot and stimulus for research and intervention. The extent to which this thesis has been successful as a pathfinder can only be truly evaluated retrospectively by the extent that it leaves future researchers with more questions to pursue than answers. In particular, it is anticipated that research exploring the application of hope psychology through the working alliance model will prove particularly insightful. In the meantime, the author would argue that positively valenced constructs such as 'Hope' and 'Alliance' are not bad tools for EPs to apply in their everyday practice, looking to inoculate young people against the stresses of everyday life through their aspirations and relationships. Indeed, in an economic climate where hope is ever more hard to come by they may increasingly form a significant aspect of their unique contribution:

People who have a why to live for can bear almost any how (Friedrich Nietzsche, quoted in Frankl, 1959, p. 121).

7.2 References

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