Approaching Juvenile Justice;
Interpreting experiences from Finnish and English perspectives

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Joulukuu 2014
Since 1990’s in England and Wales the different modes of controlling juvenile delinquency have become drastically more punitive than before. Children are no longer considered as possessing a special status during their sentencing process, which has led to growing number of young offenders being introduced to the formal criminal justice system and facing the threat of severe punishment, such as incarceration. The principles of dealing with young offenders in Finland are considerably different. This was the initial motive to choose to interpret the experiences of young offenders from these particular countries and find out how their testimonials might differ.

The research data consisted of semi-structured interviews with five young offenders, aged between 16 and 20. Two of the respondents came from Finland and three from England. I wanted to find out how the respondents had experienced the youth justice complex and whether the intervention measures had effected on their immediate criminal behaviour. The purpose was to offer a forum for the young themselves to tell their stories, in order to construct a comprehensive understanding on the efficiency of intervention measures used to tackle juvenile offending. Findings are discussed in terms of producing understanding about the opinions and experiences of these five research subjects. In order to receive more generalisable results, further research is needed.

Content analysis was used to explore the data. The principle theoretical doctrine applied to the analysis was labelling theory. Also rational choice and social learning theories were discussed in order to understand the motives for offending and its termination. The primary themes that emerged from the data were motives for offending behaviour, experiencing police conduct and implications of intervention measures. The initial reason for offending in all cases was boredom and lack of opportunities for leisure activities. Offending behaviour was often justified by claiming that it was ok to do illegal activities, as there is nothing else arranged for them. Relating to this matter, there was some reference given to the experienced exclusion of young people from the rest
of the community. As if only being young male already was a crime itself. It seems that very little value was given to the intervention measures by the young themselves. Particularly drug intervention measures were experiences as futile to tackle their use of narcotics. Instead, comments were made, that the lack of robustness in fact encouraged their cannabis use, as the consequences for getting caught were rather insignificant for them. Cannabis was perceived a normal aspect of the male respondents’ lives, which perhaps contributed to the failure of the drug measures per se. They did not experience it as criminal activity.

In addition to the experienced exclusion, the police conduct in the English cases was found highly labelling. Comments were made that police targeting was excessive among the areas were the respondents lived, which had caused friction between the police and the young themselves. It had cultivated to further offending behaviour among two of the respondents. Opposite accounts were given from the Finnish respondents, who felt that the police behaviour among them was fair and appropriate. This was the most remarkable cross-national difference that emerged from the study. Further comparative research particularly on the police conduct and different modes of youth policing would be recommended. As to the effectiveness of intervention measures in general, it seemed that the role of friends had more prominent influence on the termination of offending. Offending had a social function within the organisation the respondents were involved in. Activities were mutually decided, as was the ending of them. Interestingly, in two of the English cases the deterrent effect of incarceration had also some influence on their decision to stay away from offending behaviour.

Asiasanat

Juvenile offending, youth justice, exclusion, labelling, police conduct.

Säilytyspaikka

Itä-Suomen yliopiston kirjasto

Muita tietoja
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Appendix
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The study background

In my master’s thesis I am studying the experiences of juvenile offenders who have been exposed to the formal criminal justice system in England and Wales and in Finland. I will interpret the implications that the process has engendered upon their lives and how its effectiveness was perceived by the offenders themselves. The discussion will be partly addressed in a cross-national context. The data analysis will target to broaden the understanding of the genuine after-effects that different sanctions and punishments will generate among juvenile wrongdoers. This will be best achieved by comparing the very different measures that are being used in Finland and in England and Wales and by analysing their effectiveness through individual experience.

Internationally there has been a widespread assumption that the penal population of children and young people is growing. Minor offenders are now frequently facing a decline in their “special status” as being in need of care and protection rather than facing a punishment through which they will be made responsible of their own actions (Muncie & Goldson 2006, 1-3.) Similarly to other Scandinavian countries Finland does not follow this international trend. A juvenile criminal justice system as such does not exist in Finland; nevertheless young offenders are still treated in a very different manner from adults, with special consideration applied to offenders under 21 years. The criterion of all intervention measures by child welfare service is the “best interest of the child”. (Lappi-Seppälä 2006, 177-178.)

In recent years in England and Wales there have been debates about the prevailing youth justice policies, their efficiency and whether some of the interventions are, in fact, causing more criminality instead of reducing it. Over time youth justice has been surrounded with conflicts, ambiguity and political confrontations and the issue has been balancing proficiently year after year between the welfare and the justice model debate, and therefore neither custom has been successful in practice. Rather the policies and practices
have been an unclear mixture of the work of caring social services and the punitive measures of the neo-liberal governance. (Muncie & Hughes 2002, 1-3.)

There are number of different institutional and cultural factors which impact the criminal justice policies in different countries, yet still the baselines for the treatment of adult offenders are relatively similar in every Western society. Generally the punishments, retributive thinking and definitions of criminality are common integrative factors in this matter. However, the divergences in youth justice legislations and practises and more importantly the attitudes towards juvenile offenders are significant. In England and Wales the central objectives of the youth justice system seems to be to punish, blame and reprimand (justice model), while in Finland punishment as such seems to play a very negligible role in youth justice (welfare model) (Marttunen 2008, 1-2.) It is rather understood that particular criminal behaviour is somewhat normal at a certain age and only a temporary phase of growing up and therefore the criminal justice system should be the last resort turning young offenders away from the criminal path. In practice, the cases in Finland that eventually will be processed in court are so severe and violent by their nature that they cannot be dealt with any other institution. The principal components to solve or cure ones deviant behaviour comes from family, education, peer groups, child welfare and youth work services. Criminological research has shown that actual punishment only has a very limited impact upon youth behaviour, regardless of whether they are criminal or non-criminal. Therefore severe intervention measures from the criminal justice agencies are not seen as necessary in minor cases. Yet, it goes without saying, that disturbing behaviour should be tackled through support and education activities as early as possible. (Marttunen 2005, 2.) It was found fairly obvious to choose particularly Finnish youth justice policies as comparison for those in England and Wales, as already the basic ideas of the system in these countries seems to be considerably different.

1.2 The study purpose

The primary focus of this research is to examine the implications that are caused by the different modes of punishments and sanctions used on young offenders in England and Wales and in Finland and explore the consequences that these practises might have on the individual offenders and on their further criminal behaviour. The objective is to create a
greater awareness and understanding about youth justice policies in England and Wales and in Finland and to gain a broader knowledge about youth crime in general. The purpose however, is not to create generalizable results. Rather the aim is to bring more insight to what is already known about the different attitudes towards juvenile offending as well as policy implications that generates from them and to bring a personal insight to it. Evaluating the views and perceptions of the individuals who has been in the heart of the machinery is necessary in order to be able to understand the true implications the youth justice policies has upon young offenders. According to the European Council “Juvenile justice system is defined as the formal component of a wider approach for tackling youth crime. In addition to the youth court, it encompasses official bodies or agencies such as the police, the prosecution service, the legal profession, the probation service and penal institution. It works closely with related agencies such as health, education, social and welfare services and non-governmental bodies, such as victim and witness support” (in Marttunen 2008, 19). In this study the juvenile justice system is also understood in this precise manner. The discussion will identify the different crime prevention measures in Finland and England and elaborate which youth justice agencies are central in youth crime prevention in both countries. Thereby preliminary assumptions of what agencies and measures do have the most desired or least effective influence upon young offenders can be developed. The research questions are listed below;

1. How young offenders experience the youth justice complex and its intervention measures?
2. How the experience has effected on their immediate criminal behaviour?
3. What cross-national differences can be identified from the studied experiences?

The study will be implemented by interviewing five juvenile offenders, aged between 16 to 20 years. The offending activity was committed in all cases when the respondent was still underage. Criminal involvement among young people is most likely to occur when the person is 15 to 19 years old, after which the likelihood to commit crime declines significantly (Farrington 2002, 425-426). Three of the respondents are from England and two from Finland. Their experiences will be interpreted by using content analysis. The received data will be discussed by reflecting the findings in relation to a wider theoretical
framework. The primary criminological perspectives that will be utilized within the analysis are labelling theory and rational choice theory. Both doctrines are essential in understanding the implications that certain youth justice measures have towards juvenile offending. Furthermore, social learning theory will be discussed in order to explain the role of social organisation within the process of making rational decisions. Particularly with juvenile offenders, the role of social relationships has enormous influence on choosing to start or terminate involvement in criminal behaviour. Due to the limitations of the available data (mainly small, uneven number of interviews), the purpose is not to produce uncomplicated, nationally comparable results. Rather, the study aims to introduce certain aspects of both youth justice systems that might differ from each other in practical terms, as well as within the experiences of the young offenders.

1.3 Cultural criminology

Interpreting and comparing juvenile justice polices within two very different countries is not a straightforward process, as the root causes for juvenile offending has often been argued to lie essentially in socio-economical circumstances (Marttunen 2008, 9). As David Garland (in Easton and Piper 2005, 242) explains “Penal laws and institutions...are framed in language and sign systems which embody specific cultural meanings, distinctions and sentiments and which must be interpreted and understood if the social meanings and motivations are to become intelligible”. Considering the size of the population, the number of foreigners, economics or political agenda for instance, Finland and England are two quite different societies. Therefore distinct conclusions cannot be made while comparing these two countries and their very diverse attitudes towards youth offending. One of the great advantages in cross-national research is that it can assist researchers, politicians and other decision makers to look at the conceptual framework of certain domestic social structure and perhaps identify its strengths and weaknesses and at best, give support to its reform (Hantrais & Mangen 1996, 1-12).

The framework in which criminality is happening is growingly studied by a rather new tradition, cultural criminology. Within the wider historical context, it examines the mutual relation between criminality, culture and crime control. Cultural criminology derives from the cultural analyses of Durkheim, Merton and Parsons, as well as the 1970's researches of Chicago School who were particularly interested in the working class youth
and their integration to societal rules and their resistance relating to it. Further influence has been the 1960's critical criminologists who studied how the class structure influences on criminal behaviour. Cultural criminology however, highlights the cohesion of norms, culture and the diversity of various groups of people. One of the more specific interest focuses on the forums where the decisions relating to definitions of crime and deviance are being made. Some groups of people have very little, if at all access to these processes, and that alone may generate certain problems. For example, young people are often objects of these types of normative definitions, but have no voice of their own within the processes. (Honkatukia, Nyqvist & Pöso 2006, 214-215.) Criminologist John Muncie (in Honkatukia et al. 2006, 215-216) argues that cultural criminology has a very significant role in studying youth crime in 21st century. Particularly today, it is essential to examine the connection between media, marginalisation, crime and its control when trying to understand youth delinquency as a much larger phenomenon. It is important to draw attention to the subjective experiences of offenders, as well as to those that are produced for example in the media. Through these stories, it is possible to study the cultural ideologies that define the methods being used to treat offenders in various societies.

1.4 Previous studies

Despite the importance and value that cross-national research might offer, it seems that the number of previous studies about this current subject is fairly limited, a matter which is also the primary motivation for this study. It was found particularly challenging, yet also very interesting, to study an area which has been left fairly unexamined and therefore the demand and interest for future research will remain. By the subject limitations I specifically point to the number of studies concerned especially in the differences between Finnish and English youth justice policies. The topic is current and in recent years there certainly has been a growing interest towards the punitive measures held in juvenile justice systems and their implications within various countries. Consequently the number of comparative studies has indeed grown. However, the current research will differ from the previous studies, as it focuses merely on the individual experiences of those juvenile offenders who have been exposed to the formal criminal justice system.
The Finnish youth justice policies have been comprehensively studied by Matti Marttunen. Particularly his doctoral thesis is in a key role in my research as it outlines the fundamental differences in juvenile justice systems between Finland and England and Wales. In his work he extensively covers the history, theory and principles behind youth justice practices in these two societies. Marttunen also describes the various modes of punishments and the differing role of the child services in each country and critically discusses about the consequences the varying policies has. His work is based on secondary data; mainly comparative criminological literature and statistics, from which the current qualitative research will certainly benefit. Other current researchers within the field of youth crime and justice are Janne Kivivuori and Päivi Honkatukia. Furthermore, together with Marttunen, Tuija Kuula has done some cross-national collaboration with John Pitts, a prominent English researcher whose interest lies also in youth crime and policy.

The juvenile justice system in England and Wales has also been widely studied by John Muncie. Muncie is strongly critical of the traditional youth justice policies and is actively seeking to create endorsement to alternative ways of punishment in his work. He has done some remarkable comparative research concerning youth justice policies in various countries, including Finland. Reflecting on Muncie’s work, the current study will be able to build an all-encompassing idea of “the problem of youth crime”, question the conventional modes of sentencing and challenge the boundaries that are used to justify the current punishing methods, particularly in England and Wales. Criminological research on youth crime in England is highly active, partly due to the somewhat controversial policies surrounding the matter. Other distinctive researchers on the field are Barry Goldson, afore mentioned John Pitts and Jon Gunnar Bernburg, an Icelander whose contribution towards the labelling effect of crime policies in general are also well-used in the current study. Lastly it is important to mention Ronald L. Akers whose rather exceptional thought about the strong unity of rational choice, deterrence and social learning doctrines contributes greatly on the theoretical analysis of the current research.
1.5 The study structure

The report will be initiated by first introducing briefly the history and certain cultural aspects behind the youth justice complex in Finland and in England and Wales. This is important part in understanding the structural principles of each system, which will be presented next. Thirdly the relevant theoretical doctrines will be discussed after which I will explicate the process of data collection as well as its analysis in terms of the methods that will be utilized. In the fifth section I will analyze the data by introducing the primary themes that arose during the data collection and discuss their relevance to a wider criminological context. I will conclude the research by discussing the findings and applying them on the initial research questions.
2 JUVENILE OFFENDING

2.1 Loss of innocence

In year 1993 happened something that changed the entire course of action on how youth crime had been previously confronted in England and Wales. In one afternoon, February the 12th, two ten year old boys kidnapped a two year old toddler James Bulger from a shopping mall, took him to a nearby train track and brutally killed him. The incident widely broke the news and caused immense amount of condemnation within the greater public, the media, criminal justice officials and the politicians, who indeed took over the situation immediately. The British prime minister at the time announced that as a society “we should condemn a little more and understand a little less”, which became his new illustrious political slogan. During the very public trial the two convicted, barely criminally responsible boys were sentenced to 15 years in prison. The legal process was not fair in juridical terms and the European Commission of Human Rights did later condemn the sentencing illegitimate. (Muncie 1999, 2-5.)

According to Muncie (1999, 5-6) the public outrage against young offenders, in Bulger case as well as in general, is largely provoked by the media, certain populist tabloid newspapers such as The Sun and The Daily Mirror published in UK and Ireland. In Bulger case punitive aspect of the sentencing process was mostly produced by The Sun, as it managed to evoke extensively wrath and hostility against the perpetrators among its readers, which for its own part generated pressure for the politicians to deal with the issue accordingly. The offenders were denounced as “freaks of nature”, “devils” and “monsters”, as they were something completely paranormal. Both offenders most likely suffered from sexual abuse during their young lives, however this issue barely came up during the hunt as it would have caused irrelevant discussion about wider issues within the society, such as social inequality for instance, which are not considered as newsworthy. At that time it was not only the two young perpetrators who were labelled as incarnations of evil; it was the entire youth that was morally depraved. In the public domain children were no longer considered as pure and innocent, but the exact opposite. A whole new area for youth justice policies was initiated through Bulger case.
2.2 Recent history in Finnish youth justice

The Finnish Juvenile justice system began to build up to its current form around the 1960s and 1970s, when the importance of treatment and care among young delinquents was recognised. The old positivist view which understood individual offenders as pathological and abnormal was now considered to be controversial and very questionable. This neoclassical doctrine emphasized the importance of legal protection, equality and the dissociation of punishment and treatment from each other. New criminal policies did not only aim to fight crime, but it sought to minimize the disadvantages of crime control. The main target was to reduce the number of prison penalties, in order to reduce the recidivism rate by keeping the offenders within society and among their peer groups. At that time the number of prisoners in Finland was worryingly high compared to other European countries; however it began to fall remarkably soon after the new, Scandinavian, youth justice policies were taken into practice. (Marttunen 2008, 61-65.) Interestingly in England and Wales the number of minor offenders in custody and the known juvenile offending also fell dramatically between 1981 and 1992, as a result of tolerant policy practitioner initiatives and magisterial decision making, which successfully diverted young offenders away from the criminal justice system. (Muncie & Goldson 2006, 207.) In Finland since the 1990s there have been new significant developments for youth sanctions, such as community service, the juvenile sentence and arbitration, which all seek to consider the specific needs of individual offenders. It has long quite unanimously recognized that prison sentences only undermine the chances to rehabilitate delinquents from offending, and therefore the cooperation between criminal justice system and social service agencies has been emphasized in order to offer the best possible care for juvenile offenders and especially to those who are under the age of criminal responsibility. (Honkatukia & Hinkkanen 2009, 42-45.)

2.3 Moving back to draconian policies

As to the youth justice system in England and Wales, there lies a general misperception that robust prison sentences are successful in managing to deter juvenile offenders from criminal behaviour. This has been the case particularly since 1997 when New Labour won the General Election and began the process of reconstructing youth justice policies. The
Crime and Disorder Act 1998 introduced a number of new sentences that widened the net to tackle more young offenders and their families in a cost effective manner. Such sentences were antisocial behaviour order, parenting orders, child curfews and final warnings. A main strategy was to target policing of juveniles to those individuals who had higher risk factor to commit crime; such factors included being male, lack of parental discipline, poor school performance and low family income. In practice this meant intensifying policing within those areas that were socio-economically deprived. (Pitts 2011, 88-94.)

The grand number of new offences and intensified policing introduced more young people and their families to criminal justice system which indeed yielded some results: in 1992 the annual number of custodial sentences imposed upon offenders under 18 years was 4000, by year 2002 the comparable number had nearly doubled to a huge 7600. England and Wales is giving more penal custodies to children than most other industrialized democratic societies in the world. (Goldson 2005.) New Labours ultimate aim is to reduce crime in a cost effective way by incapacitation and strict deterrence, ignoring the real causes for offending; social inequality, poor parenting and unsatisfactory education. According to Bernburg and Krohn (2003, 1287-1290) even the minimum contact with the police or other criminal justice agencies had a negative impact upon ones’ future education, for instance. Furthermore, it significantly increased the risk of unemployment and criminal behaviour especially of those who already are somehow vulnerable due to their race, social class or age for instance. Thus, socially disadvantaged individuals are affected the most from certain punishments, because they increase unemployment and unemployment increases criminality. Labelling inhibits the offenders’ integration with certain institutions, which will reduce individuals’ chances to prosper within society.

The 1998 Crime and Disorder Act (CDA) formalised New Labour's crusade against youth crime and its main principles were to act especially against moral and social transgressions. Its assertion was that crime runs in certain families, poor parent-child relationship is the key risk-factor in criminal behaviour and that anti-social behaviour in childhood is a sign for future criminal behaviour. These arguments were followed by a number of new legislative Acts, which did not only target criminal behaviour but also tackled the youthful, disorderly individuals (Muncie & Huges 2002, 9). According to Ashworth (2010, 221-223) possibly the most controversial part of the 1998 CDA was the
introduction of anti-social behaviour orders (ASBO). It is a civil order which can be made by the police, local authority or landlord. It places restrictive conditions for a minimum of two years to a person who causes' distress, alarm or harassment to others' and its purpose is to prohibit such behaviour occurring again. The problematic issue with ASBO's is that there is no actual definition to anti-social behaviour and therefore they can be made in respect of non-criminal actions, such as loitering on a street corner, spitting, being noisy, littering or begging on the streets. If breeching the ASBO the “offender” might face up to five years in prison, even though the original cause for receiving an ASBO had not been criminal behaviour. Home Office Statistics (2014) indicates that since year 2005, from its peak time, the annual number of all given ASBO’s has gradually declined by 33 per cent (from 4122 to 1349). Still a little over one in third of all ASBO’s are currently been issued to juveniles, mainly young males under 18 years, from who two thirds breeches the order at least once. This indicates ASBO’s ineffectiveness to manage abstaining juveniles from unwanted behaviour. Instead it still places a significant number of young people under the risk of being introduced to the formal criminal justice system, without even committing legally defined criminal deed.

2.4 Available measures in England

According to Marttunen (2008, 156-158) in England offenders less than 18 years are generally dealt in youth courts, the exception being the very serious offences, which will be issued to crown courts. One of the most significant reforms brought by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 was the emergence of Youth Justice Board, which principle purpose is to monitor and evaluate the measures actualized within the youth justice complex as well as ensure their cost effectiveness. Additionally, in year 1999 Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act came into effect, which gave the Youth Justice System new measures to operate with juveniles. For instance a Referral Order allows the Youth Court to relocate young offenders case to Youth Offender Panel, which purpose is to create an individualized Youth Offender Contract together with the minor in question. The contract will consist of certain codes that will direct the behaviour of the offender towards the desired path. The spectrum of measures that can be taken among juvenile offenders when they are brought to youth justice system is considerably wide compared to Finland. However, it is important to note, that similar procedures are available also for the Finnish
youth justice complex particularly within the measures taken by the social services. To be exact the orders available in England and Wales are listed below;

1. Reprimand (by the police)
2. Final Warning
3. Conditional Discharge
4. Absolute Discharge
5. Bind over/bind over of parent or a guardian
6. Fine
7. Referral Order-Youth Contract
8. Action Plan Order
9. Attendance Centre Order
10. Reparation Order-youth
11. Curfew Order
12. Parenting Order
13. Supervision Order
14. Community Rehabilitation Order
15. Community Punishment Order
16. Combination of Community Punishment and Community Rehabilitation Order
17. Drug Treatment and Testing Order
18. Detention and Training Order
19. Imprisonment

2.5 Civil orders in England and Wales

The introduction of the civil orders was one of the most interesting reforms that were made under the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act. These orders give the authorities a power to punish people for actions that are not in fact illegal. Such deeds include the aforementioned antisocial behaviour orders, child safety orders and local child curfews. The purpose of these measures was to bring also a welfare approach to the intervention methods used among young people to offer counterbalance to the punitive policies. This is the first legislation since the early 19th century that targets to tackle behaviour that is not quite against the law, but nonetheless morally questionable. For example child safety
orders are directed at children under the age of criminal responsibility, who are considered “at risk” of getting involved in offending actions. Its solid purpose is to protect the child by positioning him/her under the supervision of a social worker. In addition there might be court designated requirements, such as avoiding certain places and people and taking part in instructive programmes. The failure to comply with the requirements might result in taking the child in to custody. In year 2006 Respect Action Plan was introduced, which gave the local authorities the power to conduct truancy sweeps. “Problem families”, who fail to make their children to attend school, are required to take parenting classes or else lose their housing benefits and thereby possibly face eviction. (Muncie & Goldson 2006, 37-38.)

These civil orders are given here as an example of the methods that are currently used to define deviance up and widen the net even to those who are not yet criminally responsible for their actions. This is perhaps one of the most noteworthy issues within the current youth justice policies in England and Wales. There is an understandable logic behind the early intervention schemes, however by targeting and punishing the “problem families” and children “at risk”, there is a possibility that the real causes of crime and deviance are ignored and hence the problems might unintentionally be given rise even to considerably bigger proportions. There is strong evidence that disorder is best managed by neighbourhood development schemes instead of punishing the children from poor and disadvantaged families (Muncie & Goldson 2006, 39).

2.6 Encountering young offenders in Finland

In Finland the collaboration of child and youth services, child welfare, mental health workers and criminal justice system is highly intensive during the sentencing process. Therefore it is difficult to differentiate one single organisation, which could be contrasted to English youth justice system. The Finnish system which serves all 10 to 17 year old offenders is based on welfare doctrine and is similar to practices that were followed in England in 1970s and 1980s. The main emphasis is to take care of children and protect them from external threats such as substance abuse, depression, learning difficulties and domestic abuse. Criminality is understood to be a consequence from above mentioned matters or a sign of some deeper social or psychological disorder. (Kuula, Pitts &
Marttunen 2006, 317-337.) A study done by Kuula, Pitts and Marttunen (2006) found that in England and Wales and in Finland there are relevantly somewhat equivalent number of children and young people taken in to custody by child welfare officials. Some of these individuals have been institutionalized primarily because of their criminal behaviour, not because of psychological divergences. Reflecting on this matter, it seems that there lays a minor paradox about the Finnish youth justice system. While England is locking more juvenile offenders into prison or secure estates, Finns are following a minimalistic prison sentencing practice. Yet, in both countries relevantly similar numbers of youngsters are institutionalized by social services. There are two critical issues reflecting in this notion. Firstly, perhaps the number of Finnish prisoners is as low as they are, because the system is overusing institutions as a relevant alternative to prison. Or secondly, perhaps the English youth justice system is incarcerating offenders who are actually in need of psychiatric care for instance. Davies (2004) argues that as much as 80 per cent of children in custody in England and Wales suffer from at least two types of mental illness, such as depression, anxiety, psychosis and severe personality disorders and are constantly failing to receive appropriate treatment for their condition.

In Finland the primary sentences that are available in courts for juvenile offenders are conditional imprisonment, community service, fine, unconditional imprisonment and probation with or without supervision. The most common sentencing mode is fine, which accounts for 74 per cent of all court sentences among 15 to 17 year olds (Lappi-Seppälä 2006, 178, 186-187.) Imprisonment is used very rarely; in 2013 from the whole prison population only 0.1 percent was under 18 years old and the number is steadily declining. After an eight year trial period in 2005 a new Juvenile Sentence was adopted in Finnish courts. A juvenile sentence is available for youngsters aged 15 to 17. Juvenile sentences cannot be used for minor offences, rather it is utilised only as a last option when the processed case is exceedingly violent, there has been numerous prior offences and when the only other remaining option would be imprisonment. The individuals who are executing the sentence usually are rather troubled children and sometimes quite reluctant to comply immaculately with the order. Nevertheless in year 2013 the dropping out rate was only 17 per cent. Despite the flexibility and robustness of the programme, it is still fairly little used among serious offenders as compared to conditional prison sentence. (Marttunen 2013, 393-395.)
The content of this programme consists of supervision meetings, different tasks and programmes which aim to improve offenders’ social skills, offers different types of support and guidance, and introduces and motivates the offender to working life and employment. The offender is required to participate up to eight hours per week into these intensive sessions with a social or youth worker. (Keisala & Marttunen 2007, 4-5.) The main department in Finland which is responsible for the enforcement of the juvenile sentence is the Criminal Sanctions Agency, whose job description is similar to youth offending teams (YOT) in England and Wales (Marttunen, 2008 276, 323). The content of the Juvenile sentence is fairly similar to Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Order (ISSP), which was introduced by the Youth Justice Board in 2001. It is one of the most robust community sentences targeted on persistent and serious offenders aged between 10 to 17 years. In ISSP the dropping out rate is very high. Between 2001 and 2004 nearly 60 per cent of the offenders in this programme failed to comply with the order (Waters 2007).

2.7 Doli incapax

The key principle in youth justice should always be that the offenders’ general welfare is being ensured and considered (Muncie 1999, 254). However, the new youth justice in England and Wales has shifted their focus more upon the deeds rather than the needs of young offenders and the principle strategy to deal with youth crime is early and rapid intervention. These intervention measures however, follow the belief that early exposure to the formal criminal justice system has a long term rehabilitative and deterrent effect upon young offenders and the stigmatising after-effects are completely left unnoticed. (Pitts 2011, 71, 92). Probably the most consequential divergence between Finnish and English youth justice policies is the age of criminal responsibility, which in England and Wales has, formally, been ten years since 1998 (Muncie 1999, 255-256). The criminal responsibility age in Finland is 15 years. When a young person under 15 years commits a criminal offence, he or she cannot be punished. Rather, depending on the severity of the case, the person will be directed to social services whose primary focus will be the treatment and instruction of the offender. (Lappi-Seppälä 2006, 177-178.) It has been assumed universally that under certain age children are doli incapax (incapable of evil) and cannot be held criminally responsible. The doli incapax principle was instituted
centuries ago in order to protect the children from the rigorous criminal law and to afford them with special consideration and understanding during their sentencing process. (Muncie 1999, 255-256.) In England and Wales today, there is no element within the substantive criminal law that could distinguish child wrongdoers from adults. Everyone above 10 years old is subject to somewhat same sentencing principles. (Stokes 2000, 51.) According to the former Finnish Minister of Justice Tuija Brax (2007), the social care for young offenders in Finland is costly; however it is eventually going to "pay itself back" in the long term. Early and active intervention, without labelling or taking away ones freedom, is the answer to prevent the creation of a criminal career, however it is also recognized that persistent troubled children cannot necessarily be helped without institutionalisation.

The most prominent consequence of the new youth justice policies in England and Wales is the increasing number of juvenile offenders in custody. As Kuula, Pitts and Marttunen (2006, 318) in their research discovered that England is incarcerating young offenders 100 times more than Finland. Considerably higher prison population cannot be explained with the lowering of the age of criminal responsibility, while most prisoners doing time are over 15 years old. In the beginning of October 2005 there were only three juvenile offenders sentenced to imprisonment in Finland and altogether eight prisoners in pre-trial detention waiting for their case to be processed in court. Kuula et al (2006, 319) also emphasizes that one of the reasons why Finland is still complying with the current 'gentle' juvenile justice policies is because it has not yet been politicized like in England, but rather the system has been structured by a small group of competent academic specialists who are not biased by their own personal interest. Therefore pressures to reform a "law and order" society, has successfully been avoided. Furthermore, the structure of Finnish media does not encourage the newspapers for example to increase their distribution by creating sensational news stories about the corrupted youth.

2.8 Other differences

According to Marttunen (2008, 337-338) differences between the methods that are used to tackle youth offending in both countries are primarily related to the treatment of first time offenders, means to minimize recidivism among offenders and the number/content of community sanctions. In England and Wales it is common practice to leave first time
offenders without charges, even in cases that are relevantly severe by their nature. While in Finland the seriousness of crime is the only measure that is being used when deciding whether or not the case is dealt in the court of law. Only in the very minor offences merely a caution is considered sufficient enough. Interestingly, in Finland a young persistent offender can receive a fine or probation a number of times (except in very grievous cases), where as in England and Wales the path to incarceration is significantly shorter; community sentence is often given only on one time basis, after which prison sentence is used if re-offending occurs.

As noticed earlier, the number of sanctions that are available in England and Wales is considerably larger than in Finland. However, the Finnish authorities, merely the probation service, have the power to be creative when crafting the sentences for young offenders. For example the conditions of juvenile sentence can include various measures that eventually are fairly similar to those used in England and Wales. The conditional sanction in Finland, such as juvenile sentence and probation, has been criticised for its lack of robustness in cases where the conditions has been breached. There are no additional sanctions for those offenders who do not comply with the procedures. Rather it solely relies upon the competence of social and probation workers and their ability to persuade the juvenile offender to continue with the supervision and related routines. In England and Wales the failure to follow the conditions will often lead to incarceration, which intensifies the performance of conditional sanctions. While the most intensive conditional sanction available for minor offenders in Finland, the juvenile sentence, includes only a few weekly meetings between the offender and the supervisor, in England and Wales the ISSP (intensive surveillance and supervision order) can contain up to 25 hours of supervised meetings. Despite the Finnish system lacks of certain firmness, the gained benefits from the juvenile sentence appears to be more distinct compared to England, where the recidivism rate is higher among offenders who had received a conditional sanction. (Marttunen 2008, 334, 338.)
3 CRIMINOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

3.1 Labelling theory

The normality of crime was already recognized by sociological thinker Emilie Durkheim two centuries ago. According to Durkheim, crime would exist even within the society of saints. It is a necessary integrative element through which the normative codes of behaviour are being established by labelling certain behaviour as criminal. People are divided to those who follow the law and those who break it. In this sense criminality has a necessary functional purpose. It solidifies the ties within the greater public as well as produces the moral codes one is expected to follow. Criminality in general can certainly be considered to have such a functional role within the society. However, youth crime alone can be understood as “The Good Enemy” as Nils Christie puts it. Young offenders constitute an appropriate societal problem that justifies the need for harsher punishments for instance (Lauronen & Pietarila 1994, 15-16.) The element of youth and innocence makes the crime highly condemnable as well as gruesome, which gives the issue plenty of news value and thereby makes the political intervention seem necessary (Muncie 1999, 3-11).

It is important to consider the prevailing explanations and theories about juvenile delinquency in order to understand why different institutions are responding to this phenomenon in certain ways. Furthermore, criminological theories might offer us an account on why criminality is a much more widespread phenomenon in one country than another. Labelling perspectives, first developed by sociologist Howard Becker, explore issues related to crime and criminality from objective and subjective dimensions of the criminal justice experience (White & Haines 2000, 77). According to labelling theory the social reactions to criminality, especially criminal sanctions, has a negative impact upon the offender and his or hers future criminal behaviour (Kivivuori 2006, 175). The main focus is what is considered to be "good" or "bad" and who actually defines this. What counts as a crime is determined by the criminal justice system, its officials and the politicians. These agencies have the power to label. This labelling process might create certain very unwanted outcomes, such as stigmatisation and the person beginning to behave according to the given label. The labelling process affects both the psychological and social development of the offender and determines his or her self-concept and future.
social opportunities. The stigma will stay with the offender and it will affect the way others see them and also how they perceive themselves. Therefore criminal justice agencies should response to criminal behaviour by diverting the minor crimes and young offenders away from the more stigmatizing criminal justice system. Labelling has a highly lasting impact upon the offenders, thus every attempt should be made to minimize offender contact with the different elements of the system. (White & Haines 2000, 77-81.)

The concept of stigma was profoundly addressed by Erving Goffman whose descriptive definition of the term is; “The situation of the individual who is disqualified from full social acceptance” (Kutner 2011, 559). In centre of his analysis was the attitudes that ordinary people has towards the stigmatized individuals and the social actions they overtake to manage their defined abnormalities. Goffman understood stigmatisation merely as a dyadic social process and paid somewhat very little attention to the structural processes and changes that can also engender stigmatisation within a wider context. (Kutner 2011 559, 562.) Despite his analysis of stigmatisation is highly relevant to the current matter as it is notably similar to those used by the labelling theorists to explain the primary formation of criminal behaviour. By including an individual to a group of outsiders on the basis of the original act (criminal for instance) or a certain attribute, stigmatization labels the person as naturally deviant. Goffman's stigma ideology proposes that also larger groups of people can be labelled as somehow weird or different only based on who they are, not necessarily what they have done. Thus features such as race, social status or gender for instance, takes part within the creation of master status, which essentially characterizes individual behaviour. Stigmatization and disvaluement will challenge the individuals’ identity management. By assuming that the stigmatized person is not quite human and consequently through various forms of discrimination, the individuals life chances are notably reduced, which essentially might lead to criminal behaviour. (Dotter 2004, 87-90.)

Labelling theory does not only apply to single individuals but also additionally to certain minority groups, such as immigrants or young men in general (Laitinen & Aromaa 2005, 66). Moreover, labelling does effect on entire communities and their policing. Specifically areas that are inhabited by socially and economically deprived groups and communities. In these areas policing is frequently more intense and therefore people living in these so called “crime hot spots” are more likely to get involved with the police
actions. It is important to note, that people from lower class communities often evokes images of deviance and criminality among the greater public as well as the police. Therefore, they also face greater number of arrests as they are more readily sanctioned and stigmatised, despite they are not necessarily involved in immediate criminal actions. A person from minority group is also more likely to get arrested as a result from encounter with a police officer and people from minority- and lower socio-economic groups are, according to some studies, receiving more rigid punishments for their actions. Furthermore, they are frequently victims of informal labelling (by their parents, peers and teachers for example), as their appearance in a larger scale is already stigmatized and associated with dangerousness and criminality. (Bernburg 2010, 189-190.)

3.2 Rationality, deterrence and social relationships

As labelling theory alone cannot explain why primary deviation occurs in the first place, it is necessary to deploy additional doctrines within the data analysis in order to understand the effectiveness, or ineffectiveness, of certain intervention measures among young people and the rationale behind them. Rational choice-, deterrence- and social learning theories are here presented within the same context as the aim is to create an understanding of their strong affinity when discussed about juvenile offending, particularly in this research. Instead of perceiving the theories as three separate doctrines, here it is essential to aim to comprehend them as one entirety in order to fully understand the logic behind the analysis of received data.

In criminology the rational choice theory assumes, that when committing a crime, offenders seek to achieve maximum utility from their action by rationally considering various options for their behaviour and coherently calculating the resulting advantages and disadvantages. According to Cornish and Clarke (in Laitinen & Aromaa 2005, 76-77) the process of criminal action can be divided in to two separate stages. The first one forms the actual context in which the decisions to step into offending behaviour are being made. It consists of the social status, family background, demographic as well as psychological factors. In addition, the offenders’ previous criminal activity, experiences with the police and the moral understanding also plays a significant part in the primary process that eventually leads to illegal activity. In the second stage, a direct decision to
take part in criminal behaviour is being made. During it the offender will evaluate the possible rewards that will be achieved by committing the crime, the work that is required to successfully accomplish the crime, the risks of getting caught and the severity of punishment that will follow if getting caught.

Rational choice theory is a utilitarian theory of crime and deviance. It understands all individuals as rational, free thinkers who act predominantly based on the gain received from their action. By following this principle, it therefore argues, that delinquents would not commit crime if the punishment (or the pain) exceeds the rewards that could be received from the deviant act. If the penalty is fairly inconsequential, the crime becomes more appealing. In order to deter the offender, and rest of the members of the society, from committing a crime, the punishment must outweigh the value of the benefits that would be received from the illegal deed. In order to successfully do this, the punishment must full fill three separate features; it has to be swift, sure and severe. 1) Swift, in order to rapidly create a mental connection between the crime and received punishment to make the delinquent to understand the severity of the crime and possibly regret it. 2) Punishment has to be sure, so that the criminal and through that example the rest of the public, can learn, that crime does not pay. 3) Severe, but only relevantly. It is important, that punishment is always adjusted accordingly to the crime committed. A severe crime will be followed by severe punishment. (Bellone 2011, 90-91.) By complying with these rules, crime and punishment is composed to appear predictable and easy to interpret by the members of the society. The process of rational calculation has been made foreseeable and thereby the ultimate responsibility of crime and its consequences can be understood to be merely in the hands of the delinquent him/her self.

Under the rational choice theory it is often presumed, that juvenile delinquents choose to get involved in criminal behaviour, because they see crime as a productive mean to earn material gain. By rationally analysing the various aspects of the criminal world, they reach to a conclusion where the earned benefits appear as highly alluring, where as the consequences of getting caught are understood to be worth the risk. (Bellone 2011, 91.) The rational choice theory derives from the basic ideas of economy, in respect of analysing risks and profits. Therefore, it has been criticized for being too narrow to be applied to criminological assay of crime and delinquency. To begin with, rational choice theory’s value as a criminological doctrine has been questioned for its tendency to understand the benefits that results from the crime merely as material. This standpoint is
overly narrow, as it does not take the diversity of human behaviour into account. More importantly, rational choice theory fails to comprehend that often the individuals who commit crime are opportunist. They get involved with illegal behaviour when they are confronted with a favourable situation for it, giving any or very little consideration for the victims or the situation itself, not to mention the resulting after-effects. (Laitinen & Aromaa 2005, 75-79.)

Sociologist Jack Katz (in Bellone 2011, 91-92) argued that young offenders do not usually seek material profit from their crimes and antisocial behaviour, but rather they act accordingly in order to receive thrill and excitement from acts such as vandalism and graffiti. Katz suggests that delinquency is a way for young people to test their boundaries and challenge those normative expectations that has been set for them. Involvement in crime is more likely if there is a low risk of getting caught or if there is a possibility of losing the respect of peers through non-compliance in mutual criminal activity with others. On the other hand, researcher Felix Padilla (in Bellone 2011, 91) found out in his study of young gang members, that illegal activities, such as selling drugs, do sometimes offer the delinquents a rational mean to earn profit. In his observation he noticed that as exchange for selling drugs, a membership in gang offers security, job skill and business success, things that would not necessarily be perceived to be possible to achieve within the legal sphere. Thereby he suggests that the most efficient way to respond to youth delinquency would be through institutional level to offer the potential offenders more legitimate means to achieve those things and consequently direct them away from the criminal path.

Considering the methods to respond to youth crime through deterrence, the results has so far been highly feasible (Bellone 2011, 92). In England and Wales deterrence thesis has been strongly used in penal populism to justify the current youth justice policies. The rhetoric of strict demand for harsher punishments and youth justice policies is still current in the governmental decision making relating to youth crime and punishment. Within the discourse, community based punishments are not considered to hold an element that would deter juveniles from crime. Despite the existing evidence on their intensity and efficiency, community punishments are perceived as soft response on crime, whereas custodial sentences are associated with deterrence and thereby argued by many to be more effective. The effect of deterrence is rather hard to measure. Nevertheless, it has been strongly suggested that so called “shock incarceration” (imprisonment for a short period
of time) has little or no effect on future criminal behaviour. Similarly there is very little evidence that the ultimate sanction, capital punishment, has any deterrent effect on criminals and hence acts as a poor crime prevention method. Moreover, as noted earlier, harsh punishments do in fact increase the chance of re-offending, rather than manage reducing it. (Yates 2008, 138-139.)

Finally, it is important to note, that rational choice and deterrence theories alone cannot form a solid bodies of criminological theory. As pointed out, there exists a strong link in between these two doctrines, as they both derive from the same utilitarian tradition, both assuming that human action is based on rational choice and the consequences that follows. Ronald L. Akers (1990) argued that both rational choice theory and deterrence theory can be subsumed to the more general social learning theories, which take a wider array of factors into account when interpreting crime. Inhibitors such as rewards/costs, past/present, informal/formal sanctions and positive/negative enforcement are all taken into account in social learning theories. Rational choice and deterrence can be understood as variables that are reduced from the wider entirety of social learning. This was also a remark made by Cornish and Clarke, who emphasized the social context in which rational decision is being made (Laitinen & Aaromaa 2005, 76-77). The value that is given to the precise planning component does not have to be grand, in order to be considered rational. Criminals do often practice only some degree of planning before hand and then adjust their behaviour within their social context. Furthermore, their rationality is always bound to their abilities, knowledge and limits of time when the crime is committed. (Akers 1990.)

One of the most well known social learning theories is differential association theory, developed by Edwin Sutherland in 1930's, where the primary focus is given to the social relationships, rather than the external surroundings or individual attributes. Sutherland understood crime as normal, learned behaviour that is composed within a social organisation. Social organisation consists of a group of individuals who share mutual goals and interests that makes the group existence and interaction meaningful. In a society, where laws and policies ensure the possibility for different individuals to coexist by restricting certain opportunities, it is inevitable that some of the social organisations begin to pursue their goals by illegal means. The main principle in differential association is that an individual becomes criminal once the general normative rules within a society are accepted as wrong and the person starts to follow the (illegal) ways that are
constructed within the immediate social organisation. (Laitinen & Aromaa 2005, 55-57.)

Gresham Sykes and David Matza (in Laitinen & Aromaa 2005, 58-59) suggested that criminals do feel shame and guilt for their actions similarly to other people. What makes them different however, is their learned ability to neutralize the guilt by denying their responsibility. For example, offenders often consider themselves as the victims of certain circumstances that have urged them to commit crime. Such circumstances are certain laws, parents, excessive alcohol consumption, or bad company for instance. Offenders might also refuse to admit that their behaviour in fact causes genuine harm to anyone or they perceive the law enforcement as the true criminals and the ones who should be getting caught. Furthermore, it is also common to justify the crime by claiming, that the act has been committed for the best interest of the offenders family or friends for example.
4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Interview situation

In this research five case studies were analysed in order to receive in depth understanding about the prevailing youth justice polices in England and Wales and in Finland. The purpose of this study was not to generate wider generalisable results as it is only a small piece of research. In the sample collection purposive sampling method was used, which allows the researcher to choose a case which represents some features in which the research is interested (Silverman 2009, 141). It was found essential to interview individuals who had been exposed and gone through the formal Criminal Justice System, in order to understand what personal implications the system has upon the young offenders’ lives and their behaviour. The sample consisted of five young offenders, three from England and two from Finland, who at the time of the offence were under-aged. The interviews were carried out in two different periods of time. A Finnish girl and one of the English subjects (E3) were interviewed in year 2010, whereas rest of the study subjects were interviewed in the beginning of year 2014. In addition, it was found essential to execute a follow up interview with the Respondent F1 in order to enhance the data. When the first interview took place the subject in question seemed highly mistrustful during the conversation and the received material was incomplete and even somewhat untruthful. This was due to a poor initial rapport with the interviewee, who was not confident enough to narrate his story to full extent.

Nigel King and Christine Horrocks (2010, 48) explain, that managing to build a good rapport with the interviewee is a key factor that makes qualitative interviewing successful. A good rapport emerges within an environment of trust, where the subject feels confident enough to open up and allows the interviewer to step in to his/hers personal zone, so to speak. The reasons why this was not succeeded to do during the initial interview was perhaps the slightly too formal setting (sitting at the table opposite each other, in silence, the recorder in between), the failure to explain the research purpose thoroughly and the respondents prejudice towards authorities and adults. Luckily, these issues were managed to be corrected in the second session, during which the atmosphere was considerably more relaxed and informal. At the time of the second session, it was noticed that the respondent became considerably more talkative when the voice recorder was not on. Therefore the
data was partially recorded only by using handmade notes, however these sections are not used as word to word quotes in the analysis.

Similar issues were experienced with the female Finnish subject, who appeared to be rather nervous during the interview. Her answers were brief and somewhat vague, which left the data incomplete. Unfortunately, a follow up interview was not possible in her case and the data collected from the interview in question fell short. Therefore her share in the data analysis is fairly small. This however was not a major issue, as each session did manage to generate new issues and rich leads to be followed during the incoming interviews. Every session was different and complimenting each other, making the data to develop further interview after interview. Generally in qualitative interviews it is preferable that the setting is free from interruption and as non-distracting as possible. The ideal place would be an “interview room”, office or home of either party (Wengraf 2001, 191.) This however, was not precisely the case with two of the interviews during this specific research. The interview setting with two respondents was a local bar during a fairly busy lunch time. This was primarily due to comfort reasons, as all parties felt that it would be a pleasant (and also a safe) place to meet an unknown person. Luckily no major interruptions were encountered during the interviews. The most fundamental requirement for the interview environment is that it is as comfortable as possible, both physically and psychologically, in order to avoid the interviewees to feel tense or unsettled. This way the rapport between the interviewee and interviewer often occurs naturally, which significantly enriches the gleaned data (King & Horrocks 2010, 42.)

4.2 Interviewing as a data collection tool

Qualitative interviewing offers an excellent way to discover what others feel and think about their worlds and how they have experienced certain events. It can also explore specific topics, events and personal histories, which can help the researcher to examine certain social or political phenomenon. There are number of different types of interviewing methods that can be used in qualitative research. They include focus groups, internet interviews and casual conversations as well as semi-structured and unstructured interviews. All qualitative interviews share the same main characteristics that differentiate them from other data gathering methods in social research, but they also have very clear distinctions between them and therefore it is important to find the correct
interviewing method that is suitable for specific research (Rubin & Rubin 2012 3, 29). For the current research semi-structured interviews were found to be the most appropriate, as this method allows the researcher to lead the interview and follow a specific focus and the interest of the research. There will be only few key questions prepared prior the session and majority of the follow-up questions will be improvised during the conversation, clearly keeping the initial research question in mind. This allows new interesting leads to emerge, that can be followed during the interview. (Wengraf 2001, 5.)

In this research, it was essential to have a data collection tool, which enables the examination and comparing of the experiences and opinions of individuals who does not share the same culture and does not follow the rules of similar criminal justice system. Clearly highly structured questions were not an option, as the law and practices are very different in England and Finland. Developing semi-structured interviews made it possible to cover similar issues in both countries and also to modify the interview, or rather the conversation, in to a wanted direction regardless of the different governing systems or experiences within it and still keep the data as comparable as possible. Prior the interview it is advisable to structure an interview guide to support the conversation and keep it flowing. The questions are primarily based on the key elements that the research is addressing. During the interview specific follow-up questions will be asked in order to pursue new ideas and thoughts (Arksey & Knight 1999, 97-98.) The interview guide that was constructed prior the data collection, was not strictly followed during the interviews. Rather, it functioned as an important support to ensure that every prominent issue was addressed during the conversation. Two different interview guides was developed, first version in year 2010 and the second in 2013, enhanced based on those themes that were raised during the first data collection period. They were largely constructed by basing it on theory and existing literature about the research subject.

Qualitative interviews are very similar to ordinary conversations: questions and answers follow each other in a logical manner, while both the researcher and the interviewee take turn talking. The interviewees are treated as “conversational partners”, rather than research objects. In semi-structured interview few questions and the main topics has been decided prior to the interview. The researcher listens to each answer carefully and determines the next question based on what was said. This makes the interview interesting and often superbly unpredictable. A semi-structured interview encourages people to talk
about their experiences and perspectives in depth and focus on much narrower range of topics, than ethnographic interviews for example. (Rubin & Rubin 2012, 29-31.) In this research it was found essential to begin the interview with a general background question (about interviewees profession, age, school, or family background for instance), which would be easy to answer and perhaps encourage the respondents to truly engage with the interview. Later on the focus moved on finding out about the experience of certain intervention programs and their opinion about the efficiency of the current Youth Justice policies, which was following the main focus of the research. It was also decided to initiate conversation about the incidents when the offences took place. This was not the main concern, but soon it became evident that it actually was a topic of which the offenders were surprisingly very keen on talking and thereby an excellent way to encourage them to participate with the conversation.

4.3 Interviewing young people

When interpreting young people, individual or group interviews are one of the most commonly used data collection tool. It is an excellent method to gain in-depth understanding about the subjective experiences, behaviour and motivations that steers the way young people conducts themselves. Furthermore, the conversation, if successfully conducted, might entourage the young respondents to contemplate their own experiences profoundly and consequently raise new ideas to be studied within the research. Qualitative interviewing is commonly seen as youth-friendly approach, as it allows the subjects to explain their stories precisely the way they themselves experience the world they live in. This is an issue that is widely ignored within the popular media for instance, where young people are continuously misrepresented and suggested to be a threat to the moral order. These representations can be redressed through interviews where young people can truly bring forth their thoughts and opinions. (Hopkins 2010, 34-35.)

Similar issues have been raised by Honkatukia et al. (2006, 211-213) who explains, that within the public agenda, the discussion surrounding young people is accustomed to see them through trouble and fear. Criminological and social research itself has had difficulties to analytically distance themselves from the public discussion and therefore it often fails to study the subjective experiences of young people and rather focuses on the
afore mentioned issues relating to the social and political concerns towards the youth. In addition to statistics and theoretical reasoning, that are used not only to explain juvenile offending but also to justify its prevention methods, it is essential to bring forth the juvenile narratives regarding their own behaviour. Narrative research is an excellent way to profoundly study the relationship between the youngsters and the society. At best, it even might succeed to further develop the crime prevention methods currently used, by minimizing the disadvantages that current administrative measures potentially engenders. That is, those disadvantages that can not only be seen in statistics. This research was carried out in order to offer a forum for some young offenders to bring forth their subjective experiences about the youth justice system, perhaps an opportunity which they would not otherwise have had. In fact, the need for expressing their feelings and opinions did come through during the conversations with them. Particularly all male subjects clearly seemed highly passionate towards the subject.

4.4 Respondent background

To hide true identity of the offenders, in the study they are named as Respondent E1, E2, E3, F1 and F2. Respondent E1, a 19 year old young man from England, had been sanctioned for antisocial behaviour, cannabis use, vandalism and armed robbery while under aged. He had been arrested twice and had received community service and fine sanctions. Respondent E2 was also a 19-year old young man, who had been arrested altogether nine times since the age of 16. The reasons for his arrests included cannabis use, public disorder, attempted burglary, theft and vandalism, however he only had been charged twice due to lack of evidence. For his offences he had received drug rehabilitation and fine sanctions. Respondent E3 was 20 years old at the time of the interview. While under aged, he had been arrested four times for possession of drugs, trespassing and disorderly behaviour. In addition to cautions, as a punishment he was given drug rehabilitation. The youngest subject was Respondent F1, who was 16 years old during the first interview and had just turned 17 when the second session took place. His offences included cannabis use, graffiti and one assault, from all of which he had received fines and also drug rehabilitation. The only girl in the study was an 18 year subject, who had been involved in arson of a fairly well known building at the age of 16, from which she was arrested, charged and fined as a punishment.
4.5 Ethics and reliability

Participating in the study was entirely voluntary for all subjects and their stories were discussed anonymously. When reporting the interviews it is absolutely essential to cover the identities of the researched individuals and also to make sure they understand and give consent to the research (Silverman 2011, 94). In the current study this was accomplished by changing the participant names, cities, their actual work places and anything else that could reveal their identities. Also in order to receive their full consent, they were offered to be provided with the finished material and thoroughly explained the study purpose prior the interview. As one of the research subjects was under aged, it was necessary to contact his guardian prior the data collection in order to receive a legal consent by proxy for conducting the interview.

According to David Silverman (2011, 360) the reliability of research concerns primarily to repeatability of the research. This bluntly means whether the study can be reproduced and completed with similar results, interpretations and conclusions in order to find out the truthfulness of the report, in so to speak. In quantitative research this can be tested for example by experimenting whether or not certain results and measurements emerge in repeated trials. However, in qualitative research testing reliability in practice is far more challenging to do. Therefore there are certain measures that a diligent researcher must take in to account while conducting the study to make it reliable. There are two primary steps that can be taken. Firstly, to ensure the transparency of the process as a whole, describing every procedure in the study in detail is necessary. Secondly, it is important to establish the contextual relevance and explain why certain theoretical aspects are more meaningful than others and eventually generate specific interpretations. It the current study enhancing the reliability has been aimed to conduct through these precise methods by explaining the relationship of the study to a wider factual connection as well as describing the research process accurately. In addition, during the data collection the interviews were digitally recorded and supplemented with handmade notes in order to maximize the internal reliability. In order to convey a truthful ambiance for the reader, direct subject quotations have been utilized within the analysis. This also gives support to the observations and conclusions that has been made during and after the analysis.
4.6 Emerging themes

The data analysis was accomplished by using content analysis. It was found as the best method to analyse the data for the purpose of this research, as it offers an accurate guide through each interview and enables the examination how different respondents feel about the youth justice system and how their understanding might differ from each other. It was essential to be able to contrast the views of the interviewees, in order to perceive certain worrying or encouraging aspects within the system and also to develop an objective approach towards the analysis. In its most comprehensive understanding, content analysis can include most methods of doing qualitative analysis, as they all essentially are interpretation of seen, heard or read material. There are four steps to be taken when doing content analysis. Firstly the researcher must decide what is being studied or which questions needs answering. Secondly it is necessary to go through the data and mark those issues that provide the answers and separate them away from the main text. Thirdly, codifying the material and lastly making coherent conclusions from the findings. In qualitative research there often will be interesting issues rising from the data that that might be otherwise valuable, but not for that specific research that is being conducted. It is essential to resist the temptation to include those emerging issues to the initial research if they will not serve its purpose and only focus on what is being studied. This might be difficult, but necessary; otherwise the study will expand uncontrollably and eventually will not form a consistent piece of research. The purpose of content analysis is to provide clear and concise view about the subject that is being studied by verbally describing the content of the collected text in a systematic manner. (Tuomi ja Sarajärvi 2002, 93-94, 105, 107.)

In the current research the analysis was initiated by first getting familiar with the interview recordings by listening them through a few times and later on transcribing each interview word by word. Once transcription was finalised it was time to disaggregate the text in to small pieces by pursuing to identify the key themes within the data. First the data was reduced by listing the most relevant phrases from it and consequently rest of the text was excluded from the research process. After this the text was rather loosely categorized in to different sections by identifying several sub-codes from the phrases and dividing them accordingly. The sub-codes were following;
lack of opportunities
role of friends in offending
the usual suspects
police resistance
compliance with the authorities
reactions on female offending
normalisation of cannabis use
experiencing drug intervention measures
respondent perceptions on own offending
reacting on deterrence
future consequences

Three primary themes were formed and named on the basis of the mutual meaning that different codes had in regards to the research question. The final themes were motives for offending behaviour, experiencing police conduct and implications of intervention measures. Once the themes were constructed, the empirical data was connected to the wider theoretical context and their relationship discussed within and after the presentation of the thematic material. This precise process, constructing conceptual deductions from the collected data, is the basic idea of content analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2002, 115).

The questions in the interview frame were selected according to the research questions, and therefore it could be said that the emerging themes were already partly constructed beforehand. However, it is important to note, that the questions were highly adjustable during the analysis and did not entirely follow a restrictive plan. This is the beauty of content analysis; allowing the researcher to study even unstructured texts systematically and objectively and construct organised conclusions from them (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2002, 105). Flexibility in the analysis was a key element for two reasons; firstly the interviews were not completed during the same time period and secondly their content and length varied quite considerably. Dividing certain codes in to strict categories was not possible in this case. This made the analysis more proficient in some ways, although consequently it also challenged the cross national comparability of the data in to some extent. Therefore it was later chosen to give less value to the comparison of the experiences than initially was planned.
Content analysis, as was in the current study, can be carried out deductively, which means that the analysis is theory-based. The coding process in theory-based analysis reflects entirely or partly to existing theory and concepts. Coding is accomplished by utilising an analysis frame, in which the primary themes are already constructed based on theory. Abstaction was completed by finding codes, based on upfront constructed themes from the original data, and connecting them directly under the relevant categories. Coding is finding similarities and differences from the heard experiences and arranging them in to a systematic form (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2002, 115). As mentioned earlier the analysis frame in the current study was fairly flexible. This is also allowed in the theory-based analysis. Moreover, those themes that arise from the data and cannot be included to the already existing categories can be utilised to create new ones by using principles of inductive reasoning. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2002, 116.) In the current research, despite there were a number of themes that were initially found necessary to include to the analysis, only few of them were included in addition to those constructed beforehand. The themes eventually selected were closely related to the original analysis frame as well as the research questions and therefore it was found essential to aggregate them, in order to make the analysis as through as possible. The data analysis section will follow chronological order throughout the presentation process.
5 MOTIVES FOR OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR

5.1 Boredom and lack of opportunities

In order to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of certain intervention measures, it is necessary to find out the initial reasons why young people end up committing crime. In the current study it seemed that boredom was a fairly typical factor, when asked about the respondents’ involvement in criminal behaviour. It gave them something exciting to do together with friends. Apparently there were fairly little public spaces available for young people to spend time in within the areas where the respondents lived. On their part, there clearly was a request for facilities where time could be spent doing sports for instance. The most prominent message that was received from the interviews of respondent E1, E2 and F1 was their irritation towards the experienced segregation from the larger communities. It seemed that they felt stigmatized as outsiders only on the basis of their age and appearance. Being evicted continuously from public places and stopped and searched by the police on regular basis had a very frustrating influence on them, which also effected on their behaviour. I will return to this matter later on in the data analysis. Considering the general trends, offences such as vandalism or stealing for instance are often committed in order to avoid boredom. In the current study four out of five respondents explained that the excuse for their behaviour was simply, that they were bored and there was nothing better to do around the area where they lived. The respondent F1 reported:

*Well, it is more like showing off and doing something for your own pleasure. I can’t figure out anything better to do. I don’t care about studying or anything. I just want to come and go with my friends’. When ever and where ever. And do things that I want to do. I don’t just want to sit at home and listen nicely. Even thought I probably should sometimes...It’s killing time. We have nothing better to do. And I need to get my mind off from all the other stuff that is going on...*

When the first interview took place, Respondent F1 was living in a foster home. Only months earlier he was relocated from his sisters care to a new foster family, due to his persistent misbehaviour. It was believed by the social workers that the respondents’ sister was not able to take care of him as his involvement in criminal activity had not stopped.
Being placed, yet again, to a foster home was clearly frustrating for the respondent, particularly because the new family lived in a very small town in Southern Finland. In addition, the respondent seemed to be extremely attached to his sister and wished to live with her instead of a foster family. According to the respondent, his current involvement in delinquency, such as drug abuse and vandalism, was kind of a coping method to overcome the stress that his family life, learning difficulties at school and boredom caused him. For a number of times, he also said, that he is old enough to decide for his own actions and decide how to live his life. Police, social workers or relatives should- or cannot do it for him. In his story it became fairly evident that the boundaries or the rationale behind normative rules was not (yet) quite clear for him. The decisions to get involved in criminal behaviour, such as graffiti or vandalism, was rationally made, however the tools to construct an all-encompassing judgement about the following short- and long-term consequences were not quite advanced. This is precisely what Cornish and Clarke (see Laitinen & Aromaa 2005, 76-77) suggested by explaining that the social context where the crime takes place does not always offer young people mature components to act rationally in the same sense as adults. It could be presumed, that those juveniles who are particularly vulnerable, such as foster children, are even less capable of making decisions on mature level.

Ravinder Barn and Jo-Pein Tan (2012) in their study about foster children and their involvement in criminal behaviour found out, that unstable placement history significantly increases the likelihood of offending actions. Frequently changing home environment has a negative effect on the progress of young persons’ self-esteem and social skills, which later on in the future might cause difficulties to cope with a negative strain. Role of at least one significant adult has a highly remarkable role in preventing the development of deviant behaviour. Since a very early age the respondent F1 had forced to move from a facility to another in between the foster home changes, which clearly had left him without a well-balanced adult supervision and support. Unstable family background was a factor in Respondent E3’s life as well, due to which he left home at the age of 16. He explained:

Until to an age about 14, 15 I didn’t really smoke cannabis. I left home just before 17 to live in Harrow. North Yorkshire. And quickly discovered that there is
The respondents’ drug habit had started already at the age of 13; however he began to smoke cannabis regularly after moving out from his childhood home. Since then he began experimenting with a number of other substances such as speed and amphetamine from which he did get caught for the first time at the age of 17. According to the respondent, taking drugs was a social event, which gave him and his friends at least something mutual to do within the area where there was nothing interesting going on for young people who are under aged. He was arrested and charged for drug possession by the officials quite a few times, however the received punishments were incredibly minor and therefore they did not give him good excuse to stop using drugs. Boredom was a much worse punishment for him than taking up a few classes in drug rehabilitative programme.

All five respondents committed their offences with friends and did express that friends had a significant role in their lives. Most of their leisure time was spent with them, just hanging around where ever possible. Tina Byrne et al. (2006, 15-18) suggest that the leisure activities among young people usually concentrate on spaces that are not within the reach of the adult supervisory glaze. In England the juvenile dalliance is essentially considered as a problem of the working class. Or more specifically, it is often assumed that the working class youngsters are the origin of the problems caused by their inactive behaviour. Leisure activities often include meetings with friends and hanging around on public places, outside the domestic sphere and the adult supervision. Byrne claims that it is a form of protesting against the adult authority, which is part of the growing up process. Children and young people who are motivated to their studies, are taking part in voluntary activities or are intensively committed to some type of hobby, are less likely to get involved with deviant behaviour and therefore do not draw police attention to themselves. These permissible activities however, are often not available to all children; hobbies, going to movies, concerts or youth discos costs money, which some do not have. When asked about the initial reasons for some of the illegal behaviour that he has been taking part to, the respondent E1 stated:
We get bored!! We drink and then we do stuff because there is nothing else to do. If there would be like social clubs or like places where you could go to like mini football fields and shit. There is nothing to do! (...) There should be something. There are bike grounds and stuff, but realistically you have to be into biking or skating or whatever. You know what I mean? There is nothing to do! You need money...

Also respondent E2 pondered that the initial reason for him and his friends’ antisocial behaviour was boredom and lack of opportunities. Particularly at the time they were under-aged there was nothing for them to do, except hang on the streets, drink and mess around with the police. The respondent hoped that there would be something that could encourage young people to follow healthy lifestyle and would keep them out of the streets. Respondent E1 and E2 both lived in the same area. In their story the frustration towards the lack of activities arranged to young people within their community became obvious. Furthermore, respondent F1 and E3 also expressed similar views towards the issue. Interestingly, apart from the respondent F2, all the interviewees raised concrete suggestions for neighbourhood development, mostly relating to betterment of sport facilities.

The mutual account of boredom causing the interest towards illegal activities is related to social learning theory and particularly to Edwin Sutherlands’ differential association paradigm. Arguing, that it is not “their” fault the local authorities have not arranged anything else to do for them, is part of the mental process that justifies the criminal behaviour and gives a meaning to it. Furthermore there is another perspective towards the issue to be discussed reflecting to differential association theory; considering the socially and economically poor areas where all male respondents lived, as well as the fairly unstable backgrounds of respondents F1 and E3, it is essential to question whether their activities were in fact a form of counter culturist behaviour empowered by the experienced exclusion. For example the respondent F1 felt annoyed, that in the small city where he had lived with his foster family, there is only one local shop, where he and his friends can spend time during the cold winter. When they are being evicted from the shop, they usually come up with some alternative activities for themselves, instead of “just hanging around”. By this he meant spray painting or drinking somewhere. In addition, the respondent E1 was annoyed about the fact, that no matter where he and his friends were spending time, they were driven away. He narrated:
I got cautions for antisocial behaviour. I didn’t actually do anything bad. We were just around in a park (...) and we were just chilling there quite a long time just talking there just bored. And eventually they (the police) just told us to go home. Don’t know why I gave them my name and everything. And a couple of days later they came to my door and yeah “you’ve been doing section something something” and yeah...disorderly conduct.

This was not the first nor last time he along with his friends was evicted from public space and received an antisocial behaviour order for it. In fact, it was fairly common thing to experience for them. Being asked to leave from mutual areas and receiving warnings without an appropriate reason is form of labelling practiced by the police and other members of the community within the area respondents E1 and E2 lived. Being treated differently from others only on external grounds weakens the cohesion between the youths and the “others”. Relating to the position of the young people within their immediate communities, Paul Omaji (2003, 187-188) argues that since 1990's the draconian juvenile justice system in England has greatly contributed to the growing isolation of young people from the rest of the society. The media and its readers growing demand for harsher punishments has kept the punitive measures intact and consequently bolstered the declining status of younger people as active citizens. Instead of including them to communities the aim has been to evade them from the public scenery.

Young people, teenagers to be specific, usually have the need to spend time with their friends outside the adult supervision. It is part of the pathway of becoming independent. Their recreation mostly concentrates on semi-private spaces; areas which essentially are public, yet privately owned. Such spaces could be city centres, filled with supermarkets, shopping malls and fast-food restaurants. These are common places for young people to spend time in. The loitering youth is frequently not welcomed to public spaces and recently their being in certain places has been tried to eliminate by using various methods, such as “mosquito devices”, which produces a high, annoying sound that can be heard only by people who are under 25 years. Unwanted loitering could be considered to be a form of resistance towards the adult authority. Doing the exact opposite what has been told becomes an important part of the identity construction process for young teenagers (Kuusisto-Arponen & Tani 2009, 58; Byrne et al. 2006, 11.) This might be the case in the current study as well. Experiencing exclusion and discrimination together with friends
had perhaps only strengthened their feelings of cohesion with each other. Within their immediate social organisation, new rules and values are crafted and the commonly accepted rules discarded. To be excluded from the rest of the society, and being forced to carry the stigma of an outsider or a deviant, evidently becomes a burden to anyone experiencing it. According to the stories of all English respondents, for them is was exceedingly unfair to be labelled as dangerous or potentially dangerous even before doing anything wrong, as was the case particularly with the respondent E1 and E2 quite often. Furthermore, it seems that the frustration of not being taken along to communal activities becomes an issue among young people and might eventually trigger counter behaviour.

The social stigma that certain groups of young people often do carry particularly in England and Wales is well established within the new penology of the youth justice system, which recently has been focusing on community protection through incarceration and managing the probability of offending by targeting certain (youthful) risk groups. Moreover, in majority of the western societies, neo-liberal policies have been used to justify the lowering responsibilities of the government to include all in its benefits. This has led to widening of the gap between rich and poor, by favouring those who already can take care of themselves. The role of young people as citizens has now declined and their position is more now than never connected to the structural matters. In Britain adopting the free-market principle has led to moderate impotence of youth services particularly within certain less representative areas. Perhaps instead of following the new penology, criminal justice agencies could bring forth more desirable results by regenerating solidarity measures, which would include young people as equal and active members of the community. (Omaji 2003, 190.) Also Kuusisto-Arponen and Tami (2009, 54-55) suggests that community developers should include young people to their planning process and listen to their needs and ideas on how to improve their immediate community circumstances. Taking the ideas of young people into account and letting them to participate in neighbourhood development has highly empowering effect on their well-being. It is worth to mention, that in Europe the idea of hearing the opinions and suggestions of the young themselves about community and employment planning is currently being actualized within the youth guarantee plan. Preventing social exclusion of particularly the young and vulnerable is one of the main targets of the programme. (Borbély-Pecze & Hutchinson 2013.)
5.2 Is it rational?

When considering other reasons, besides boredom, for the offending behaviour of the respondents in the current study, it seems that they were fairly impulsive in all five cases. In order to create preventive measures to offences such as vandalism, it is again necessary to evaluate the role of rationality in juvenile offending. Can impulsive behaviour be also rational? Raymond Paternoster argues (in Burfeind and Bartush 2011, 158-163) that rational choice is usually not applicable when dealing with young offenders. In his work he has found out that even when rational decision making is part of the process of getting involved with criminal behaviour, considering the risk of getting caught as well as the severity of punishments has only a minimal part in the process. The rational decision making has a number of other important elements that should be taken into account when punishing the young wrongdoers. Punishment itself has very little, if any, effect in preventing juvenile delinquency. Yet this is the primary element that current crime control methods in England and Wales rely upon. Material gain from the criminal action and its consistency with offenders moral values are as well important factors within the decision making process. However, the choice of getting involved with criminal activity is commonly bound to the particular situation and does not therefore follow a certain pattern as the decisions are often made impulsively. In the current interviews some of the offenders could not really explain why they committed some of the crimes. For example the Offender E2 narrated about the time he got caught for vandalizing cars:

* I was smoking a cigarette and just strolling down the street and then uhm...and then I heard a crash behind me. And I turned around and saw that one of my mates had thrown this massive brick through a windscreen. And being drunk I just started laughing and said what the hell are you doing? Just young and stupid...and uhm...everyone started doing it and I got involved.

At first it seems that there was not much time to consider the consequences of breaking up a few cars and therefore it could be said that it was not very rational. After all, the crime was committed together with friends during alcohol fuelled night out. However, here the role of friends plays an important part when analysing the extent of rational thinking during the act. A slightly different point of view from Paternoster is given us by Michael A. Corriero (2006, 25-32) who argues that when a young person makes the
decision to get involved in deviant activities, one of the prominent factors that affect the outcome is maintenance of social relationships with the peers. Furthermore, the sense of belonging to a group is highly important to most young people and therefore it frequently is a vital motivation to take part in criminal activities. Youths often choose to get involved in collective behaviour even when it is illegal, as being left out of it and being alone is considerably worse option for them than getting caught. Despite a young person would recognize the nature and severity of the possible sanctions and punishments, being in the same boat with friends is often more important for them than bearing the consequences. Belonging to a group and having friends is an essential part of the lives of young people and their growing up process. In fact, thereby not many of the youth crimes are committed by a single individual.

The current data also suggests that the importance of friends and loyalty towards them is highly important to all five interviewees. The offender F1 explained that spray painting is something that outsiders cannot understand. Rather, it is something that everyone involved in it appreciates and one does it in order to show the other members how well you can do graffiti. There is an element of admiration that a painter receives from peers, once an exceptional “tag” to a highly visible location has been made. According to the respondent this admiration was the ultimate goal and motivation to do graffiti. Some of his friends in the small city where he lived during the first interview were also involved in spray painting activities and making graffiti was a common hobby for them. Considering the use of cannabis, the respondent F1 narrated during the second interview, that he began using it at the age of 14. Before, he was strongly against drugs and never thought becoming a regular user himself. However, after majority of his close friends began smoking cannabis, he decided to try it as well. His cannabis use evidently was triggered through social interaction, which also emphasizes the important role of friends in his life. Perhaps friends and wanting to be accepted by them had even more significant role in his decision making, as in his case there had always been a lack of permanent and secure family life. He explained that in the small town where he lived with his foster family, he was forced to be very careful with whom he smoked cannabis and to whom he could talk about it, as most young people living there are against drugs. The situation in the capital, and in larger cities in general, is completely different, as in his words, everyone smokes cannabis there. He reported:
In the small village everyone strongly disapproves cannabis. The group of friends with who I hang out, ten of us, we are the only ones who smoke it. The rest of the people, they.....they give no value to drug users what so ever. (...) I feel really bad that people stick their noses to other peoples businesses. It doesn’t really concern them at all! I don’t want to be labelled as a junkie just because I use weed...

The respondent had once been seen high in a movie theatre, by some of the youths from the small town. They began loudly insulting the respondent and calling him a “worthless junkie”. The respondent explained that since the incident he had not been spending much time in the town centre, as he was too ashamed to go there. He felt remarkably bad about being labelled as a junkie among some of his peers. He did not consider him a one and in fact, he as well despises the so called junkies as well. The respondent explained that the he does not really feel pressured by his friends to commit crime; it is just something they usually do together. In the first interview he continuously highlighted that the company of his friends or the police surveillance has nothing to do with his involvement in antisocial behaviour, as ultimately he is the one who decides how he chooses to behave and what he does with his free time. Despite of this, he later explained that he belongs to two different groups of friends and he usually adjusts his actions according to each groups’ behavioural codes. In the small city where he lived with his foster family, he and his friends did graffiti and drugs, as there was nothing else to do. The other group of friends, in a considerably larger city where he currently lives by himself, is more involved with drugs and alcohol consumption. No one does graffiti there and therefore in is not needed for him to get involved in that either. The respondent clarified that he does different things with different friends. Thereby it could be said that his behaviour was socially learned and the influence that his friends had on him is a significant factor considering his illegal activities. Responding to criminal activities in cases such as this one is imaginably challenging; on the other side there is group of friends encouraging him to do one thing and law enforcement on the other. As discussed earlier, for young people their immediate everyday surroundings often provides more influential behavioural guidance.

In addition to theme regarding the role of rationality, the offender F2 initially did not get caught for being involved in arson. Instead she willingly reported herself to the officials, despite the other participants did promise to leave her out of their stories. The offender explained that it would have been unfair for them and she did not want her friends to lie
for her. Therefore, it was better for her to also come clean with what she had done. Also the Offender E2 narrated a story about a time when he and his friends got caught for smoking cannabis. They were in an abandoned warehouse and once the police came, they quickly hid most of the drugs they had on them. Police, however, managed to find a small back of cannabis from the ground. When no one admitted owning it, the offender E2 stepped forward and took the blame for everyone and was arrested for the possession of class B drug. He said that he had done so, because everyone else seemed so scared about the situation. The respondent was the only under-aged person in the group and due to his previous arrests he was the one who would get into most trouble from the offense. Nevertheless, he felt that protecting his friends was more important. Despite knowing that the act is stupid and recognizing the consequences in these above mentioned cases, belonging to a group and proving ones loyalty towards the other members had been more important than suffering the consequences. This clearly indicates that the respondents indeed were capable of rational thinking prior and after the offending actions. Interestingly, the influence of peers, and perhaps receiving some admiration from them, was the decisive factor during the decision making process. Moreover, when asked the respondent E1 why he was involved in the act of street robbery, he explained:

_The moment you know...we just went for it. It was a group decision. Pointless really. (...) I mean obviously if I would have been on my own, I would not have done it. Just when you are in the group you are in the group you know._

The robbery was not motivated by material gain, as the group of friends knew beforehand that there was nothing much to steal. Rather it was the excitement that they gained from it. When asked if the respondent felt pressure to act in a certain way within the group he said it is not the pressure as such that makes them behave unanimously, rather it is the unsaid group rules. Everyone just internally knows and accepts what to do and how to behave. It is the essential spirit of belonging to a group. Intriguingly this also applies to the mutual decision to stay out of trouble and criminal activities. The Respondents E1, E2 and F2 all felt that staying out of trouble is an obvious choice for them nowadays, as they have all grown up and gotten wiser. In addition they can also go to a bar or someone’s own apartment, instead of just hanging on streets. According to their account this also applies to most of their friends. The respondents elaborated:
**E1:** We're just old enough. We know together, all together, as one group, what to do and what not to do. You know what I mean...We are more sensible. I have changed now.

**E2:** Try as hard as we can (to stay out of trouble). I’d say that is the case with most of my friends now. I guess we all have definitely matured and grown up. Having had those sorts of experiences as well...uhm most certainly and most of my friends as well if not all of them...its just not...its not worth a while getting involved with.

**F2:** But nowadays I have and will always call the cops when something like this happens! Maybe that's the lesson that I've learned from this. Maybe it’s because I've grown up or something... We were just young and stupid. And inexperienced.

It is evident that in all five cases the influence of peers has played a highly prominent role in adapting illegal practices. There has been a mutual decision, or at least a silent acceptance within the groups, prior the crimes have been committed. Here the wonderful unity between social learning and rational choice theories can be appreciated. On one account it can be said that rational choice has been a part of the decision making process to get involved in offending behaviour. Maintaining the relationship with friends has played a highly prominent part in all of the case studies, when making the choice to get involved in criminal behaviour. However, the level of maturity of the decision making process is questionable. As mentioned earlier, being left out from the group might be a much worse punishment for a young person than receiving an official sanction. The ground and rules on which the rational decisions are being constructed had been developed through social interactions with others in similar situations. The rationality of young respondents in the current study has evolved through social relations and their influence. This raises an important question about the nature of the current youth justice policies and whether they should be adjusted to meet the specific needs to reduce or prevent the emergence of anti social behaviour among young people. Treating young offenders accordingly to adults might not work to tackle juvenile offending as the psychological and social maturity does not always meet the expectations and assumptions that youth justice policies lays upon them.
6 EXPERIENCING POLICE CONDUCT

6.1 The usual suspects

During the data collection there appeared to be considerable differences between Finnish and English respondents on how they had experienced the intervention measures and the police behaviour. In both countries early intervention schemes are a highly prominent part of youth delinquency prevention; however their implementation differs significantly from one another. Perhaps the societal punishment/welfare dichotomy emerges best within the respondent accounts on police conduct. It became evident, that all three English respondents felt that they were perpetually labelled as “the usual suspects” by the officials, on the basis of what they were wearing, how they behaved, were they spend their time as well as due to their age and gender. Particularly the police actions were found extremely unjust and annoying. This differentiated significantly from the Finnish experiences, as both respondents had almost nothing negative to say about how they had been treated by the police. Surprisingly, the female respondent even narrated that the officials had been very gracious and caring towards her during the time she was in prison. The respondent E2 elaborated about his experience with the police:

When we were younger and we had nothing to do and we were hanging around the shops the whole day. There was a time when (...) there were a lot more police around the area and it was quite a big area so you could imagine that we would see a few police cars every day. And probably...there was a time...maybe a month and a half you would probably get stopped maybe once or twice every few days (...) which we thought was starting to get a bit tedious and a bit like ridiculous because It’s like the same people as well...and that's why it was even a bit more like...if you stopped me like two days ago and you found nothing wrong why would you stop me two days later?

The respondent explained that partly the reason why he and his friends where targeted so often was because they were, without appropriate reason, suspected of doing something criminal, such as shoplifting. He also explained that there was a general understanding among his peers that the police bullied them, because they needed to get more arrests in order to achieve their targets, which is certain number of arrests. The surveillance of specific target groups in England and Wales is highly intensive and has aroused some
concern among the academics. For example so called “stop and search” tactic allows police officers to carry out bodily search only on the basis of their on suspicion of something criminal happening or about to happen. The law enforcement is highly encouraged to use their powers to potentially prevent those situations where crimes typically occur. This situational crime prevention measure is fairly problematic, as it frequently targets certain individuals and social groups who already are in a less privileged position. The surveillance is notably more intensive within socially deprived areas, which also guarantees more stops and searches and therefore more convictions. Young working class men, particularly if they are black, are more likely to be stopped by the police than their white middle class counterparts as they are already labelled as potential wrongdoers within the public discourse. (Young 2003, 61-64.) All three English respondents did in fact live within an area that could be called socially- and economically deprived neighbourhoods. Respondents E2 and E3 felt that the law enforcement perhaps kept their eye on them, due to their family members’ previous involvement with the police. Both respondents had an older brother, who had been involved with the police in the past. When asked about the initials reasons why Respondent E2 did get arrested nine times, he felt that it was in a way bad fortune in his part, as if he had always been in the wrong place at the wrong time. However, he did not find most of the arrests justified. He explained further:

*It almost sounds stupid, all being consequential...But uhm....it literally was the case quite often. I was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Yeah...maybe. It’s like if I would go out like this (wearing a hoodie and sweat pants) I would be the prime target for the police to search or to arrest or...because I’m wearing a trackie. (...) It is almost like they pick on certain group of people.*

During the interview the respondent seemed visibly indignant about his past experience with the police and he did not appreciate that most likely the police had arrested him only on the basis of his appearance. In addition, he explained that most of his friends had also been labelled and treated by the police with similar manner, which had created a fairly hateful atmosphere towards the officials among them. The respondent’s mother had encountered the local police officers a number of times and threatened to sue them for bullying her son. This clearly indicates that the actions taken by the police against the respondent E2 had created unreasonable strain upon his family as well. Travis (2014) in
his article about stops and searches claimed that one of the prominent problems of the highly centralised stop and search activities by the police is, that it increases the lack of confidence towards the law endorsement among the public. This particularly applies to those areas where their crime prevention measures are needed the most. Moreover, as a crime prevention method stop and search is not only discriminatory, but also ineffective as great majority of them do not lead to arrest or criminal proceedings. It has been found out that stops and searches reduce the number of disruptive crime only by 0.2 per cent. Furthermore, its effectiveness on drug related crime, or rather reducing it, has no apparent significance. Exceptionally stops and searches made in year 2009 under the suspicion of possession of knifes and stolen property had a steadier arrest rate (possession of knifes 6 percent and stolen property 12 per cent). (Graham & Karn 2013.) Also Respondent E1 felt very strongly about the power police are using among him and his friends:

*I mean it’s so corrupted...So corrupted. How can you follow something that is so corrupted? How come people use them as the last resort? How come people follow their rules when they are the problem itself? I mean I’ve done criminal damage and stuff. Fair enough, but...just sometimes police go too far. (...) When they see you as well...like when your round and about in town and they just always grab you. There are certain ways they act as well! They think they have so much power. They just wear a uniform like everyone else. (...) You are supposed to protect us, but you're not protecting us. You're just trying to get more convictions. What are you protecting really!*

When asked the respondent why he felt the police are behaving this way with them, he also stated that he feels it is due to his young age and the way he dresses. Being unjustly labelled as an offender had significantly reduced his trust upon the law enforcement. It became rather evident, that he did not have any confidence upon the police officials, or the entire criminal justice system for that matter. Despite the respondent E1 had been confronted by the police mostly for appropriate reasons, he did not acknowledge their actions as equitable in his case. This might give some insight to the common perception that young people may have towards the police within certain areas in England. Clearly more research on this specific issue is recommended, in order to create a general account on the matter. Nevertheless, it has to be said that bad news tends to travel like wild fire. Particularly among young people, to whom communality is often vital, shared experiences among friends do have a great impact upon mutual opinions. The ability of
juveniles to analyze and rationalize matters is not necessarily fully developed, and therefore even the slightest negative incident might have enormous consequences. In addition, reflecting on Sutherlands account on differential association (see eg. Vito & Maahs 2012, 174-175; Laitinen & Aromaa 2005, 55-57), by discarding generally accepted rules and the law new operating models begins to emerge. Within the social organization, a.k.a the group of close friends, the respondents E1 and E2 began adapting new, illegal ways to respond to police conduct. Being negatively labelled by the police provoked resistance among the group of people the respondents were involved in and thereby new justified practises began to evolve, as the data will soon indicate.

6.2 Police resistance

There is recent evidence that the police practices experienced by the subjects in the current research are rather ineffective in reducing actual criminality. In the last 10 years the number of stops and searches has remarkably increased, yet interestingly the amount of searches leading to arrest has declined. Previous research indicates, that the disproportionate stop and searches targeted to young adults (and under 18 year olds) potentially causes discord between the police and youth. Most worryingly recurring encounters occasionally leads to conflicts between the police officers and the public, when being the usual suspect unduly becomes intolerable. Therefore it would be important to re-evaluate the benefits of stops and searches and ask, whether their disproportionate number causes more harm than good to community protection. Young adults, more often than juveniles, do usually understand the initial purpose of the police power to stop and search and frequently do accept it. However, once their experience from it becomes vainly excessive, their co-operation with the police and the law might become fractured. In addition, this sometimes leads to situations, which eventually cultivates into disorderly behaviour and ends up to arrest. (Graham & Karn 2013.) When asked how the Respondent E2 felt about the continuous arrests and stops and searches he had experience, the respondent narrated:

*It made me angry. It made me start...it made me want to annoy them more and I did! In fact I started just almost taking the piss out of them, which probably didn’t help my case. But when they are like that...when someone’s rude to you, you
The current data indicates, that it was fairly common for the respondent E2 and his friends to attempt to make the life of the police as hard as they could, as it was felt like that is precisely what the police is doing to them. They had no motive to comply with the orders given them by the police. According to his story they were telling the police things they did not want to hear, they were being rude to officers and they did not answer to the questions asked from them. Compliance with the law enforcement was not on their agenda, as they believed that the officers did not deserve that. Similar comments were received from the respondent E1. Interestingly this reaffirms the results received from previous studies concerning stops and searches. For example Graham and Karn (2013) in their study about policing juveniles found out that during their encounters with the police, people consistently are expecting to be treated fairly and with respect. Even one negative event might provoke hatred against the law enforcement amongst the entire community. Therefore the manner in which stops and searches are carried out is extremely crucial. Even young people do wish to be respectfully treated and do not want to be looked down on. Most importantly the police should always justify their use of power clearly and explain why it is necessary at that time. This action is not always executed and young people do find the lack of explanation irritating.

Furthermore, a study done by Jackson and Smith (2013) also indicated similar results about young Londoners attitudes towards the police. Through the 36 conducted interviews, they found evidence, which suggested that a great number of the experiences young adults has had with the law enforcement are negative. Particularly stop and search situations are frequently considered as unjust. Furthermore, similarly to current report, the study also demonstrated that the subject individuals often feel as they are being targeted and stereotyped by the police, thereby making the police conduct unprofessional. Many youngsters felt embarrassed and annoyed to be stopped and searched, which had a negative impact on their attitudes towards the police. Many stated that they felt being treated disrespectfully and rudely by the police during a stop and search, and wished to see a change in this. In some cases, where stop and searches are experienced frequently, the target might start behaving according to the stereotype he is being stopped for, as was the case in the current study. Despite not being a criminal, one might start feeling like
one, due to the targeting behaviour of the police. In this study this sort of behaviour emerged in the form of police resistance. In addition the respondent E1 felt that sometimes during a stop and search situations the police were trying to provoke him to behave badly just to make the arrest. There was one time he was pulled over and searched and despite he was staying calm during the situation, the officers were trying to appease him despite he was not being rowdy at all. He believed that they continuously do that just to annoy him. He said:

_They pretended that I'm getting angry even if I'm not. Or something like that. You know what I mean? They go like “lower your voice, lower your voice”. It’s just so patronising. The police are patronising._

6.3 A contrary reaction

Although the respondent E3 also showed some sort of disrespect towards the youth justice agencies, he had slightly different approach on dealing with the police compared to his English counterparts. He felt that during the encounters with the law enforcement, the best way to stay out of prison is to be kind to the officers and do exactly what they ask you to do. He said:

_Well....uhm...I actually felt that the police are stupid, because they are easily to be manipulated. I’m living in a council estate, I’m a little shit, me and my friends have always been little shits, vandalizing things, criminal damage, lottering...all those sort of things, you know, has been a part of my life from a very early age. As long as you’re polite and friendly, the police will genuinely do the same to you and there's no real punishment for you._

Despite the respondent E3 also had felt the effect of excessive police surveillance within his area, he did not react to it similarly to the other two English respondents. Instead he thought that the best way to stay out of prison, fines or community service is to behave appropriately and respectfully when experiencing police conduct. This was the case with the both of the Finnish respondents as well. When asked how the respondent F1 felt about police behaviour around young people, he thought that their conduct was mostly quite fair and appropriate. He understood that it is necessary to get involved with under-aged
drinking and unruly behaviour, as it might be harmful to other citizens. He also felt that it is justified to intervene to drug use and alcohol consumption because it is against the law. During the interview the respondent did not make any excuses for his substance abuse and did not feel offended by the police intervention to his actions. This was surprising, as the respondent also did not consider doing anything wrong when using cannabis for instance. There were some contradictions in his comments in terms of how he felt about police intervention being quite reasonable, yet people should be able to decide for their own lives without interference from the officials. Unlike the English respondents, either one of the Finnish interviewees stated that they were unjustly treated by the police. The respondent F1 explained:

Well, I think they are just doing their job. The best they can. And I do understand that if someone is behaving drunk and unruly, they have to intervene, because they are just protecting other people. And if you are under aged you are not even supposed to have any substances on you. It’s their duty to take it from you, because the law says it so. It’s their job...

Concerning the issue of excessive surveillance, the respondent reported that he has not felt differently treated from others, nor did he feel that the police or other officials had handled the situation inappropriately in his case. However, on occasions when he has been stopped by the police they usually do complete a full search when his previous drug offences come to their knowledge through the records. The respondent F2 also had good experiences about the encounters with the police officers. She was arrested on the grounds of involvement in arson and was imprisoned for four days during the preliminary investigation period. At the time her dress style was quite of certain kind; black clothes, piercings and black/red hair. One could call this gothic fashion. Despite the police officers were fairly solicitous towards her well-being she did not feel quite the same towards the prosecutor. According to her story, the arson was purely an accident, yet the prosecutor was determined to make it look like a satanic ritual. She guessed that it was partly due to the way she (and her friends) looked and in that sense she did feel that she was treated on basis of a certain stereotype. She explained:
In the hearings they were continuously trying to make us look like Satan worshipers and drug abusers and all that. They were really trying to do that! But they couldn't. They were asking all sort of silly questions like what happens 6th of June 2006 (6.6.06). Or I don't know... They were asking what sort of music we listen if we listen to heavy metal. And when they searched our homes they were trying to find some sort of Satan worship-voodoo stuff, but they couldn't find anything. Oh, they found a CD which had like number 6 on it...

6.4 Reactions on female offending

When asked the Respondent F2 how she felt the police conducted themselves around her during the preliminary investigation, she felt that they were incredibly gracious towards her and treated her with a somewhat fatherly manner. One of the police comforted the respondent by saying that as a father of two daughters he certainly hopes nothing bad will happen to her. This statement was found fairly amusing by the interviewee, as at that point the officials did not know whether she had done something severe or not. According to the respondent’s story, they automatically assumed it was the boys, not her, who had committed the crime and done all the “nasty work”. Interestingly, similar remarks about the divergences of the police treatment between boys and girls were also made by the respondent E2. During the interview he mentioned his irritation towards the issue of police targeting him a number of times. The respondent did not understand why it was always he and his male companions who were stopped and searched and taken down to the station. Most of the times there were girls involved as well, but they were frequently released from the police measures. The respondent remembered an occasion when he and his friends were spending time smoking cannabis in an abandoned warehouse outside the city centre. The police car pulled over and performed a bodily search to him and to all his friends, the only exception being a girl who was with them at the time. He narrated:

One of the guys was searching it and the other one was standing there with (the female friend) the whole time saying “It’s alright, It’s alright. This will be over soon. Nothing is wrong, you have not done anything”. And I was just standing there thinking right, ok that’s fair. Like how could you know that it wasn’t her? (...) They didn’t even bother searching her.
These experiences are somewhat intriguing as they contradict with the current concerns academics both in Finland and England are addressing. According to Gelsthorpe and Sharpe (2006, 47-50) since the late 1990’s the number of arrested young girls in England and Wales has increased disproportionately as compared to boys. The prominent change of the criminal justice policies from the welfare to punitive approach in dealing with young offenders has altered the way criminal justice agencies deal particularly with female offenders. Perhaps the reason for growing concern towards the reckless girls is perishing of the “bedroom culture” where girls and young women were expected to focus their social activities inside the domestic sphere. The social expectations for girls were, and still are, notably higher than what are posit to boys. The leisure time among girls has become very similar to boys, which has caused public worry about the corruption of young female mind. Historically speaking the criminal justice agencies (among many other institutions) has always treated girls and young women in a manner that could be comprehended as somewhat double standard. On the other hand girls are considered to be more fragile than boys, in need of care and guidance. However, when girls do misbehave in a way that is not expected from them, it usually is understood to be very severe and something to be very concerned about, whereas young men in comparable situations might be confronted with “boys will be boys” attitude.

Deviant behaviour among girls was previously addressed with care system, instead of the punitive stance. However, the feminist critique against the different modes that previously was used to treat female offenders has completely changed the measures that are used to tackle young female offending. The more egalitarian youth justice now perceives their deviance primarily as criminal, not problematic as was done before. In England the net-widening measures introduced by the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act has brought relatively more girls inside the Criminal justice system compared to boys. For example anti social behaviour orders are increasingly used to control youthful behaviour, their language, life- and dress style. Consequently the amount of crimes committed by girls has increased, however the number of individuals committing those crimes has stayed rather still. (Gelsthorpe & Sharpe 2006, 50.) This has also been the case in Finland. According to Honkatukia (2009, 236) the violent crime committed by girls according to the police statistics has increased, even though the number of self-reported crime has stayed the same, if not declined. This suggests that majority of the youth could be even more law-abiding than before, but there possibly is a small group of marginalized individuals who
commit more crime. In addition, the youth control in Finland has also remarkably intensified in recent years, which clearly in its part increases the number of police reported crime. The disproportionate moral panic about the increasing violence especially of girls and young women, both in Finland and in England, has led to their more robust criminalisation. In current atmosphere the general public is as well more encouraged and sensitised to report any detected deviant or antisocial behaviour.

It is important to note, that girls still do commit considerably less criminal actions that boys. The older they get, their involvement in crime related behaviour decreases. In fact it could be said that girls and young women grow out of crime notably faster than boys. There is very limited evidence for the argument that the criminal behaviour of girls and young women has increased in recent years. Yet the number of diverting measures used previously to avoid their exposure to the criminal justice system is diminishing. This concerns both sexes, however relatively more girls than boys. (Gelsthorpe & Sharpe 2006, 50-52.) On the other hand, in regards to the current data, it seems that the police behaviour with the respondent F1 and with the female friend of respondent E2 had been rather protective, which largely reminds us from previously used methods to treat young female offenders. Perhaps the welfare approach among certain officials has not entirely vanished and specific old-fashioned stereotypes still have a stand within peoples’ minds. However, even if this is the case, it would be a substantial double-edged sword; bluntly it would treat girls in a more lenient aspect, while strengthening boys’ labelled position as the usual suspects. The collected data suggests that the possibility of the latter does generate fairly strong negative feelings towards the police behaviour among already negatively labelled and therefore strained young men, as they do not recognize themselves to be treated coequally. The Respondent E2 quite passionately elaborated his feelings further towards the matter:

*I don't think it’s right how they treat young people. How they single them out and how they single the males out of females. (--) The way that they...they would never approach a group of females and obviously they would never search them. They would never do that. They would do that to guys all the time. Like ALL the time!*
7 EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERVENTION MEASURES

7.1 Normalisation of cannabis use

When it comes to drug use, it is considerably challenging to respond to it, as it seems that the ideological mindset towards drugs has rather changed among young people in recent years (ESPAD-report 2011). In the current study drugs were, and party still are, a prominent part all of the respondents’ lives. Particularly illegal use of cannabis had been a reason for police intervention among all the cases, excluding the respondent F2. Interestingly all the respondents did not consider class B drugs as wrongful, definitely not illegal, and possessed a rather lenient attitude towards it. This seemed to have been the case not only among the respondents, but also among their immediate friends as well. The commonness of cannabis use among young people gives an excellent cause to study their attitudes as well as opinions towards the intervention measures and analyse their effectiveness from an objective point of view. In the current study, the respondents were more or less aware of the medical and legal consequences of their drug habit. Calculating the pros and cons made their decision to smoke cannabis even easier, particularly once they had experienced the measures taken after getting caught. Smoking cannabis was definitely worth the risk for them. The tolerant attitudes towards cannabis use among young people themselves, presents a great dilemma on how it should be controlled. It is challenging to punish or treat people who do not consider themselves either sick or criminal. Respondent F1 elaborated about his attitude towards drugs:

Well, I don’t think alcohol is bad or cannabis either. I think it’s ok. I think they both are ok. They are pretty normal stuff. I don’t think they are anything special. Yeah, it’s normal.

It is difficult to evaluate whether the Respondent F1 one had a problem with drugs or not, but his cannabis use was rather excessive. He himself perceived it as a “choice of lifestyle” and stated that he could quit using any time he wanted. However, during the second interview with him, he had turned 17 and was permitted with his own apartment where he could stay with the condition of staying out of trouble, including drugs. To secure this, regular drug tests were planned to take place. Even when facing the risk of
going back to foster care, to up northern Finland where he was dreading to go, he did not find quitting cannabis use necessary or even an option. He narrated about different methods, that he had found from the internet, how he could try to modify the test results and change their outcome. This included taking an overdose of other medical substances than might potentially be damaging. At this point, it was found necessary to verbally, and perhaps slightly morally, intervene with the respondent’s actions. This was done at risk of knowing, that the appropriate distance between interviewer and interviewee might get transgressed. It stays unsure whether this had any effect on the received data.

In Finland drug usage and experimentation among young people has also increased and started to become somewhat normal behaviour within their leisure activities. In year 2011 from all school aged children 11 per cent had explored cannabis at some point of their lives, compared to year 1995 when the equivalent number was only five per cent. Drugs other that cannabis had been experimented by four per cent of the school aged children in year 2011. Even though in Finland the drug consumption among young children has grown in recent years, it still has one of the lowest rates of drug use when compared to many other European countries. The statistics indicates that despite cannabis has become more popular among young people, their interest on using other drugs is still fairly low. (Raitasalo et al. 2012, 9, 22-23.) Also the Respondent F1 felt reluctant to use any “stronger” drug than cannabis. He explained:

*They are dangerous and you really should not play with those. And I won’t, at least not anymore. I think it would be better if everyone could decide for themselves what they can and cannot do. I for instance want to get a good job and begin a good life for my self. I don’t want to become some sort of junkie, never. I don’t think It’s right that you just sit at home drinking and doping all day long. That’s not life! I think it’s ok that you smoke cannabis and drink occasionally as long as you do your job well.*

It was evident that the respondent F1 understood the danger that lies within excessive drug use, especially when class A drugs are in question. He stated that it is acceptable to smoke cannabis every now and then, as long as you manage your responsibilities. Being high all day long, doing nothing was not the life he wanted for himself. Yet, this was precisely the life he was living at the time of the interviews. It is fairly typical for juveniles, not to understand and consider the long term consequences that their current
actions may inflict. This is a phase, which will in most cases pass in the verge of adulthood. This seemed to have been the case among the three English respondents, as the study will show later on.

7.2 Experiencing drug measures

What comes to British crime policy, there exist a strong predicament between the normalization of the cannabis use and the crime-drug connection concerning mostly heroin and crack cocaine users. The policies that are being used to tackle drug use as well as drug related criminal behaviour do not acknowledge the cultural or social concept related to the consumption of different kinds of narcotics. Sanctions frequently do not fit the crime. (Muncie 1999, 36-37; Seddon et al. 2008.) Since 1990's the Labour government has been trying to build a stronger nexus between the Criminal Justice System and drug treatment programmes, in order to diminish drug related crime. Perceiving the drug problem as a crime problem has lead to increasing criminalization of drug policies. Previously the focus in drug interventions was health, whereas in recent times it has shifted to crime control; from welfare model to punitive model. Today the political culture faces a major predicament; certain drugs has become a normal aspect of youth culture, while at the same time drug related crime has increased particularly in certain areas. How should the offenders and the habitual drug takers be encountered? The current policies cover everything between cannabis to heroine within its measures, but do not successfully manage either one of the issues. (Seddon et al. 2008.) The Respondent E3 elaborated about his experience with drug intervention:

_Instead for sending me to prison they gave me a caution and they sent me to see someone who could help you with your problems as a drug addict. Even though I didn't see myself as an addict but as a drug taker. Uhm...they sort off gave me a choice to go to prison or to drug therapy, but it was not really a choice. As 17 year old young lad your mind goes like prison or therapist, prison or therapist. I made a decision to therapy, even though I don't see it as a choice because I didn't want to go to prison._
The problem of the current drug policies and the responsibilisation of the individual clearly emerges within the respondents experiences. It seems that he was given the choice to consider himself either as criminal or a drug addict, and punish or treat himself accordingly. As he said, he did not consider having a problem with drugs, but going to prison was not even an option. After all, he most certainly was not a criminal either. Forced rehabilitation to someone who does not even consider having a problem with drugs will unlikely result in recovery.

A drug intervention programme that goes under the name “Tough choices” was introduced in year 2006 as a part of New Labours fight on crime (Seddon et al. 2012, 67). It includes the right to test the offender for drugs on arrest and the obligation to attend to a rehabilitative programme in case drug use has been detected. “Tough choices” initiative does follow the new-liberal model, typical to any post-modern western society, which aims to emphasize the role of the individual in risk control. Essentially the focus has shifted away from the well-being of the drug takers, who are nowadays given the “choice” between forced drug treatment and prison. Interestingly the paradox within the drug politics is, that the drug users are seen at the same time as rational decision makers as well as out of control drug addicts who are forced to feed their habit by criminal means. (Seddon et al. 2008.) This certainly was the case with respondent E3 but also respondent E2 had experienced a drug treatment programme followed by his caution for cannabis use. He narrated:

*He (the drug specialist) was...he seemed really blasé about that. He didn’t care. So if that’s the sort of message you are sending to people who takes drugs...well then they just keep on re-offending. Cos they think that ok, I can do that. I can go to a one meeting. Alright. Especially if it’s that easy.*

Respondents E3 and E2, both felt that the drug meetings were not enough to convince them to stop using cannabis. Instead, they felt rather more liberated about the idea of using drugs as the consequences were not particularly severe. None of the respondents in the study perceived class B drugs as bad or harmful, which also certainly affected to their careless attitude towards the experienced rehabilitative measures. Also the Respondent F1 felt that he is mature enough to decide for his own life and make his decisions, without intervention from the officials. Measures taken in his case, for example the talks with the
social services had not made a difference in his drug or other criminal behaviour. It is more a question of how to avoid getting caught in the future. He explained:

*Everyone can do what they want. Everyone lives their own life and police will intervene when they really have to. But, you can also avoid those situations by not getting involved with them and keep low profile. Learn to predict and avoid situations where you could get caught.*

At time of the second interview the respondent F1 had been caught again for using cannabis and given his first warning, before sending him back to foster care. The warning was given with the obligation to take part in a drug rehabilitation programme, which included sessions with other underage drug users. Interestingly, respondents’ thoughts about the measurement were rather similar to those experienced by respondents E2 and E3. Instead of rehabilitating him, the programme gave him new ideas on how not to get caught and how to cheat the drug test results. It seemed that sharing knowledge about a mutual interest with other cannabis users was more of a reward than a punishment for him. The authorities aim to rehabilitate the respondent by introducing him to other members of a “social organisation”, which shared the same values and practices as him, was indeed not very effective in his case.

In Finland adolescent first time drug offenders are always addressed to a formal meeting with a social worker, the offenders’ guardians, prosecutor and a police officer. Meetings function as a replacement for fine sanctions and are aimed to direct the offender away from the formal prosecution process, replacing it with an oral warning. This policy is part of a preventative scheme which objective is to avoid the development of severe drug dependency among young people. In practice this includes informing youngsters about drug related harm, evaluating their situation and discussing about possible rehabilitative measures to be taken. Also it is important to make the young person understand the severity of the situation and hopefully generate some remorse towards it. (Rönkä 2006, 2-3.) In the current study, neither in England or Finland, the drug education as a formal measure has not succeeded to convert the respondents’ attitudes towards drug use. It appears that they understand drugs as a normal and purely pleasant way to spend time together with friends. The information that is provided to them about the disadvantages that cannabis might engender is perceived as false and yet another method to exercise
adult authority upon the youngsters. This has also suggested by Salasuo (2004) who argues that the official information that is presented is frequently understood as adult “propaganda”. Instead of entrusting the given information, alternative knowledge is searched from the internet for instance, which entails also so called facts that are dangerously untrue. In order the drug rehabilitative programmes to be successful their organisers must first familiarize themselves with the fields of contemporary youth drug cultures. It seems, that by simply telling the young people that “drugs are bad”, is ineffective.

7.3 Respondent perception on offending behaviour

The reason why current drug policies were discussed earlier is that during the data collection emerged some very interesting comments concerning the effectiveness of drug intervention programmes as well as youth justice measures in general. These comments gave some useful tools in understanding the effects that youth justice system had for these five young offenders behaviour and whether it actually has any prominent efficacy towards their criminality. Next, it is essential to interpret how the criminal behaviour is experienced by the young themselves, or rather whether they even do consider themselves as deviant, and reflect their accounts on the issue to the measures experienced. As discussed earlier, drug use among many young has reached a somewhat normal position within their leisure time and punishing them for it has had very little effect on the actual drug related behaviour as it was not considered as illegal. When asked how the Respondent F1 felt about the criminal damage he had done to other people’s property he said:

Well, I don't think it’s wrong really. I know that people don’t like what I’m doing, but I don’t think it’s wrong. I mean, I know that it is wrong, but I don’t think....I don’t know anymore.

It was evident that the respondent was fairly undecided how he felt about the criminal aspect of his hobby. Perhaps due to his difficult history growing up, the normative and moral boundaries were still unclear for him. In his life there was not just one close group of friends but many, mostly coming from similar conditions as the respondent himself.
Each group was creating their own rules and moral codes, which were learned by every member of the group through interaction with each other. During the interviews with the respondent, it was obvious that he felt strained about what he was expected to do by his friends and by the society. Furthermore the Respondent felt that graffiti and drugs was an important part of the youth culture that he was involved in. Following the principles of differential association, it seemed that he was justifying his behaviour by saying that it was not his fault that there are not enough legal places to practise his hobby. It was as if the Respondent knew that what he is doing is wrong, yet it is acceptable as he does not appreciate additional options given to him. When the first interview took place, the Respondent had been involved in a battery only months before. During the incident he broke his acquaintances nose due to some differences of opinion. He also had threatened a boy his aged with a knife, because he belonged to a racial minority. These both events he found insignificant and did not feel guilty about committing the crimes. Only thing he did worry was the fines he probably would receive afterwards, but otherwise no sign of remorse came through in his story. The Respondent felt that the financial sanctions did lower his motivation to work, as he did not see the point to earn money only to pay the unnecessary and unjust penalties received. Similarly, the Respondent F2 felt that she had done nothing wrong and even felt that the whole process was a big joke. Her attitude towards the entire case emerges well from the following comment:

*I mean it was pretty serious because there was a possibility of conflagration and apparently we put a lot of people in danger...at least that's what they said!! (laughing). (...) But at any point I didn't feel that I should be there!! I had done nothing wrong. Especially in the prison...I couldn't even have my own lighter in there! (laughing)*

On issue of the actual punishment received, the informant appeared to feel that it had been quite lenient. Her case was dealt in the Court of Appeals (equivalent to Crown Court in England and Wales), as the prosecutor saw that the Principle Trial Court failed to give an appropriate punishment. Ultimately the respondent received a fine, which she stated to be “not bad”. Concerning the emotions that she had during the procedure of her case she said;
I wasn't really scared or anything like that. Just a bit unsure what will happen to me. A bit excited and confused maybe. (laughing)

During the interview the Respondent F2 appeared rather indifferent towards the crime she had committed. It seemed that she considered the entire proceeding as well as the incident itself as absurd and showed no regret at all during the interview. Experiencing the youth justice system was for her exciting and something that you could tell your friends about. Also the Respondent E1 felt that the first times he got arrested were quite exciting, rather than intimidating for him. However, later on the excitement was replaced with fear of getting incarcerated for good. He narrated:

"uhhm..After the first couple of times I got arrested I thought it was quite cool. And then I think when I got a bit older and I got arrested A few times more it wasn't cool at all. It was not where I wanted to be."

As to the crimes he had committed, the respondent explained, that breaking the law had been exciting and cool when he was younger. It was part of the fun at that time; however once getting in trouble with the police more often, the youthful innocence of doing illegal things all the time disappeared and was replaced with fear of being incarcerated. Similarly to both Finnish respondents, only one of the English respondents, E3, did not really feel bad for what he had done. This might be because his only crime was taking illegal drugs, which he did not find at all criminal or deviant, but rather as normal and fun behaviour. Despite getting caught in several occasions he did not find the police actions to be enough to rehabilitate him out of his habit. He said:

*I always will offend again! I don't see how taking drugs, as long as I don't steal or hurt anybody, I don't see why I'm committing a crime. I can see why drug dealing is a crime, because usually when there are drugs, there are guns and slave prostitution and stuff like that. They don't just bring in drugs but they do a lot of other horrible things. But my personal view is that I don't do any of that I just take drugs. So I WILL re-offend! I have not personally done anything wrong to anybody else."

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During the interview the respondent also wanted to talk about his brother who was a drug user and a dealer. The brother had been caught on several occasions for possession of cannabis and cocaine, but he had never been punished in an appropriate way, receiving only fines and warnings. According to Respondent E3, his brother had not even received a “slap on the wrist” from the police, which in essence had caused his problems to escalate much bigger proportions than they were before. It was interesting that the respondent claimed the lack of official intervention is the core reason for his brother’s excessive drug use and he felt remarkably irritated about the police for not doing anything robust enough in his brothers’ case. Yet, he did not consider himself as doing anything wrong or worth punishing. Unlike both Finnish respondents and the respondent E3, the two other English offenders eventually felt at least some remorse for what they had done and expressed sympathy for the crime victims. The Respondent E2 was involved in an offence where he and his friends had done criminal damage to a number of cars for which the group got caught by the police. He got arrested and kept imprisoned for 24 hours, followed by a formal trial after which he received a fine sanction. When asked how he felt about the incident later on, he explained:

Disappointed in my self. I felt it was really petty and stupid and I unneeded. Like its easy for me to look back now and say that at the time I was drunk and a was just having a laugh with my mates, but...not regarding that it was someone else’s car and that they had to get up in the morning and see that. And uhm...I was just young and immature and so stupid. Not thinking on my actions. Just thought I was having fun with my mates.

Similarly the Respondent E1 expressed sympathy towards his victims; however his statement sent somewhat mixed messages:

E1: I guess I felt bad. Obviously.
I: Why?
E1: I don’t know. Cos they got robbed.. I mean if you were in their shoes and you got robbed it’s dreadful. innit? And we were all so small. I can’t believe they found us as a threat really. It’s just funny! (laughing)
I: How about your family? How did they react?
E1: Yeah my mom was quite upset. That was dread. That was the worst part in everything really. Family...You know sitting in the corner and crying.
Despite managing to see the situation from the victims’ point of view and sympathize with their experience, the Respondent stated that it was quite funny to see them scared of him at the time of the robbery. The Respondent E1, E2 and F1 expressed some regret for their actions, as it had made their families needlessly to suffer and worry about them. In addition, despite not really feeling bad for what he had done, the respondent F1 did express his concern towards the burden he had caused to his sister who acted as his guardian at the time of his first offence. The data indicates that the reactions within the immediate social network has influenced on the offenders capability to comprehend the seriousness of the committed crime, even when the given formal punishment had failed to do so. English respondents E1 and E2 both stated that disappointing particularly their mothers was incredibly hard for them to see. This also strengthens the understanding about strong influence of immediate social relationships. A common factor in all male respondents’ cases was a somewhat unstable family background. Family apparently did not offer them a primary social organisation that could have preventively acted as a factor in reducing their deviant behaviour. Rather it was experienced as a secondary body that perhaps had some counterbalancing influence on their behaviour.

7.4 Reacting on deterrence

Interestingly, against the general account on deterrence, what in fact did influence on the offending behaviour of respondents E1 and E2 was the fear of being incarcerated. One of the classical methods used to prevent criminality within society is to set harsh sanctions and punishments in order to deter the potential wrongdoers out of crime. Deterrence can be divided in two separate forms; general deterrence and specific deterrence. The first method aims to convince the total population to fear the harsh results that will follow from criminal behaviour. Specific deterrence pursues to deter individuals from further criminal activities. In England and Wales positivist perspectives replaced the element of deterrence in punishment practices already before the 1950's. However, since the new labour “nothing works” agenda deterrence has again steadily grown its role within the crime prevention schemes, which primarily are legitimated by the rational choice of the individual. The problem of using deterrence as a crime preventive tool is that it fails to take into account the great variety of reasons why people commit crime. Rather, it
presumes that all people are capable to rationalize and weight their options at the time crime is being committed. It does not consider the different stages of mind or the situational circumstances in which criminal actions are being generated. A petty criminal often does not weigh the pros and cons of his actions or a young man does not think about the punishment when he gets involved in a spontaneous street fight. (McLaughlin 2013, 130-131.) The current measures presents a great problem especially among young offenders as their capability to rationalize and consider the consequences of their actions has generally not yet developed to a fully mature stage compared to adults.

Furthermore, reacting to criminality with deterrence has another downside to it. Deterrence does not take into account the labelling effects of the formal criminal justice system. When punishing the offenders by giving them formal sanctions or prison time, in the future they often are left with no other choice than re-offending. The labelling process often diminishes the chances for ex-offender to find employment, earn money by legitimate means or maintain social ties within the society. (McLaughling 2013, 130-131.) Specific deterrence assumes that if young offenders are punished in a highly robust manner, it will scare them off from offending behaviour. Any rational person would avoid incarceration or juvenile centre by every possible way and by using this logic, recidivism rate evidently decreases. Previous research indicates that in some cases severe punishments, such as incarceration, do in fact diminish the chances of re-offending among young offenders. This is due to the matter, that the risk perception of those offenders who has experienced severe punishments is considerably higher compared to those who have managed to avoid detection. (Siegel and Welsh 2014, 84.) There is some indication towards this argument in the current data as well. When asked the respondent E1 how the experience with the juvenile court affected on his criminal behaviour he said:

Not to do it again!! When it was like 50/50, nearly going to juvenile prison, I was like no way. Never again! You know what I mean. There are things like if I get three points to my licence, fines or whatever. These things I don’t mind and cautions are not that bad. But actual criminal activity is stupid. You know what I mean. Pointless. Honestly I don’t know why people do it.

From this statement it becomes fairly obvious that in offender E1’s case robust intervention, or even the substantial danger of being incarcerated, was indeed enough to prevent his perception for severe future criminal behaviour. He also had experienced
incarceration during his cases preliminary investigation, which he had found as an extremely dreadful experience, something that he would never want to go through again. Minor sanctions would not necessarily have succeeded to change his behaviour, as he said that he did not find sanctions and cautions overly severe. In addition when asked the respondent E2 what he had learned from his past experience with the criminal justice system (if anything) he also expressed his fear of going to prison:

Yeah, not to get arrested. Simply because I don’t want to spend time in the cell. But the longest time that I was in cell was 22 and a half hours and I didn’t like it. I don’t want to be in cell for 22 hours. It not natural for a human being to be locked up in a cell in a small room with some bars and...its not what you want. You wanna get out of that. You want to be able to run. But I just know that I wouldn’t cope in prison. So therefore if I stay away and try not to get arrested I won’t go to prison. That’s what I’ve learned.

It is important to note, that the offender E2 had been arrested nine times. His involvement in antisocial behaviour did not really change until the severe possibility for him to go to prison. Once the possibility of incarceration for a longer period of time became highly probable, he began to avoid situations where he might draw police attention, this including avoiding the company of many of his friends. Furthermore the respondent E2 stated that in this sense the youth justice had worked in his case, as now he does not want to have anything to do with the organization in question. He now only tries to stay out of trouble the best he can. It could be said, that the respondents E1 and E2 both felt the necessity to recede from severely deviant activities due to the threat of going to prison. However, at the same time the offender E1 felt that when it comes to minor offences such as free-running (jumping on the roof tops), drinking or taking drugs he now knows better how to offend without getting caught. Admittedly he said that his experiences with the police had also made him a better criminal in that a sense. When enquired the offender F1 if his former sentences had managed to change his attitude towards criminal behaviour, he expressed that it is not the sentences which had changed him, but rather the current lack of interest towards certain activities, such as spray painting or vandalism. He said:

Well, the punishments did not really make me stop (spray painting). In fact, it had no effect at all, as at the end of the day I am the one who decides what to do with
my life. I know what’s wrong and right, but I don’t always agree with that. The police official intervention did not make me stop what I was doing. I just started doing other stuff…I’m not interested in vandalism and painting anymore.

He also had been incarcerated for a short period of time, which had been a very terrible experience for him. According to the respondent, it was unnecessary lesson that an individual police officer wanted to give to him. This specific officer had caught him spray painting (among many things) several times and felt that it is now necessary to deal with the young offender with a more robust manner. This had no effect on his offending. Instead it was the change of location and consequently the group of friends which effected on his involvement in vandalism. The respondent did state that he most certainly hopes not to get imprisoned again, as the experience was very awful for him, however his stance towards the issues was in a way ”whatever happens, happens”. He stated that everything is in his own hands and you never know what the future brings to you. Compared to E1 and E2, the respondent F1 was not particularly worried about to be taken into custody again, instead the financial sanctions bothered him considerably more. He felt that there is absolutely no point of begin to settle the fines, as there will be more to come in the future. Paying for something without getting anything tangible back, felt pointless to him.

During the interviews a few interesting comments were made by the Respondents E2 and E3 about the respondents general perception towards the youth justice system and their effectiveness. Similarly to respondent E3, the Respondent E2 also had an older brother who had been convicted for drug related crimes. The respondent's brother was 17 years old when he was arrested and incarcerated to young offenders’ institution for over a year for selling ecstasy. The respondent explained that he as well as his brother both found this a positive thing, as without getting caught he probably would have kept abusing and dealing drugs, which might have eventually cultivated into a significantly bigger problem for him. The respondent said:

So he turned his life fully around. And I think it was definitely a wake-up call for him, because he was as well involved with drugs in terms of taking them. He took quite a lot of drugs when he was younger. And he was partying and raving and all that. And then he got involved selling them and that’s when it started to go downhill. But as I said he is a living evidence of for some people the justice system does work in this country. But for some people it just doesn’t.
The respondent regarded his brothers experience justified. However, later on in the interview he narrated that in general the adolescents under 16 years should be treated more leniently as often they just do not know how to behave, especially if no one has ever taught them the difference of right and wrong. Instead of treating young offenders similarly to adults and robustly punishing them, they should be more lenient with juveniles. He also highlighted, that the social differences should be taken into account and understands that some of the youngsters for example bully, because they have been bullied or experienced violence at home. The respondent suggested:

_They should not be involved with the police, they should be with maybe a social worker or something like that who could help them (...) or to tell them constructively that its wrong rather that just throw a punishment at them. I don't know...I just don't think that it’s right._

Also respondent E3’s brother (as discussed earlier) was first time caught for selling drugs at the age of 14. In his case, however, no charges were raised and he was let go. The respondent explained, that as it was so easy for his brother to deal drugs without any consequences, he continued making money by those means. Since then he had been arrested several times for possession of cannabis and cocaine, but not once did he receive a proper punishment, not until his offenses became a considerably worse. At the time of the interview the Respondents brother had just recently been imprisoned for nine months. When asked how he felt about the matter, he explained:

_If he would have been dealt with in a lot younger age it would have prevented him of being in the position where he is now. And you don't really need to go to prison for punishment but uhm..no punishment what so ever, make them commit just more crime. You know, if you hit someone and don't get arrested for it you're gonna hit someone again you know? If he would have been dealt with a more appropriate manner when he was arrested for the first two or three times then perhaps he would have avoided going to prison right now._

The respondent reported that in his experience, the youth justice system is definitely not working, as it is not deterrent enough. In his and his brothers’ cases, if the officials would have intervened to their drug related behaviour more rigorously, maybe his brother would
not be a professional criminal and they might not be so liberal with drugs. In his opinion there should always be an element of fear, when dealing with young offenders. If the offenders are not scared and they get away with their crimes, there is no reason for them to discontinue their deviant behaviour.

7.5 Life after the youth justice experience

When asked if any of the respondents had experienced some long term consequences as a result from the experienced interventions, only the respondent E1 felt that it had effected on his employment for instance. He had experienced some of earlier discussed labelling consequences that being exposed to the formal youth justice system might cultivate. It had a very negative influence on his employment possibilities, which had caused him considerable strain. The respondent explained that he had been looking for work for a long time and he had received zero replies from his applications. Eventually he did manage to attain a part-time job in logistics from a warehouse; however it took a lot of work and some fabrication as well. When asked if his criminal past had affected on his job seeking or employment possibilities, he said:

*Oh yeah! If I did tell my work that I had a criminal record I probably wouldn’t be working there. I was looking for work for like 8 months. Even longer. And I could not get anything. And then I went through an agency and they found me like work here. So that’s just... when I was in the agency I had to fill a form and obviously in the form I put NO criminal convictions. But If I had put yes obviously they would have not hired me. You get like trapped...*

Outside work the respondent felt that his criminal past effects even more strongly on his behaviour, as his leisure time primarily consists on playing tag with the police. He narrated that the only thing he wants to do, is make money, but the police will not let him do that, as they get him only to further trouble with their endless surveillance. His every move has to be premeditated: parking to a right place, careful driving, not loitering around wrong placed with wrong people, and so on. However, he had fairly positive expectations for his future and he was pretty certain that his involvement with the criminal justice system had not effected on his plans to become an electrician. After he finishes his school,
even his criminal record does not matter to his employment, as he can then start up his own business. When asked from the respondent E3 if his involvement had somehow made his job seeking more challenging, he replied:

*It never affected on my employment or anything...up until recent I was a assistant manager for a large retail company. So cannabis didn't effect it...but if I had been arrested for speed or amphetamine since I was 18, I probably would have had major difficulties finding a job.*

According to his experience around employers, cannabis is not considered as a harmful drug and a lot of people smoke it. Its users are mostly not looked down on by the employers. The Respondent also said that he does use every drug he only gets his hands on, but at the same time he helps old ladies across the street. He considers himself as a good hearted person and therefore he did not understand why his drug taking is a problem to others. As long as he does his job well and will not get involved in criminal behaviour (drugs omitted), it should not be anybody else’s business what he does on his free time. His perception towards drug use is very similar to the view of respondent F1, who also did not understand why other people are so concerned about his personal decision to use cannabis. Regarding to his future and employment, the respondent F1 had already made solid plans. After recently finishing his junior high school, he had applied to college to study either logistics or surface finishing (painting). During the interview he explained that he would rather go to study painting, as within that field of work drug tests are considerably less likely to happen. This indicates that the respondent is very capable of rationally considering his options and calculating the consequences that follows from his decisions. Career wise the respondent had a plan B to start growing his own cannabis and get rich by start selling it, in case he would not get accepted to school or if he would not find work later on. Interestingly, despite the respondent felt that he does not have a problem with cannabis use, there was strong indication during the second interview about a nascent drug addiction, as the following statement explicates:

*Well, I guess I can admit that...to be honest, I smoke almost everyday. Yeah, sometimes I smoke alone too, because it doesn’t really harm me. Well, the only thing is that my memory is a bit poor, but that’s all. I can wake up in the morning*
and all. Well, ok. I can admit also that it does make me feel a bit lazy and I don’t really want to do much stuff anymore. But it doesn’t bother me at all!

During the second interview it was found out, that regardless of Respondent F1’s recent history in violent behaviour (assaulting his sister and a one of his peers), previous convictions for destroying private property and continuously giving positive results from drug tests, the social services had decided to give him the opportunity to move into his own apartment. One of the conditions for the arrangement is not to use cannabis and to secure that, regular drug tests will be executed. The respondent explained that he probably will not follow the terms, but rather tries somehow to manipulate the tests as he had done before, although with poor success. The respondent felt exceedingly pleased about moving to the capital city, to his own apartment and explained that it was all he had wished for, as all his good friends lived there as well. Yet, giving up cannabis use is out of the question. Regarding how he sees his future, the respondent felt that everything that he wants to achieve is still possible for him, despite his convictions or cannabis use:

I don’t think it effect on my future, at least not yet. (...) As long as I get my fines paid, it's going to be alright. The situation is not hopeless, not yet at least! Everything that I want to complete in my life is still possible for me. I’m an adult soon. I’m trying to sort things out and eventually become a good adult, a civilized adult. I really try hard...

When asked the Respondent F2 if she had a criminal record and if her past had effected on her current future situation in any way, she seemed somewhat careless towards the issue, laughing throughout the answer. She had no idea if she had a criminal record and she pondered whether her mother’s reputation had suffered more that hers. Furthermore, she explained that no one really was upset with her during the trial or after it, not even her parents. The respondent believed, that her past had not affected her in any way and most likely will not influence on her future plans and their implication. Similarly to other respondents, E2 also trusted that his future had not been compromised by his criminal record or dealings with the police. He explained that for him it was very easy to find work; however this was due to his connections at a local supermarket, where one of his friends was working as a manager and was able to arrange him an interview there. He narrated further:
I think a lot of people lie in the interviews about having a criminal record and I don't think the companies really follow them up and find out if they do or not. I didn't actually lie...I told them that (…) it was a long time ago and that I was immature and that I learned a lesson from it. That I haven't been arrested for a long time and they were fine with it. And they just said..they just said that was fine and uhm..just stay out of trouble really.

Instead of lying about his past during the job interview, like many of his friends do, the respondent felt that it is better to tell the truth, which in his case eventually led to a positive result. In addition, he believed that his involvement in vandalism will not inhibit his future objectives as his crimes are relatively minor. When asked for the final thoughts about the youth justice system in general and how it had changed the respondents’ behaviour, he narrated:

It has changed me...how it has changed me? It has probably changed me the simplest way just the fact that I don't want to be arrested anymore and that I don't want to be involved with the criminal justice system anymore. I have been involved with it quite a few times. I don't want to be part of it. Just trying to stay out of trouble the best I can. So I guess you could argue it works in that sense. For some people, for some it doesn't.
8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Experiencing youth justice complex

This study has described five individual experiences of youth justice system and found out the implications it has engendered upon their lives. By choosing the research subjects from two very different countries, it was made possible to introduce some different operational modes within the intervention measures used to tackle youth offending. The aim was to find out if there were some significant divergences between the cross-national experiences that could be used to formulate new ideas for future research. The findings regarding this matter remained fairly subtle; however some interesting remarks did emerge from the collected data, which will be discussed shortly. Firstly it was found necessary to give the research subjects the opportunity to explain their actions and carefully listen what they had to say about their past experience with the youth justice complex, finding out their side or the story in so to speak. Only through interpreting the motives and the setting in which the offending behaviour was made, it was possible to answer the question on what meaning did the intervention measures have on the respondents lives and their future criminal behaviour.

It is fair to say that all respondents gave very little value to the intervention and punishment measures they had experienced. One of the reasons why this might be so is the fact that they did not always completely agree that they were actually doing something wrong. In all five case studies there was clearly a trend of making excuses for committed crimes. All three English respondents as well as the Finnish male respondent explained that the initial reason why they got involved in vandalism and cannabis use was due to ongoing boredom. Lack of facilities and opportunities for doing sports or other interesting hobbies, was especially to blame. At the time of the interviews all male respondents were living in somewhat deprived neighbourhoods, which indeed did lack of spaces that were directed for the young people. Activities, such as vandalism, loitering, graffiti, roof jumping and substance abuse were part of their everyday lives, as it provided them with excitement and something mutual to do with peers. Offending behaviour, almost without an exception, happened with friends, which indicates that the immediate social surrounding has a significant influence upon their activities. Mutually experienced boredom and feelings of exclusion from the greater community might cultivate into
unwanted behaviour, behaviour that is easily rationalized and justified by the young themselves within their immediate social organisation.

All male respondents had experienced some form of official intervention during their everyday leisure time activities. They had been asked to leave public scenery a number of times only due to the stigma that shadowed their footsteps and it was felt that they were not welcomed to public places due to their age and appearance. Lack of permissible activities and spaces arranged for young people within the areas where respondents lived became evident during the data collection. The intervention was strongly experienced as unjust because it was felt as if their public existence was the problem itself and not so much what they were actually doing. This experience was strengthened by the stop and search tactics practiced by the police among the English respondents. Similar issues regarding social exclusion of young people has been raised by researchers in both countries (see Byrne et al. 2006, Kuusisto et al 2009, Muncie 1999). It seems that there perhaps exist a lack of will and methods to include young people as equal members of the society. Particularly within certain areas there is immediate need to create additional leisure activities for young people to spend their time in. Such methods have been proven to diminish juvenile involvement in offending activities. By labelling the loitering young as “yobs” or “lazy hoodies” and driving them away from the public scenery the authorities are only contributing to the growing exclusion of some already vulnerable individuals, which might lead to their unwanted behaviour. Despite by no means any generalisations alone from the current data cannot be made, this study contributes to this stance in its own part.

8.2 Experiencing drug interventions

Intervention measures that were used to tackle drug use among the male respondents were found completely useless by the respondents themselves. In every case it was felt that the experienced drug intervention programmes were rather lenient effort to tackle their drug use. Smoking cannabis was normal habit for the male subjects and they did not consider it as something that should be terminated, which in fact perhaps made the intervention unsuccessful per se. As discussed earlier, there lies a growing concern both in England and in Finland about the normalisation of cannabis use among young teenagers and adults.
This presents a great challenge for the youth justice agencies, as new more efficient ways to respond to such behaviour are urgently needed. Whether the evolution of such programmes should be directed towards more punitive or rehabilitative stance, remains to be answered. As the growing use of cannabis appears to be an international phenomenon, cross-national research definitely would provide an efficient tool on finding new methods on encountering the matter.

As said earlier, the current data indicates that the drug intervention measures were experienced as highly ineffective. Three of the respondents mentioned, that the consequences of getting caught for cannabis use only encouraged them to continue smoking it, as it is so easy to get away with it. The Finnish male respondent said, that the group sessions gave him new contacts and ideas for future on how to hide his cannabis use from the social services. One of the English subject made a comment on how the interventions he had experienced were not punitive enough to make him quit his habit. He even blamed the youth justice system for lack of robustness to deal with his brothers drug related criminal behaviour. By no means are these observations meant to be interpreted as an element of support for harsher punishments for cannabis use. The labelling consequences that emerge from official intervention, particularly from incarceration, have been thoroughly proven and discussed during the current study as well. For example, one of the English respondents had considerable difficulties finding work after his past with the youth justice system. Only after lying about his past and criminal record, was he able to gain employment. The negative strain that might develop from the unnecessary exposure to formal youth justice system and the stigmatising force it has upon one’s life should not be ignored. The suggestion here would be to find out new methods to stop or at least slow down the evolvement of normalisation of drugs within the youth culture. Instead of punishing the young, perhaps more value should be given to development of preventive work that in wide scale aims to change their attitudes towards cannabis use. As Salasuo argued (2004) the most prominent challenge is that the information provided by adults about the disadvantages of drug use, is often understood as adult propaganda. Perhaps this dilemma could be defeated by including the young themselves to this process, giving more value to their opinions and ideas about the issue.
8.3 Deviant behaviour after the intervention

Regarding the question of the efficiency of intervention measures to tackle the respondents offending behaviour, it seemed that the formal interference was experienced as a secondary element as comparison to the influence of peer association. This also contributes to the notion that perhaps governmental intervention should be directed to grassroots level activities, instead of practicing authoritarian principles upon young people. Besides to the experienced exclusion that cultivated from lack of opportunities and available spaces, the English respondents also felt that the experienced police conduct increased their feelings of becoming marginalised. This observation indeed was the most prominent cross-national divergence that arose from the collected data, which in fact conforms to the findings from previous studies regarding highly centralised police activities in England and Wales discussed during the report. (see Young 2003; Pitts 2011; Muncie 1999; Graham & Karn 2013).

The stops and searches practiced by the police aroused considerable anger among the English respondents, particularly two of them living almost within the same area in England. They felt as if they were labelled as delinquents by the police, only based on their age, gender and appearance. This indeed did provoke the two young male respondents to behave accordingly to the given label. They began making trouble on purpose by talking disrespectfully back to the police, not answering their questions and calling them names. They felt that whatever they do, they are being treated as delinquents, so they might as well start behaving as ones. This is a very interesting finding, as labelling doctrine has been a highly prominent component also within the previous academic evaluations of current youth justice policies. There are a number of studies (see Bernburg & Krohn 2003; Jackson & Smith 2013) that have managed to provide evidence on the negative implications that cultivates from labelling certain individuals as well as communities as somewhat outsiders. It is rather surprising, that despite the sample in the current study is indeed very small, it certainly did manage to bring forth findings that strongly support the concerns that persist upon the authoritarian youth justice practices in England and Wales.

The draconian elements of youth justice are often justified within the political discourse by promoting rational choice and the claimed effects of deterrence that eventually will manage to scare the offenders from criminal activities. By increasing their awareness of
discomfort that will be laid upon them if committing crime, the policy makers presumes that young offenders are capable of rationally considering their actions and the consequences that will follow. This study has aimed to find out if juvenile offenders in the current sample felt that the experienced punishments were rigorous enough to in fact deter them from offending. Firstly, at the risk of sounding too repetitive, it is essential to highlight the role of friends in discontinuing offending behaviour. The rational choice to commit crime as well as the choice to end it was done under the influence of friends, or social organisation if reflecting to the ideas of Edwin Sutherland. It could be said that the intervention measures began working only once the entire social organisation started to assimilate new rules and codes for behaviour and rejected the old offending activities. Both Finnish respondents reported that the intervention itself had nothing to do with their decision to stop offending. Instead offending (some aspects of it) had stopped because of change of social surroundings (and consequently friends) and becoming emotionally more mature. Furthermore the experienced measures were considered as a joke. Based on their accounts about youth justice experience itself, it seemed that the process did not manage to awake any feelings or remorse in neither of the respondents’ attitudes towards what they had done.

Interestingly two of the English respondents however, were managed to deter from further criminal activities with highly robust intervention measures, particularly by presenting them with the threat of incarceration if their behaviour did not change. It is important to note that the decision to stop offending was made after the “peak” years of their offending behaviour and when majority of their friends had also began behaving accordingly to the bylaws. Despite police behaviour within the English cases had been very questionable, particularly their stop and search activities, surprisingly their robustness did also get some support from the respondents themselves. The respondents E2 and E3 felt, that if criminality is not dealt in a severe manner, there is no need to stop offending. Nevertheless, all in all it appears that overly intensive surveillance and intervention only creates more conflicts between the police, public and the young. Policing a group of individuals who are excluded from the rest of the community, only on the basis of their age and appearance is highly challenging. Intervention should definitely be kept at minimum, as there lays a risk for long-term consequences on the wellbeing of individuals as well as to the wider communities. Perhaps this is the field where the dichotomy between welfare- and punishment model, that separates the policies of England and
Finland, is best shown. In order to find out the level of criminal behaviour caused by the police conduct itself, further study is needed. Cross-national research unquestionably would provide a great benefit for the matter by offering contrast of two (or more) different policing operating models. Comparing their weaknesses and strengths, especially from the point of view of the young themselves, might produce new ideas for developing youth policing.

8.4 Final words

This study has indicated some of the similarities and divergences between Finland and England on how the intervention measures are perceived by the young themselves. In hindsight it can be said that the research sample itself was rather concise and therefore building grand cross-national comparisons between the two countries is not sensible. However, in both countries there seems to be room for a forum, where young people can bring forth their own ideas and efforts concerning their own well-being. Creating a (conversational) environment where young people are treated as equals would perhaps present new ideas for revising old intervention measures to tackle offending behaviour and its causes. The predominant theme with juvenile offending and its policing seems to be, who should be held responsible for those criminal actions and the consequences the intervention itself cultivate. In Finland it has been long explicitly understood that children below 15 years should not legally be kept responsible for their actions and generally juvenile offenders should be treated with special consideration. Only in the most extreme cases should custodial sentences be applied on children and young people. In England and Wales the general attitude towards juvenile interventions still is rather punitive and accusatory.

The distinct nature of the thematic differences and similarities between English and Finnish case studies leaves considerable space for future research. Most certainly it would be beneficial to attempt to replicate the current research by using larger samples, as perhaps it would produce more generalisable results. Furthermore, it would be recommendable to examine offenders who have committed similar crimes, which would offer an improved understanding about the differences and similarities between Finnish and English youth justice systems. Particularly drug intervention measures are
internationally in demand for continuous improvements. Cross-national collaboration would be greatly beneficial in their development. Indeed, doing social research will never be entirely complete as the society and the people living within it are perpetually changing and thereby so are the institutions and penal laws. However, the present research does offer excellent preliminary knowledge about the current youth justice policies and practices in Finland and England and Wales and gives some insight about the divergences that they possess. This definitely would be appreciated by students in criminology, law and sociology for instance and furthermore, it would greatly contribute to the knowledge and understanding about the youth crime and youth justice system of many professionals working within this industry. Youth crime is a complex phenomenon and thereby it requires complex measures. Cross-national research provides the youth justice officials with extensive, international information about those practices that has been successful among young offenders, and those that has been rather disappointing. Interpreting the youth justice policies in various countries is highly beneficial, as it offers guidance for the future youth justice reforms to proceed into a more successful direction.
References:


Appendix 1

Interview guide

Background information
- Age
- Profession/studies/current activity
- Success & motivation in school
- Family
- Living conditions (now and as a child)

Offence/offences
- Could you walk me through to your criminal past? In what sort of criminal activity have you been involved in?
- How many times have you been arrested?
- Could you tell me what happened when you committed the crime you got arrested from?
- What made you commit the offence/offences? What were your motives?
- How did you feel during the act/acts?
- How did your friends react to it? (In case more people were involved in the crime committed)

After the offence
- How did you get caught?
- How did you feel when you got caught? What was going thought your mind when you got caught?

Process
- Could you tell me about your experience within the juvenile justice process? (How the process began? What happened first?)
- Overall, what kind of feelings did the process generate in you? The first time you were dealing with the CJ professionals?
- What agencies were involved within the process?
- How did the officials treat you? Name a few…
- What kind of help or guidance did your family receive from the public officials during the process? Did you find it useful or unnecessary?

- Would you have needed more guidance from someone?

- Is there anything you would have wanted to be done differently during the process or after it?

- What do you think was the initial purpose of the process? Did the officials succeed in it in your opinion?

- Overall, how do you feel about the official intervention in your case? Was necessary/justified in your case?

- How the experience/experiences has changed you?

- What effect did the process have on your future criminal behaviour or to your attitude towards possibly doing something illegal again?

**External reaction**


- How did the officials treat you after the offence? Have you had any issues with them?

- How do you feel around your family now after the offence?

- How have you found the process of continuing your everyday life after the offence?

- How has the CJP effected on your school motivation? Your grades?

- How have you found the process of finding a job after the offence? How has the employers reacted to your criminal past?

- Do you have friends? How have they reacted on your past? Has anything changed? What sort of effect do they have on your criminal behaviour if any? Do you ever feel pressured by them to do something you would rather not do?

**Future**

- Do you have any plans for your future? Could you tell me about them?

- How did you find the process of returning back to everyday life and its responsibilities after going through your sentence?

- How do you feel the juvenile justice process has effected (if at all) to your future plans and their implementation?

- Is there anything that you would like to do, but you are not able to, due to your criminal past? OR is there something that you are doing now that you would not be doing if you had not got caught?
Genral View

- How do you feel about the criminal justice system and the law in England in general? How about the police (or other official) intervention methods?

- How do you think the young people in general are being treated in England? Or the public attitude towards them? (their representation within the media for example) How do you see yourself and your chances to prosper within the society compared to others?

- Is there anything else you would like to add to our conversation? Do you have something on your mind that you would like to tell me?