Juvenile delinquents’ perception of the police:
What are the differences between ethnical Danish and ethnical minority juvenile delinquents’ perception of the Danish police?

Julia Ahlbom

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well, I just tell him to give us a fine then, for sending bad vibes... If they want to take you, they take you... they sit around the dinner table and they have never seen an immigrant before. I could see two officers behind a bus. “Hey listen,” I whispered to my friends, “come on, let’s talk about hash, right.” Every time he nicked us, and it’s a few times now, we have been polite and laughed and stuff... I haven’t done anything wrong, I haven’t beaten anyone so... they grab me and play wise-ass and take me down and everything... Then he says, “don’t play smart with me”...

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Abstract

A phenomenological qualitative investigation of Danish juvenile delinquents’ perception of the police is presented in this thesis. The purpose of the thesis is to investigate what the differences are between ethnical Danish and ethnical minority juvenile delinquents perception of the Danish police. This subject area is initiated by The National Council for Children in Denmark. This investigation is important as it provides a new perspective and new knowledge in this area by focusing on the juvenile delinquents’ subjective experiences.

A pilot study has been carried out to test the chosen approach and methodology on a small scale to see whether the chosen methodology can, without causing undue stress to participating individuals, generate and contribute to further knowledge in this area. The scale of the study is two male participants, one with ethnical Danish background and one with ethnical Iraqi background who both have had direct contact with the police.

The data is gathered by individual open-ended semi-structured interviews inspired by narrative therapy intervention. The two interviews are subjected to three modes of analysis in a prioritised sequence: 1) a thematic analysis 2) a phenomenological meaning condensation, and 3) a narrative analysis. The narrative analysis is also inspired by narrative therapy intervention, as identification of dominant and preferred stories in the informants’ accounts is applied. The results of the narrative analyses of the two informants’ accounts are compared and provide the final results to answer the research question. Employment of narrative therapy intervention and concepts in research interviews and narrative analysis have not to the present researcher’s knowledge been done before, and is, therefore, considered a new approach.

Major differences between ethnical Danish and ethnical minority juvenile delinquents’ perception of the police, is not found in this study. Both informants present accounts, which indicate perceptions of the police as unjust and abusive of their position of power. However, differences are found between the ethnical Danish and ethnical minority juvenile delinquents’ perception of what is the incentive behind police injustice. The ethnical Dane attributes police injustice to his former criminal activity and to police practice in general; whereas the ethnical Iraqi attributes police injustice to his ethnical background. Thus, it is not possible to confirm a selective police practice based on foreign ethnicity in this study but equal surveillance of the ethnical Danish and the ethnical minority juvenile delinquent. Further, the informants’ perception of police is influenced by their perception of themselves as well as their position in relation to the police. In this study, empirical findings suggest that it is not possible to speak of juvenile delinquents as one group in the Danish society; and no findings suggests juvenile delinquency groups cross ethnical boundaries.
Abstract in Danish

En fænomologisk kvalitativ undersøgelse af danske unge på kant med loven og deres oplevelse af politiet præsenteres i denne undersøgelse. Formålet med undersøgelsen er at undersøge, hvad forskellen er mellem etnisk danske og etnisk minoritetsunes opfattelse af politiet. Børnerådet har taget initiativ til dette emne. Denne undersøgelse er vigtig, fordi den bringer nye perspektiver og ny viden på banen, idet perspektivet tages ud fra de unges subjektive oplevelser og erfaringer.

Undersøgelsen er udført i form af en pilotundersøgelse for at afprøve valgte fremgangsmåde og metode i et mindre omfang og således finde ud af om denne metode kan tilføre viden i dette felt uden at påføre utilbørlig stress på deltagere. Undersøgelsens omfang er afgrænset til to mandlige informanter, en med etnisk dansk oprindelse og en med etnisk irakisk oprindelse, hvor begge to har haft direkte kontakt med politiet.

Data er indsamlet ved åbne semistrukturerede interviews inspireret af narrativ terapiinterventioner. De to interviewer er genstand for tre analysemåder i prioriteret rækkefølge: 1) tematisk analyse, 2) fænomenologisk meningskondensering, og 3) narrativ analyse. Den narrative analyse er også inspireret af narrativ terapiintervention i form af identifikation af dominante og fortrukne historier i informanternes beretninger. Resultatet af de to narrative analyser af informanternes beretninger sammenlignes og giver det enlige resultat, som besvarer problemformuleringen. Anvendelse af narrativ terapiteknik og koncepter i forskningsinterviews og i narrativ analyse er ikke, så vidt vides, blevet brugt før og ses derfor som en ny fremgangsmåde.

1 Introduction
This thesis presents a pilot study which is a phenomenological qualitative investigation of Danish juvenile delinquents\(^1\) perception of the police. The participating individuals were male adolescents, one with ethnical Danish background, age 15, and one with Iraqi background age 17. Both had had direct contact with the police. The presupposition in this thesis is that there is a difference in the perception of the police between ethnical Danish and ethnical minority adolescents\(^2\) who are or have been in conflict with the law.

This subject area is initiated by The National Council for Children in Denmark, from now on referred to as NCCD. NCCD works to protect the rights of children and is a self-governing national institution which is politically independent and acts on its own decisions. NCCD focuses on and provides information about children’s situation in the Danish society, and it offers advice and consultancy to the Danish authorities on issues concerning children. The Council believes that Children’s attitudes, views and suggestions can bring the political work up to date and make it more relevant for children. Moreover, NCCD’s responsibility is to speak out on behalf of children in the public debate. Their focus is particularly on factors that may have an inappropriate influence on children’s lives and development. It is the Council’s task to draw attention to legislation or practices which directly ignores or fails to accommodate children’s needs. NCCD also assesses the circumstances under which Danish children live in relation to the demands of UN’s Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Council deals with all aspects of children’s lives predominantly meta-aspects, to promote practises which have a positive influence and to change practises which potentially have negative influence on children’s development, but the Council does not deal with individual complaints. The collaboration between NCCD and the researcher is interesting to both parties because of shared values. The ethics of NCCD is in accordance with the perspectives and theoretical considerations in this thesis.

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\(^1\) The wording juvenile delinquents is a legal term with no known negative connotations to the researcher, however, it is not with confidence, but with the lack of a better term, that it is still used even though the term may stigmatise the adolescents. They may be or have been in conflict with the law but they are not defined by it.

\(^2\) Ethnical minority and related words such as race/racial are often used interchangeably therefore they are not differentiated between in this thesis, though linguistically they do have different meanings.
The present investigation presents a new perspective, the perspective of the adolescents who are or have been in conflict with the law. This new perspective creates new knowledge about adolescents in conflict with the law and thus this thesis contributes to a better understanding of juvenile delinquency. The aim is that a better understanding in society, in the public opinion and with the authorities, will lead to more appropriate practices to rectify juvenile delinquency.

As a pilot study, this thesis tests a new approach to research interviewing and analysis. The new approach is based on known theories but is combined and adjusted for the purpose of this thesis research. The reason for conducting the thesis as a pilot study is to test if the new approach is relevant for accumulation of new knowledge in this area, pinpoint possible flaws and make adjustments relevant to develop an appropriate way to gain knowledge in this area without wasting resources and putting individuals through unnecessary stress.

Juvenile delinquency has become a common discourse in the Danish society as well as in other western countries. In politics, the media and in private conversations there seem to be a consensus that this is a rising problem, which most successfully can be dealt with by harder punishment and longer imprisonment (Cohen, 1994). This way of thinking is in contrast to the humanistic view that otherwise has characterised Danish law politics and is not in accordance with UN’s Convention on the Rights of the child (Glending and Oliviera 2006).

The adolescents’ perceptions of the police are an interesting subject matter for several reasons; (1) because of the view taken in this thesis that children have opinions of their own and their own descriptions of their thoughts, opinions and experiences are important contributions to the development of society’s view of children as well as the children’s own involvement as valuable citizens; (2) the police represent authority in our society and they are assigned power, therefore the way the police deal with juvenile delinquency does not only contribute to juvenile delinquents’ perception of the police as authority figures, but also to their perception of themselves as worthy participants in

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3 The western industrialised countries are the only countries that can be justifiably compared with Denmark, with the awareness of juvenile delinquency elsewhere.
society. It can be argued that the police represent society in general for juvenile delinquents. Police practice can thus influence these adolescents’ perception of society as well as themselves and their feelings of belonging in society.

The purpose of this thesis is to present the perspective of adolescents, therefore it requires statements from the adolescents themselves. The focal point of the adolescents’ own perception is in contrast to common psychology practices, which usually rely solely on professionals’ statements and points of view. According to Narrative Psychology this practice of expert advisory opinions limits the possibility of understanding the complexity and richness of the issue concerned (Sabrin, 1986) which may lead to unsatisfactory practices to combat problems in our society, in this case juvenile delinquency. Furthermore, Giorgi’s (1994) proposition is that to understand the complexity of a phenomenon it is necessary to go back to the “thing” itself. The qualitative phenomenological research interview is therefore used, as it attempts to understand the world from the subjects’ points of view, to unfold the meaning of people’s experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations (Kvale, 1997). For that reason, the theoretical grounding for the conducted interviews arrives from a phenomenological point of view based on the poststructuralist school of thought. In terms of conducting and analysing the interviews, the phenomenological perspective is assisted and complemented with narrative techniques. Narrative analysis complements phenomenology by taking the story itself as the object of analysis. Also, because humans understand their own as well as other individuals’ lives and actions through the narratives they construct and the narratives constructed by others (White, 2004).

Contrary to traditional individualistic traditions, this investigation will highlight that juvenile delinquency can be seen as a result of a system failure rather than being located in the individual. This perspective opens up for other possible solutions where endeavours are towards prevention rather than treatment, which is known from individualistic approaches. This is in accordance with systemic philosophies and narrative psychology, which focus on relationships. This means that the analysis of the narratives in this thesis will try to locate problematic relational connections between individuals and social systems in society as expressed in discourse. Thus, this analysis
will not pursue problems as belonging to individuals; juvenile delinquency does not belong to juvenile delinquents. Juvenile delinquency results more often than not from inappropriate practices in society and is further perpetuated in the social community (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005). This means that systemic approaches, which focus on relationships as a locked and self feeding system based on a constructivist theory (Lundby, 2000), are not sufficient and adequate. If problems are shaped in relations between individuals and between individuals and systems in an open, flexible, continually changing and context bound process, then it can be established that problems are not located in the individual, therefore, can not successfully be treated individually (Carey & Russell, 2002).

However, this does not mean that individuals are excused for illegal or cruel acts that they have carried out as a consequence of a malevolent society. Rather, the aim is to find solutions that are aimed at the circumstances under which these problems develop to preventing them from happening. This has to include all aspects which influence communities’ development in different directions, including society, media and local discourses.

In terms of perspectives of this research, community psychology is a great source of influence because of the recognition of the importance of collaboration, participation and inclusion (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005). Further, the meta-theoretical perspective taken in this thesis rises from Social Constructivism and Anglo-Saxon Critical Psychology. This means that the way one individual views the world is no more true that another and that our actions and understandings are influenced as well as constrained by systems of language and power (McGhee, 2001). Thus, language constructs our social world and our reality, rather than there are an objective truth out there, which can be discovered (Gergen, 1994; 2003). The Anglo-Saxon Critical Psychology emphasises social justice and human welfare and work as an agent of social change rather than social control (Fox & Prilleltensky, 1997) to an extent beyond the issues of class struggle. The Social Constructivist school of thought assumes that reality is created and shaped by language as we speak (Gergen, 1994; 2003; Fox & Prilleltensky, 1997) thus, the attempt in this thesis is to let the narratives of the informants speak for itself and guide the analytic and scientific conclusions.
1.1 Readers Guide

The structure of this thesis is stringent and formal; the language is academic, presented in an objective voice. This may remind of a layout more associated with the style of quantitative research rapports, yet this way of writing helps to organise the text purposefully, to give clarity and to keep arguments short and straight to the point. There is no theory chapter in this thesis. This is an attempt to stay open and inquisitive to the data produced without a preset mind. However, theoretical considerations which concern methodology and analysis are integrated in the relevant chapters, i.e. Chapter 4 Methodology and Chapter 5 Analysis, Definitions and Verification. The structure of this thesis is as follow:

**Chapter 2 Research Question** presents the research area of interest in this thesis and narrows the area of interest down to the specific research question.

**Chapter 3 Juvenile Delinquency in Denmark** presents rates and distribution of juvenile delinquency in Denmark, differences in criminality rates between ethnical Danish and ethnical minority adolescents and associations between criminality, socioeconomic status and psychological factors.

**Chapter 4 Methodology** presents the approach of the thesis, the type of study, methods for data collection and modes of analysis. This includes methodology and theoretical considerations with regards to a new interview technique inspired by narrative therapy techniques and the application of three different modes of analysis and a new form of narrative analysis, also inspired by narrative therapy techniques. All parts of the method are presented under relevant subheading: pre-methodological reflections, methods and theoretical considerations including: design of the study, data collection and its treatment, ethical principles, participants, interview, interview guide, methods of analysis, discussions of reliability and validity, and procedures for the entire endeavour.

**Chapter 5 Analysis, Definitions and Verification** presents definitions and theoretical reflections of three modes of analysis, as well as the actual analyses and verifications of the two conducted interviews i.e. the thematic analysis, the phenomenological meaning condensation, the narrative analysis, and a comparison of the two narrative analyses. Finally, the results are summarised.
Chapter 6 Post-Methodological Discussion presents a discussion of the methods used and the reflections that have surfaced after the interviews were carried out. The purpose of presenting a chapter such as this is to reflect on the research process actively and learn, as there is a substantial difference between the planning of carrying out an interview study and actually carrying it out. Therefore, as new issues has surfaced during and after the process of this study these are presented in this chapter under relevant subheadings: Design, participants, interview, ethnics, analysis, reliability and validity and finally results.

Chapter 7 Discussion presents induction of the results of the analysis; the inducted results of the analysis are substantiated by existing theory: the social learning theories of Julian Rotter and Albert Bandura, respectively. Their concepts of locus of control and self-efficacy are used to explain how the informants perceive and act towards the police.

Chapter 8 Conclusion presents the conclusions relating to the specific research question, and the results of the analysis respectively.

Chapter 9 Perspectives argues relevance, future perspectives and aims of the study.

Sections 10 and 11 presents the References and Appendices.

2 Research Question

There is a wide spread public opinion that rates of criminality in general is increasing and this especially includes juvenile delinquency. In particular there is a view that ethnical minorities constitute a scrupulous problem in this area. Whether or not literature, media, law and police practices as well as politics have created this prejudice is arguable, for sure it is now perpetuating private conversations leading to discourses concerning prejudice against juvenile delinquency in general and against ethnic minority juvenile delinquents in particular. However, it is particularly the adolescent ethnic minority groups that are highly represented in the Danish statistics of criminality. In fact 15-19 year olds of foreign origin or offspring of foreigners have a 72 percent higher criminality rate than the general population for the same age group (Danmarks Statistik, 2002). The research in this thesis only includes 15-17 year old males, this is for several reasons which will be stated elsewhere (see 4.5 Participants). The main reason is to make the group as homogenous as possible. This is accomplished by only
interviewing adolescent males who are under the age where they can be prosecuted as adults\(^4\) but above the age of criminal responsibility.

The purpose of this research is to explore subjective aspects of juvenile delinquency. Thus, it is necessary to understand the complexity of the context in which juvenile delinquency occurs. Due to the perspectives that have been presented in this thesis, it is mandatory to investigate adolescents’ experiences and listen to their voice, and how they understand situations and interactions in their environment where they live. To limit the research question, the focus is on one particular kind of phenomenon; Juvenile delinquents’ perception of the police. This thesis also investigates the differences in subjective perception of the police dependent on whether or not the adolescent have a Danish background. This is based on the assumption that perceptions are constructed in relations and discourses, determined by preconceived opinions and views commencing from moral values from our backgrounds and from the society in which we live (Sabrin, 1986). The precise research question then becomes: What are the differences between ethnical Danish and ethnical minority juvenile delinquents’ perception of the Danish police?

3 Juvenile Delinquency in Denmark

This chapter presents rates and distribution of juvenile delinquency in Denmark, differences in criminality rates between ethnical Danish and ethnical minority adolescents, and associations between criminality, socioeconomic status and psychological factors.

A vast amount of crimes in Denmark, as well as other western countries, are committed by adolescents. The only age group with a higher rate of convicted crimes in Denmark is 20-24 year olds (Danmarks statistik, 2006). The preconception that criminality in Denmark is increasing has been proved wrong (Danmarks statistik, 2006). The number of criminal offences has not risen, on the contrary it has decreased over the last decade, but the criminal offences have become more serious and violent (Danmarks statistik, 2006; Kyvsgaard, 2003). There are recorded less theft and burglaries and more violence,

\(^4\) At the age of 15 adolescents in Denmark can be prosecuted as adults but they are not allowed to have any direct contact with adult convicts when they are incarcerated. This and the shift to being considered an adult rather then a child were considered a possible influence on the data.
robberies and sexual assaults (Danmarks statestik, 2006). Violent offences are the only offences that have risen from 2004 to 2005 except for fraud (Danmarks statestik, 2006). However, the reason why statistics show an increase in violent crimes could be explained by other causes than an actual increase in this type of crimes. In cases of multiple crimes, the most serious crimes are considered the main crime, for example, violence will be considered more serious than theft (Danmarks Statestik, 2006). This point to an overrating of violent crimes calculated to approximately 20 percent (Kyvsgaard, 2003). On the other hand if this is the case, logically the statistics for other, less serious crimes than violent crimes are underrated. Additionally, the attention and media coverage of violent crimes committed by teenagers has increased the last 10 years (Balvig, 1999). This focus on violent crimes committed by adolescents may have led to an increase in adolescents being reported for the violent crimes that they have committed (Peters, 2004). As follows, it may not be a real increase in those crimes, just more convictions in this type of crimes.

It is arguable that the political and the media focus on violent crimes, particularly committed by adolescents, have led to the public opinion that harder and longer penalties are a viable solution. However, detention homes and imprisonment have shown to directly reinforce criminal development (Balvig, 1999). This harshness in treatment has proved to be more likely to create a group of psychosocially disintegrated individuals with a long career of criminal activity a head of them, rather than to navigate these adolescents towards a more productive way of living with better opportunities to contribute to society as oppose to being a burden to society (Kyvsgaard, 2000). Thus, this rough treatment will in the long run cost society, not only in financial terms, but also in terms of citizens’ prospects to live meaningful lives.

The goal in this thesis is to carefully investigate the lived world of juvenile delinquents to try to understand the way they perceive and interact with the social system to find out whether the system is perpetuating practices which influence juvenile delinquency in a positive or negative way and whether this influence is different depending on whether or not adolescence are of ethnical Danish heritage. The perspective drawn upon is that of Community Psychology because this perspective consider that active involvement of adolescents who are in conflict with the law, in participation and contribution to the
community to increase individuals’ feeling of belongingness, the result of which is profitable for both the society in general and in financial terms, and for the individual, though it can be problematic to consider a particular lifestyle more or less meaningful than another.

3.1 Criminality Rates

This subsection presents criminality rates for ethnical Danish juvenile delinquents and for ethnical minority juvenile delinquents.

Historically, ethnical minorities have represented a particular criminality problem in many societies since the turn of the last century. An example of this is Europeans who emigrated to America and Australia at the beginning of the 19th century. Today Europe is a recipient of many refugees from developing countries. This tendency of higher rates of criminality amongst individuals of other origin in a society is also shown in the statistics of criminality in Denmark (Aebi, 2004). The criminality rates in 2002 were around 3 percent for the general population in Denmark, 4 percent amongst foreigners, and 7.6 percent by children of foreigners (Danmarks Statistikk, 2002). This means that the criminality frequency amongst foreigners and their children is approximately 48 percent higher than amongst individuals of Danish origin (Danmarks Statistikk, 2002). The greatest difference in criminality rates between ethnical Danes and ethnical minority individuals is in the adolescent age group where adolescents with a foreign background have a 72 percent higher criminality rate than that age group in general.

However, apart from having a foreign background, other variables associated with criminality appear when looking at the statistics of delinquency in Denmark more thoroughly. For example, when age and differences in socioeconomic status is controlled for the difference between criminality rates for ethnical Danish delinquents and ethnical minority delinquents is no longer as convincing. This indicates that there are other stronger indicators for criminal development than foreign origin and the assumption that individuals with another ethnical background are more prone to criminality is an artefact. It is more likely that there are oppressive circumstances for foreigners living in Denmark which may marginalise ethnical minorities’ in the Danish society in general. Statistics show that one great factor in developing a criminal career is
little or no connection to the work market. Further, children in families whom have limited access to employment in Denmark have shown to be much more likely to develop a criminal career than children from families with employment and this is equal for natives and immigrants in the Danish society (Kyvsgaard, 2004).

3.2 Socioeconomic Status

This subsection presents a relationship between adolescents in conflict with the law and socioeconomic status.

For the population at large, frequency in criminality varies with age, level of urbanisation, education, and social and economic status. For example, independent of origin, young, poor, uneducated men always present a higher criminality rate than highly educated rich women (Danmarks statistik, 2006). Therefore, when these factors are statistically accounted for the picture changes drastically and only shows a very little difference in criminality rates between native origin and ethnic minorities. It may even be that this preconception that foreigners more often than Danish people commit crimes, have led to an extra awareness and focus on foreign individuals resulting in more arrests and convictions of individuals of foreign origin due to a selective practice of law and police. This may explain the slightly higher criminality rates in this group, rather than it being a true reflection of the state of criminality in Denmark. For example, convictions are not necessary the same as the actual number of occurrences of a criminal event. One question that could be raised from this is, is individuals from an ethnic minority more likely to be charged for criminal activity than are Danes? This points to issues of police and law practices on the practical level and to marginalisation and stigmatisation on the meta-level.

There is evidence suggesting that adolescents who come in conflict with the law, particularly in cases of violent crimes, usually come from negligent homes (Christoffersen, 2006). Negligent homes are characterised by lack of care. This can extend to abuse and/or violence which is often due to psychological and/or alcohol and drug problems amongst family members, parents in particular. There are many similarities between ethnical Danish and ethnical minority juvenile delinquents, mainly in the socioeconomic status of their families. Both Danish and foreign adolescents who
are in conflict with the law and especially those who stay in systematic criminal activity, typically comes from neglecting families where parents are unemployed, have psychological problems as well as problems with alcohol and narcotics. A home environment often characterised by aggression and violence rather than communication and affection (Felding, 2005). This suggests that effective prevention strategies should primarily be aimed at neglecting families; that is, a more holistic approach which aims at both systems and the individual. This means preventive actions supplemented by treatment interventions. A plan for involvement in all levels of the “problem” will result in fewer adolescents who end in juvenile delinquency and those who do, will be less likely to continue in life long criminal activity. That is, if there are other available routes to readjust to society available to them. Moreover, this points to other fundamental “problems” in society, such as poverty and unequal sharing of the wealth and goods in society, which promote criminal development rather than ethnicity. This is very important to keep in mind when trying to design strategies and efforts to rectify criminality.

3.3 Psychological Factors

This subsection presents and discusses psychological factors associated with adolescents involved in criminal activity.

In Swedish as well as Danish studies, it has been found that adolescents in conflict with the law, particularly violent and repeated crimes, often have personality disorders regardless of ethnical origin (Felding, 2005). This can be linked to the neglecting homes mentioned above which, most often, is the environment where development of different psychological difficulties arises (Marecek & Hare-Mustin, 1997).

Theories on criminality and personality indicate that some children are simply brought up to violence. A Danish longitude study show direct links between circumstances of violent crimes and upbringing. An individual who repeatedly commits crimes typically comes from a family of low education and/or unemployment. This shows a link between psychological factors and socioeconomic status discussed above. In the study referred to, extremely few juvenile delinquents who had committed violent crimes had
passed their A-levels\textsuperscript{5}. They had often been in children’s homes and been hospitalised for psychological problems and suicide attempts (Christoffersen, 2006).

Further, unemployment, all other factors kept constant, is strongly associated with rates of criminality, particularly committed by individuals under the age of 18. This indicates that treatments where the adolescents are given an opportunity to reconstruct their self-worth and confidence, and where they are ensured education or employment and support from a functioning social network are the way forward (Christoffersen, 2006). The only purpose prison sentences will serve is to keep young offenders off the streets during the time they serve their sentence, since imprisonment has showed to promote rather than impede criminal activity (Balvig, 1999).

It is important to clearly define objectives of an intervention and its consequences before designing strategies for implementing them. The goal to impede criminal activity and the goal to keep young offenders off the streets are essentially very different objectives with essentially different consequences. If the objective is the first rather then the latter, the interventions must aim at all levels of the problem. Penalty by loss of liberty in imprisonment for individuals who are already mentally strained by their upbringing is not justifiable as, psychologically, this will only harm them more.

In summary, the statistics of criminality rates in Denmark show that a great part of crimes are committed by adolescents in general and by ethinical minority males in particular. This difference still pervades, though to a lesser extent, when differences in education, employment, urbanisation, and age are taken into account. Therefore, it is extremely important to investigate reasons for why this is the case. Is it, for example, because of a cultural conflict, or because of a selection in police and legal practices? This thesis focuses on police practices and investigates how juvenile delinquents perceive the police and if there are differences in perceptions of the police between ethnical Danish and ethnical minority juvenile delinquents.

\textsuperscript{5} Researcher’s translation: In Danish: Studenter eksamen.
4 Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology and related theoretical considerations in this thesis. That is, the approach of the thesis, the type of study, methods for data collection and modes of analysis.

The data collection is carried out through conduction of a new phenomenological open-ended semi-structured interview method inspired by David Epston’s and Michel White’s (2000) externalising technique. The transcribed interviews are exposed to three modes of analysis: thematic analysis, a phenomenological meaning condensation (Kvale, 1997), and a new approach to narrative analysis inspired by David Epston’s and Michel White’s (2000) concepts of dominant and preferred stories. Further the elements of the research design and methodological and theoretical reflections are presented and discussed in the subsections of this chapter under the following headings: Pre-methodological reflections, Methodological Aims, Design, Data, Participants, The Interview, Interview Guide, Transcription of Interview, Ethics, Analysis, Reliability and Validity, and Procedure.

4.1 Pre-methodological Reflections

This subsection presents the process from the initial ideas of the research for this thesis to the actual implementation with the moderations which had to be made in this process.

The original idea of this thesis has changed several times during the planning and initial stage of the investigation. This has been due to a mixture of unrealistic ideas and limitations of time and resources. The first plan was to interview three incarcerated ethnical Danish adolescents, three incarcerated ethnical minority adolescents as well as three police officers to try to understand juvenile delinquents’ perception of the police as well as differences in perception between ethnical Danish and ethnical minority adolescents in conflict with the law. Though the research question has remained the same, the method applied has been changed. Further, in an attempt to be thorough and to produce trustworthy results, the initial idea was to use two methods for data collection in the form of interviews and observation. This also involved a theoretical triangulation for analysing the data: hermeneutic analysis, thematic analysis and
narrative analysis. Finally, the results were meant to produce a questionnaire which subsequently could be used for quantification and generalisation.

This turned out to be too ambitious within the boundaries of a master thesis such as this. Thus, the interviews with the police officers as well as the production of the questionnaires were made redundant early in the process. Difficulties in obtaining permission to interview incarcerated adolescents led to a decision to change the criterion for participation to juvenile delinquents who are not imprisoned. This also turned out to be more relevant and representative as only very few adolescents in conflict with the law end up in prison. When collecting data, which was at this point restricted to interviews and no observational data, showed to be very time consuming and difficult. This led to the reduction of participants and the idea to conduct this study as a pilot study. However, this turned out to be a good alternative for many reasons e.g. finding out whether this new way of combining methods will contribute to knowledge in this area without too many individuals using their time and the strain of the process.

As the research took form, new ideas were produced and the triangulation and hermeneutic analysis were changed into more suiting methods which will be presented below. Eventually what is presented here is the product that has had many forms until it took the shape of the present thesis. This process has been a lesson in staying focused, delimitation, patience, flexibility and last but not least, emotion regulation.

4.2 Methodological Aims

The main concern of this thesis is to understand the complexity of the meaning individuals attribute to events and how meaning is negotiated in society, rather than to generalise and establish causation or explanation; therefore, the focus of the thesis is on subjective description, analysis of meaning, and identification of themes. Thus, the approach is qualitative in the phenomenological tradition.

This approach is relevant, as it draws upon the ability to develop perceptual concepts from patterns in the data, and analyse these concepts in relation to society, rather than to collect data to assess preconceived models, hypotheses or theories to verify existing knowledge about juvenile delinquents.
The data and the results presented in this thesis is that of a pilot study. A pilot study is used to examine, on a smaller scale, if this methodology can generate and contribute to further knowledge in this area, and if this can be done without causing undue stress to participating individuals.

4.3 Design

A design concerns the systematic approach which is applied to collect and analyse data. This pilot study is based on phenomenological qualitative data. The data is gathered by semi-structured open-ended interviews recorded digitally. The interviews are transcribed in full detail. It is a between participant design with two conditions. There is one male adolescent with Danish background in one condition and one male adolescent with Iraqi background in the other condition. The informants are collected on the basis of fitting the research criteria; male adolescents who have had direct contact with the police. The transcripts are analysed using a model inspired by phenomenology, and narrative ideas but created by the researcher for this particular thesis. The explorative nature and purpose of this pilot study justifies the small sample and selection method (Andersen, 2002).

4.4 Data

The raw data is the digital interview recordings, and the treatment of the data is a verbatim transcription of the audio recordings. The goal is to catch and preserve the informants’ vernacular in the transcription. However, citations used in the analysis are translated from Danish into English and minor corrections are made to adapt oral language into written language (See 4.8 Transcription of Interviews).

4.5 Participants

Participants for this study are collected at one of the departments of the special school Sputnik allocated in the City of Copenhagen. Sputnik is a school for children and adolescents with psychosocial difficulties and learning disabilities as well as for juvenile delinquents. It is financed by the Municipality of Copenhagen⁶ and has several departments in the city and the outskirts of Copenhagen. The purpose of the school is to

⁶ Københavns kommune.
offer schooling/elementary education to pupils who do not fit into the normal school system for 7-16 year olds.

The school Sputnik has extra resources with which to meet their pupils’ particular needs and difficulties. The classes are small in numbers and have a one teacher to three pupil nomination; they are seven employees and eighteen pupils. This means that the principal does not teach classes but is devoted fulltime to management.

On the basis of the research criteria, the principal decides who can participate. However, there are only three pupils who fit the criteria and one does not wish to participate. They are, as suggested by the principal, offered a fast food meal and a soft drink of their choice to participate. Also, informants who participate are excused from their class during the time of the interview.

Two male adolescents at the age of 15 and 17 participated. One is of Danish heritage and the other is Iraqi. They both grew up in the city of Copenhagen and have been arrested at least once\(^7\) for a violent crime. The informant with ethnical Danish background is diagnosed ADHD\(^8\) and the Iraqi informant is suspected to be dyslectic but had not been tested at the time of the interview. Both adolescents are brought up in their native families. Apart from for seven months which the ethnical Dane spent at a boarding school at the age of twelve. The ethnical Dane lives with his mother and two younger sisters and the Iraqi lives with both his parents and three younger siblings, one girl and two boys. Both the adolescents have working parents. None of their family members have been arrested for crime or been diagnosed with any disorder or learning difficulties.

The reason for targeting males between the ages of 15-17 is to make the group as homogenous as possible. Gender and a wide age range are assumed to influence individuals’ perceptions (Crosnoe, Riegle-Crumb & Muller, 2007; Kroger, 2007). For example, literature suggests that women engaged in criminal activity are treated

\(^7\) Arrested does not necessary mean convicted, therefore, there can not be allocated any guilt or blame at this point, and the only thing that mattered for the study was that they had had direct contact with the police.

\(^8\) Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: A disorder characterised by hyper activity, attentional deficits and impulsivity (The Penguin dictionary of Psychology, Third edition)
differently than males by the police (Visher, 1983). Therefore, it is also likely women have a different perception of the police from males. The choice of using males rather than women is due to relevance and practicality; there are more adolescent males in conflict with the law (Danmarks Statistik, 2006), and therefore more adolescent males available for interviews.

Age is also assumed to influence individuals’ perceptions (Kroger, 2007). Older individuals show greater diversity in development and experiences, which also influence perceptions. Furthermore, crimes committed by adolescents represent a large proportion of all crimes in Denmark (Danmarks Statistik, 2006) for further discussion see chapter 3.1. Criminality Rates above. Adolescents who are under the age of 15 cannot be charged for criminal activities in Denmark. This may prevent them from taking the police as serious as do adolescents over 15 years of age. However, it has been found that adolescents who start their criminal pursuits extremely early in life are more likely to continue a criminal career throughout their life (Felding, 2006). Though a very interesting observation, however this issue is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Individuals who have turned 18 years of age are by the society considered adults and fall under the same penalty acts as adults do, which put them in a different position towards the police than adolescents under the age of 18. Consequently, participants in this study are over 15 years of age but below 18 years of age.

4.6 The Interview

The data is gathered by individual open-ended semi-structured interviews combined with narrative therapy techniques. The interviews are conducted in a place well known to the informants. The time is arranged in advance both with the participating informants and the school. The interview is limited to maximum 30 minutes. The interviews are seen as collaboration between the interviewer and the interviewees, and meaning is created as a result of this collaboration in this particular context (Kvale, 1997).

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9 They are referred to social services.
There are several reasons for choosing individual interviews. Firstly, the topic area is of a sensitive nature, therefore, confidential material may come to the fore, and this can have consequences for the informants. Secondly, the limited time and resources for this thesis study puts a restriction on the number of informants. The alternative would have been focus group interviews but due to the need for two groups in this study, group interviews would require a large number of participants. Group interviews may also reduce the interviewer’s control of the interview situation and data from focus group interviews are often more chaotic and more difficult to handle (Kvale, 1997). Hence, considering the novice interviewer, the individual interview is more likely to produce quality data.

The strength of a semi-structured open-ended interview is that it opens up for the possibility to receive a deeper understanding of the informant’s view of the subject area in question. The semi-structure makes the interview focus on the topic without losing flexibility to change the order and reframe questions according to informants’ answers. The open-ended questions give informants the opportunity to freely reflect upon questions.

A structured interview would stay more focused but restrict informants in their answers as well as limit the possibility to follow up on interesting leads. This would undoubtedly conform to structures and preconceived views of the researcher rather than giving insights to the world of the informant (Fontana & Frey, 1994).

An unstructured interview would promote more reflection from the informant and have a propensity to produce an even deeper understanding of the informants lived world. However, bearing in mind the young age of the informants and their ability to stay focused as well as their willingness to participate, it is decided not to conduct long unstructured interviews. In addition, it would also produce a huge amount of data and there is a risk that it would become unspecific to the topic of interest and loose relevance to the research question. Again, considering the novice interviewer/researcher and the limited time and resources available to this study, it is essential that the interview is focused on the area of interest in order to answer the research question.
The principal’s office at the school was chosen as the place to conduct the interviews, primarily to provide an environment with which informants are familiar. To conduct the interviews in another place than the school is not an option. This is mainly out of concern for the informants’ feelings of security. This solution is also one of practicality, as the informants turn up at the school everyday. Nonetheless, it is possible that the informants have certain associations with the principal’s office, though none known to neither the principal nor the researcher. The principal was not present during the interviews.

To follow Kvale’s suggestion (1997), the interview is limited to 30 minutes, thereby facilitating a short and purposeful interview, which is focused and straight to the point. This should also make the data easier to handle. In addition, the informants are also less likely to get bored and become less cooperative and enthusiastic. This is important considering the young age of the individuals in this study as well as the fact that one informant is diagnosed ADHD\(^\text{10}\).

It requires great care to prepare interviews in a subject area which, on one hand, is sparsely covered in empirical literature, but, on the other hand, is profoundly influenced by the media coverage. Conscious efforts are made by the researcher to break free from preset stereotypical pictures of “juvenile delinquents” as often presented by the media. Moreover, the researcher’s personal opinions, pre-existing prejudices and emotions within the field are considered in order to limit the influence of un-reflected emotions and to prevent those from manipulating the empirical findings (Fog, 2004).

It is possible that the role of the researcher may influence the informants to add on to their stories to try to make it fit with what they believe the researcher wants to portray, rather than what they perceived themselves (Fog, 2004). To minimise this tendency an attempt is made to create an atmosphere where the informants feel safe to entrust their story to a stranger. Therefore, it is clearly stated that the interest is solely on their story and their experiences hence, there are no right or wrong answers. An attempt is also made to make the relationship as equal and spontaneous as possible and to make it clear that the researcher is “on their side”, as opposed to on the side of the police, the societal

\(^{10}\) One of the main symptoms of ADHD is short concentration span.
system, the school or the parents who may have a negative view of their former criminal activities.

Additionally, the informants learn that the researcher’s aim is to gain knowledge which might potentially help change some of the social policies and practices they themselves have been exposed to. Finally, an active attempt is made to show empathetic understanding of the informants; to avoid to intimidate or tear their statements apart, or to force a normative understanding upon them in the interview situation. The focus is on the personal experiences and understandings of the individual rather than an attempt to uncover some objective truth.

The questions in the interview followed a narrative structure inspired by the therapeutic technique called externalising the problem, developed by David Epston and Michel White (2000). Employing narrative therapy technique in research interviewing has not to the present researcher’s knowledge been adopted before, and is, therefore, considered a new approach to research interviewing.

It consists of four phases:

1. Identifying and naming the problem(s)
2. Effect of the problem(s) in the individual’s life
3. Evaluating the effect the problem(s) has on the individual’s life
4. Explanation of why the problem(s) has that effect on ones life

As the name suggests, this form of questions is designed to help the person externalise her/his problems away from her/himself. This changes the focus of the problem from being internal to being external which lessens the problems’ oppressive power on the individual (White, 2003). One way of doing this, is to personify the problem as being someone with whom one is having a relationship. This makes it possible for the individual to say things to and about the problem, instead of the problem saying something about the person (White, 2003). This often provides relief when individuals

\[\text{footnote}{11}\text{ Both participants expressed their wish to change their ways and not engage in criminal activity anymore.}\]
experience that they are not the problem themselves (Carey and Russel, 2002). Further, it may help the individual see the “problem” from a different perspective and to identify what circumstances sustains the “problem”, which can facilitate resolving it (Epston & White, 2004).

In a therapeutic interview, this is done in the following manner: When the “problem” is identified, it is named. Examples of names in literature are; sneaky pooh (White, 2000); the abuse (Freedman & Combs, 1996), but can simply be Mr. Trouble or Mrs. Pleaser. What is important is that the word describes the problem satisfactory to the individual who experiences it. Once the name is established, the next phases are explored, namely, the effect, evaluation and explanation.

The order of questions from the three categories can vary, but for the purpose of example, they are presented one by one under the category to which they belong. The following examples are made by the researcher for illustrative purposes:

Effect
   - How does Mrs. Pleaser affect your life?
   - She makes me have bad conscience.
   - How much of the time does she have influence on your life?
   - Well, I have bad conscience almost all the time.
   - So you would say that she takes up most of your time?
   - Yes.

Evaluation
   - How does it feel that Mrs. Pleaser makes you have bad conscience all the time?
   - I hate it most of the time. But it makes me feel like I am a good person when I do things for other people, it’s just never enough.
   - Ok is it fair to say that having Mrs. Pleaser in your life is both good and bad at the same time.
   - Yeah I guess.

Explanation
Can you explain why you think you are a good person if you do things for other people?
- Because it shows that I am not selfish, that I am generous, oh I hate stingy people. With less stingy people in the world, the world would be a better place…
- Can you explain what it’s like to have a bad conscience?
- Ah it does my head in, it’s pressure, never enough and I never get to do the things I want to do… but I think if I do this then maybe someone would like to do things for me too…give and take you know…

The dialogs above demonstrate that this technique for asking questions probe narratives that inform us of individual’s underlying value system and meaning making, which do not only influence individuals way of perceiving and experience the world, but plays an actual part in the making of that world. The stories are both shaped by life events and shapes life event, as well as self image (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Hence, this shows that stories shape individuals’ lives, and that individuals’ relationships evolve as these narratives are told (White, 2003).

Therefore is this technique adopted and adjusted for this thesis study. Because it fits the interview purpose of understanding informants meaning making and the shaping of the young individuals identities, which influences their perception and experiences and this may help answer this particular research question. However, life (of course) is always richer than discourse (White, 2003).

The major difference between using this technique as a therapy intervention, and using it as a research interview is that there is no “problem” to be externalised. The “problem” is in the interview situation replaced by: adolescents’ perception of the police. However, this is not an externalisation as in the therapeutic intervention and it is presumed to secure that the interview do not turn into a therapy session. Otherwise, a similar strategy to the example above is attempted in the interviews, as explained above, narratives can provide an insight into the informants’ desires, meanings, intentions, beliefs,
commitments, motivations and values which influences perceptions of experiences (White, 2004).

Thus, the interview conversation is initiated by asking the informants questions such as\textsuperscript{12}:

- What is your perception of the police/What do you think of the police?
- Can you give an example of a time when it was like that?
- What happened/Why did it happen?

This is done to promote story telling (Kvale, 1997), and to get started on the subject area. Subsequently, the narrative structure is attempted with questions covering \textit{Effect, Evaluation} and \textit{Explanation} (Epston & White, 2000) in the following manner:

\textbf{Effect}

What effect does it have on you that the police did that?

\textbf{Evaluation}

Was that ok/not ok with you that the police did that?

\textbf{Explanation}

Why was that ok/not ok with you that they did that?

The questions did not necessarily follow this order in the real/live interview. For further information about the interview questions consult section 4.7 Interview guide and Appendix 1. This strategy is used to facilitate an understanding of the informants’ meaning making and perspectives from the informants’ own point of view. The phenomenological stance is compatible and complements the narrative structure. This may give an understanding of the informants’ worlds, and further, if there are differences in these worlds depending on the informants ethnical backgrounds.

\textsuperscript{12} All the examples here are translated by the researcher/author of this thesis as the actual interviews were conducted in Danish.
4.7 Interview Guide

An interview guide is produced which is to be followed in both interviews. The reason for using an interview guide is primarily for securing systematic and strategic interviews so that comparison can be made subsequently (Kvale, 1997). The interview guide contains a presentation of the interviewer; an introduction of the collaborating partner, The National Council for Children in Denmark; a presentation of the research topic (an investigation of adolescents’ perception of the police); the purpose and aims of the study; information about the interview procedure; informants rights as participants; a form of consent (appendix 4); a demographic questionnaire (appendix 8) and finally, a semi-structure for the interview with suggestions to open-ended questions (see appendix 1).

In the interview, a narrative structure is followed as showed in 4.6 The Interview: Firstly, the informants are encouraged to narrate their stories with questions such as “What do you think of the police?”, “Can you tell me about a situation where you had contact with the police?”; secondly, informants are encouraged to reflect on their reactions as a effect assessment with questions such as “How did you react to that?”; thirdly, informants are encouraged to assess their attitude to their own story and reactions as an evaluation, with questions such as “Was that ok with you?”; and finally, informants are encouraged to clarify their evaluation as an explanation, with questions such as “Why was that ok/not ok with you?”. Attempts at interpretation is made during the interview to check that the interviewer understands the informants correctly with questions such as “I have understood this as…is that correct?”, as suggested by Kvale (1997). Further, the informants are encouraged to tell stories of events that support their general perception of the police. The endeavour is to empower the respondents in a way which respects their ways of constructing meaning, and to try to find the plot embedded in their narratives (Mishler, 1986).

Both informants are asked similar questions, in a similar order, so their perceptions and themes can be compared and contrasted subsequently (Kvale, 1997). It is, however, allowed for deviance in the structure and the questions asked to makes room for follow up leads interesting and relevant to the topic. Thus, the interview guide gives structure without becoming too rigid or inflexible.
4.8 Transcription of Interviews

The interviews are transcribed verbatim in full length, including repetitions, pauses, “hms” and “ums”. Transcription is the most economic means of structuring the interview conversations into an amenable form for closer analysis. The detailed transcription is an attempt to provide a more precise record of the original communication in the interviews which makes it more precise for the analyses and interpretations. However, the transcripts are not conceived as the interview, they are a tool for performing the analysis. Transcripts are not checked for reliability for economical reason.

The interviewer’s and interviewees’ pauses are marked [pause] in the transcripts where they occur, showing to whom they belong. Places where informants start talking but hesitate and do not finish a word are marked as […]. Words and passages which are impossible to hear are marked [unclear]; and passages where interviewee and interviewer are talking at the same time are marked [talking at the same time] followed by what is said by each person. Interruptions are marked [interrupted] and other comments such as body language, implicit meanings and emotional expressions are also stated within brackets as for example [looking down] [the other officer] and [laughter]. Informants’ vernacular is also preserved to the extent it is possible. Both transcripts are page and line numbered. The Iraqi informant is called Emil, marked E in the transcript, the Danish informant is called Christian, marked C in the transcript, and the interviewer is marked I. These names are pseudonyms to conceal the informants’ identities. Similarly, all other names and places mentioned in the transcript are also anonymised for the same reason. The transcripts are 13 and 11 pages, respectively (see appendix 2 & 3).

Citations showed in the analysis, in Chapter 8, are translated from Danish into English by the researcher, and the vernacular is changed from the verbatim form into acceptable and coherent written language. Repetitions, “ums” and “hmms” are included but

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13 Researcher’s translation: In the transcript [utydelig]
14 Researcher’s translation: In the transcript [taler I munden på hinanden].
15 Researcher’s translation: In the transcript [afbryder].
16 Researcher’s translation: In the transcript [kigger ned]
17 Researcher’s translation: In the transcript [den anden politibetjent]
18 Researcher’s translation: In the transcript [griner]
reduced to a minimum. There are two reasons for this: Firstly, for ethical reasons, as a protection of the informants, as the verbatim transcripts may appear incoherent and therefore potentially indicating a lower level of intelligence, which may stigmatize the informants. This is common practice in qualitative interview research (Kvale, 1997): Secondly, it is for readability and understanding purposes.

Nevertheless, transcription raises theoretical issues about the differences between oral and written language. Transcripts have a tendency to be considered as the raw data (Kvale, 1997), the foundation on which interpretation is based. Therefore, the language in interview research is very important; ignoring linguistic complexities can result in losing important information in the transformation process. In the “translation” from the oral into the written medium, discontinuities and nuances in a conversation, which may have vital meaning, might be lost (Kvale, 1997). These nuances can be the very essence of knowledge. Sensitivity to the rather interpretative basis of the alteration from the oral medium into the written is therefore important. However, the principle for the transformation from the oral language to the written is acceptable, as the focus of this thesis is not to analyse linguistic features, but primarily to analyse the meaning making conveyed.

4.9 Ethics

Qualitative research, in contrast to quantitative, is in this thesis understood as reciprocal, and the ethical considerations are of paramount importance. The highest priority of this investigation is to gain as much knowledge as possible without causing damage or unduly stress to the individuals involved in the study. The reflections and considerations of the actions involved in this study are as follows:

The informants are informed of the study, and they receive a full description of the purpose and procedure of the interviews, prior to their decision to participate. Moreover, an informed consent is obtained from participants and the researcher guarantees anonymity and confidentiality (see appendix 4). The participants are also informed that it is voluntary to participate, and that they are free to withdraw from the study at any time they would wish to do so with no further obligations or consequences. There is no deception involved in this study. The informants are told that the study is about
adolescents in conflict with the law and their perception of the police. However, they are not told of the presupposition that there is a difference between ethnical Danish and ethnical minority juvenile delinquents’ perception of the police, as it might influence the data.

The qualitative open-ended form of interview and the probing for detail can potentially be very stressful for any respondent (Kvale, 1997). This is the main reason for this investigation to take form as a pilot study, as it will give an indication to whether or not this new interview technique, with questions inspired by therapeutic interventions, contributes to any practical knowledge, before several individuals are put through the time and potential stress that it may evoke.

Moreover, this pilot study gives a possibility to observe whether the interview is too stressful for the participants and if any adjustments are necessary for future investigations. However, the phenomenological approach, where focus is on the informants’ subjective worlds, is considered to prevent the informants from feeling that other, e.g. normative, views are forced upon them, or that they have to justify or defend their own views, which could be very stressful for them (Kvale, 1997). The informants are also encouraged to object to talking about a subject matter or to answer a question, if they do not feel comfortable to do so. Further, awareness of potential emotional effects of the interview is considered and discussed with the staff where the informants are collected. Should it be relevant, staffs are prepared to be involved.

Another concern is that the investigation, because of the selection criteria, might tie the informants to a specific role and further stigmatise them as “juvenile delinquents”. However, they are selected and interviewed when they attend a special school with certain criteria for admission.

Further, a meta-concern in this study is about how important it is to categorise in the following manner:

- What consequences may it have and is it meaningful to distinguish between ethnical Danish and ethnical minority juvenile delinquents?
- Is this further perpetuating the stigmatisation of being foreign?
These questions can have serious implications for any study such as this. However, as there is a higher representation of ethnical minorities than of ethnical Danes in the statistics of criminality in Denmark (see 3.1 Criminality Rates), it is important to find out what the reasons for this may be. If these issues are omitted out of fear for condemnation and stigmatisation there will be no foundation of knowledge on which endeavours toward amelioration can be based which ultimately is an acceptance of the status quo.

Moreover, the dilemma of stigmatisation has been used as an argument for not dealing with the combination of criminality and ethnical minorities (Asmussen, 2004), nonetheless, there are concrete examples in Denmark were the intense focus on young offenders with foreign background have led to tolerance and more positive attitudes towards ethnical minorities as well as brought the rates of offences down\textsuperscript{19}. This demonstrates a form of catharsis, which demystifies a concern through exposure and increase tolerance in the long run (Andersen, 2002).

Thus, the purposes and uses of the categorisation are important and the judgements must be made accordingly. The point of using the categorisation in this study is to analyse the social factors that contribute to ethnical Danes’ and ethnical minority juvenile delinquents possible different perceptions of the police. Understandings of these factors may contribute to amelioration of the condition for those who are most disadvantaged. Hence, the purpose of the categorisations in this study is not to stigmatise further.

\textsuperscript{19} An example is Vollsmose, in Odense as stated in Asmussen, (2004) by head of Secretariat of Vollsmose, Lise Færch.
4.10 Analysis

This subsection presents the methods of analysis and the theoretical considerations involved. Two interviews are subjected to three modes of analysis in a prioritised sequence:

1) A thematic analysis
2) A phenomenological meaning condensation
3) A narrative analysis

A comparison is made of the narrative analyses.

The thematic analysis and phenomenological meaning condensation are inspired by Kvale (1997), and the narrative analysis is inspired by Epston and White (2000). This is a combination accustomed for this research purpose (see model below).

The interrelationship between the three analytical modes is not that of triangulation; the first mode is applied to the total set of data, aggregating a reduced set of data, a selected thematic discourse; the second mode of analysis is applied to the aggregated set of data and provides a summary of the selected thematic discourses, a phenomenological meaning condensation; the third mode of analysis is also applied to the selected thematic discourse, a narrative analysis. The narrative analyses of the two interviews are inspired by narrative therapy intervention via identification of dominant and preferred stories (Epston & White, 2000) in the informants’ accounts. Finally the results of the two narrative analyses are compared and provide the final result which answers the research question.

See the accustomed model of analysis in figure 1 below:
The following paragraph presents and substantiates these specific modes of analysis.

In the thematic analysis, key features in the informants’ accounts, as the researcher understands them, are extracted and summarised. They are extracted from the original transcripts (see appendix 2 & 3), and each theme is given a distinct colour. All statements which represent a particular theme e.g. injustice are given a specific colour.
e.g. green. All same-colour statements are arranged together so that all the statements representing one theme can be read in sequence (see appendix 5). These statements are summarised into thematic discourses. This condensed material of non-redundant themes forms the data set exposed to the phenomenological meaning condensations and the narrative analysis. The phenomenological meaning condensation summarises the non-redundant thematic discourse. This summery provides the context for the selected thematic discourses which enables validation. The narrative analysis extends and interprets the selected thematic discourses and dominant and preferred stories are identified. The results of the two narrative analyses are compared to answer the research question, see Chapter 8 Analysis and Verification.

4.11 Reliability and Validity

This subsection discusses the reliability and validity of the qualitative method presented above. These concepts, however, are predominantly known in quantitative research; therefore, the concepts of reliability and validity need discussion and redefinition in general and in relation to the present study in particular.

The concepts of reliability and validity do not apply to qualitative methods because qualitative methods do not share ontological and epistemological assumptions about the world with quantitative methods. Most critique of reliability and validity of qualitative methods are based on quantitative arguments and points of view (Mørk, 1989), which is problematic and irrelevant. Therefore, discussion and redefinition of reliability and validity in relation to qualitative methods are necessary in this context.

Reliability refers to consistency of measurement devices, whether the same measurements utilized repeatedly under the same condition produce the same results (Reber & Reber, 2001). Validity refers to whether or not a test tests what it purports to test (Reber & Reber, 2001). Both these concepts are based on an assumption of correspondence to reality where the “true” state of the world can be revealed by the use of reliable and valid methods. This is problematic in qualitative research because there is no such assumption about one universal “true” reality rather, reality is constructed in discourse as a never ending context bound endeavour. Hence, different readings of the
same results would in quantitative research mean that it is flawed as only one interpretation can respond to reality and the others must deviate from the “true” reality. In qualitative research, on the other hand, alternative interpretations of the same data may offer several unique understandings of a phenomenon. However, there are interpretations which are more plausible than others, i.e. interpretations which are text bound and vastly substantiated by the data. It may appear that there are not such strict guide lines in qualitative as in quantitative research, qualitative research are welcome on the basis of being critical and politically correct (Mørk, 1989).

The terms’ reliability and validity are therefore not often applied to qualitative research, but replaced or conceptually redefined as discussions of importance of findings and concepts of quality (Hepner, Kvivilighan & Wanpold, 1999), which are based on the results themselves. However, Kvale (1997) suggests that issues of verification are addressed during the entire research process e.g. in relation to leading questions, when they are not part of the interview technique, and to inter-subjectivity in relation to transcribing and extracting themes or categories. For economical reasons, it has not been possible to check for inter-subjective transcriptions and themes in this thesis. Further, the transcriptions and analysis was not returned to the informants for verification and adjustments, if necessary. This was to protect the informants as the principal, of the school where they were collected, perceived that the informants had enough on their minds already. These forms of verification mentioned above have been compensated for by detailed transcriptions and description of procedures, which is also recommended by Kvale (1997) as an alternative verification. This includes an interview summery, which provides a context for the extracted themes i.e. the phenomenological meaning condensation. Once the context and intention of the research becomes known, the divergence is usually comprehensible to all even if not universally agreeable. That is the key criterion for qualitative research (Giorgi, 1975). Thus, by adopting the same viewpoint as articulated by the researcher facilitate the reader to see what the researcher saw, whether or not agreeing with it.

Further evaluation of qualitative methods are suggested by Merrick (1999), involving concepts such as trustworthiness, reflexivity and representation. Trustworthiness refers to elements of “good practice” through out the research process; Reflexivity refers to
the acknowledgement that the researcher is central in the construction of knowledge; presentation refers to logical arguments and availability. In this thesis focus is on using a method loyal to the informants so their stories are presented as close to their original form as possible and researchers perspectives are demonstrated. Therefore, in this thesis, transcriptions and procedures are detailed, data is thoroughly familiarised, themes and interpretations are closely connected to the data so that conclusions are self evident. Also, the fact that this topic area is new to the researcher facilitate staying naïve and inquisitive. Thus, this study complies with the above requirements, and interpretations are text bound and presented with transparency in an open effort to make them plausible.

4.12 Procedure

The procedure describes the stages involved in the process of producing the data for the analysis. A detailed description of the procedure serves as an alternative to having the informants verifying the analysis (Kvale, 1997). This is made to guide the reader through the several stages and considerations made in this investigation so that she/he can follow the rational to understand the conclusions made in this thesis.

To get contact with adolescents at the age of 15-17, who have had direct contact with the police, one of the city departments of the special school Sputnik was contacted. The school was contacted by telephone and as they had pupils who suited the criteria for this thesis’ research and since they were willing to participate, they were the only institution which was contacted.

Prior to the interviews there was an informal meeting with the principal and the teachers at the school as well as with the pupils. For further information about the visit at the school Sputnik, see Appendix 6. Initially, the study was presented to the principal and afterwards to the pupils whom the principal considered suitable for the interviews. The choice of selecting participants was made by the principal, based on the criteria for the study as well as considerations for the individuals participating. Three adolescents were considered of which one did not wish to participate. The two remaining adolescents are individually informed of the study by the principal and the researcher and asked for their participation. When they agreed to participate, the principal telephoned their
parents. They were briefly informed of the study, and their consent was obtained (see appendix 7). Afterwards, time and place for the interviews were arranged with researcher, participants and the school.

An interview guide was produced with questions inspired by narrative literature combined with ideas relating to interviewing (see appendix 1). Test interviews were executed with an individual not familiar with the topic area and adjustments were made to assist conduction of the interview in a colloquial manner.

The first interview took place at the scheduled time, but the second interview was obtained after several attempts. The first time the informant did not turn up was due to a misunderstanding with the school but the following times the informant failed to turn up. Consequently, it was arranged so that the school contacted the interviewer on a day when the informant turned up for school so that the interview could be conducted on that same day which turned out successful.

The interviews took place in the principal’s office. Informants were introduced to the study (see the interview guide, appendix 1). Before the recorded interview begun, a form of consent was signed, (see appendix 4) and a demographic questionnaire were filled out (see appendix 8). The pre-planned set of questions, (see interview guide appendix 1) was followed with few modification to follow up on interesting leads and to follow the flow in the interview. Both interviews came to a natural end before the 30 minutes had passed, namely after 17 and 24 minutes, respectively. One of the informants objected to answering what he had been arrested for, which was one of the questions on the demographic questionnaire. He said that it was several arrests for violence and no further details were asked for, as the study did not required more details. However, this suggests on the one hand that the question might have been confrontational and should have been worded differently but on the other hand it proved that the informant was able to object to talk about topics he did not want to talk about.

Both informants were asked if they wanted to add anything or ask some questions before the tape recorder was switched off, an offer both informants turned down. After the tape recorder was switched off, they were asked, if it felt okay to have been
interviewed, and if they felt that they had been treated with respect. Both stated that it was okay and that they felt they had been treated fairly. The Iraqi informant did not want the fast food and drink for the participation. It was agreed with the school that they would arrange this later, should he change his mind. The other informant was given a pizza and a soft drink after the interview, as was agreed.

The Iraqi informants did not want to be anonymous. He said that his parents and the school knew about all he had done, and he stood by what he said and his name did not need to be anonymised. However, it was considered that he may not realise the actual consequences of being recognised. Also, he was not going to receive the analysed interview for reflection and adjustments, if necessary, before it is made available for the public. Therefore, he remains anonymous in the study. This, however, does raise some ethical dilemmas, which will be discussed later in chapter 6 Post-Methodological Discussion.

The interviewer got the impression that the Danish informant became emotional during the interview and was therefore not probed for explanations to the same extent as was planned. He seemed affected by thinking about and telling stories of previous abuse he had experienced by the police. Therefore, one of the teachers was contacted after this interview with concern for the informant’s emotional and mental state. It transpired that this state of mind was not uncommon for the pupil, but the teacher assured that he would stay attentive towards the pupil. This was considered the best option as the teacher knew him better than the researcher, hence the informant would probably feel safer with the teacher, should he need support after the interview.

5 Analysis, Definitions and Verification

This Chapter presents definitions and theoretical reflections of three modes of analysis, as well as the actual analyses and verifications of the two conducted interviews i.e. the thematic analysis, the phenomenological meaning condensation, the narrative analysis, and a comparison of the two narrative analyses. Finally, the results are summarised.

The meta-perspective of the analysis is phenomenological, which focuses on the informants subjective worlds. Although, the thematic analyses were preformed first, the
phenomenological meaning condensations are presented first in this chapter for the sake of the reader; this way the non-redundant thematic discourses are summarised and form an introduction and general view of the data.

5.1 Phenomenological Meaning Condensation

This subsection defines phenomenological meaning condensation (Kvale, 1997) and presents the two phenomenological meaning condensations based on the extracted themes in the interviews.

5.1.1 Definition of Phenomenological Meaning Condensation

These descriptive condensations of the statements made in the interviews present the subjective worlds of the informants. The aim is to re-tell the stories in a condensed form and yet as if it was the informants themselves telling the stories, i.e. with the same informal idiomatic language and expressions as the informants use in the interviews. For the full length interview transcripts, (see appendix 2 & 3).

5.1.2 Interview Number One, Emil, 17 Year Old Iraqi Male

Emil thinks there is a difference between good and bad police officers. He says that some are good and show respect. Those he listens to and respects. Other police officers are bad and they bother him and his mates all the time. These officers threaten Emil and his mates with fines. The police also use unnecessary force and their power as officers when there is no need to do so. Emil has no respect for these police officers because they harass him and his mates even though they have not done anything they could be charged for. An example of this is when one of Emil’s mates was arrested for asking if the police officer came from Jutland.

It does not matter if Emil walks alone or with his mates, the police say that they send out bad vibes no matter what. Emil says the police bothers him all the time because he is foreign, which he thinks is unfair. Not all police officers do so, but in general they do. Emil also explains why this is the case. It is because most police officers come from Jutland where there are no foreign people and all they know about immigrants is the bad representation from the media. When they later come to Copenhagen to train as police officers, where there are immigrants, they get messed up. Emil also tells about a police
officer that said to him: “My mission in life is to get all immigrants locked up”. In the arrest they are treated badly. The police let them wait for ages before they let them go to the toilet and the cells smell of “piss and shit”.

Emil says the police can not tell the difference between him and troublemakers. If Emil is with his mates who verbally offends the police officers and Emil behaves, the police judge him the same way as they judges the troublemakers. However, Emil also states that if he is by himself, then the police do notice that Emil is one of the “good ones”. It is when they are in a group that the police lump them all together.

Emil tells a story about how a police officer forced him to lay on the ground even though Emil had not done anything wrong. He was leaning against a car that belonged to one of his friends. This police officer threatened to take Emil to the station because he thought Emil was playing a smart-arse with him\(^{20}\). Another police officer talked this police officer into letting him go and to not exaggerate as Emil had not done anything wrong. Emil knows this police officer from the youth club he goes to. Emil says it is not because that police officer knows him that he helps him; he is like that with everyone. Emil says that the good officer treats them with respect, therefore Emil listens to him and do what he says. This police officer tells them off and tells them to not make trouble and gives them a chance to get out of there. Once he even let a guy go that had a knife. He just said put that away and go. Emil states that some police officers are good and some are bad. Emil listens to the police officer who treats Emil with respect, the others he does not listen to. Emil will always start out talking properly to an officer but if they treat him unfairly he can not be bothered.

Emil also says that the police are good at some things. For example one time when his friend had been stabbed with a knife the police found who did it. He also thinks they are good at sorting out accidents but they just don’t have enough to do, so they harass guys with foreign backgrounds. Emil says that the police exist to protect us all, though he does not need protection, as he feels safe no matter what\(^{21}\). He also believes that it does

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\(^{20}\) Researcher’s translation: In the transcript [spiller smart]

\(^{21}\) Researcher’s translation: In the transcript [lige meget hvad]
matter how the police treat him and his mates, as well as how he himself sees and treats the police officers.

If the police did not hassle them all the time and talked respectfully to them, then they would listen to them and do what they tell them to and there would be less trouble. But because the police bother Emil and his mates they do the opposite of what the police tell them to. One time, for example, when the police were constantly driving around the same block where Emil and some mates were chilling out, they all agreed to run off just to make the police chase them. They did that just for a laugh. Emil says that the main thing the police could do to avoid trouble between the police and them is to keep a low profile, and then there would not be so many problems because most of the time it is the police that provoke the troubles and arrests anyway.

5.1.3 Interview Number Two, Christian, 15 Year Old Danish Male

Christian thinks the police are strange people who are not very helpful. He says there are probably more good police officers than there are bad, but the bad once are really bad, he calls them corrupt pigs. They break the law themselves and just beat people up, particularly children. Christian tells about the several times he has been beaten up by the police. Christian has also been put in detention when he was only 14 years old, even though it is illegal to arrest people under the age of 15 in Denmark. He was put in detention for 17 hours on his own because he did not want to talk to the police. Another time a police officer held Christian in a stranglehold and rolled him on top of a metal bar and did not stop until Christian said he would not play a wise arse anymore. Christian did not want to say that just because the officer told him to. All he had done was play fighting with his friend on the street.

Christian talks about how the police always come and check on him and his mates. The police are also sly and they come from behind and stop them. Christian says this is because him and his mates have done a lot of bad stuff. He calls the offences they do for “boyish pranks”\textsuperscript{22}. That some of the things are just little things like nicking mobile phones from people. Christian thinks it is unfair that they check him and his friends when they have not done anything wrong. He is convinced it is because the police want

\textsuperscript{22} Researcher’s translation: In the transcript [drenge streger]
to find something so they can finally bust them for something. This constant hassling, 
from the police, makes Christian and his mates want to tease the police instead because 
it is fun to “piss them off”. One time when Christian could se the officers hiding behind 
a bus, he and his mates purposely started to talk about rolling a joint just to whine them 
up. This made the police come over and check them without finding anything, which 
whined up the police officers.

Christian thinks that the police are violent because they think that Christian plays smart- 
ar-se with them, and that the police think that they might as well beat Christian up while 
they have the chance, because they think he is “a little shit” anyway. Other officers are 
just watching, they do not do anything. Christian thinks it is unfair that they can beat 
him up but if he hits them back, he ends up in prison. And he says that “if the police 
want to take you, they take you, there is nothing you can do about it”.

Christian says some people think the police should be treated with respect just because 
they are police officers and because they are the ones who rule over the country. 
Christian is not sure about that, but there are some good officers and they do their work 
properly.

Christian tells about one officer that used to be good but after Christian ended up 
beating his son the officer was not so nice to Christian anymore. The police officer’s 
son had flirted with Christian’s best friend’s girlfriend and that was that. Suddenly the 
police officer’s son was on the floor but he had himself to blame according to Christian, 
he should not have flirted with other peoples’ girlfriends.

Christian says that he had a good time when he was 14 but now it is enough. Now he is 
15 and can be charged for the crimes he does, and he does not want to go to prison 
because it will make it difficult to get a job later. Christian says that if you are not a 
criminal then you will like the police, but if you are a criminal then you will not. The 
police are there because otherwise there would be thefts everywhere, and there would 
not be money, and everybody would just take what they want.
5.2 Thematic Analysis

This subsection defines and presents theoretical concerns with regards to the thematic analysis. Further, it presents the extracted thematic discourses which are demonstrated and verified by means of citations from the original transcripts i.e. how the discourses are offered by the informants.

5.2.1 Definition of Thematic Analysis

The thematic analysis provides a focus on the informants’ major concerns, as the researcher understands them, by locating repeatedly presented matters in the interview conversation. These are the major constituent parts of the informants’ meaning making and the construction of their perception, world and identity (Kvale, 1997). This part of the analysis is a clarification of the material, e.g. elimination of superfluous material, digressions and repetitions as well as a distinction between the essential and the non-essential. Meaning condensations such as extracting themes involves a reduction of large interview texts into briefer, more succinct formulations (Kvale, 1997) which is more accessible for analysis.

The thematic analysis is strictly based on the informants’ accounts to allow the data to speak for itself. The point is to forgo the researcher’s foreknowledge and prejudices in order to understand the phenomena and experiences from the informants’ perspective. This is, however, an ideal methodological ambition which can not be fully accomplished, as the world of the researcher inevitably will influence her/his understanding of any phenomenon, including the subjective world of the informants. Nevertheless, this method, which aims to understand the world from the informants’ point of view by closely pursue the meaning making expressed by the informants, should prevent researcher’s foreknowledge from domineering the interpretations (Fog, 2004).

The interviews are originally conducted in Danish and the translation into English is done by the researcher. An attempt is made to translate slang and vernacular as closely as possible to stay true to the original data. All citations from the interview transcripts in the analyses are marked with appendix number; informants name; page number; and line number in the following manner: (A2; Emil; p. 22; 46).
There were several thematic discourses identified in the informant’s accounts (see appendix 5). Many of the major themes in both interviews are interlinked and appear to relate closely to the notion of being treated unfairly. Hence, a prevailing thematic discourse is extracted; injustice which has subordinate and overlapping themes such as power/powerlessness, provocation and racism. The two other themes exposed to analysis are differentiation between good and bad police officers and respect.

5.2.2 Injustice

Injustice is the superior theme pervading most of both interview conversations. In this context it relates to the police practices and how they treat the informants when they interact in the community where the informants live. The theme injustice is essentially about the informants perceiving police harassment of adolescence in different ways, such as checking on them, provoking them, using unnecessary force and abuse, arresting them unduly, as shown below:

*I haven’t done anythin’ wrong, I haven’t beaten anyone so…they grab me and play wise-arse and take me down and everythin’…* (Appendix 2; Emil; p. 2; 12)

*I haven’t done anythin’ wrong’, I am just hangin’ out…talkin’ and discussin’ and they approach me: [The police officer]”Is it your car?”[Emil]  “ No, it’s not”...[the police officer] “are you playin’ wise-arse with me?”*  
(Appendix 2; Emil; p. 2; 37-40)

[Indignant] They can’t just come and check me, when I ain’t done anythin’...  
(Appendix 3; Christian; p. 10; 7)

[Police arrive] “What are you doin’, and why are you here, and why do you lean against that car? Why do you lean against that car? Is it your car?” Then, I say, “no, it is not my car, it is my friend’s car.”  “Oh, is that right?” “Yes, that is right! It is my friend’s car and it is alright that I lean against it.” Then he says, “don’t play smart with me.” I say to him, “have I said somethin’ wrong or what?” uhm.. [the police officer]
“Do you want to lay on the floor or what?” I say to him, “are you threatenin’ me or what?” He says, “what [...]” and he grabs me and puts me on the floor.
(Appendix 2; Emil; p. 1; 24-30)

If they want to take you, they take you, there is nothing you can do... They stick together you know, you can’t turn anythin’ against them, no matter what you do.
(Appendix 3; Christian; p. 3-4; 45 & 47)

This illustrates how the police come and interfere with the adolescents’ activities when the adolescents consider it unnecessary. The adolescents perceive the police’s manner to be confrontational and argumentative; the police arrest and/or use force to handle the adolescents’ reactions on issues the adolescents experience as initiated by the police themselves. The last statement above also shows a sense of powerlessness and despair about the situation and the police’s behaviour.

Thus, the theme injustice is related to the way in which the adolescents perceive the police as an institution that uses unnecessary force and abuse their power, especially in relation to episodes where no crime has been committed. The informants often mention incidents where the police interfere, provoke and accuse the adolescents for bad and provocative conduct, arrogance and miscellaneous negative behaviour.

Well, me and one of my friends were play fightin’ when a police van passed by and when they saw us, they stopped. And then one of the officers wanted to put me in handcuffs and I said, “sorry, but I am only 14 years old and you are not allowed to put handcuffs on me”. Then he rolled me on top of ah.. a iron thingi’ my back was... I was laying on top of it [unclear] it hurt [unclear] and then he asked if I was still playin’ a wise-arse... (Appendix 3; Christian; p.1; 22-25)

Every time he nicked us, and it’s a few times now, we have been polite and laughed and stuff, but he says, “what are you guys doing man, you eat and make a mess, drink too much and always fuck it up” but what is fucked up is, what have we done? We are just hangin’ out, doin’ nothin’ man, but he says we give bad vibes, well I just tell him to give us a fine then for sending bad vibes… (Appendix 2; Emil; p. 4; 30-34)
This theme of unjust treatment, being under surveillance constantly, being treated with suspicion and being abused by police officers, is also an account of being foreign. This is understood by Emil as police officers’ racial prejudices. The following dialog is an example of these racial issues.

_I: Do you think it has something to do with you being foreign?_

_E: Yes. [looks down]_

_I: Are you sure?_

_E: I am absolutely sure._

(Appendix 2; Emil; p.3; 16-19)

There are direct references to police officers who openly state their racial prejudices, as seen below:

_I know one police officer that at one point said, “my mission in life is to get all immigrants locked up.” He just said that straight out [smiles]._

(Appendix 2; Emil; p. 4; 23-26)

Emil’s understanding of the police officers’ racial intolerance is as follows:

_Most officers are from Jutland, right... They take their trainin’ her in Copenhagen and then they stay here in Copenhagen... And you know in Jutland, there they don’t like, or most people from Jutland, they don’t like foreigners, so let’s say... let me give you an example. Mr. And Mrs Hansen they sit around the dinner table, and they have never seen an immigrant before, they live on the country side, and on... what it’s called, on the news...one immigrant that has Hansen say because she knows...they have never seen, they have only seen the bad sides, they have never seen the good sides. They come from a Village where there are none [immigrants] where there are maybe 200 people...Therefore you know their sons are gonna grow up like that, and when they go to Copenhagen for their trainin’ as police officers, they get fucked up._ (Appendix 2; Emil; p. 3; 34-61 & 44-45)

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23 This is equivalent to use Mr. and Mrs. Smith.
Both informants state that they think it is unfair that the police always check on them. According to Emil this is due to the fact that he is of foreign origin. However, in Christian’s account the police harassment is caused by his previous frequent involvement in criminal activities but also to police practise in general. Yet, their accounts centre on how the police deal with juvenile delinquents by provoking them and using unnecessary force. Nonetheless, the adolescents state that this behaviour does not make them afraid of the police. Rather, and as a consequence of the police’s behaviour, the adolescences justify their own actions to provoke the police further. A few examples of this follows:

*There were some of my friends down there, and I had seen them, I had seen one of them before...*civil [officer] could see two officers behind a bus. “Hey listen”, I whispered to my friends, “come on, let’s talk about hash, right,” then he says [one of the friends], “can’t you role a joint?” Then two heads suddenly appeared, what was that? Then they came and checked us. They didn’t find anything...then they ask, “why do you talk about rollin’ a joint then?” “Hey listen, I saw you guys, you are not very good at hidin’, you try and camouflage yourself...Then they got pissed off right there.

(Appendix 3; Christian; p. 10; 36-43)

*We are hangin’ out in the block, sittin’ on a bench right, and they [the police] drive around that block for like half an hour, like...In the end, we look at them, alright, lets pretend we run off ... when they hear that, they run after us*

(Appendix 2; Emil; p. 5; 27-28 & 32)

*We are standin’ talkin’ and we get [unclear] because of us they stop right next to us and we are lookin’ at them, one of my mates says, “come on lets run off,” ok, fine, and we run...That is fun [laughs]* (Appendix 3; Emil; p. 5; 31-32).

### 5.2.3 Difference

This theme illustrates that the informants have different experiences with different police officers and that in the informants’ views there are both good and bad officers.
...but some of them are alright though. (Appendix 3; Christian; p. 4;10)

I think most of them are probably good…(Appendix 3; Christian; p. 5; 36)

I am not sayin’ they all do, but in general. (Appendix 2; Emil; p. 5; 4)

Then his friend arrive [The other police officer], “calm down, he has not done anythin’ wrong, what are you doing, what is it you got pissed about?” (Appendix 2; Emil; p. 1, 36-38).

They are good many times as well … (Appendix 2; Emil; p. 10; 15-16)

Hm, and there are some that are good as well, but most of them are […][interrupted] (Appendix 2; Emil; p. 12; 33)

As seen above, the informants’ express awareness that there are both good and bad officers; however, the stories about bad officers are predominant.

5.2.4 Respect

The theme of respect is presented by the informants as fair treatment and is defined by actions such as talking properly, behaving and listening. The concept of respect is perceived by the informants as something a person earns, and it is not something one should take for granted. Respect is understood as mutual behaviour; it is about reciprocity; the informants believe that if the police treated the adolescents with more respect the police would gain more respect from the adolescents. This is a concept which both informants practice; initially the adolescents behave and address the officers in an appropriate manner, but the adolescents discontinue this behaviour the moment their respect is not returned. Here is an example:

When I speak to you, right, I don’t… around and all that. I have respect and then I speak with respect to you, you know what I mean, I speak properly. (Appendix 2; Emil; p. 7; 26-30)
And examples of the opposite; to not show respect:

*It is like, I do this* [he looks around the room and the other way] *I just look around and go, “hey what’s up”* [pretend to talk on his mobile phone]... *talk to myself, be in my own world and every time you ask me something’, “ah, what did you say?’*...That is not respectful. (Emil; Appendix 2; p.7; 37-46).

*So when a police officer talks to me no matter if I know him or not, I always answer him in a respectful manner...* (Appendix 2; Emil; p. 8; 22-23)

*People that don’t like me, I don’t like either. That’s how it should be, I think. If they like me, then I like them too.* (Appendix 3; Christian; p. 4; 22-23).

*If they speak nicely to me, then I speak nicely to them, I am like that...* (Appendix 3; Christian; p. 4;17).

The informants perceive respect as something you earn and it is reciprocal. If a police officer is not treating them with respect, then they do not act respectfully either. Examples as follows:

*So him I told you about the nice officer [called] Bent, I have respect for him, you know...When he comes over and chats I listen to him... As when him the other one, well shut up and stuff, you know...you listen, because he, [Bent] he has helped me many times, you know... and he respects us, he has not been an arsehole...He respects us, also when we mess up, you know...* (Appendix 2; Emil; p. 6; 36-47).

*[respect] that is somethin’ you earn -*[next sentence] *So when a police officer talks to me, no matter if I know him or not, I always answer him in a respectful manner...* (Appendix 2; Emil; p.8; 19-20)

*You know, when he [the police] talks to me, talks decently to me and explains and stuff, then I listen to him, and I also ask him questions and everythin’*
The informants point out that some of the police officers think they should be met with respect due to the fact that they are police officers. Neither of the informants in this study agree with this notion, which is consistent with the accounts of respect being reciprocal and earned by action. As examples below:

_He [police officer 1] says, “pull yourself together, do you know who you are talkin’ to?” I say, “yes, I am talkin’ to a police officer.” Then the police officer grabs me and says, “you know what, you are comin’ with me to the station.” Then the other officer [police officer 2] approaches and says, “come down, don’t exaggerate,” he also says to me,” you too have to pull yourself together” Then I say, “this is not right, it was him [police officer 1] that started it, you know, it was him that played wise-arse with me” this I say to him [police officer 2]. (Appendix 2; Emil; p.1; 36-37)_

_And that is something you should respect, that is [police officers]. (Appendix 3; Christian; p. 3; 39-40)_

_You should respect the police. [pause] (Appendix 3; Christian; p. 3; 42)_

_Because they say it’s them that rules the country…(Appendix 3; Christian; p. 3; 44)_

_Well, I don’t care what they are [the police]. (Appendix 3; Christian; p. 4; 26)_

_People that don’t like me, I don’t like either. (Appendix 3; Christian; p. 4; 22)._

5.3 Narrative analysis

This subsection defines narrative analysis as used in this thesis where concepts from narrative therapy practices have been included; further, narrative analysis is applied to two selected thematic discourses, extracted from the interviews.
5.3.1 Definition of Narrative Analysis

Narrative analysis takes the story itself as its object of investigation (Riessman, 1993). A narrative has a meaning, a plot giving the story a point and a unity. Narratives give many interpretative possibilities, i.e. emphasis on the temporal, the social, and the meaning structures expressed by informants (Mishler, 1986) and is thus comprehensive.

The concepts from narrative therapy praxis are identification of a dominant story and a preferred story (Epston & White, 2000). The relation between a dominant story and a preferred story can be adverse or congruent. When the dominant story is a saturated problem story it is adverse to the preferred story. If the dominant story is the preferred story they are congruent.

Employing narrative therapy concepts in a narrative analysis has not to the present researcher’s knowledge been adopted before, and is, therefore, considered a new approach. The researcher has adopted and adjusted narrative therapy concepts to the narrative analysis, because the added concepts enable distinction between a dominant story and a preferred story as well as rating of the relation between the dominant story and the preferred story. To understand how individuals perceive others or position themselves in relation to others as well as institutions, it is necessary to understand how they perceive themselves (White, 2004). The employed narrative therapy concepts enable identification of how the individuals perceive themselves and also how they position themselves towards others i.e. the police.

5.3.2 Emil, a Narrative about being Foreign

Emil’s account of the police is narratives about injustice, racial intolerance and respect. The account presents several examples of how the police treat adolescents unfairly because of their foreign background. Emil produces a discourse about being foreign in Denmark. However, Emil’s dominant story is inherently optimistic in tone, and no internalisation is made of racial intolerance which Emil expresses him and his friends are exposed to by the police. Emil presents himself as an agent and not as a victim.

Emil differentiates between good and bad police officers. This differentiation is based on his experiences of police officers where reciprocal respect is practiced and where he
actively acts in accordance with his understanding that respect has to be earned. Emil initially offers all police officers respect, however, if his respect is not returned he does not continue. Yet, Emil maintains that the police harass him because of his foreign background; thus he identifies himself as belonging to a minority group.

Emil’s meaning making of racial intolerance from the police expresses a perception that social practices in different, small, local, social communities in Denmark i.e. Jutland where he believes many police officers are recruited from, are influenced by the negative media focus rather than direct experience with foreigners. He expresses understanding of social phenomena and avoids internalisation of his experienced police prejudice. In other words Emil avoids being victimised by the way he is treated by the police. Emil maintains that it is possible to improve the interaction between foreign adolescents and the police through mutual respect. Emil suggests that the police keep a low profile and do not constantly hassle and provoke adolescents with foreign background and that the adolescents with foreign background participate and cooperate respectfully with the police. Thus, a narrative of hope and belief for the future and a possible change of the situation is presented.

There are few inconsistencies in Emil’s account. And therefore his dominant story and his preferred story are congruent.

5.3.3 Christian, a Narrative about Injustice

Christian’s account is narratives about injustice and powerlessness. He presents several narratives of himself as a victim of police surveillance and abuse of power. Christian maintains that the police use their authority unfairly, particularly on children who can not oppose them. The police are unjust and they provoke adolescents to a point where they can arrest the adolescents for not behaving. Christian also states that the police are sly, corrupt and do illegal things themselves. They have the power to do anything they want and they watch each other’s back. Christian feels he can not do anything about the situation. However, Christian thinks there are officers who do their job properly, but those who are bad are really bad.
Christian’s dominant story presents a situation which is out of Christian’s control; his powerlessness is extended to include his own behaviour. For example, when Christian narrated a story about a good police officer, Christian explained how he ended up beating up this police officer’s son. Christian’s justification of his actions is as follows: “He [the officer’s son] had himself to blame” because he flirted with Christian’s friend’s girlfriend. Thus, Christian does not present himself as responsible for a violent action.

The dominant story in Christian’s account is about assigned power to police officers which is abused, about how there is no way to resist the police, and about how the police use their power and authority to humiliate adolescents. Christian presents a dominant story of victimisation and despair. In his story it is not possible for Christian to influence his situation and his relationship with the police. In Christian’s dominant story, the agency is solely with the police; Christian narratives about how change the situation never includes action from himself. An example of this is Christian’s suggestion that police officers should ensure that they know what is going on before they intervene, instead of just beating him up. This type of discourse perpetuates Christian’s powerlessness. Hence, Christian attributes police injustice to police practice in general but also to his former criminal activities.

In Christian’s narrative the police exist to prevent robberies and anarchy; without the police money would not exist. Christian presents a discourse where individuals in conflict with the law are against the idea of the police and individuals who are not in conflict with the law are in favour of the existence of the police. Thus, in Christian’s narrative the police represent a selective controlling institution as oppose to a protective institution.

Christian’s narratives show inconsistencies. At the same time as Christian constructs dominant discourses about injustice, powerlessness and victimisation, he also presents glimpses of more positive stories; a preferred story about resistance, agency as well as the power to change, and a hope for the future.
In Christian’s narrative, he also explains that he has stopped his criminal activity to avoid imprisonment, thus increase his chances on the job market in the future\textsuperscript{24}. This is a preferred story where Christian presents agency to change his own situation. In Christian preferred story, he also creates resistance towards the power of the police. This resistance is expressed when he acts in accordance with his belief of justice, despite the pain the police inflicts on him. In those glimpses of a preferred story, Christian fights for what he believes is right, by means of non-compliance. Thus, Christian presents agency in the preferred story, however his agency in relation to the police is indirect. It is depicted by silent resistance, i.e. non-action.

However, Christian’s preferred stories are glimpses intertwined with his dominant story, where victimisation, injustice and powerlessness pervade. This is sustained by expressions such as, “this happened to me”, as oppose to, “I did this”, which presents him as passive and with no agency.

5.4 Comparison of the two Narrative Analyses

This subsection presents a comparison of the two narrative analyses carried out above. In both informants’ narratives injustice is pervading. However, their dominant stories are different.

Emil’s account is congruent because his dominant story is congruent with his preferred story. He presents himself as an active agent in his own life, though the police treat him unfairly. Emil explains this unjust treatment with reference to his foreign background. This is factor beyond his control. Thus, Emil’s story about injustice is also a story about being foreign, and he perceives how the injustice he experiences with the police is based on racial intolerance.

Christian’s account is incongruent because his dominant story and his preferred story conflict. Christian has no agency in his dominant story. In this story Christian is a victim of the police’s unfair and abusive acts. However, there are glimpses of another opposing, preferred story, where Christian resists the unjust practice of the police. Thus

\textsuperscript{24} Christian has just turned 15, the age for criminal responsibility in Denmark. Thus, convictions will from now on show on his criminal record.
in his preferred story, Christian’s presents resistance and personal agency. He explains the police injustice to be based partly on general police practice and partly on his former criminal activities.

In summery, Emil’s account is congruent and Christian’s account is incongruent. Thus there is no tension between Emil’s dominant and preferred stories whereas the conflict between Christian’s dominant and preferred stories creates tension in his account.

5.5 Results

The following subsection presents the results of the narrative analyses.

The two informants in this study perceive the police as being unjust. The stories in both accounts present police practices of inspection and surveillance of adolescents to a point of persecution. The informants perceive the police to use and abuse their power as police officers. However, it is also clear from these accounts that the informants in this study differentiate between good and bad officers, where good officers and the informants have a relationship build on mutual respect.

However, there are differences in the two accounts. Christian presents an incongruent account and the Emil presents a congruent account. Another difference in the two accounts is the incentive behind police injustice. Christian attributes police injustice to his former criminal activity and to police practice in general whereas Emil attributes police injustice to his ethnical background.

6 Post-Methodological Discussion

This chapter presents a discussion of the methods used in this thesis and the reflections that have surfaced after the interviews and analysis were carried out. The purpose of presenting a chapter such as this is to actively reflect on the research process and to learn from it, as there is a substantial difference between planning research and carrying it out. Therefore, as new issues surfaced during and after the interviews, it is necessary to re-discuss certain parts of the method presented above, that is: design, participants, the interview, ethics, analysis, reliability and validity, and results.
6.1 Design

The conduction of a pilot study has its advantages and its pitfalls. One disadvantage is that the results derived from a pilot study are inconclusive (Kvale, 1997). This is due to the fact that it is difficult to induct from one participant’s subjective experiences in two conditions to argue for general differences between conditions. On the other hand, results of a qualitative study can and will not be generalized to other contexts. This does not mean that the results of any qualitative research can and should not have importance to others. This is due to the nature of qualitative studies, which focus on applicability rather than generalisability (Hepner, Kvivilighan and Wanpold, 1999), and where results have no meaning stripped of their context. Hence, the explorative nature of this pilot study justifies the small sample size.

Thus, there is no reason to undermine results from a pilot study despite the small amount of participants. A pilot study can still give indications of issues relevant to future studies. An example of this is the enormous influence of Piaget’s and Freud’s research up until the present day: they both build their theories on very few participants. Further, according to Kvale (1997) there can also be too many informants in interview research which can make data insuperable.

6.2 Participants

This subsection discusses the selection methods used in this thesis and the issues of the participating individuals' representativeness.

The sample of informants for this thesis was selected by the principal at a special school which was contacted by the researcher. The principal selected the pupils from the special school on the basis that they fit the research criteria as well as on his judgement of the pupils’ personal suitability for participation in an interview study. The principal’s exact criteria for suitability are not known. Moreover, the pupils were offered a pizza and soft drink for their participation and they were also excused from lessons during the time of the interview.

Hence, the informants are not randomly chosen, they were in “treatment” (special school), and their choice to participate may have been influenced by feelings of pressure
from being asked by the principal and by the gains of participation (soft drink and pizza). This means that the informants in this study may not be considered representative for juvenile delinquents in general.

However, there were only three individuals at the school which suited the research criteria and one did not want to participate despite the offers made and being asked by the principal of the school. Out of the two who did participate, one did not take up the offer of a pizza and a soft drink. On the other hand, these factors are not considered relevant in a study such as this because the concept of participant representativeness is a quantitative term (Williams, 2003) based on the interest of generalisation which is not of interest to this study.

Nonetheless, there is no reason to believe that the informants in this study are more or less representative than others. The aim of selection methods in this thesis was to locate participants with relevant experiences of the topic in question, in the relevant age group. All individuals will have their particularities and certain reasons to participate. It is not possible to control this, no matter which selection method is chosen (Williams, 2003). This is because the interview is a context bound endeavour which is unique to time and place as well as to the particular interviewer and interviewee (Kvale, 1997).

6.3 Interview

This subsection reflects on the conducted interviews.

The interviews were co-authored and co-constructed by the interviewee and the interviewer in the context of the performed interviews: they were not produced in a vacuum. Strauss and Corbin (1994) call this reciprocal shaping. In this way, a constructionist perspective replaces the individual with the relationship as the locus of knowledge (Gergen, 1994). Thus, reflections such as why does an informant develop her/his account in a particular way in conversation with a particular listener. These issues became relevant to this study and will be discussed further below.

Speculations were made as to whether or not it was difficult for the informants to convey negative accounts about the police, because the informants may have perceived
the researcher as in favour of the police. On the other hand, if the informants thought
that the interviewer had a positive perception of the police they may just as well have
wanted to convince the researcher otherwise. During the interview both informants
frequently mentioned the notion of good officers, however, this notion was never
substantiated in the informants’ accounts: When the informants were asked directly to
give an example of a story about a good police officer, both informants’ accounts
transformed into accounts about bad police officers. There can be many reasons for this;
for example, the informants’ experience of bad officers may be so predominant that it
overrules the experiences of good officers. Another reason could be that the informants
tried to neutralise and justify their negative views of the police in the presents of the
researcher.

Reflections were also made concerning the fact that the interviews were prepared in
detail and that an interview guide was used may have limited the chances of getting
richer descriptions when new unforeseen themes appeared and therefore, that only
already known phenomena were verified (Søndergaard, 2000). Unforeseen topics in the
interviews were somewhat explored. In hindsight these topics could have been
developed further and potentially provided useful information.

6.4 Ethics
This subcategory discusses the ethical issues which came to the fore during the
conduction of the interviews.

It was a concern that respondents may have been “reliving” their experience during the
interview when they narrated dramatic and stressful events (Labov 1982). This was a
particular concern with the Danish informant who appeared to be emotionally distressed
by the stories he told. This happened though both informants were told initially to object
to talk about subject matters they did not want to talk about. Nevertheless, it does not
necessary follow that informants do not want to talk about matters which move them
emotionally (Kvale, 1997). Christian gave the impression to be emotional but he still
appeared committed to tell his story. It was decided to continue with the interview

25 Much in the same way that politically incorrect views are expressed with a sentence such as: I am not a
racist but….
despite this, however, this may have been dire for Christian subsequently. The decision was based on the impression that there was no reason to believe that Christian could not object to talk about something he did not want to, as he had already objected to answer a question in the demographic questionnaire. This led to the judgement that he would do the same in the interview; however, he was not probed for answers to the same extent as did the other informant and this may have influenced the data.

The interview technique was inspired by narrative psychotherapy practice and may have created interviews which were intense for the informants. Kvale (1997) advises to take caution against research interviews turning into therapeutic interviews. This is considered inappropriate because the environment of a research interview is not as sensitive as the context of a therapy session. One of the most significant differences between research interviews and therapeutic interviews is that in research, it is the professional who search for participants to contribute whereas in therapy, it is the individual who searches for a professional and the individual is already committed to talk of personal events which are potentially stressful (Kvale, 1997). If this narrative interview technique turns interviews into therapeutic sessions leaving informants in a vulnerable place, then this method is not appropriate for research.

However, the narrative therapeutic intervention which inspired the interview technique in this study was adjusted for the concern mentioned above. This was done by eliminating the externalisation of the problem, which induces a saturated problem story and may lead to emotionally straining material (White, 2004). In the interview, focus was on the part of the narrative technique which promotes stories that bring about individuals meaning making. The fact that there was not a personal problem involved in the interview was considered to prevent the interview from turning into a therapy session. However, it can not be ruled out that there were practices in the interview situation that contributed to the emotional state of one of the informants which could have been avoided, if conducted differently.

Further, there are also general ethical guidelines of which researchers are required to submit to such as informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity. These requirements were followed in this study. Nonetheless, this was an issue which transpired to need
further reflection since one of the informants clearly wished not to be anonymous. This raised some difficult questions that the informant actively wanted to contribute to the research and to be acknowledged for it. It was decided that the informant should stay anonymous in this study despite his wish not to be so as this is common practice (Kvale, 1997) but also because he was never presented to the transcription of his interview and the analysis of his account before the thesis was published, as mentioned in chapter 4.9 Ethics, therefore, he did not know exactly how he was represented. Consequently, this informant stayed anonymous because the researcher was unclear whether he knew what it would involve not to be anonymous, though this may have undermined the informant. This practise of ethical guidelines are meant to protect the informants, however, there are sometimes reason to speculate on who they actually do protect; the researcher or the participants (Brown, 1997).

These reflections were taken into account in the analysis and thus all interpretations are transparent and text bound i.e. they remain close to the original accounts. This should secure that the informants can recognise themselves in the accounts, should they be presented to them. Yet, this does not guarantee that there are no interpretations which could be considered erroneous by the informants.

6.5 Analysis

This subsection discusses the strength and weaknesses of the applied model of analysis developed for this thesis.

The purpose of developing a new model of analysis for this research was to do justice to the lived experiences of the informants; to understand their meaning making. In summery the model consists of the following three modes of analysis:

1) The phenomenological meaning condensation which provides a description of the informants’ worlds; to know how someone actually experienced what has been lived, description becomes necessary (Kvale, 1997).
2) The thematic analysis which provides a focus on the informants’ main concerns because these are the major constituent parts of the informants’ meaning making and the construction of their perception, world and identity (Kvale, 1997).

3) The narrative analysis which provides a continuation of the story told by the interviewee in the form of a new story told by the researcher. In this way the narrative analysis built on the selected thematic discourses. More importantly, the narrative analysis identifies dominant and preferred stories in the informants’ accounts (Epston & White, 2004). Thus, the narrative analysis is not a narrative analysis in the classical sense; life stories and personal narratives.

This particular combination of analyses worked well as a useful tool to understand the world of the informants and their meaning making. The model enabled a combination of text-bound and abstract levels of analysis: A complex model of analysis which stayed as true as possible to the informants meaning making without loosing the psychological and analytical perspectives. Thus, this combination of the three different levels of analysis provided a text-bound yet abstract analysis.

A critique of this three levelled model of analysis could be that it is somewhat repetitive due to the fact that themes are analysed several times. Moreover, the transparency of the text-bound interpretation may give the impression of superficiality in the analysis.

However, the goal of the analysis was to investigate the expressed meaning rather than the intended meaning. The analytic interpretations are therefore presented with transparency in an open argument, the aim being reasonable believability rather than certitude. Data was of a subjective character because the interest was not in what exactly happens when the young offenders meet the police but how young offenders’ perceive the interaction, thus the interest is meaning making; how this interaction make sense to and affect the informants.

It can also be argued that the fact that the model of analysis focused closely on the informants’ meaning making could have influenced the researcher’s sympathy for the informants’ world view. Thus, the picture the informants wanted to convey of
themselves in this particular context combined with the researcher’s extensive efforts to understand the informants from their point of view may have influenced the analysis.

6.6 Reliability and validity

This subsection discusses the redefined concepts of reliability and validity as quality and importance of findings.

Stiles (1993) suggest that the quality of findings be evaluated by its impact on participants, investigators and consumers of research. The informants’ participation may have led them to new insights and understandings of their experiences which potentially can empower them to grow and change (Kvale, 1997).

It is difficult to know what the precise impact of participation was for the informants. However, there can be several benefits of participating in interview research e.g. in this research, the informants were given an opportunity to tell their story and to be heard. As mentioned above, this may lead them to understand their own experiences and perceptions in a new way, which can encourage change, grow and act differently (Kvale, 1997). This is in accordance with the concept of translocutionarity (Kirkeby, 1999) which refers to the notion of “I know what I mean when I say it aloud”. This is suggested to be due to the process of speech; thoughts become clear when they are transformed into words. It could be the case in this research since Emil stated in the interview that it does matter how he perceives the police, and it does also matter how the police treat him. This reflection is important according to translocutionarity and the fact that he constructed that meaning may have influence on what he does next. This does not seem to apply to Christian who did not present reflections on such an abstract level in his account. The ultimate validation would be if concepts presented in the interviews would lead the informants to new insights or understanding of themselves, as well as their situation with the police.

The researcher gained practical experience with interviewing and research and more importantly, a unique possibility to understand the meaning making of two young individuals from a different environment than the researcher’s. And thus despite
reflection beforehand, existence of own prejudices surfaced, as they were disproved by
the informants, which is always a relief.

It is difficult to predict the impact of research on consumers of research, however, the
hope is that this thesis will further knowledge in the investigated area and contribute to
development of better social policies and practices.

6.7 Results
This subsection discusses the quality of the results produced in this thesis.

There were differences in the quality and quantity of narration made in the two
interviews. The reason for this may be that one of the informants was not probed for
reflections and verification of his meaning making to the same extent as the other
informant. This was, as mentioned before, due to the fact that he appeared emotional
therefore, the interviewer considered it inappropriate to put too much pressure on him. It
was considered more important that the interview situation was comfortable for the
informant.

The age difference between the two informants may also account for the difference in
quality and quantity of narration. Christian was only 15 years old and Emil was 17 years
old. Therefore Christian may not have developed his vocabulary and reflection skills to
the same extent as Emil had. However, there can be many factors in development of
expression capability and it is impossible to know exactly what reasons influenced this
difference.

Moreover, there are multiple questions that can be posed to an analysis. Therefore, the
questions chosen in this thesis co-determine what meanings that are found and different
questions may have led to different meanings (Kvale, 1997). However, the meaning
found in this analysis presents common, recognisable discourses which can be found in
our society elsewhere. For example, discourses about foreignness and injustice.

The results are also based on the fact that the researcher lives in the same culture/society
as the informants and therefore has tacit knowledge of this culture however, the
researcher does not have the specific knowledge of the subculture of juvenile delinquents.

7 Discussion

This chapter discusses the induction of the results of the analysis, where existing theory substantiates the induction. The existing theories are the social learning theories of Julian Rotter and Albert Bandura, respectively. Their concepts of locus of control and self-efficacy are used to explain how the informants perceive and act towards the police.

Analytical induction (Yin, 1994) involves a reasoned judgment of the extent to which the findings from one study can be used as a guide to what might be relevant and what might occur in other situations. In this thesis, analytical induction is accomplished by specification of the above theoretical concepts to make the arguments for the analytical induction explicit for validation (Kvale, 1997).

Rotter (1954;1966) developed the locus of control construct, which distinguishes between internal and external locus of control belief. The differences between these two concepts are shown to predict that individuals who believe events to be unrelated to their actions, external locus of control beliefs, are less likely to change behaviour compared to individuals who believe they are in control of occurring events, internal locus of control beliefs. Individuals drawing on the internal locus of control beliefs are shown to be more positive and less depressed compared to individuals drawing upon an external locus of control belief (Conner & Noman, 1996).

Bandura (1977; 1982) has developed the concept of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to doubts an individual may have about hers or his ability to change a current pattern of behaviour. It is different from the concept of locus of control beliefs in the sense that the locus of control beliefs refers to whether or not the individual believes that events are related to her or his actions; and self-efficacy refers to whether or not the individual believe she or he has the strength to change her or his pattern of behaviour. In short, the locus of control belief concept involves having or not having influence on events whereas self-efficacy refers to whether or not the individual believes she or he can carry
out the action needed to change a situation or behaviour. Thus, the concept self-efficacy is based on an internal locus of control belief.

External locus of control beliefs characterises Christian’s perception that events in general happen to him rather than him being in control of events in his life. Therefore, it is argued that Christian’s thought structure imprints powerlessness in his perception of himself. This perception is seen to continue to influence his behaviour and affect his position in relation to the police. In his interaction with the police, he positions himself as a victim and thus ascribes the police power, which may sustain the injustice carried out by them.

Christian also shows an internal locus of control belief when he states that he has stopped criminal activity to avoid prison and keep opportunities open on the job market. However, the external locus of control beliefs pervades. According to the social learning theory, a combination of the two loci of control beliefs is not uncommon (Rotter, 1966).

External locus of control belief also characterises Emil’s perception. Unlike Christian, Emil’s external locus of control beliefs is only in relation to police injustice and not to general events in his life. Emil’s understanding of the unjust encounters with the police is explained and attributed by him to his foreign ethnical background. For Emil, as oppose to Christian, his thought structure does not imprint powerlessness. Emil’s strength may be rooted in his membership of an ethnical minority group, which can provide a strong sense of identity (Lundby, 2000).

Emil shows internal locus of control beliefs in general when he maintains the importance of mutual respect, which he practices in his interaction with the police. Unlike Christian, Emil shows self-efficacy when he actively avoids conflicts and confrontation with the police. Emil’s perception is seen to continue to influence his behaviour and this imprint of self-efficacy affects his position in relation to the police as an individual; however, Emil’s individual behaviour does not affect the attitude of the police towards ethnical minority groups in general, and Emil’s sustained efforts do not affect police behaviour when he is encountered as a part of an ethnical minority group.
Comprehensive criticism of the concepts of locus of control beliefs and self-efficacy is that these concepts presume that humans are rational information processors; and the concepts also fail to consider the social context in which behaviour occur (Ogden, 1996). In other words, values held in a social environment influence whether or not the individual feels a need to change a current pattern of behaviour (Insko, Nacoste and Moe, 1983). This criticism is beyond the scope of this thesis, because the concepts of locus of control and self-efficacy are adequate for description and comprehension of the informants’ behaviour and perception, and conceptualise the informants’ understanding of their own position and behaviour, and how that may affect the way they perceive the police.

Both accounts are pervaded by narratives about injustice and police abuse of power. This was the most frequent verbalisation during both the interviews. This is interesting because the Danish informant’s (Christian) narrative expressed just as many experienced situations of unjust treatment and hassling carried out by the police, thus the discourse of injustices was just as pervading in Christian’s account, as it was in the Iraqi informant’s (Emil) narrative.

Therefore, selective police practice based on foreign ethnicity was not presented in the accounts if this thesis, rather what was presented was equal accounts of surveillance of the ethnical Danish (Christian) and the ethnical Iraqi (Emil) juvenile delinquent. This suggests that though both of the informants in this thesis are by society defined as belonging to the group of juvenile delinquents, they do not seem to identify themselves as belonging to the same group. The Danish informant affiliates himself to a group of juvenile delinquents whereas the Iraqi informant affiliates himself to an ethnical minority juvenile delinquent group. Even though they both identify with marginalised groups, they do not identify with the same marginalised group. This suggests in this study that juvenile delinquency groups do not cross ethnical boundaries. And further, the police are equally selective towards both groups.

While both informants identify with a marginalised group the fact that the Iraqi informant foremost affiliates himself to an ethnical minority group may give him a
stronger sense of belongingness and thus source of identification than the Danish informant.

The Iraqi informant’s apparently strong source of identification may make it easier for him to distance himself from the racial intolerance that he perceives are carried out by the police because he does not internalise the police perception of him as acceptable. Instead he externalises his perceived police’s racial intolerance to police prejudice, and hence away from himself, because he is proud of his ethnical background. The fact that the Iraqi informant is able to externalise the perceived police’s racial intolerance may provide him with self-efficacy which means that he can actively work towards a change of his situation i.e. the police prejudice. The Iraqi informant try to change his situation by actively practise his understanding of mutual respect.

The Danish informant’s source of identification appears less strong in his account. This may make it more difficult for him to externalise the police’s intolerance. Instead it seems like the Danish informant internalises the police’s perception that he is the problem; thus accepting that he is deficient. Therefore, he may feel that his rights are ignored and in combination with his perception of the police as an unjust, superior power, this may make him powerless and unable to change his situation which indicates that he has external locus of control beliefs and no sense of self-efficacy.

This way, it can be argued that the Danish informant’s situation is more difficult to overcome than the Iraqi informant’s situation because the Iraqi informant seem to have a secure identity and a strong sense of belonging which is important in self-development (Møller, 2001). On the other hand, it could be argued that the Danish informant’s situation could be change through individual interventions whereas the Iraqi informant’s situation involves a general change of attitude towards ethnical minorities and a change of the police’s attitude in particular; a change which engages a whole population (the police).

It could be argued that the Iraqi informant has an advantage over the Danish informant in terms of having a strong sense of belonging. This is consistent with the importance of belonging to a group with regards to identity development (Møller, 2001).
The Danish informant does not present an equally strong sense of belonging in his account as the Iraqi informant does. This may have deployed the Danish informant of a meaning making such as the one of the Iraqi informant, that is; the Iraqi informant himself is not the reason for the police unjust treatment. This may have helped the Iraqi informant externalise the police’s unfair treatment of him. On the other hand, the Danish informant’s internalisation of the unjust treatment by the police may make him more vulnerable (White, 2004).

However, it is not possible to induct from this pilot study that ethnical minority juvenile delinquents are in a better position with regard to identity development, than are ethnical Danish juvenile delinquents in the Danish society in general but this may be a condition worth investigating further. This observation leads to other issues of interest such as integration and assimilation. The reason that the above observation is interesting in relation to integration and assimilation is that the strong sense of belonging to and identify with a group has a positive influence on identity development and therefore on the ability to function and participate as an individual in society due to a strong development of internal locus of control and self-efficacy.

If a strong source of identity is provided by an affiliation to an ethnical minority group, then this affiliation is a positive influence in relation to integration.

This may not be in accordance with public opinions of good strategies for integration as integration in the Danish public debate mainly focuses on moulding ethnical minority individuals into becoming as “Danish” as possible. This could lead to speculations that the concepts of integration and assimilation are confused. This may have great consequences for integration: If it is important for individuals to belong to a group, then, by trying to assimilate ethnical minority individuals into belonging to a group which probably can not give them the same strong sense of identity, this may have fatal consequences for integration in the Danish society in the long run.

In summery, the differences between the ethnical Danish and the ethnical Iraqi juvenile delinquents’ perception of the police lays in the informants’ understanding of the reason
for the unjust treatment; in the Iraqi informants account, it is due to his foreign ethnical origin and in the ethnical Danish informant’s account it is attributed to the criminal activity he has been involved in as well as to police practise in general.

8 Conclusion

The following conclusions answer the specific research question, “What are the differences between ethnical Danish and ethnical minority juvenile delinquents’ perception of the Danish police?” and the results of the analysis respectively:

There are no significant differences between ethnical Danish and ethnical minority juvenile delinquents’ perception of the police. Both perceive the police as unjust and abusive of their position of power.

There are differences between the ethnical Danish and ethnical minority juvenile delinquents’ perception of what is the incentive behind police injustice. The ethnical Dane attributes police injustice to his former criminal activity and to police practice in general whereas the ethnical Iraqi attributes police injustice to his ethnical background.

It is not possible to confirm a selective police practice based on foreign ethnicity.

It is possible to confirm equal surveillance of the ethnical Danish and the ethnical Iraqi juvenile delinquent.

It seems that informants’ perception of police is influenced by her or his position of her- or himself in relation to the police.

It is not possible to speak of juvenile delinquents as one group in the Danish society; juvenile delinquency groups rarely cross ethnical boundaries.

The approach and methodology of the pilot study provided results therefore a full study is justified.
9 Perspective

This chapter puts the results of this study, which indicates several aspects of the problem area, into future perspectives. The study examines the problem area in relation to police encounters with juvenile delinquents from the point of view of the juvenile delinquents.

The results indicate the following aspects of the problem area:

The approach and methodology of the pilot study is recommended to be extended to a full study to substantiate the results of this study.

The approach and methodology can be extended to police encounters with individuals and groups in general. It would be important to do so in order to verify whether the perception of the police as unjust and abusive of their power is general. Recent media coverage of police encounter in relation to “Ungdomshuset” and “Christiania”, Copenhagen, suggests the actuality of this issue.

The same approach and methodology can also be used to pose other questions than injustice in relation to police encounters; for example, focus on individual identity development in relation to perception of others and options for action.

The same approach and methodology can also be used to examine the police’s perception of juvenile delinquents as both are parts of the problem as well as the solution.

In summery, all the above aspects, as suggested in this pilot study, are recommended to be included in future studies for a better understanding of the field. A thorough understanding of a problem area is necessary for designing solutions which aim at prevention rather than the present focus on treatment.
10 References


Peters, J. (2004). Lidt for gode historier. *Børn og Unge nr. 6*


11 Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview Guide (see enclosed CD-Rom)
Appendix 2: Transcript, Emil (see enclosed CD-Rom)
Appendix 3: Transcript, Christian (see enclosed CD-Rom)
Appendix 4: Participant Consent Form
Appendix 5: Themes (see enclosed CD-Rom)
Appendix 6: Visit at the School Sputnik (see enclosed CD-Rom)
Appendix 7: Parent Consent Form
Appendix 8: Demographic Questionnaire
Projekt- & Karrierevejledningens Rapportserie


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