Research Commons

http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/

**Research Commons at the University of Waikato**

## Copyright Statement:

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

The thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- Any use you make of these documents or images must be for research or private study purposes only, and you may not make them available to any other person.
- Authors control the copyright of their thesis. You will recognise the author's right to be identified as the author of the thesis, and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate.
- You will obtain the author's permission before publishing any material from the thesis.

# "Be Feared, or Live in Fear": A Descriptive Model of Institutional Gang Violence

A thesis submitted in fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree

of

***Master of Social Sciences in Psychology***

at

**The University of Waikato**

by

**NICOLA BRENNAN-TUPARA**

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

2023

## Abstract

Prison violence is a significant concern both in New Zealand and across the globe. While past theories and empirical research have highlighted several risk factors implicated in prison violence, we continue to have a limited understanding of what happens, and why it happens, during a prison violence event (PVE). Furthermore, we have even less of an understanding about the involvement of gangs in prison violence despite research suggesting that gang members are over-represented when it comes to involvement in such incidents. Previous research on gang violence in prison also focuses heavily on prisons in the United States of America which have different cultural, social, and judicial dimensions and may not generalise to the New Zealand prison population. This research project aimed to fill some of these gaps by taking an exploratory approach to induce new ideas following interviews with gang members who have first-hand experience with perpetrating prison violence. We used Grounded Theory to collect and analyse event descriptions to build a descriptive model of institutional gang violence which describes the distal and proximal features of the PVE process. The resulting model contributes to a better understanding of the function of PVEs involving gang members and the extent to which these events differ when carried out for or on behalf of the gang. It also highlights the role of past trauma and the prison ecology in the perpetuation of these events.

1 Please note: The present research conducted is my own. However, I use the words “our”, and “we” throughout this thesis to reflect the fact that I was supported and directed by my supervisors during the duration of my research.

## Acknowledgements

Firstly, thank you to the men who shared their stories with me. I will forever be grateful for your cooperation and openness during the interview process. Each of you shared some deeply personal stories. Your willingness to open yourself up to a stranger like that is something I held with me during analyses and writing of this piece of research. I hope I have done justice to your words and that this research makes prison a safer place in the future.

To my primary supervisor, Devon, thanks for constantly pushing me to think harder and never to take the easy route. Your belief in me and your encouragement throughout my masters and my entire post-graduate career is why I am where I am today. Not giving in to my reassurance-seeking behaviour was not always what I wanted at times, but it was what I needed. I am stronger now because of it.

Thanks also to my secondary supervisor, Armon. I would not have had the privilege of working on this important project were it not for you selecting me to be part of your Nga Tūmanakotanga research team. So, a million times thank you for the opportunity.

To the team at the Department of Corrections: Ara Poutama Aotearoa, thank you for supporting this project, particularly during a global pandemic when staff and men in the Department's care had their challenges to deal with. Special mention must go to Glen Kilgour, Michael Healy, and TeeJay Halliday for helping me make connections with the participants.

Thank-you also to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and Māori Psychology Research Unit for funding my work, which was part of a broader prison violence study titled Nga Tūmanakotanga.

Thanks to my fellow Polaschek lab buddies and my clinical psychology classmates. Your support and guidance have helped me stay sane during this journey.

Lastly, thank you to my family who have sacrificed much time with me over the past two years. To my husband Dion, thank you for always supporting me to follow my dreams in

whichever shape they come. To my children, thank you for your patience and understanding when mummy had to duck off after the bedtime routine to go and do “more work”. And to my mother, Heather, thank you for always being there to wipe away my stress tears. Your consistent and never-ending faith in my ability to do good in this world has been my driving force.

This thesis is dedicated to my sister, Michelle. We may only have had a few short years together in this physical world, but your spirit lives on in me. I live this life for the both of us and I hope I have made you proud.

# Table of Contents

Abstract ..... ii

Acknowledgements ..... iii

Table of Contents ..... vi

List of Figures ..... ix

Literature Review ..... 1

  Defining Violence ..... 2

  The Prison Violence Problem ..... 2

  Causal Explanations of Prison Violence ..... 3

    Importation Perspective ..... 4

    Deprivation Perspective ..... 7

    Management Perspectives ..... 8

  Problems with Causal Theories ..... 9

  Integrated Perspectives of Prison Violence ..... 11

  Gangs and Prison Violence ..... 14

    Defining a Gang ..... 14

    What the Research Tells Us ..... 16

    Explanations for Gang Involvement in Prison Violence ..... 19

    Limitations of Prior Gang Violence Research ..... 24

Positioning the Current Study ..... 26

Method ..... 29

  Participants ..... 29

Location ....................................................................................................30

Materials ....................................................................................................30

Participant Recruitment ....................................................................................................30

Interview ....................................................................................................32

Analytic Strategy ....................................................................................................34

Results....................................................................................................36

Descriptive Model....................................................................................................36

Phase 1: Background....................................................................................................36

Phase 2: Pre-Event ....................................................................................................42

Phase 3: Event....................................................................................................52

Phase 4: Post-Event....................................................................................................55

Gang v Non-Gang Related Events....................................................................................................60

Discussion....................................................................................................62

Overrepresentation of gang members ....................................................................................................63

Role of Trauma ....................................................................................................68

Prison Life....................................................................................................70

Theoretical Implications ....................................................................................................72

Practical Implications....................................................................................................73

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research ....................................................................................................77

References....................................................................................................80

Appendix A – Participant Information Sheet....................................................................................................99

Appendix B – Participant Consent Form ........................................................ 102

Appendix C – Ethical Approval ..................................................................... 104

Appendix D – Research Amendment Ethical Approval ................................... 105

## List of Figures

Figure 1 *Phase 1: Background*……………………………………………………37

Figure 2 *Phase 2: Pre-Event Period*………………………………………………...43

Figure 3 *Phase 3: Event*……………………………………………………………….....53

Figure 4 *Phase 4: Post-Event*…………………………………………………..56

## Literature Review

Prison violence is a persistent and prevalent problem in Aotearoa New Zealand, yet it is often overlooked in terms of priorities for the public and government alike. According to Byrne and Hummer (2007) this is because society, in general, holds the view that “at its core, prison should infuse offenders, particularly violent offenders, with ‘equal pain’ for their criminal behaviour” (p.532). Therefore, research into prison violence in Aotearoa has not been given as great a priority as other violent offending. However, the impacts of prison violence are just as far reaching and traumatising as other forms of violence for both the victims and witnesses (Novisky & Peralta, 2020). We know from prior work in this area that gang members are over-represented when it comes to involvement in prison violence. However, explanations for why that is the case remain elusive in empirical research. Furthermore, there has been little examination of the relationship between Aotearoa gangs and prison violence. Given the number of imprisoned gang affiliates in our prisons has more than doubled in the last decade (New Zealand Parliament, 2022) it is crucial that we get a better understanding of the phenomena to ensure the safety of those living and working in our prisons. This research project aims to fill prior knowledge gaps on this topic by speaking to those with expert knowledge on the topic- gang members who have used violence in prison.

This first section of the literature review will define what is meant by violence in this study and by extension prison violence, before exploring the prison violence problem globally and in Aotearoa. It will then examine various causal theories of prison violence. While not exhaustive, the section will provide an overview of each perspective. It also examines the factors from each that empirically correlate with rates of prison violence. The chapter will then discuss what these theories might tell us about the background circumstances and drivers of violent events and what they do not.

The second section will investigate the relationship between gangs and prison violence. It will also explore research so far on the phenomena and hypothesised explanations for why gang members consistently show up more in prison violence statistics.

**Defining Violence**

Violence research consists of numerous and often conflicting definitions of violence. Criminal law defines violence by listing crimes considered violent, rather than common elements of those crimes which could provide an overarching definition of the commonalities among them (Hamby, 2017). Conversely, the American Psychological Association (APA) takes a broader brush stroke to define violence as “the expression of hostility and rage with the intent to injure or damage people or property through physical force” (American Psychological Association, n.d.). Definitions of prison violence are also varied, with group disorders, like riots, included in some studies on prison violence, but excluded in others. This study used the World Health Organisation (2002) definition of violence when examining prison violence:

> The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation (p.4)

**The Prison Violence Problem**

For many New Zealanders prison violence is only something that piques their interest when the most extreme forms hit the national headlines albeit, because of a death or disruptive violence like the Waikeria Prison riots in Aotearoa in 2020. However, these headlines do not always convey the full extent of the frequency and impact of prison violence. Research shows that prisoners are at a higher risk of becoming a victim of violence than those in the general community. For example, male prisoners in the United States of

America are 18 times more likely to be assaulted than those in the community (Wolff et al., 2007). For female prisoners rates were even higher, with their risk of being assaulted 27 times greater than females in the public. Here in Aotearoa, incidents of serious assaults against prisoners quadrupled, and assaults against staff tripled, between 2010 and 2016 (Ara Poutama Aotearoa, n.d.). Ara Poutama classifies a serious assault as "an act of physical violence that involves one or more of: bodily harm requiring medical intervention by medical staff followed by overnight hospitalisation; bodily harm requiring extended periods of on-going medical intervention; or sexual assault of any form and degree" (Ara Poutama Aotearoa, n.d.). The aftermath of these assaults can leave not only the victims fearful for their future safety, but also others living and working in the wider prison community. Furthermore, prison violence can see property destroyed and prison routines disrupted. There are also economic impacts due to costs associated with staff absenteeism and turnover or having to hold prisoners involved in violence longer in prison.

**Causal Explanations of Prison Violence**

For the past 60 years, two prominent perspectives have been used to explain prison violence, inform research, and propose intervention and prevention. These are the importation and deprivation perspectives (Irwin & Cressey, 1962; Sykes, 1958). Researchers have also examined the impact prison management, namely administrative control, has on prison culture and violence (Huebner, 2003; Reisig, 2002; Ricciardelli & Sit, 2016; Wooldredge, 2020) as well as situational risk factors such as features of a particular prison including staff levels, history of violence in the institution, and the phsyical environment (Cooke et al., 2007; Cooke et al., 2008; Johnstone & Cooke, 2010; Wilson & Tamatea, 2010). Due to a growing consensus that none of these explanations alone adequately explains the phenomena, more recently researchers have examined multi-factor models and how risk factors interact to cause prison violence. One of the most recent, and comprehensive, is Social Control-Opportunity

(Steiner & Wooldredge, 2020). While not exhaustive, this section will discuss aspect of these perspectives.

### *Importation Perspective*

Importation theorists argue that a culture of violence is imported into an institution by way of the prisoners it houses (Irwin & Cressey, 1962). In other words, prison behaviour, and with it violence, is primarily a function of prisoners' pre-institutional characteristics. Each prisoner brings with them a set of values, attitudes, beliefs, coping styles, and behaviours that shape the culture of the prison and the behaviour of those within it (Lahm, 2008). Prisoners also bring varying criminal offence backgrounds, which influence their likely involvement in violence while incarcerated (Griffin & Hepburn, 2006). Past behaviour is a generally a good predictor of future behaviour (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). Therefore, this perspective assumes that violence and other serious rules violations will be committed more frequently by those with extensive histories of similar behaviour in the community.

**Prior violence.** Numerous studies highlight the relationship between prior violence and violent misconduct in prison. These studies show that those with a history of violent offences in the community are more likely to be engaged in all types of violent misconduct in prison than those with non-violent prior offences (DeLisi, 2003; Flanagan, 1983; Gendreau et al., 1997; Griffin & Hepburn, 2006; Harer & Langan, 2001; Huebner, 2003). For example, one study of 1,005 randomly selected male and female prisoners serving time in prisons in the United States of America (USA) examined the relationship between a raft of prior criminal offence variables taken from prisoners' files and prison violations, including severe violence (e.g., homicide, rape, aggravated assault). The independent variables included criminal history, offence severity, confinement history and time served (DeLisi, 2003). Using a negative binomial regression model, the study found that a history of interpersonal violence outside prison predicted interpersonal violence in prison. Prisoners with extensive arrest and

incarceration histories, particularly those with a history of violence or weapon use charges, were more likely than those without such histories to be involved in prison misconduct and violence during the period examined (DeLisi, 2003). Another study which examined self-report survey data from 644 American prisoners found that as self-reported levels of pre-prison violence increased, so too did the likelihood of them engaging in prison violence (Gillespie, 2005). However, a critical review of the empirical prison violence literature found that current offence conviction (which was used as a measure of prior behaviour) impacted prison violence in the opposite way with men serving time for non-violent offences and shorter sentences being cited more frequently for prison violence violations than men serving lengthy sentences for violent-related offences (Schenk & Fremouw, 2012). However, it could be argued that examining prisoners' current conviction type in isolation is not the most accurate measure of prior violent criminality as it misses more distal convictions. Furthermore, prisoners on shorter sentences for non-violent related offences are also more likely to be housed in lower security units, thus possibly increasing their opportunities for interactions and altercations with others.

**Personality factors.** Other imported characteristics associated with prison violence include antisocial attitudes and personality, low self-control, anger, low self-esteem, and mental health problems (Friedmann et al., 2008; Gillespie, 2005; Newberry & Shuker, 2012; Walters, 2011). For example, one study examining racial differences in violence of American prisoners (Gillespie, 2005) found that low self-esteem was positively related to prison violence for white prisoners, but not black prisoners. Another study found that several personality characteristics, as measured by scale on the Personality Assessment Inventory (Morey, 1991), were significantly correlated with violent infractions among 311 prisoners serving time in a prison in the United Kingdom. The strongest of these were high scores on

the antisocial behaviour, antisocial features, aggression, physical aggression, and verbal aggression scales.

**Age.** While these numerous studies above have highlighted some of the individual characteristics associated with increased prison violence, age shows up consistently as one of the most significant correlates of both prison misconduct and violence (Cao et al., 1997; Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007; Cunningham et al., 2011; DeLisi, 2003; Flanagan, 1983; Griffin & Hepburn, 2006; McGuire, 2018; Wright, 1991). The research shows that the younger the prisoner is on entry, the greater their risk of violent behaviour while incarcerated. Generally, those under 21 have higher rates of violent misconduct than those over 21 (McGuire, 2018). The issue with these studies is that they never fully explain or explore why age is such a significant correlate. It could be that violence within prison mimics the ‘‘age-crime curve’’ explanation of general criminal behaviour which shows that antisocial behaviour, and with-it criminal activity, generally increases during adolescence before declining throughout adulthood (Farrington et al., 2013; Moffitt, 1993). However, this proposition has not been fully explored.

**Gang membership.** While all the above individual factors have been linked to an increased risk of involvement in prison violence, gang membership or affiliation has consistently been shown to be the strongest predictor of prison violence. International research has found that gang members are involved in 43%-80% of prison violence incidents despite them making up only around 15% of prison musters (Fahmy et al., 2020; Pyrooz & Mitchell, 2020). In New Zealand, recent media coverage also suggests that gang affiliates are disproportionality targeting prison staff in violent attacks (One News, 2022). The number of gang members involved in serious attacks on prison staff also doubled from the 2020-2021 financial year, to 2021-2022 (One News, 2022). The relationship between gangs and prison violence will be explored in more depth during the next chapter.

***Deprivation Perspective***

In direct contrast to importation, is a perspective which proposes that misconduct and violence occurs in direct response to the prison environment itself, known as the "pains of imprisonment" (Sykes, 1958). Deprivation theorists argue that the very nature of prisons strip prisoners of their identity, privacy, and freedom (Clemmer, 1958). Therefore, prisoner rule violation, aggression, and violence are mechanisms of adaptation to oppressive or stressful conditions or culture within the prison itself, rather than the characterises of any one individual (Wooldredge, 2020). Therefore, prison violence is shaped by the extent to which one can get one's needs and goals (e.g., physical, financial, and emotional) met. These attempts to adapt to the prison environment can create cultures which consist of unique belief systems and rules designed to alleviate some of the negative effects of being locked-up (Clemmer, 1940). These cultures entwine with broader motives (e.g., status, power) prisoners might already hold. In fact, it has been argued that the main reason prisoners use violence against one another is out of a "desire to achieve higher status in the prison society, since violent prisoners generally have higher status than non-violent prisoners" (Bowker, 1982, p. 64).

Researchers have looked at the impact of both absolute and relative deprivation on violence and aggression. Absolute deprivation encompasses the loss of access to liberty, autonomy, heterosexual relationships, and goods and services. Relative deprivation is caused by a perceived discrepancy between what you and others have. Prison-specific variables, such as overcrowding, availability of prison programmes, lock-up rules, visiting patterns and rule enforcement, have been used to examine absolute deprivation, with all being found to contribute to a stressful environment that can lead to aggressive behaviour (Barak-Glantz, 1985; Cooke, 1989; Gaes & McGuire, 1985). Researchers looking at the impact of relative deprivation have done so by examining the impact of security level, indeterminate sentences

and longer sentences on the number of disciplinary tickets issued (Cao et al., 1997). However, results from this study did not find any significant influence of these variables on rule breaking (which included fighting as a measure of violence).

### *Management Perspectives*

The management, or administrative control, perspectives argue that it is not the physical prison environment or the type of prisoner that contributes to prison violence, but rather levels of violence are influenced by the way the facility is managed or mismanaged. Prison management, or staff behaviour, can greatly influence the overall prison culture based on how staff treat prisoners in their care (Wooldredge, 2020). To prisoners, staff are the face and their greatest connection to the prison. Therefore, the way in which staff behave can influence prisoners' perceptions of the prison regime (Shamir & Drory, 1981; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2015; Wooldredge, 2020). Dillulio (1987) argued that institutions with formal structures, who were led by someone who implemented fair and detailed rules and routines, were less likely to experience significant prison disorder. This perspective acknowledges that while some form of control is a requirement in a prison environment, two types of control have been shown to influence both levels of misconduct (e.g., rule breaking) and violence in an institution (Dillulio, 1987; Huebner, 2003; Reisig, 2002; Ricciardelli & Sit, 2016). Overly coercive control (threatening or forceful management) can frustrate and alienate prisoners, increasing the risk of violence and misconduct. Skarbek (2014) argues that this is because prisoners use violence to problem-solve when they feel they cannot rely on staff to help them. On the other hand, remunerative control (the use of incentives or rewards) can increase commitment to institutional rules and goals (Huebner, 2003). For example, studies have found that prisoners involved in either work or education programmes are significantly less likely to assault fellow prisoners or staff (Gaes & McGuire, 1985; Huebner, 2003; McCorkle et al., 1995). Research examining these two types of controls have found that institutions that

have greater prisoner privileges and supportive staff have fewer incidents of misconduct and violence than those who have less tolerant staff and rely solely on coercion as the main means of control (Colvin, 1992; Reisig, 1998).

However, some researchers argue that the relationship between control and prison violence is more complex than that noted above. Useem and Kimball (1991) contended that rather than pure control, it is "administrative breakdown" which leads to misconduct and violence. Administrative breakdown, or mismanagement, can occur due to high staff turnover or a lack of staff cohesion, which can lead to security lapses, variable rule enforcement and deterioration of prison services. Therefore, misconduct and violence occur because of a gradual breakdown of the organisational structure (Useem & Kimball, 1991). One study which looked at the relationship between disorganised structure, and procedural justice (fairness of prison processes), found both to be related to violence, particularly homicide rates (Reisig, 2002). Other studies have found that poor prison management is a risk factor for assault towards both staff and prisoners (McCorkle et al., 1995).

**Problems with Causal Theories**

The above explanations of prison violence each separately have empirical studies which support their influence on prison violence. However, studies which have examined variables from all three perspectives in the same empirical model show that each domain has a part to play in understanding prison violence (Camp et al., 2003; Cao et al., 1997; Huebner, 2003; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2008; Wooldredge & Steiner, 2014). Therefore, while the general processes outlined in each of these perspectives can contribute to prison violence (Wooldredge, 2020), none of them alone adequately explains the wider phenomenon. Prison violence is a "wicked problem" (Rittel & Webber, 1973) which has various complex interconnecting parts which are often difficult to explain, and even more complicated to solve. The very fact that these singular theories compete, ignore interactions between

variables, and focus on often static risk factors alone, is evidence of them failing to fully explain the wider dynamic ecology that prisoners and prison exist in. These perspectives also fail to tell us when or where violence is more likely to occur, or toward whom. Furthermore, they fail to properly examine the function of the violence. Therefore, interventions which focus solely on one of these theories, and ignore interactions between, are condemned to fail.

We now know that prisons are not monolithic institutions that are depriving, as the deprivation perspective originally suggested. Rather, prisons are also shaped according to various dynamic factors (e.g., staff behaviour and the prison muster) which can either increase or decrease felt deprivation and aggression within. Deprivation alone also cannot explain why some people react violently in the prison environment, while others do not. If deprivation or hardship was the sole contributor to prison violence, we would expect to see frequent group violence and rioting across all prisons. But that has not been the case. So, while there are certainly factors about the prison environment that are depriving, it is not the sole explanation for prison violence.

While the importation perspective has proven to be good at predicting who is at greater risk of committing prison violence, it tells us very little about why these individual characteristics matter. For example, it could be that younger people are more at risk of involvement in violence because they find it more difficult to adjust emotionally to prison life and act out violently as a coping mechanism. Or maybe their age puts them at greater risk of becoming victims of prison violence, so they need to gain a reputation through violence to protect themselves. Whatever the explanation/s might be, the importation perspective does not currently provide the answer. This is because it creates a false dichotomy which assumes people’s involvement in violence is static and predetermined by characteristics on a prison file. However, that assumption completely ignores the impact of an individual’s interactions with others (staff and other prisoners) once incarcerated, as well as influencing environmental

factors, therefore, potentially missing more proximate risk factors for violence in the prison environment.

While the management perspective examines the effect of prison staff behaviour, it ignores the wider ecological aspects that might influence prison processes. For example, a change of government or legislative changes can impact how a prison is run over and above any on the ground decisions by individual managers and staff. Wider social or economic factors, like unemployment levels, can also influence what staff are even available to recruit. How a prison unit is managed may also vary depending on the types of prisoners housed within it, how they are housed (double bunking), by the way the unit is designed or by the number of security measures (e.g., cameras) present.

**Integrated Perspectives of Prison Violence**

More recently, integrated, or multilevel models have attempted to remedy some of the above failings by questioning how risk factors pinpointed in importation, deprivation and management theories might interact and influence each other. PRISM: Promoting Risk Intervention by Situational Management is a systematic approach developed to explain how differing situational risk factors interact to influence the climate of a prison and, in turn, the level of violence displayed by those within (Johnstone & Cooke, 2010). The main premise is that human behaviour does not occur in a vacuum, but rather situations or contexts alter individual or group behaviour. Basically "prisoners are not violent merely because of who they are but because of where they are – and how they are treated" (Cooke, 2020, p.83). Risk factors highlighted in PRISM fall into five distinct domains, including some already highlighted in management and deprivation perspectives. These include the history of violence in the institutional, physical environment and security, organisational factors, staff features, and case management. Ratings on risk factors within each of these domains help to determine areas which need attention to reduce violence risk within a particular prison or

unit. PRISM was used to examine situational risk factors for violence within a New Zealand maximum security prison (Wilson & Tamatea, 2010). The results of the study showed both staff and prisoners considered situational factors relevant to individual and collective violence risk. Furthermore, PRSIM highlighted differing situational risk factors (e.g., unlock patterns) across different units mean that different approaches, changes, would be needed to reduce violence risk in each unit.

Another example of an integrated perspective to prison violence is the multilevel social control-opportunity perspective (Steiner & Wooldredge, 2020) which attempts to provide a framework which not only explains the influence of micro- and macro-level variables covered off from prior perspectives, but also how they might interact and influence each other at different points. While the perspective acknowledges the importance of individual characteristics prisoners import with them, as well as their reactions to losses suffered while in prison, they suggest other factors (e.g., prior exposure to violence, personal self-control, social bonds) could help paint a more comprehensive picture of why prison violence occurs and when it might happen (Steiner & Wooldredge, 2020). To explain their perspective, they draw on both social control and routine activity theories.

Social control theory (Hirschi, 1969) was first developed to explain delinquency. It posits that an individual's attachment or bond to conventional society (social bond) acts as an inhibitor to deviance. Therefore, those who feel bonded and part of the wider collective would be less prone to social deviancy because they care more about what the wider collective thinks of them and about how their actions might impact that collective. Those with weaker connections do not hold the same concerns, which places them at greater risk of deviancy. Routine activities theory (Cohen & Felson, 1979) suggests that crime occurs due to the opportunity presented when three elements converge: (1) a motivated offender, (2) a suitable target (human or premises), and (3) the absence of a capable guardian (e.g., a

witness). According to the theory, if one of these elements is missing, crime will not occur. An example in the context of prison then might be that a violent prisoner (motivated offender) seeking revenge is less likely to attack his victim (suitable target) if he is in an area actively monitored by staff (capable guardian). However, if you take one of those elements away (e.g., active staff patrol) the opportunity for that crime to occur increases.

The multilevel social control-opportunity perspective leverages the above theories to argue then that no factor alone causes prison violence. Rather, variations in individual prisoner characteristics and their daily routines, along with the situations or the environments to which they are exposed, shape the odds of them being involved in violence as either a perpetrator or victim. This theory attempts to explain the where, when, and who aspect of violence which was missing from earlier theories. It also highlights the complex aetiology of prison violence. While earlier theories focused on singular causal areas of the problem, more recent theories such as the integrated social control-opportunity perspective posit it is likely the ways in which these different and complex variables interact which alters the odds of a violence event occurring. This then creates a dilemma for those interested in interventions to reduce violence because there is not a simple cause and effect relationship to alter. Instead, it appears a cocktail of variables, both distal and proximal, are needed for a violent event to spark. Therefore, it is not enough to just focus interventions on individuals that might be at risk of violence whilst ignoring the physical aspects of the prison environment. Likewise, simply modifying the physical structure without thought to the management style of those who work within it is also not enough. And while we now know that certain variables, and interactions between those variables, can increase or decrease the odds of an event occurring (Steiner & Wooldredge, 2020), we still do not properly understand the function of violent events or why certain groups, like gangs, are more likely to be involved. Therefore, we need

to further unpick those complex interactions to gain a better understanding of the mechanisms and functions of violence.

## Gangs and Prison Violence

We know from the examination of the importation perspective above that being a gang member is one of the most significant risk factors for prison violence, but why that is the case is not that clear when looking at the empirical research. This chapter will first explore issues with defining gangs and gang members, and the implications of those on past research. We will then review the empirical literature on gangs and prison violence before exploring what current theories of prison violence might tell us about why gangs are at such a high risk, as well as what other factors might be at play.

### *Defining a Gang*

Despite numerous attempts to find an overarching definition of a gang, research shows little consensus remains (Densley, 2018; Esbensen et al., 2001). In the early days of gang research, definitions centred on common factors gangs possessed, which differed from other types of collectives like clubs or secret societies. In his book *The Gang,* first published in 1936, Frederic Thrasher acknowledged that while no two gangs were alike, they had common features. These included an unplanned origin, a sense of organisation and solidarity, intimate face-to-face interactions between members, cooperation to meet a hostile element, and operating out of a specific geographic area which they defended by force if required (Thrasher, 2013). While acknowledging that criminal gangs were one specific type, Thrasher's gang definition did not specifically include the crime or delinquent behaviour as a prerequisite. Omitting this criminal element, therefore, ignores the most prominent feature synonymous with modern-day gangs.

More recently, Hagedorn (2005) defined gangs as groups which have been "institutionalised on the street" and comprise members who have been "socially excluded"

(p.156). Some may have been cast aside by society because of race or social status. The different mechanisms of alienation can give rise to the formation of different types of gangs (Taonui & Newbold, 2012). In Aotearoa, the alienation of the youth culture gave rise to motorcycle clubs to defy societal norms. At the same time, racial discrimination, structural marginalisation, and ethnic poverty are linked to street gangs' formation (Gilbert, 2013). Gangs offer these disenfranchised people a chance to belong to a community or family and an opportunity for financial rewards via criminal activity (Nadesu, 2009; Tamatea, 2017).

In Aotearoa, under legislation an adult gang is defined as an “organisation or a group that: (a) is recorded on the New Zealand National Gang List; and (b) promotes, encourages, or engages in criminal activity that is driven by a desire to — (i) create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation; or (ii) make a profit” (Parliamentary Counsel Office, 2018, para. 3). The National Gang List (NGL) comprises information held by the Gang Intelligence Centre (GIC) and includes information about patched or prospect New Zealand Adult Gang (NZAG) members (New Zealand Parliament, 2022). It does not record gang associates or affiliates. The New Zealand Police add individuals to the NGL following discussions with different police districts and police intelligence staff. Information considered when adding a person to the NGL includes: whether the person was wearing a gang patch when they were arrested; if they had prominent or significant gang ‘patch’ tattoos; as well as intelligence obtained from search warrants (New Zealand Parliament, 2022). Based on this information, on the National Gang List increased from 4,361 in February 2016 to 7,722 in April 2022 (New Zealand Parliament, 2022).

The lack of consensus on what defines a gang, or what makes someone a gang member, is problematic and has major implications for researchers. Much of the research on the relationship between gang members and prison violence has relied on administrative or file data on gang classification. However, that data may not be an accurate measure of

someone's self-identification as a gang member. For example, a person may be classified as a gang associate by prison staff due to their associations with known gang members. However, that person may not self-identify with being a gang associate or member. Therefore, biasing the data. We did not use any preconceived definitions of a gang for this study. Instead, we relied on our participant's self-identification as members or associates of a gang. Gangs in our study included the Mongrel Mob, Bloodz, Killer Beez, Hells Angel, Nomads, and a smaller street gang which cannot be identified to protect the identity of the participants. The Mongrel Mob is New Zealand's largest gang by numbers with them also making up the largest percentage (30%) of gang members or affiliates imprisoned in Aotearoa New Zealand (New Zealand Parliament, 2022). The Killer Beez are also in the top five gangs by numbers to be imprisoned, making up around 9% of gang members imprisoned (New Zealand Parliament, 2022). Other gangs in the top five include Black Power (18%), Crips (9.6%), Head Hunters MC (4.7%).

### *What the Research Tells Us*

Empirical literature shows that gang members are involved in more violence than non-gang members while in prison, particularly gang members with extensive arrest and conviction records (McGuire, 2018; Schenk & Fremouw, 2012). Furthermore, gang members are over represented when it comes to such violence (Fahmy et al., 2020). One report from the USA showed that incarcerated gang members in prisons in Arizona were two to three times more likely than non-gang members of the same security level to commit serious disciplinary violations (Fischer, 2001). Variables analysed for this report were taken from prison files which noted type of gang membership and then violations each prisoner had been involved in while incarcerated. A further breakdown found that members of prison gangs (gangs formed in prison) were significantly more likely than any other group to be involved in serious violent violations, prison assaults, drug and weapon violations and rioting.

Meanwhile, members of street gangs (gangs formed outside prison), recorded the highest rates of property destruction, fighting, and equipment tampering. It was also reported that as the percentage of gang members in a unit increased, so too did violence violations, with 36% of the variance in assault rates being explained by gang member concentration. However, the report was not conducted with the intention of measuring the impact of gang membership on violence violations alone, rather it was focused on evaluating whether a security threat programme had helped reduce overall violations within the prisons. Therefore, the number of gang members studied ($n$=362) was quite small.

Positive relationships between gang membership and prison homicide have also been found, with facilities with a higher percentage of gang members reporting higher rates of prisoner homicides (Reisig, 2002). However, it must be noted that this study was based on data collected from 298 prisons in the USA in 1985, so generalisation to the modern day might not be as reliable. A slightly more recent study of 2,158 prisoners, incarcerated in a south-western state prison in the USA found that gang affiliation predicted violent misconduct beyond individual risk factors, including age and prior criminal history (Griffin & Hepburn, 2006). However, age was still a significant predictor of prison violence during the first three years of imprisonment independent of gang membership. This contrasted with a slightly earlier study which specifically tested the relationship between the importation model and gang membership using official infraction records of prisoners in the south-west of the USA (DeLisi et al., 2004). The results of that study showed that while gang variables significantly predicted prison violence, overall, the predictive effects were smaller than other individual risk factors like prior violence convictions and incarceration. Despite these slightly differing results, it seems clear that gang members are at an increased odds of becoming involved in prison violence. But why that is, has not been fully explained by existing

research. This is because very few studies have examined gang violence in prison in isolation from other variables.

One of the few studies that did look solely at the relationship between gang membership and their involvement in prison violence did so by developing a "threat index" model (Gaes et al., 2002). The model aimed to provide a "geographical representation of the relative magnitude and heterogeneity of the threat posed by different gang affiliations" (Gaes et al., 2002, p. 359). Using automated American prison data, researchers found that gang membership increased the likelihood of violence and misconduct even after controlling for other variables previously associated with prison violence (e.g., prior history of violence, security-custody classification). Affiliation to 20 of the 27 gangs included in the study increased the probability of all types of violence for members, while affiliation to 18 of the gangs increased the likelihood of serious violence by members. It was also found that the more embedded a prisoner was in the gang the greater the threat of violence. The length of time in the gang also reduced the probability of violence, with those who had been in the gang longer being involved in less violence. Researchers used the Bureau of Prisons pre-established three-tiered system of gang membership to determine how embedded a person was in the gang. They did not account for the age of the participants in their analyses. The tiers consist of gang member (fully fledged), gang suspect (credentials not yet fully established), and gang associate (someone who conducts business on behalf of a gang but has not actually joined the gang) (Gaes et al., 2002). However, the researchers did not state how or who was responsible for classifying participants into one of these tiers. Results of this study suggest that it is not necessarily solely the presence of gang members in a facility that influences the probability of violence occurring, but importantly the type of gang and the length of time people have spent in the gang. However, this study does not explain what it is

about certain gangs that make their members more likely to be involved in violence than others, or why time spent in the gang was correlated to reduced violence rates.

The researchers did suggest that perhaps gang activity compounds stress over time, so members eventually burn out and no longer have the inclination for such behaviour (Gaes et al., 2002). A second rationale was that length of time in the gang increases the likelihood of becoming a leader who can then order others to commit violence on their behalf rather than get directly involved themselves. A further explanation was one of loyalty, with new gang members initiating violence more than older members to prove themselves to the gang during the initiation process. Lastly, it was hypothesised that security classification could influence involvement in violence with senior gang members who were more likely to be housed in higher security areas or facilities, restricting their access to other inmates and their opportunity for violence. A later test of the security hypothesis failed to find a significant effect between security classification and serious rule violations like violence (Tahamont, 2019). However, there was an impact on less serious offences like gambling with those housed in medium security facilities 11% more likely than those in close security prisons to be written up for such violations. Therefore, security level does not fully explain the negative relationship between the length of time in a gang and prison violence.

***Explanations for Gang Involvement in Prison Violence***

This section will explore what previously discussed theories and research might tell us about why gangs are overrepresented in prison violence statistics, but also what they do not.

**Individual Variables:** One of the most obvious explanations for why gangs are more likely to be involved in prison violence comes back to the importation perspective. That is, gang members by their very nature import with them a greater risk of violence than other prisoners. Gangs comprise groups of individuals known to engage in both violent and criminal behaviour on the outside, with membership being found to be a strong predictor of

offending in general (Decker, 1996; Pyrooz et al., 2013; Pyrooz et al., 2016). Therefore, it might logically flow that this pattern of behaviour would be emulated in the prison environment, making gang members disproportionately more likely to become involved in violence and disorder (DeLisi et al., 2004; Drury & Delisi, 2011).

Many gangs' members could also bring with them personal histories that could make them more open and prone to using violence. The relationship between violent victimisation in childhood, and the perpetuation of violence in adulthood, has been empirically established (Baron, 2003; Hartinger-Saunders et al., 2011). For gang members that relationship may put them at higher risk of continued violence because they often experience greater levels of trauma and violence and trauma as children when compared to non-gang members (Gaston et al., 2021; Quinn, Pacella, Dickson-Gomez, et al., 2017). Therefore, cumulative exposure of gang members to such adverse experience may open them up to both an increased risk of perpetrating and becoming a victim of violence, as the two become mutually reinforcing (Begle et al., 2011; Pyrooz et al., 2014; Ross & Arsenault, 2018)**.** For example, research has shown that childhood exposure to family conflict, violence, or dysfunction, as well as violence in the community, can lead some individuals to join a gang for protection in an attempt to alleviate some of their anxiety and increase feelings of security (Eitle et al., 2004; Garbarino, 2001; Kubik et al., 2019; Schwab-Stone et al., 1995). However, what has been found is that rather than protecting members from the adverse events of their childhood, gang membership instead increases rates of victimisation and perpetuates the cycle of violence (Lenzi et al., 2015; Peterson et al., 2004; Quinn, Pacella, Dickson-Gomez, et al., 2017). Therefore, associations between childhood adversity and later delinquency are reciprocal, "wherein trauma increases risk for delinquency and gang involvement, and involvement in antisocial behaviour increases risk for further traumatization and exposure to violence" (Quinn et al., 2017, p. 37).

Cumulative exposure to violence throughout the lifetime can also normalise violent attitudes and behaviours (Quinn et al., 2017; Stoddard et al., 2015). Studies have shown that such exposure can lead to psychological desensitisation to violence as a method of adaptation. While this adaptation protects the child/youth from psychological and emotional distress at the time, it can increase their violence propensity in the long term (Garbarino, 1995; Mrug et al., 2016; Ng-Mak et al., 2002).

Cumulative exposure to violence and trauma also impacts mental health with studies showing links to increased risk of anxiety, depression, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), conduct disorder (Frisby-Osman & Wood, 2020) and alterations in autonomic nervous system functioning (Harper et al., 2008; Herzog et al., 2018; Petering, 2016). Gaston et al. (2021) found that gang members suffered both negative physiological and psychological outcomes due to their cumulative and chronic exposure to trauma and violence with participants reporting fear, anxiety, hypervigilance, nightmares, and anger. However, many participants considered these to be normal and natural reactions to life "failing to realise the anomalous nature of their experiences" (p.12). Such consequences impact how a person perceives the world and reacts to perceived threats in it. According to Bush et al. (2016), some offenders, like gang members, experience the world in ways which make "it practically inevitable that they will offend" (P.3).

**Prison Environment:** Another explanation for the over representation of gang members in prison violence is that the prison environment itself may influence the opportunities for violence between and within gangs as they seek to broaden and strengthen their social networks (Kubik et al., 2017), opening them up to situations that might induce violence (e.g., fighting for territory, recruitment). Some researchers have suggested that violence occurs out of a desire for control of a certain "patch" which might by controlled be another gang. The phenomenon of "defended neighbourhood" (Suttles & Suttles, 1972) has

been widely examined in the context of street gangs (Kintrea et al., 2010; Kintrea & Suzuki, 2008; Morris & Graycar, 2011) and suggests that threats to a dominant gang will be responded to with violence. Research which shows that the heterogeneity of gangs within a prison impacts the levels of violence experienced could back up this hypothesis. Worrall and Morris (2012) found that the larger the percentage of different types of gang members there were in a prison unit, the higher the risk of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults. However, because this study uses reports of prisoner-on-prisoner violence only as a measure, it cannot be said for sure that the function of this violence was control of territory as that was not directly examined.

A study by Beare and Hogg (2013) gives weight to the concept that "defended neighbourhood" may transfer from the streets to prison. By listening to Canadian Police wiretaps, researchers showed prior hostilities between street gangs do transfer into the prison environment. Their data showed that imprisoned gang members were assaulted by rival members as retribution for gang assaults in the community before imprisonment. While this study was not done for the purpose of examining the function of gang violence in prison directly, it does give some insight into at least one possible function of it.

Closely associated with the fight for control hypothesis is one of gaining status for personal protection. Kristine (2011) argued that prisoner status determines the likelihood of becoming either a victim or perpetrator of violence. Those with a higher status in the prison hierarchy, like prominent gang members, are protected from being victims of violence due to their propensity to be perpetrators of the violence. However, it must be noted that Kristine (2011) did not put forward any empirical studies to support the proposition that those with higher status are protected from being victims of violence. Nevertheless, studies examining the prisoner code (social rules) have shown that the greater the perceived personal risk, the greater the adoption of behaviour to adhere to the prisoner code, which often includes being

“fearless” or “acting tough” (Ricciardelli, 2014). Gaston et al. (2021) found that this prison culture or code also influenced how gang members thought about the need and their use of for violence in prison, with the threat of violence always imminent among gang members they interviewed: “If you ain’t violent, you gone have to get violent basically ’cause that’s the atmosphere of prison versus the streets.” (p.p. 8).

Another study suggests that the presence of gangs in prisons also has a positive pay off for staff who can come to rely on them to govern prisoners through an informal social control (Butler et al., 2018). Furthermore, a study examining first-hand accounts from imprisoned gang members found that gangs could help mitigate conflict and “threats of violence, extortion, or unwanted sexual conquests from other incarcerated persons” (Gaston et al., 2021, p. 9). This informal social control gangs bring with them was also seen in a study of South African prisoners (Lindegaard & Gear, 2014). Interviews conducted with prisoners showed that while the presence of gangs in prison increased overall risk of violence, they also offered prisoners a mechanism for members to avoid random violence that helped establish a sense of safety. This sense of safety within the gang has also been found in with other studies based on interviews with prisoners, with gang members always on guard and prepared to protect each other should conflict arise with a rival gang (Gaston et al., 2021). Therefore, gangs can act as both protectors and punishers within prison environments.

**Criminal Economy:** Some academics and authors on gang activity in prison hypothesize that the fight for control, and with it, violence, exists for the purpose of continuing a criminal economy behind bars. Lyman (1989) argued that the “prison gang will usually operate in secrecy and has its goal to conduct gang activities by controlling their prison environment through intimidation and violence directed toward non-members” (P. 48). While Lyman (1989) did not provide empirical evidence to back up his hypothesised link between a criminal economy and violence in prison, investigations by others have reported

such a relationship. Human Rights Watch (2001) stated that much of gang-related violence in prison centres "around efforts to seize or maintain control of [the prison] economy" (p. 32). A study examining the rise of gangs in English prisons also reported that gang members interviewed spoke of importing their drug trade structures and allegiances from "the street" and into the prison environment (Maitra, 2020). Furthermore**,** gaining and maintaining control of that drug trade once in prison often result in 'turf wars' as gangs battled it out due to limited customers to whom they can provide services and sell drugs (Fleisher, 1989; Maitra, 2020). The enforcement of drug and gambling debts can also lead to further violence involving gang members (Kristine, 2011; National Gang Intelligence Center, 2011).

***Limitations of Prior Gang Violence Research***

Our examination of the literature so far has highlighted a couple of important gaps in our understanding of prison violence and the involvement of gangs in that violence. Most importantly, we still know very little about the violence events themselves or why or how they occur. This knowledge gap is mainly because theories used to explain prison violence, such as the importation and deprivation perspectives, have used a hypothetico-deductive approach. That is, researchers started with a theory, or hypotheses, about what they thought might be causing prison violence and then collected and analysed data to test the validity of that hypothesis (Mentis, 1988). Taking this approach has meant that research on prison violence has focused on testing possible predictors of who will be violent derived from prior theories rather than focusing on the violent events themselves. Similarly, the limited studies examining gangs and prison violence focus on identifying gang membership alongside numerous other clusters of risk factors rather than exploring why gang members are more often involved in prison violence or the function of the violence when they are.

One of the major limitations of the hypothetico-deductive approach is that it overemphasises theory verification at the expense of the evolution of new ideas about the

broader ecology of the phenomena (Rennie et al., 1988). The focus on theory verification also means that explanations for why gang members are overrepresented in violence rates remain speculative and open to interpretation. As Athens and Rhodes (2017) so succinctly put it: "When social experiences are reduced to numbers, the appearance of precision is almost always gained, but at the unacceptable expense of sacrificing the very heart of the meaning of the social experiences studied" (p. 18).

The way gang involvement in prison violence has been examined in prior research is also problematic and prevents a deeper understanding of the relationship for a couple of reasons. Firstly, past researchers have used violence indicators that do not identify whether the violence being examined was gang-related (i.e., violence ordered or committed for or on behalf of the gang). Looking purely at whether one or more gang members were present in a violent incident tells us very little about whether the incident was actually "gang-related violence". It also tells us very little about whether "gang violence" in prison is different to prison violence that has no connection to gangs. However, given the high percentage of gang members in Aotearoa New Zealand's prisons, and their involvement in violence, it is crucial that we better understand the potential mechanisms involved if we want to identify points for intervention to prevent it and reduce harm.

Secondly, the variable way in which gangs and gang membership has been treated in past research is also problematic. Some researchers have looked purely at prison gangs (gangs that form within the prison environment itself), while others have looked at street gangs (those formed in the community). Others have included organised drug cartels and motorcycle gangs in their research, while others have not. The problem with this tossed-salad approach to gang research is that gangs vary in membership makeup and purpose, making it difficult to compare studies and ascertain how transferable results are across contexts. Mixed classification also means gang presence may have been over or underestimated in the prison

environment. Most research in this area has also used file information as a measure of prisoners' gang status, rather than self-identification. This method is problematic and privileges the opinions of staff or the judicial system over that of the voices of prisoners. Furthermore, file information about a prisoner's gang status could be incorrect or old, therefore impacting the reliability of research findings.

Thirdly, past studies on prison violence used differing definitions of what constitutes prison violence during their examinations. For example, some researchers have used serious disciplinary violations as a measure of violence, while others have used misconduct reports. This creates issues with generalisability given behaviour which fits into these disciplinary violations or reports likely differs across prisons. Misconduct reports usually also contain behaviour which may not be classed as violence, therefore impacting the reliability of research which uses misconduct reports as the only measure of violent behaviour.

Finally, prior research on gangs and prison violence has been very focused on examination of prisons in the USA. Many of the gangs found in prisons across the United States, like the Mexican Mafia, Aryan Brotherhood and Nuestra Familia, first formed in prison before spreading to the outside community (Camp, 1985). However, the same is not true of the gangs found in Aotearoa New Zealand's prisons. Rather Aotearoa New Zealand prisons consist of gangs that first formed in the community. As gang membership grew nationally, so too did the numbers arrested, sentenced, and imprisoned. Therefore, the emergence of gangs in prison was "essentially by force of numbers" (Meek, 1992, p. 273). Therefore, there are likely differing cultural and social dimensions to gangs in the USA which might not generalise to gangs in Aotearoa.

## Positioning the Current Study

The current study aims to develop new knowledge about prison violence by moving beyond the examination of records in official databases and beyond tests of predictors, such

as those derived from traditional theories of prison violence. Instead, this study uses a qualitative approach to induce new ideas and hypotheses to be explored based on interviews with gang members who have first-hand experience with prison violence. The aim is to build a descriptive model of gang involvement in prison violence by examining the Prison Violence Event (PVE) process. Doing so will allow us to see how violence is understood in the minds of those who perpetrate it and help us unravel the possible mechanisms and ecological systems that lead to and maintain such behaviour.

A descriptive model was first constructed to describe offences involving sexual offending against children (Ward et al., 1995). Since then, such models have been useful in understanding several different types of criminal offending in the community (Gannon et al., 2008; Murdoch et al., 2010; Polaschek et al., 2001; Stairmand et al., 2021). Descriptive process models provide a temporal outline of the offence process itself by exploring a violent event's cognitive, behavioural, motivational, contextual, and environmental components (Ward et al., 2006). Much like functional analysis in clinical psychology, this method allows researchers to explore the antecedents (both long and short term), goals and consequences or rewards of a particular offence. Development of descriptive models involve the collection of descriptive accounts of an event from the perpetrators themselves (Ward et al., 1995). These accounts are then systematically analysed using qualitative methods to examine patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting, as well as beliefs or attitudes that might shape their use of violence in prison. The result is a descriptive model grounded in the perpetrators' point-of-view. Prior descriptive models have allowed for the examination of and separation of different types of interpersonal violence (e.g., reactive, or proactive) used by offenders and reasons for those (Stairmand et al., 2021). Furthermore, such models have highlighted victim, situational, or environmental factors which have influenced how offences have unfolded, therefore highlighting possible intervention points (Polaschek et al., 2001; Stairmand et al.,

2021). However, no one has developed an offence process model for prison violence. Given the valuable contribution of these types of models to understanding the "how" and "why" of other criminal offences, we believe the creation of such a model for institutional gang violence is warranted.

We believe that building a descriptive model of institutional gang violence will allow for a deeper understanding of the private and subjective experiences of the men who perpetrate prison violence. These men's beliefs or rules around the use of violence throughout the offence will hopefully provide the key to us understanding their motivations for acting violently in prison. Building a descriptive model will also allow us to examine the issue in a new way and hopefully shed some light on why prison violence remains such an issue despite numerous attempts to reduce it. If we can better understand the behaviour of those at the heart of the prison violence problem and how they make sense of the world, we have a better chance of finding appropriate interventions that work with, and not against, those views, because "every criminal act makes some kind of sense- is permissible, justified, or even necessary – in the mind of the person who does it at the time that he or she does it" (Bush et al., 2016, p. 3).

Drawing on previous descriptive model research we will use the oral accounts of gang members who have been violent in prison to construct a "bottom up" descriptive model that we will then use to answer the following questions :

1: When and why do gang members commit violence in Aotearoa New Zealand prisons?

2: What factors may help explain why gang members overrepresented in prison violence statistics?

3: To what extent can violence committed by gang members in prison be termed "gang violence"?

4: Are events perpetrated on behalf of the gang different to those that are not?

## Method

Our study used Grounded Theory methodology to collect and analyse oral accounts of the offence processes of gang members who had used violence in Aotearoa New Zealand prisons. This study had ethical approval from the University of Waikato and agreement from The Department of Corrections' Research and Evaluation Steering Committee (RESC).

### Participants

Fourteen men were interviewed for this study. The event narratives of twelve men (10 gang-members, 1 gang-prospect, 1 associate) formed the basis of this study. Two non-gang members who had not been violent in prison provided additional information on prison violence and gang involvement from their perspectives. Their information provided helped me to understand some possible differences in experiences in prison life between gang and non-gang members which was helpful during the memoing and analytic phases. Participants ranged in age from 28 to 52 years (M = 40.77, SD = 8.97). Participants identified as New Zealand Māori (n = 12), or as having multiple ethnicities which included Māori and Pasifika (n = 2). They included members of six different gangs including the Mongrel Mob, Nomads, Killer Beez, Bloodz, Hells Angels, and a smaller street gang which has not been named to protect the identity of the participant. At the time of their involvement in the research, all participants were completing a court-imposed sentence for a violent offence they had committed while in the community. These offences included murder, aggravated robbery, common assault, wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm, injuring with intent, kidnapping, and assault with a blunt instrument. Sentences ranged from home detention to life imprisonment.

**Location**

The research was conducted within the Waikato region of Aotearoa New Zealand at two separate correctional facilities: Waikeria Prison (9 interviews) and the Tai Aroha Residential Treatment Programme (5 interviews) based in Huntly, which houses high risk violent offenders serving home detention sentences while undergoing treatment to target their offending risk related needs. At Waikeria Prison, interviews were carried out with prisoners housed mainly in the Karaka Special Treatment Unit (STU, 6 interviews), though some were sourced from more general units (3 interviews). STUs are therapeutic environments that provide high-intensity treatment programmes for male prisoners considered to be at the highest risk of continued violence or sexual reoffending upon release (Polaschek, 2005). Psychologists and specially trained staff facilitate the programmes. Given Covid-19 restrictions, the first six interviews were conducted via an audio-visual connection which linked straight from a room in the STU. As Covid-19 restrictions eased, we were able to then conduct three later interviews in person at each of the units. All the interviews at Tai Aroha were carried out in person.

**Materials**

A Sony ICD-PX470 Stereo IC Recorder was used to record all interviews. Participants were informed that the interview would be recorded and signed a consent form with this knowledge. The audio recording was downloaded onto my secure computer before being manually transcribed and then destroyed.

**Participant Recruitment**

This study aimed to examine the offence process of a violent event in prison. Therefore, we sought participants who had been the perpetrator of at least one violent incident while in prison. However, prisoners who did not have such experience, but could provide wider context on prison violence, were not excluded. The second requirement was

that they were willing to describe, in detail, one of those violent events. While participants were not required to be gang members, those who had current or past affiliations were targeted as research participants because we wanted to understand the event process of gang members specifically. Staff in Ara Poutama helped identify gang members via file information on gang membership. However, the researcher confirmed gang membership or association once interviews commenced. The participants' descriptions of their gang affiliation at the time of the PVE were the final classifications used in this study. Classifications included gang member, gang prospect, and gang associate (including "middlemen" who acted as a go-between for gangs).

Participants were recruited over a seven-month period. The recruitment process differed at each of the facilities and prison units due to Covid-19 restrictions around travel and visitation to prison sites at differing times through-out the recruitment period.

The first set of Waikeria Prison participants (n=6) were recruited indirectly with help from psychologists in the STU. We needed a brief and easy way to have staff identify potential participants due to Covid-19 restrictions at the time. We suggested using the Violence Risk Scale (VRS), and prison records of gang affiliation, to do that. The VRS is a 26-item psychometric used to assess violence risk and predict recidivism. It consists of 6 static items and 20 dynamic items. One of the dynamic items directly measures violence during institutionalisation. Ara Poutama staff used this information to suggest possible participants and then approached them on our behalf, providing them with the participant information sheet. Those who wanted to take part, or wanted to know more, were then able to meet the lead researcher individually via a private video meeting conducted via a secure network or in person where possible. The research interview commenced immediately once the men gave consent to take part.

Tai Aroha potential participants were first approached by psychology staff who provided information about the research project. If the men wanted to know more, or take part, an individual hui in person was arranged.

Participants from other units other than the STU at Waikeria Prison were put forward as possible participants by an Ara Poutama staff member who provided the men information about the research project. If the men then wanted to know more, or take part, an individual hui in person was arranged at a room within their prison unit.

**Interview**

The first two interviews were carried out by the primary researcher's supervisor, Devon Polaschek (DP), an experienced researcher and clinical psychologist. This process allowed me to learn the interview process. I carried out the remainder of the interviews alone. Each interview followed a structured beginning and lead-in to the main body of the interview. Each interview opened with a karakia, a Māori prayer, if the participant agreed. The karakia was either performed by me or the participant if they so wished. A process of Whakawhanaungatanga then commenced by way of introduction. Whakawhanaungatanga is a traditional Māori practice that helps establish connections and strengthen the relationship between researcher and participant. The process included information about both the researchers and participants' cultural connections to land, place, and people and any other information determined to be relevant for the process ahead. Once this process was complete, the researcher then went over the participant information sheet (See Appendix A) to see if there were any further questions about the research and their possible involvement in it. Of the 15 prisoners to get to this point, only one did not want to proceed after finding out more about the project. I read out each question on the Participant Consent form (See Appendix B) to participants interviewed via video link before gaining their final oral consent to participate. The consent form also offered a voucher as a thank-you for their participation. Once oral

consent was given, the interview progressed. For interviews conducted in person, the participant physically signed the consent form after having read the form.

The interviews aimed to have the participants speak freely and openly about their violent prison event. Participants were given a free choice as to which event they wanted to talk about. I first told participants that I wanted to take them through a violent event in prison that they had been part of and felt comfortable talking about openly. I then told them that the aim of the discussion was to better understand what happened before, during, and after their PVE. When the participant had such an event in mind, I asked them to describe it as best that they could. I used questions to prompt participants through-out their descriptions to ensure that areas of interest in the offence process were discussed more fully (e.g., How did that make you feel? What were you thinking at that point? What did you do then? What kind of relationship did you have with your victim? Can you describe how you were feeling that morning?). These prompting questions expanded as theoretically focused codes developed to ensure that areas of theoretical importance were fully investigated. Once discussion points about the specific event itself were exhausted, and if time allowed, questions moved more broadly to the topic of prison violence reduction (e.g., if you were reimagining prisons, what do you think would reduce violence? Is there something about the way prisons are run, the way people live in them, that could be altered to reduce violence?). At the end of each discussion, I thanked the participant for sharing their information with the researcher. The interview was then closed with a karakia. A voucher was then sent out to a nominated family member as a thank-you for the mens' participation.

After each interview, I converted the interview audio into a transcript with any identifying names or information removed. Each transcript was given a participant number label (e.g., 001- 014). I deleted the audio file to protect the participants' identity once the interview had been transcribed and re-checked for accuracy. I also created an interview log

using the participant numbers. This log had information about when, where, and how the interview was conducted and basic demographic information of each participant.

**Analytic Strategy**

Much like the original study descriptive model study by Ward et al., (1995), this current study was conducted using Grounded Theory. First developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in the 1960s (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), Grounded Theory has become one of the go-to methods for researchers seeking to understand a phenomenon that has attracted little prior research attention or depth (Milliken, 2010). One of the main advantages of Grounded Theory is that researchers do not begin with a pre-formed hypothesis or assumption about what is going on. Instead, a structured and systematic method is used to look for patterns and themes in the data gathered from participant interviews to generate new meaning and explanations of the phenomenon grounded in situated knowledge.

Different versions of Grounded Theory have developed since its inception. The procedure used for the current study was the Strauss and Corbin (1997) version. Consistent with this method, interviews were collected and analysed in several stages. The first five interviews were collected over an initial two-week period in November 2021 from participants at Waikeria Prison's STU. A sixth interview was collected from the same STU in January 2022. After the sixth interview, Covid-19 began spreading rapidly through-out Aotearoa. Therefore, the final set of interviews were collected between June and July 2022. Participants in this second set were from other units at Waikeria Prison (*n*=3) and from Tai Aroha Residential Treatment Programme (*n*=5). Interviews ranged in length from 40 minutes to 90 minutes.

Each interview was immediately transcribed. I then read the transcripts multiple times to familiarise myself with the data. Each transcript was then loaded into Nvivo in preparation for the open coding stage of analyses. The open coding stage involved reading each transcript

on a line-by-line basis to identify and label individual meaning units. Meaning units could include a single phrase or word said during the interview or an entire transcribed paragraph. Memos were also used throughout the process to refine and keep track of ideas and relationships between concepts as they arose (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). The first six interviews were used in the open coding phase and led to the development of 334 different meaning units. These meaning units were then compared for conceptual connections between them, the axial coding phase. These connections were also grouped into broader temporally relevant categories. We were left with 60 axial codes: 14, which sat in the distal event category, 17 in the proximal category, 16 in the event category, and 13 in the aftermath category.

I also completed a detailed chain analysis of each of the events to understand the similarities and differences across the six different event descriptions, specifically to examine any differences between gang and non-gang related events. This analysis looked specifically at the processes occurring as each event unfolded and how thoughts, feelings, and behaviours impacted the next stage. Categories from the chain analyses and the codes developed in the axial coding phase of analyses were then used to develop more focused codes that captured the different nuances of each stage of the offence process.

The next stage involved integrating these focused codes into a draft model. However, this model highlighted several gaps in the offence process of gang-related events that needed further exploration and informed the focus of the next stage of our interviews. The next three transcripts were used to fill in those gaps and refine the model, with this model being tested and refined using the final three transcripts at which point data saturation was achieved.

# Results

## Descriptive Model

Our *Descriptive Model of Institutional Gang Violence* has four distinct phases arranged temporally from the most distal to the most proximal relating to the Prison Violence Event (PVE) described (see Figures 1-4). The model comprises 32 descriptive categories which are further subdivided into different aspects (subcategories) of that category. The model also includes five contextual categories which influence several of the main categories at differing stages. The model describes participants' childhoods and early experiences with gangs and prison (Phase 1), the context and build-up in which the PVE occurred (Phase 2), the PVE itself (Phase 3), and the aftermath of the PVE (Phase 4). The PVEs described in the model occurred at several different prisons through-out Aotearoa New Zealand (including Waikeria Prison, Spring Hill Correctional Facility, Hawke's Bay Regional Prison, Manawatu Prison, Whanganui Prison and Auckland Prison) and one which occurred at an Australian prison. The PVEs occurred in remand, medium, medium-high, and high security units between 1996 and 2018.

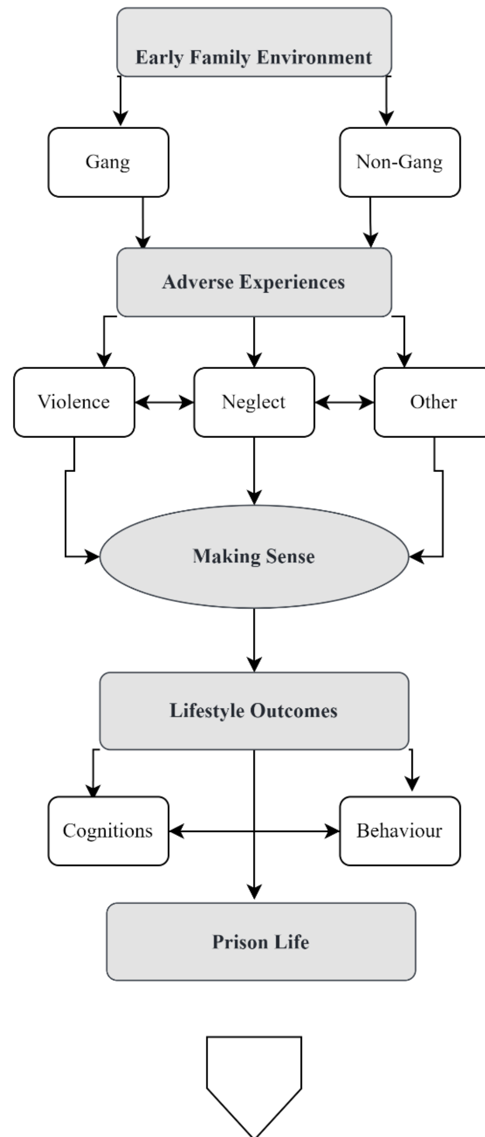
In our model the term "victim" is used to describe those who had violence inflicted upon them by our interview participants. While the term victim in our model includes people who were sometimes active provokers and participants in the PVE, we chose the word victim to describe them in the model as they were the ones who came out of the event more seriously injured.

### *Phase 1: Background*

The first phase of the model contains data relevant to background (distal) factors that influence the PVE. It consists of five main categories further subdivided into different aspects of those categories. The first category, ***Early Family Environment,*** describes different aspects of the participants' home environments growing up. Two further subcategories

**Figure 1**

*Phase 1: Background*




- ***Gang*** or ***non-Gang*** - make up this category and describe whether the perpetrator was born into a gang-associated family (e.g., family members were gang members) or not. Those who grew up in gang homes described being taught by their family that their gang must *"be number one, the best and the greatest",* and if they had to use violence to achieve that, they should. Participants who did not grow up in a gang family described being taught these same messages once they joined the gang. Participants from both subcategories described having

experienced one or more ***Adverse Experiences*** growing up. Most described witnessing or being subjected to ***Violence*** within the family home frequently during their early years. Others described ***Neglect*** (e.g., going to school with no food) or ***Other*** adverse experiences (e.g., a parent dying when they were young, witnessing criminal activity). ***Adverse experiences*** lead to a process of ***Making Sense*** of what was occurring in their life and why. The core beliefs and learnt behaviour developed in this category influence all subsequent stages in the event process with participants often retrospectively making direct links to early life experiences as reasons for their violent behaviour during the PVE. Being beaten as children led to feeling powerless, fearful, unworthy, and unloved. The constant exposure to violence, and their inability to escape it, led them to develop ways of perceiving and acting in the world to protect themselves physically and emotionally. Participants described learning that: they needed to "be feared or live in fear"; "the strong pick on the weak"; "violence brings you power and rewards"; and violence is a normal and necessary way to communicate with others and solve problems.

These core beliefs and learnings from childhood led to ***Lifestyle Outcomes*** that reinforced their earlier ways of making sense of the world (***Cognitions)*** and led to a series of ***Behaviours.*** These behaviours included joining a gang and committing juvenile criminal offences (including violence), which landed them in youth justice facilities or prisons in their teens. Those brought up in gang families described becoming officially patched members of the gang during their teenage years. However, they described not thinking of it as officially joining a gang because, to them, it was par for the course because the gang "*is just family*". Those who did not grow up in gang families described being drawn to gang life as teenagers for various reasons. Some described joining because gang members had been kind to them (e.g., gave them food and shelter), giving them a sense of belonging to a family. "E.*g., That [with the gang] was where I felt at ease, and it was like I'd finally found a family."* The

power and fear which came with being a gang member enticed others to join. Once in the gang, they were taught that the gang's needs come before all else. For example, their gang was the "*God of all things*" and to "*fuck the rest, because we're the best*". They described "super violent" interactions with those outside the gang but also within the gang. *"E.g., It's super violent. Even with each other; especially with each other. It's worse when it's with each other*." (P- 007). They also described being rewarded with gifts (e.g., motorcycles, cars, drugs) for carrying out violent orders on behalf of the gang. These rewards reinforced those earlier beliefs that violence is a normal way to communicate and that it brings power and rewards. Perpetrator 007 describes how the gang shaped his violent behaviour:

> *At 18-19 I got patched up by the Mob and the more violent I was the more fuel it gave and the more an arm got put around you to mould you in certain areas. Because I was more violent and aggressive than most my age, I sort of got moulded into that. I got taught that was my destiny. And if I had a destiny in the world, this was it.*

This continual use and reinforcement of violent behaviour resulted in gang members believing they were "entitled" to use violence. *"E.g., It's [violence] the gang way"*. Furthermore, participants learnt that the "brotherhood" that came with being a gang member also kept them safe, as they had a group to call on to back them up if they felt threatened. Participants described this as *"backing up a brother".*

Participants also described being involved in crime (e.g., car thefts, aggravated robberies, burglaries) from a young age, eventually leading them to enter the juvenile justice system. Some started in boarding homes for troubled youth before being sent to prison, while others went straight from the streets to prison (e.g., for murder or other serious violence). Here they enter the following category of the model – ***Prison Life.*** This category reflects an adaptation where prison life becomes a more intensified or concentrated version of participants' lives in the community, which perpetuates previously adapted beliefs and learnt

behaviours around the normalisation and need for violence for gang members. All but one participant described spending more of their adult lives inside prison than outside, which enhanced their beliefs around the continual need and use of violence.

Some participants described previously being aware of the violent nature of prison due to gang associates or family members conveying that message to them. Others knew from prior first-hand experience. Furthermore, they described learning that certain prisons were more violent than others (e.g., Auckland Prison). Some prisons were more dangerous for individual participants due to the make-up of gangs in that prison (e.g., if a gang other than theirs dominated that prison, their risk increased). Therefore, they entered that prison with a plan to use violence to make a name for themselves (e.g., increase their reputation) to protect themselves. Others described the expectations that were placed on them by the gang to be violent once they got to prison. Perpetrator 009 describes the expectations that were on him as a new gang member to use violence in prison:

> *Yeah, it was expected of me because I was young. I was a new recruit. I was still trying to earn my name. I had a name. My birth name. But then I got a street name. But they still called me boy [in prison].*

Others described having little pre-awareness of how violent prison was going to be when they first entered, but soon learning *"real fast"*. Perpetrator 012 describes the shock he got when he first arrived in prison as an 18-year-old:

> *When I went to jail, it changed. It wasn't even a game no more. Everyone was tense. Everyone was huge. Everyone was bigger. Everyone was uglier, tougher…It was all about who's more intimidating. Who's the toughest, like, the hardest. I mean you have to be hard to be in this yard. And it changed what it was like hey. This isn't the game I know out there; this is different in here.*

Participants described prison life as "hostile" which led to increased hypervigilance and what many described as the development of a "sixth sense" for when something was not right and when they needed to be on guard and come together as a gang. Perpetrator 009 described what that felt like for him:

> *You feel the atmosphere change, yeah, when something bad is about to happen. Just goes shroom. It's like an emptiness. Just a dark, cold, vibe throughout the whole wing… [You know] someone is about to get a hiding. So, you just go to your corner, the place where the boys will just go hang out with their team [gang]. Just make sure everyone's all good.*

Participants repeatedly described needing to use violence more frequently in prison than in the community because there was "no other way" to deal with a threat. The proximity of rival gang members in prison also meant that threat to territory and reputation was more heightened than in the community, where they did not have to interact with rivals on a day-to-day basis because they could actively avoid them. They did not have that option in prison. Instead, many described needing to be a "gang member 24/7" due to the threat rival gangs presented to both their gang's power and territory, but also to themselves as individuals. Furthermore, the confined space of prison also became the perfect place for gangs to collect debts which people accumulated with the gang on the outside because there was *"nowhere for them to run and hide"* once they came to prison.

Another component of ***Prison Life*** that participants described having to navigate is the behaviour of prison staff. They spoke of feeling disrespected and made to feel worthless by officers who treated them like they were *"just a number"*. They also described officers turning a blind eye to violence at times, which led to beliefs that officers would not keep them safe, so they had to do it themselves or rely on the gang for protection. These feelings and beliefs both directly and indirectly impact later PVEs. Directly, in the case of violence

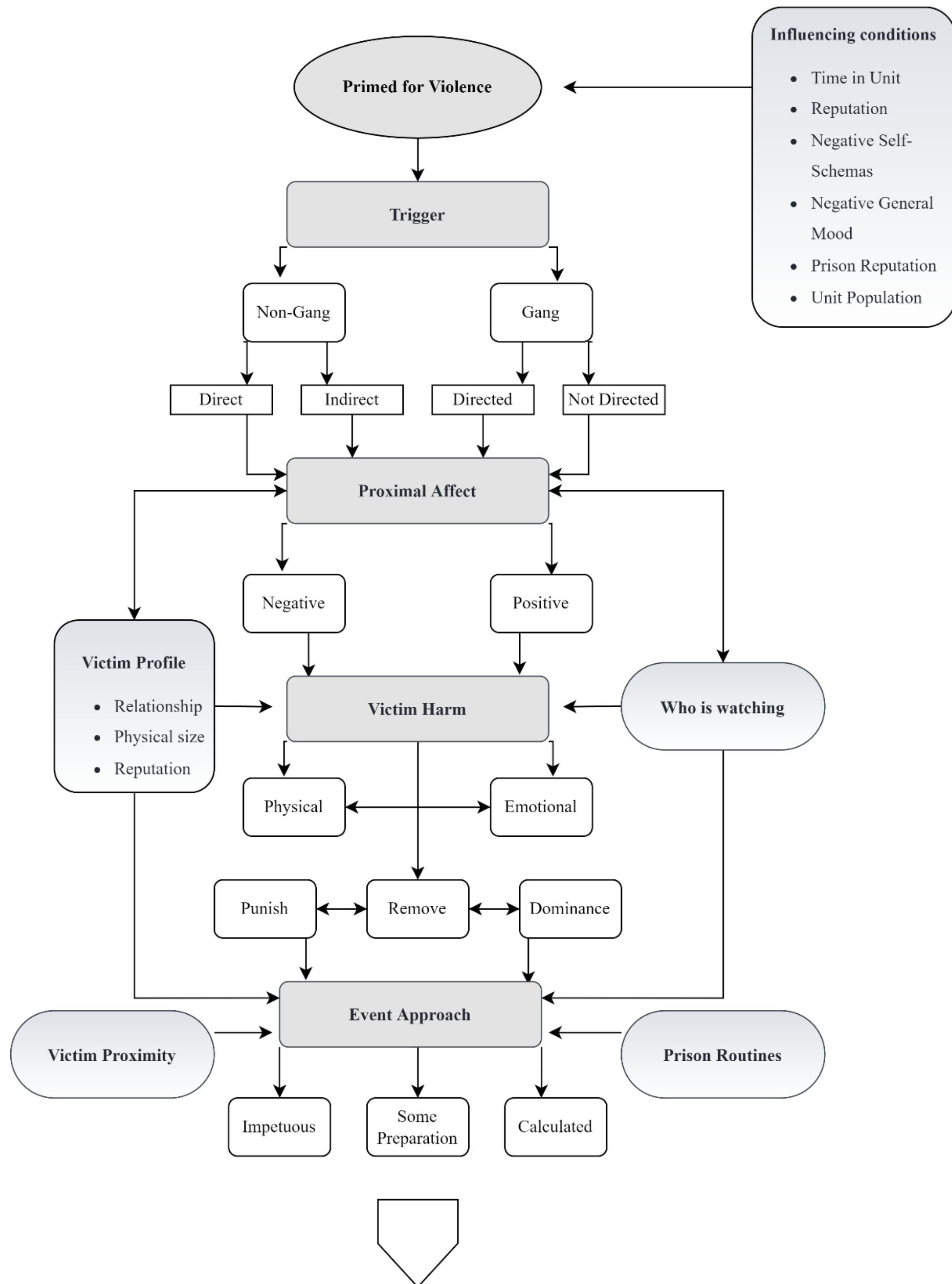
being inflicted directly on staff who participants perceived as treating them badly or disrespecting them. Indirectly it is reflected in the weight or concern participants gave to the presence of prison staff when they were planning or carrying out the PVE, with most describing the presence of staff being irrelevant to their behaviour as will be seen in the pre-event phase of the model.

***Phase 2: Pre-Event***

This phase describes the thoughts, actions and events that occurred in the weeks, days, or minutes leading up to the PVE. It consists of five main categories. At differing stages, five additional contextual conditions were found to influence the gang members' thoughts, feelings, and actions (See Figure 2). Participants described being ***Primed for Violence*** during the months, weeks, or days leading up to the PVE. All the men described being hyper-alert to any threat to themselves or their gang during this pre-event. Much of this hypervigilance was due to them being chronically primed due to experiences with violence in both their childhoods and gang life outside prison. However, they also described several proximal contextual conditions that increased their hypervigilance and readiness to use violence in the lead-up to the PVE**:** *Time in the Unit* (e.g., being new to a unit/prison increased their hypervigilance to threat and their need to act on that threat); *Reputation* (e.g., Their reputation in the prison at the time altered perceptions of needing to use violence to establish or uphold their reputation); *Negative Self-Schemas* (e.g., feeling worthless and not caring if they lived or died); *Negative General Mood* (e.g., feeling pissed off that they are back in prison or worried about family on the outside); *Prison Reputation* (e.g., the prison was known for extreme violence); and *Unit Population* (e.g., a variety of rival gangs in the unit). The next category describes the ***Triggers*** and the emotional response they provoked within the participant, which we have called ***Proximal Affect. Triggers*** typically fall into two main categories: ***non-gang-related*** and ***gang-related***. Most often the trigger is directly linked to

**Figure 2**

*Phase 2: Pre-Event Period*




the eventual target of the violence. The ***non-gang-related*** category describes two types, *Direct* or *Indirect*. ***Gang-related*** triggers also fall into two further types, *Directed* and *Non-*

*Directed.* Two dominant types of emotions arose in the ***Proximal Affect****: Negative* (e.g., angry, scared, hurt, anxious) or *Positive* (e.g., amped, or excited).

***Non-Gang-related*** triggers consisted mainly of the victim (eventual target) saying or doing something that the perpetrator perceived as personally harming, offending, or threatening to them (*Direct*). However, they also described being triggered by their own overwhelming emotions *(Indirect). Direct* triggers often involved the perception that the victim was lying to them or trying to dupe them in some way. In other cases, it involved the victim causing personal offence to the perpetrator through their or words. For example, *"He's come into the yard. And I've introduced myself. I've felt disrespected by how he responded when I went to go shake his hand. So, I instantly offered him out (challenged him to a fight)"(P- 008).* These *Direct* triggers led to ***Negative Proximal Affect*** in the lead-up to the PVE. Participants described being disrespected, hurt, or angered by the victim's actions.

***Non-Gang*** *Indirect* triggers involved participants being overwhelmed by negative emotions in the lead-up to the event (e.g., anxiety, powerlessness, paranoia, and anger). These emotions were either caused by the circumstances in which they found themselves (e.g., locked up again) or by something that occurred outside of prison (e.g., receiving some distressing family news). The participants described purposely looking for someone to redirect, or displace, that negative energy onto to feel in control again. "E.g., *I was looking, and it was stewing on my mind, and then I just kind of went bang like you're going to be it, you're going to be my victim and then I just dished it out" (P-004).*

***Gang-related***, *Directed* triggers involved the perpetrator being given a direct order by others in their gang, usually those of higher rank than themselves, to cause harm to the victim. Participants described being told that the victim (or the victim's gang) had harmed the participants gang in some way (e.g., owed debt, dishonoured the gang, threatened the gang's power/territory) and that they were to "sort it out". They described being chosen as the one

that needed to sort it out because either they were new to the gang (e.g., prospect or newly patched) and still needed to prove themselves, or because they had a prior reputation, or position, in the gang (e.g., sergeant at arms) as someone who was violent and could get the job done. Most of the time, the participants were given very little detail about the indiscretion of the victim that had led to the ordered hit. However, they described not being concerned about that. For them, the word of the gang was enough to justify the physical harm they were planning to inflict because the gang was their family, and protecting that family was of utmost importance to them. "E.g., *It didn't matter because at that point I would have done anything for the gang"* (P-007). Others described feeling like they had no choice but to act on the order to ensure their own safety. *"E.g., You can walk away but somebody, something else is going to come your way. Either way, it was either I do it or it's going to happen to me*" (P-009). These direct orders or "hits" came from gang members both inside and outside the jail. Participants described the network in which the "kite" (order) came to them, with messages being passed between gang members in different prisons and outside so that they knew the target victim was coming to their prison or unit even before they arrived.

***Gang-related***, *Non-directed* triggers were not too dissimilar from the *Directed* in that there was a perception that the victim had harmed or was a threat to the gang. However, in these cases, participants were not instructed to cause harm. Instead, because the gang had taught them not to think as an individual, but as part of a wider collective, any threat or offence directed at their gang or any member of it was also perceived as a personal threat. For example, individual participants regularly used the term "we" when referring to something they were thinking, feeling, or doing as an individual.

Two contextual conditions influence gang members' ***Proximal Affect*** and the later ***Goal Formation.*** Those are **Who is Watching** and **Victim Profile.** Firstly, gang members spoke of the importance of the presence of other gang members when it came to

both their decision making and feelings (Who is Watching). The presence of other gang members (be they rivals or the same gang) influenced both their feelings towards their victim, as well as their own affect. They spoke of feeling embarrassed or dishonoured more frequently if others witnessed the trigger event or knew about it. "E.g.*, At the time I was thinking aye, everyone's listening. Because there's a lot of gangs watching, a lot of gangs listening… I know what I was feeling. A bit embarrassed. Yeah, humiliated" (P-012).* They also spoke of needing to act sooner if others were watching. Perpetrator 012 described what triggered him to take on a rival gang member despite being outnumbered by other rivals:

> *"[I was] put on the spot. I have to react now. Everyone was looking… I can't have him, having him saying in front of all these people. I can't have him talking about my bro like that. Like, oh, I've gotta do something."*

The ***Victim's Profile*** also impacted this pre-event period. Firstly, the participants' *relationship* with the victim had an influence. Often the victim was a relative stranger (*Relationship*) they had only very surface-level information about prior to the trigger. Not knowing the victim that well led to feelings of uncertainty, increased the perceived threat level, and the need for them to do something to remove that threat. They also spoke of a greater need to prove themselves if the victim was unknown to them. "E.g., *I guess it's more like, now you know who you are fucking with sort of thing. You don't know me, now you know who the fuck I am sort of thing" (P-008).* If the victim was considered a friend, or someone they thought they could trust (e.g., someone from the same gang), thoughts and feelings were based on betrayal, sadness, and hurt. If the victim was a rival gang member, feelings of hatred, mistrust, and thinking they needed to act quickly were present. These feelings were present because they had been specifically taught that they should hate rival gang members because they were a threat to their gang's power and dominance. The *physical size* of the victim also impacted how they felt in the moment. Larger victims prompted

increased feelings of being scared and anxious. The victim's *reputation* (e.g., unpredictable, volatile, dangerous) also impacted their level of uncertainty, scaredness or anger and prompted thoughts of having "no choice" but to act.

The next part of the pre-event phase was proximate goal formation, which we have called ***Victim Harm.*** In all cases, participants described intending to cause the victim ***Physical*** harm. However, some also described intending to cause ***Emotional*** harm to the victim. Perpetrator 013 described the importance of emotional pain during the PVE:

> *The message had to be sent in blood. And it also had to be physically, mentally, and emotionally painful for the victim. Bruises and cuts will heal but emotionally hurt them and mentally hurt them had to be in the package as well. Because that lasts forever.*

The degree of physical ***Victim Harm*** intended varied from *Moderate* (e.g., a few punches) to *Severe* (e.g., wanting to kill, damage or seriously hurt the victim). In all cases, there was a belief that they must and were entitled to use violence to sort out whatever problem had arisen. Options that did not involve violence were given little to no thought. Instead, their perception was often that the victim had given them "no choice" but to use violence. In several cases, participants described the victim as also expecting the violence. "E.g., *They knew, you knew what you're getting yourself into. You got yourself into it. So, this is how you are going to lie in your bed. And that's a choice they made"(P-008).* The descriptions given could be likened in a sense to rules of engagement used by military personnel. Participants described both themselves, and their victims, as gang members, understanding that there were certain rule violations or "wrong doings" which should and would ultimately only be settled with violence.

The participants generally described three ultimate goals they wanted to achieve through their ***Victim Harm***: to ***Punish*** (e.g., seek retribution, send a message), ***Remove*** (e.g.,

emotional release of negative emotion, removing a threat to power or person), ***Dominance*** (E.g., gain power or influence over others usually for the purpose of a criminal economy). Often, participants identified a combination of these goals. Furthermore, pursuing one goal also led to the achievement of another. For example, punishing a victim by using violence also had a second equally important goal of removing a future threat. Participants frequently described needing to ***Punish*** the victim physically for harm or disrespect caused either to self or gang. They described thinking that the victim should not be allowed to get away with whatever they had done, and they needed to teach them a lesson. "E.g., *Yeah, I'm just gonna go in there and ruin his life. I'm going to wreck him and send a message to him and his whole chapter that 'Don't fuck with us, you know?'" (P-013).* Another goal heavily on the minds of gang members during the G***ang-Related*** events was that of asserting ***Dominance*** over the victim, and thereby their victim's gang, to ensure rival gangs did not invade their "turf". P-013 described asserting dominance over a rival gang member pre-emptively before a threat was clear.

> *We started getting the vibe that the Dogs was sort of like getting a bit too comfortable. And what we decided to do was send a message, really hurt someone… This prison has already had its, sort of like, how to say it is the blood has been spilled, and the war has already been fought for this prison. And we own this prison. (P-013).*

Those whose goal was to ***Remove*** a threat spoke of imminent threats to both self and/or gang from the victim they needed to sort. Their main goal was to extinguish or remove that threat entirely:

> *We sort things out with a fight. Not with knives. Talk about a knife, you are going to bring a knife to a party; then I'm in. I'm going to get you before you can get me or any of my bros. (P-006).*

Another goal of the violence was for emotional release (***Remove***). Participants described feeling like they had no healthy ways of coping or dealing with their negative emotions and the resulting distress they caused them. Reasons for these negative emotions included proximal causes like receiving negative news from family outside prison, which they could not do anything about, being back in jail and being unable to access the person they wanted to hurt— more distal causes included their adverse childhoods. Many men spoke of being unable to talk about their feelings with other gang members due to being perceived as "weak":

> *If you were to speak weak, then you're just gonna get just wasted. They'll treat you weak for months and months and months. They'll smash you down to weakness, and then they'll rebuild you. Yeah, that's what they do. (P-009).*

The thought here was often, "*If I'm hurting, he's gonna hurt too"*.

The final part of the pre-event phase was the ***Event Approach*** which describes the amount of pre-planning, both cognitively and behaviourally, involved in the lead-up to the PVE. As well as the previously mentioned contextual factors, **Who is Watching** and **Victim Profile**, we highlight two other contextual variables during this phase that impacted how the perpetrator approached his victim: **Victim Proximity** (e.g., Was the victim, or a victim, immediately available to them when the trigger occurred) and **Prison Routines** (e.g., officers' shift patterns, lockdown routines, yard time). Both contextual elements altered how much time the perpetrator spent planning their attack. For example, if the victim was very close to them when the trigger occurred, or the ordered hit was given, the time spent planning the approach was generally shorter than if the victim was not in their immediate location. Furthermore, if the trigger occurred and the perpetrator was then hindered from getting to the victim due to various prison routines (e.g., being locked down for lunch or the night), then more planning occurred as they waited to act.

Three predominant event approaches were described. The first, ***Impetuous***, describes the more emotionally driven, reactive approaches in the heat of the moment. These usually occurred when the victim was near the perpetrator when he was triggered. Participants who used this approach described giving little thought or care to what they were about to do or who was around. They described being infuriated by something the victim had just said or how they had behaved towards them. "E.g., *I just said, 'what the fuck's your problem?' and he said 'what?' and then boom"(P-008).* There was also no thought about what might happen to them if they went ahead with the violence. "E.g., *You don't really don't even think about a consequence. You don't even think about nothing"(P-009).*

The second type of event approach involved ***Some Preparation*** as to how they would approach the victim and usually occurred over several minutes. In these cases, the victim was easily accessible and close to the perpetrator. Thoughts involved how best to approach the victim given their size. Participants described thinking about whether a blind shot would be needed to give them the upper hand over their victim, or if they needed to attack as a pack to overpower the victim. During this phase there was also a process referred as "rarking" – a type of positive self-talk to prepare themselves for the event mentally. They described repeating the following type of phrases in their heads to themselves: *"We'll see how tough you are?"*; *I'm gonna drop this fella in front of everyone"*; *"He's a big fella, but I've dropped bigger".* They also described thinking about how they would do it because of **Who was Watching** at the time. Many described thinking about the need to act quickly to send a message to the victim and the other events' witnesses. "E.g., *This is what happens when you when you fuck up with us [our gang]."* Some described thinking about the impact not acting would have on the gang's reputation and territorial control, as well as their sense of belonging to the gang. "E.g., *You feel like you have to; otherwise, you feel like there's no honour. You feel like you've betrayed [the gang]in some way. So, I'm just thinking all that sort of stuff,*

*just rarking myself up"(P-007).* The only participant who was a gang prospect at the time of his PVE described thinking about his safety in the context of what the gang might do to him if he did not act ("*it's either him or me*"); however, established gang members said concern for self was not something they considered because the gang needed them. None of the participants described any forethought regarding any punitive outcome that might come from the justice or correctional system. Instead, the focus was on what other prisoners would do to them if they did not act. These concerns stemmed from the proximal and direct threat other prisoners posed to their physical safety, including their life which they mentioned numerous times. Conversely, possible punitive outcomes from the justice or correctional system were more distal and not life-threatening.

The third style involved a ***Calculated*** approach which varied in length from hours to days to weeks of preparation depending on access to the target victim and prison routines. All calculated approaches in our study were ***gang-related,*** with the primary goals being ***Punish*** and ***Reward***. Frequently the victim was someone who owed a debt to the gang (e.g., drug debt), betrayed the gang, or posed a territorial risk (e.g., a rival gang member). In this approach, participants described thinking at length about where and when they should carry out the PVE for maximum impact (e.g., prisoners watching) but a minimal physical risk of hurt to self (e.g., room to move, back-up from other gang members, officers not watching). They also described thinking about who needed to witness the violence so that the message would spread around the unit (e.g., organising for a neutral to witness the event so an unbiased view of what occurred would be dissertated); as well as whether senior members of the gang should also be present to reinforce the message that they were intending to send during the PVE. They further described lengthy plans to get the victim to that chosen location. In one case, a perpetrator spent weeks ensuring that he and other gang members were shifted into cells on the same wing as his intended victim to ensure easy access. They

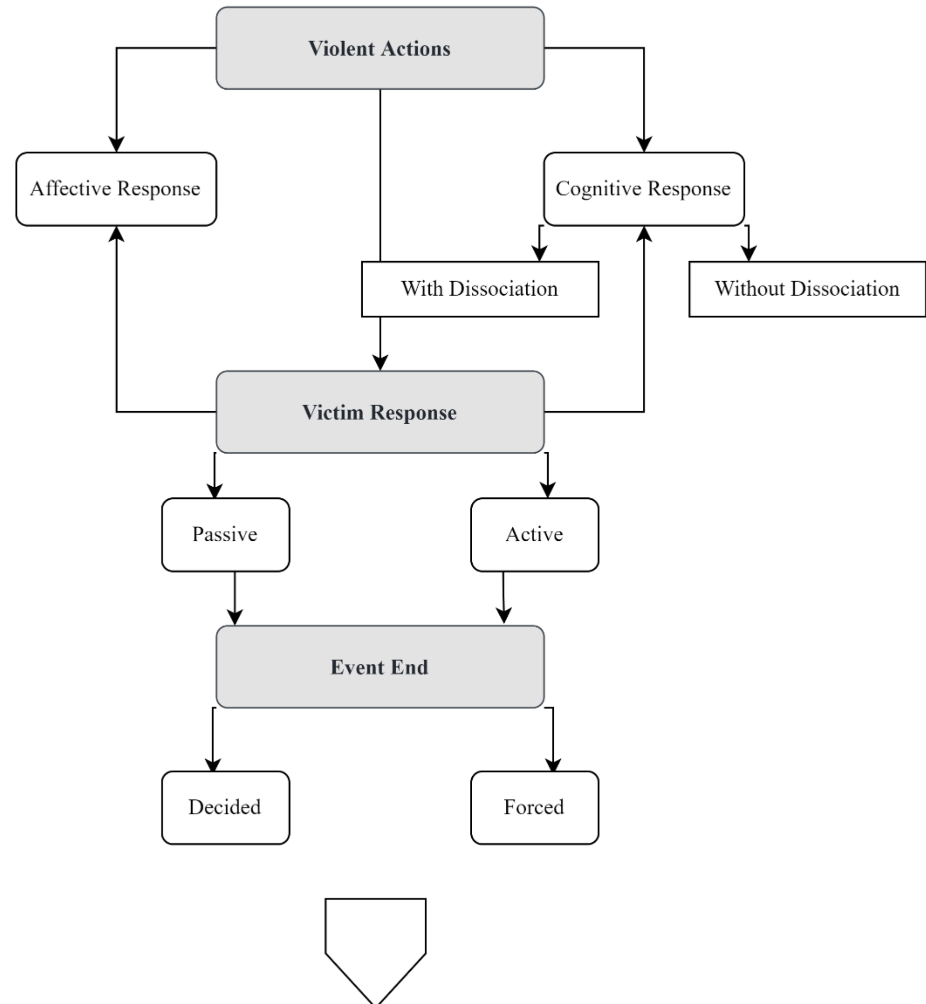
also spent time befriending the victim by giving him items to get him to let his guard down and there was a process of readying themselves for battle both psychologically (e.g., rarking themselves up) and physically by arming themselves (e.g., making weapons, smuggling in weapons) or training to ensure they were battle fit.

***Phase 3: Event***

The event phase refers specifically to the behavioural, cognitive, and affective aspects of the PVE (See Figure 3). These aspects varied through-out the event depending on the ***Victim Response,*** with either the victim being ***Passive*** *(e.g., did not fight back) or* ***Active*** *(e.g., tried to fight back)* during the PVE**.** Events in which the victim actively tried to fight back were often lengthier and elicited increased negative affective responses during the PVE. None of the participants described events in which they were more badly injured than the victim, or events they “lost”. The ***Violent Actions*** describe individual and group behaviour during this phase. On some occasions, the event started with a short verbal exchange in which the participant attempted to give the victim one last chance to right the perceived wrong (E.g., “pay up” in reference to a debt) or to “stop lying to me”. On other occasions the verbal exchange was used to signal that violence was about to occur (E.g., “Let’s go”). Both types of verbal exchanges were followed quickly by actual violence**.** On other occasions, the PVE began with the participant “blind-shotting” the victim (e.g., an act that the victim did not see coming) to give the participant a head-start and upper hand in the interaction that followed. Individual behaviours included: punching, elbowing, head stomping, kicking, stabbing, and strangulation (with an improvised weapon like a phone cord, towel, or jumper). Participants also described other gang members joining in on the PVE either at the initiation of it or during the event. They called this behaviour “one in, all in”

**Figure 3**

*Phase 3: Event*




or "backing up a brother". Sometimes this group attack was planned because the victim was too large to be taken on alone; on others, the perpetrator was not expecting his fellow gang members to join in:

*Our brothers were in there….I could hear one of the Dogs (Mongrel Mob) behind me saying, 'I want a piece of this'. By then, I was using my elbow on his [the victim's] head. I know it must have been serious because there was blood everywhere. (P-007).*

Sometimes a senior gang member might be present (but not actively involved) during the assault to reinforce "the message" that was being sent through the violence. Perpetrator 013 described why he needed to be present – but not physically involved - during a PVE which was triggered by a threat to prison territory:

> *I had a prospect in there who was doing the hit. He's brought the shank in, I'm supervising it. And I'm sending the message…and the message went like this. 'Don't you know who you are? Don't you know where you are? Do you know what this is for? Get the fuck out of our prison'."*

During the violence, participants also reported different ***Cognitive*** **Responses** (thoughts), either with ***Dissociation*** *or* ***Without Dissociation*.** The participants (n= 6) who experienced ***Dissociation*** described having some initial thoughts during the PVE of wanting to harm the victim, but then periods in which they "blanked out", sometimes causing more harm than initially intended because they "couldn't stop". During these periods, they lost the concept of time, space, and control over their actions. They described having no idea of who or what was happening around them at the time. Some described it as though someone else was doing the violence, and they were watching it like a movie. Occasionally, they described experiencing brief flashbacks of violence in their childhoods during the PVE which impacted their thoughts and behaviour "E.g.*, I'm not the punching bag."*

A thought that frequently came up during PVEs ***Without Dissociation*** was the need to extensively hurt the victim so that he would not come back at them or the gang. *"E.g., What I wanted to do was hurt him enough so that he stopped. If he wouldn't stop and he was going to try and kill me, then I'm going to kill him"(P-006).* During the **Violence Act**, participants

also reported the **Affective Responses** such as anger (e.g., annoyed, irate, furious), elation (powerful, joy) and fear (scared, anxious).

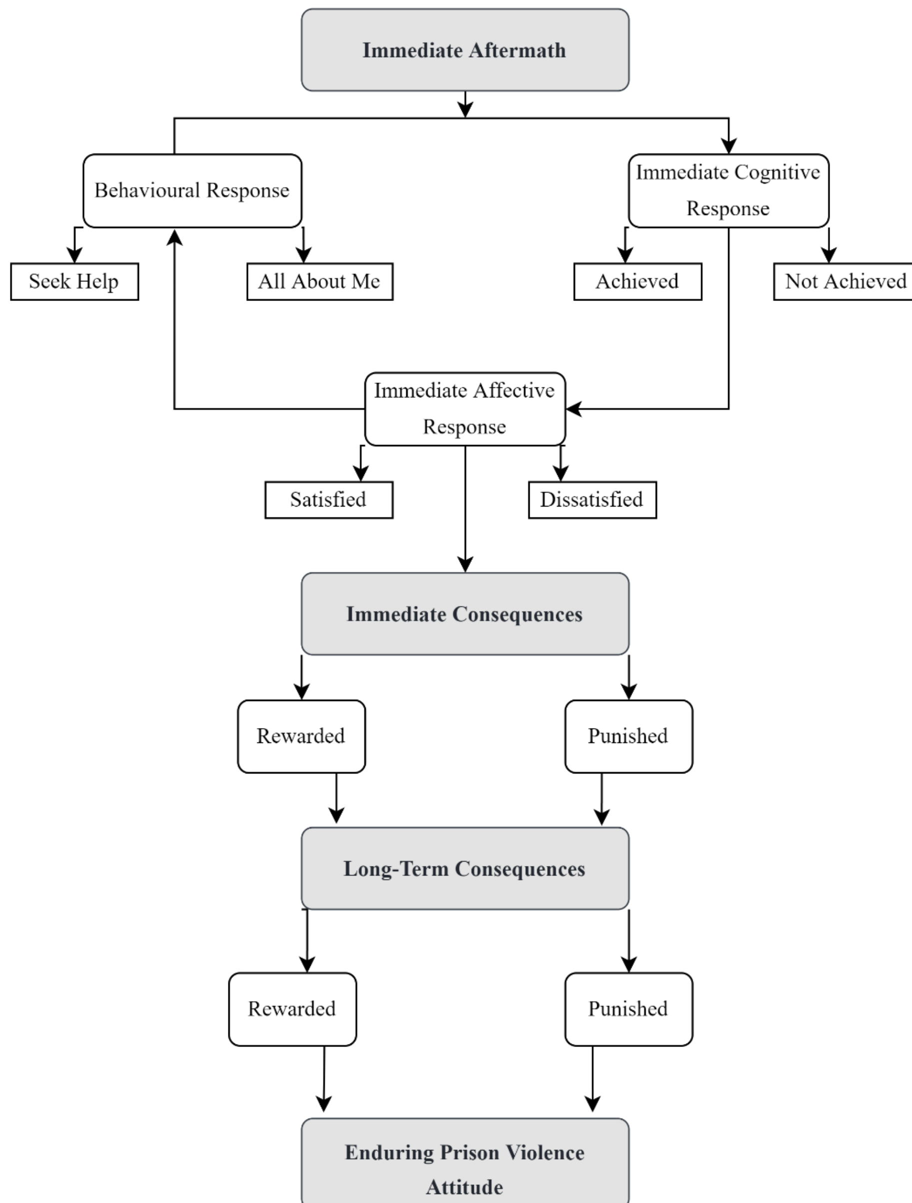
Whether the perpetrator experienced dissociation or not impacted the **Event End** with participants who did not experience dissociation deciding (***Decided)*** when the violence should end. They based their decision on when it should end on whether they were satisfied that the victim had suffered enough pain or harm. "E.g., *Unless they are crying and pleading for their life, that's when I'll stop and when I'm satisfied that he's had enough"(P-011).* They described looking for signs that the victim was no longer moving to make that decision. "E.g., *If he's not moving anymore, you go: 'oh, he's had a good hiding"P-011).* Conversely*,* participants who experienced dissociation during the PVE described the ending as ***Forced*** due to the intervention of prison officers or other prisoners. They described that intervening moment as the one that brought them back into conscious awareness and made them realise that they had "blanked out" during the PVE.

***Phase 4: Post-Event***

The **Immediate Aftermath** period occurs within minutes of the act of violence ending. Participants report a range of different ***Behavioural Responses*** in this period depending on their ***Immediate Cognitive Responses*** (e.g., whether they believed their goal had been achieved *or* not). These thoughts also impact their ***Immediate Affective Response.*** As seen in the model (See Figure 3), participants evaluated that they had either ***Achieved*** or had ***Not Achieved*** their initial goal. Those who thought they had ***Achieved*** their intended goal more reported a ***Satisfied Immediate Affective Response*** in which the perpetrator felt positively (e.g., joyous, relieved, content) about their actions. Participants in these categories described ***Behavioural Responses*** and ***Immediate Cognitive Responses*** that focus on themselves. They described needing to cover their tracks so that they did not get punished

**Figure 4**

*Phase 4: Post Event*




by officers. The behavioural response to these thoughts was to hide any physical evidence of the violence (e.g., washing blood off hands and clothes or disposing of any weapons used); and ensure that witnesses or the victim kept their mouths shut (e.g., via verbal threats) and did not "nark" (tell the authorities). In other cases, they described giving no thought to any future punishment and just carrying on with normal daily activities. They also gave little to

no thought to the victim's welfare. Participants who thought their goal was ***Not Achieved*** described experiencing more ***Dissatisfied Immediate Affective Responses.*** In these instances, participants reported feeling unfulfilled by the violence and feeling no better or worse than they did before the PVE. This sometimes-occurred following PVE involving ***Dissociation.*** Participants described these "going blank" moments as robbing them of control over the situation and leading the victim to be injured more severely than initially intended.

Initial thoughts following ***Dissociation*** included worrying about what would happen to them (e.g., formal punishment) due to the severe nature of the injuries and feeling panicked or scared. Most showed little concern for the victim's welfare following the PVE, but rather the focus was on their own needs. However, two participants did describe being concerned about the victim's welfare following the PVE; though, only one of these men took steps to ***Seek help*** (e.g., sending someone to get medical help for the victim).

The next stage of the model describes the Post-Event Period. It begins with the ***Immediate Consequences*** participants experienced in the hours and days following the PVE and how they thought and felt about those. The two predominant perceptions were of being ***Rewarded*** or ***Punished*.** It is important to note that while some participants received a formal punishment from Department of Corrections staff (e.g., isolation in the "pound" or shifted to another unit or jail) during this period, many believed that the rewards from the PVE (e.g., mana from their gang peers, membership to the gang, removal of a threat) outweighed those formal punishments. These beliefs then impacted their perceptions of whether they were being punished or rewarded following the PVE.

Those who felt **Punished** described feeling like the situation they now found themselves in was unfair. This perception occurred for varying reasons. For some it was because they thought the victim "deserved" what had occurred and thus they did people a favour by assaulting him. While others felt they were being unfairly punished because a third

party or parties had joined in when they should not have to escalate the severity of the victim's injuries. Lastly, others felt the punishment was not fair because dissociation occurred and their intention was never to harm the victim to that extent. During this time, thoughts frequently focused on blaming their victims for what had happened to justify their actions. They described an intense hatred for their victim and little care for the victim's welfare, particularly if they had a friendship/relationship with the victim prior to the PVE:

> *Well because he made me go there, I didn't really care at the time you know. He didn't think about me, so if you are not going to care and think about me, then I'm not going to care and think about you. (P-006).*

A few described replaying the event in their head repeatedly to try and make sense of what had happened and what they could have done differently. This rumination occurred only during non-gang related PVEs and when the victim ended up more injured than initially intended due to dissociation or a third party getting involved. They described feeling annoyed, angry, and frustrated at either themselves or the others that got involved. P-004 described how he felt about being put in isolation after dissociating and severely injuring a member of his own gang shortly after he got off a distressing phone call which made him feel angry and powerless:

> *I'm just thinking- why the fuck did I do that for? This shit sucks. Look where you have ended up. Now I only get one five-minute phone call a week. Now I can't talk to my kids. A lot of stuff is stewing in my mind. I feel like I'm being treated like an animal.*

Those who described feeling ***Rewarded*** primarily described being treated "like a hero" by staff and fellow prisoners alike shortly after the event. Perpetrator 002 described how he was treated by staff immediately after he assaulted a gang prospect who had tried to attack him:

*On the way up [to the pound], [prison officers] were thanking me for beating him up. Because they didn't like him and when I got [moved], they were thanking me. So, it had gone around the whole jail what happened, and they were treating me like a hero because none of the officers liked him and thought that he needed the bash.*

This treatment involved direct praise or increased respect from others and reinforced participants' thoughts about being "justified" in their actions and that violence was "accepted" in the prison environment. Some participants also described receiving no formal punishment from officers, with them "turning a blind eye" (e.g., pretending not to have seen anything). Other ***Rewards*** described by participants during this period included the removal of negative emotions (e.g., anxiety, powerlessness) they were feeling before the PVE. Instead, they described the PVE as making them feel powerful and in control again.

The next stage of the model describes the ***Long-Term Consequences*** participants experienced in the months or even years following the PVE. Again, they perceived that they were either ***Rewarded*** or ***Punished.*** Those who referenced being treated like a hero immediately after the PVE described it as lasting long after the PVE (***Rewarded***). This hero status afforded them some extra privileges and status within the gang, e.g., being gifted control of a "territory" on release from prison. The PVE also increased both their own and their gang's reputation of people to be "feared", thus allowing them to go about their day-to-day lives more easily (e.g., reduced threats to self and gang's power) in prison after the PVE. Perpetrator 009, who was new to a unit when he assaulted a high-ranking and respected rival gang member, described what life was like for him after the PVE: "*They [other gang members] seemed quite impressed. Yeah. So, how I got treated was quite good. So, it worked out good for me in a way because everyone just started being nice."*

This increased status or reputation often stayed with them for years as they moved to different prisons or served different sentences.

Those who were ***Punished*** described having formal charges laid in court or misconducts noted on their prison files, leading to two differing responses. For some, it led to increased feelings of anger, blame, and resentment towards their victim. One perpetrator described holding onto extreme hatred towards his victim over 20 years after the PVE. However, the punishment made others think about the seriousness and consequences of violence. During these reflections, participants described thinking about the event from the victim's perspective (empathising) and feeling both regret and remorse. This process more frequently occurred if the victim was injured more seriously than the perpetrator initially planned due to how the event played out (e.g., dissociation occurred, or a third party got involved and escalated the event). Those who felt remorse described apologising to their victim or pleading guilty to formal charges in court. They described thinking that they would do things differently next time to ensure the victim was not as severely injured.

The final category of the model describes the participants' ***Enduring Prison Violence Attitudes.*** Every participant expressed a view that prison violence would always exist. The main reason for this view was due to the presence of gang members and contraband in prison. They described a core belief that gang members should and would always be more violent than other prisoners because it was not only their right, but also their duty. "E.g., *Yeah, it's because we think we can do anything we want. That's what that is. We do what we want, when we want, and if we want."* Perpetrator 007 describes why he thinks gang members are overrepresented in prison violence statistics: "*It's pack attacks really. I never told any of them [other gangsters] to jump into any of my fights over the years, they just did."* These enduring attitudes maintain the violence cycle for gang members in prison.

**Gang v Non-Gang Related Events**

The above model consists of three broad types of PVEs involving gang members. We determined the types by examining who was involved (both participant and victim), the

trigger, and the goal of the PVE. While there are a few distinct differences between the three types, for the most part, they are more similar in function and consequence than dissimilar. However, some characterises are more common in one type of PVEs than the other.

The first type, ***Gang Directed,*** consists of events directly ordered by the gang (e.g., an ordered hit on the victim from inside or outside the prison). These PVEs are predominantly characterised by explicit event preparation and calculation over weeks or day/s and most often involve a process of "arming up" and readying for battle. These events also involved thinking about and making plans for who needed to be watching when the eventual event unfolded so that the message, they intended to send with the violence, would be relayed. The events themselves involved more than just the participant. Plans were made for other gang members to either take an active part in the violence (e.g., pack attack) or be present as backup to ensure the "hit" was completed. There were also plans for a "fall guy" to be present should prison officers find out about the PVE and seek to charge someone for the attack. These events predominantly ended with more positive post-event reflections due to the positive reinforcement they received from the gang for their involvement.

The second type we have labelled ***Gang Related.*** This type consists of PVEs that were committed for or on behalf of the gang, but which were not directly ordered by the gang. It also includes PVEs that occurred because the victim was acting on behalf of a gang. An example of this includes a gang prospect initiating a fight with the participant to prove themselves to the gang. These events were predominantly characterised by a felt sense that the participant's gang or a specific gang member had been disrespected by the victim; or that the victim was a threat to the gang and/or the participant in some way (e.g., the victim was planning to attack a member). These events involved less calculation than those that were ***Gang Directed,*** and the length of time between trigger and actual violence was shorter. While there was usually some preparation for the PVE, this was usually only minutes to

hours during which time the participant described themselves as “rarking” themselves up and occasionally arming up if a weapon was easily accessible. These events also involved more thought about the presence of other gang members (E.g., who was watching) when the trigger for the event occurred. The events themselves usually only involved the participant attacking the victim, however on one occasion other gang members joined in to “back-up” the participant, though this was not planned. These events also predominantly ended with more positive post-event reflections due to their feelings that they had done right by the gang.

The third type we have labelled ***Non-Gang Related*** PVEs. While both the participant and victim involved in the violence in this study were gang members or associates, the violence itself was not directly related to that relationship. These PVEs were predominantly characterised by overwhelming negative feelings through-out the pre-event phase. In general, these PVEs involved less calculation and planning than those which occurred during gang directed or related PVEs and tended to be more impetuous, automated, and quick. Non-gang related events predominantly involved the participant alone inflicting the violence on the victim. These types of events also predominantly ended with more dissatisfied affective responses post event.

While there were some differences between these differing types of events, there were also some commonalities. One clear theme that emerged from all the participants was that they had “no choice” but to use violence to solve whatever problem or threat that had arisen. In most of the descriptions there was also a callous disregard for the welfare of the victim following the PVE, with the participants believing that the victim deserved what they got. Dissociation was also experienced across the differing types of PVEs.

## Discussion

The main objective of this thesis was to gain a better understanding of when and why gang members commit violence in New Zealand prisons. It was hoped that by doing so we

could answer the questions as to why gang members were overrepresented when it comes to involvement in such incidents. We also wanted to know if all gang violence in prison was “gang-related” and if PVEs perpetrated on behalf of the gang differed in form and function from those which were not. We used Grounded Theory to gather and explore the personal accounts of 12 gang members/associates to develop the first descriptive model of the event process of institutional gang violence. The final model consists of four distinct phases, 32 descriptive categories, and five contextual categories, that, when combined, describe the distal and proximal intrapersonal, interpersonal, and situational factors that interact to influence the perpetration of PVEs for gang members. Fundamentally, our research draws attention to the complex nature of prison violence carried out by gang members. Nevertheless, we suggest that by conceptualising gang members' involvement in prison violence as a process, we can get a deeper understanding of the why and how of their involvement in PVEs. It also allows us to examine previously unidentified psychological constructs involved in PVEs for gang members and wider ecological interactions at play. Furthermore, the model offers several explanations for why gang members are overrepresented in prison violence statistics and the extent to which PVEs are done for or on behalf of the gang. These explanations have been missing in prior empirical research on this topic. The model's theoretical and practical implications, as well as its limitations, and future research directions, will be discussed through-out.

**Overrepresentation of gang members**

We know from prior research on prison violence that being a gang member is one of the most significant risk factors for prison violence (Fahmy et al., 2020; Fischer, 2001; McGuire, 2018; Schenk & Fremouw, 2012). However, the reasons for that had not been explored in prior empirical research. Our model fills that research gap and offers several explanations for why gang members may be overrepresented in prison violence statistics

compared to non-gang members. One of these is the role of gang identity. A notable theme in our study was the entwinement of participants' sense of self (e.g., the characteristics that define them) with the gang – or their gang identity. This entwinement led them to often think and act as part of a group rather than as an individual. This phenomenon has not been highlighted in past empirical research examining the involvement of gangs in prison violence. However, it does fit with prior research using Social Identity Theory to examine the link between gang identity and subsequent anti-social and violent behaviour in the community (Bubolz & Lee, 2017; Hennigan & Spanovic, 2012; Stretesky & Pogrebin, 2007). Social Identity Theory focuses on how people think about themselves and others in an intergroup context. When a person identifies themselves as a member of a particular group (e.g., a criminal gang), they take on a social identity associated with that group (Hennigan & Spanovic, 2012). This social identity then impacts their view of themselves and their behaviour both within that social group and towards those in other social groups. For example, Vigil (1988) observed that to gain acceptance from gang peers, individuals "adopted behaviour patterns that initially have little intrinsic meaning to him, and perhaps might even be repugnant, but nevertheless are requisites for gang membership: for example, showing that one can feel, act, and look hard and uncaring" (pp. 427–428). The more strongly one identified with a social group and what it offered them personally (e.g., acceptance, belonging), the more likely they were to act in accordance with the group's social rules (Sherman et al., 1999). In the case of gang members, the more committed they were to their gang identity, the more likely they are to behave anti-socially and use violence to maintain that identity (Bubolz & Lee, 2017; Hennigan & Spanovic, 2012).

This pattern of personal assimilation to the gang's way of thinking and acting can be seen in our study. Our participants described their strong connection to their gang identity at the time of their PVEs and how that specifically impacted their need to be violent. They also

explicitly stated that as gang members, they could not show weakness. Furthermore, they described being taught by gang leaders that the gang must come before all else and that self-sacrifice was expected. In turn, these teachings impacted not only participants' motivations for violence but also their beliefs about violence and their violent actions. Participants described being taught "one-in-all-in" and "backing up a brother". These teachings likely increase the likelihood of gang members joining in on PVEs that do not directly involve them due to beliefs that it was expected of them, thus increasing the numbers of gang members involved in a PVE and creating an overrepresentation in the statistics.

Furthermore, our participants' deep connection to the gang meant they often felt hurt, disrespected, or threatened when witnessing members of their gang being threatened or disrespected despite having no direct involvement in that event. This collective thinking led participants to initiate and get involved in PVEs on behalf of the gang without being directly asked. They described needing to protect their sense of self, or mana (pride), as a gang member by using violence to settle issues that did not directly involve them. Given this pattern of over-involvement with fellow gang members' disputes, there may be more perceived triggers or reasons for violence in prison for gang members than for non-gang members. These increased triggers may cause gang members to use violence more often than prisoners who are not gang members.

While participants' sense of self as a gang member appears to be a characteristic imported into prison, our model highlights that it is not a static risk factor as the importation perspective would likely suggest (Irwin & Cressy, 1962). Instead, our research shows it is dynamic and becomes heightened, or strengthened, due to interactions within the prison environment, particularly the make-up of the gang muster. This finding highlights again the complex nature of prison violence and supports the arguments put forward by Steiner and Wooldredge (2020) and Johnstone and Cooke (2007) that prison violence comes about due to

a series of complex interactions between prisoners, others, and their environment which can either increase or decrease the risk of violence. Our participants described the fact that there was no escape from rival gang members in prison, as there would be in the community, as a contributing factor in their need to be a gang member "24/7". Their descriptions highlight role of physical environment. They also said they used violence more frequently in prison than they would in the community because of the presence of these rivals, thus highlighting the role of interpersonal factors and the gang muster. They described two reasons why the presence of rivals increased their perceived need to use violence. Firstly, if their gang was the dominant one in a particular unit, their need to be an active gang member was even more critical as they needed to maintain power and dominance over other gangs and not be seen to be weak. If their gang was the less dominant gang, they needed to use violence to establish their own reputation as someone not to be messed with to ensure their continued safety among rivals. Therefore, it appears the prison ecology and the presence of gang members within it strengthened participants' gang identity and subsequent violent behaviour while inside. These findings fit with prior assertions that the prison environment influences the opportunities for violence as gang members fight for control of power and status within confined space (Gaston et al., 2021; Kristine, 2011; Kubik et al., 2017). However, this relationship has not been included in prior theories of prison violence.

This strengthening of gang identity in prison may also help explain gang members' involvement in PVEs not directly related to the gang. Our model highlights that gang members are frequently involved in PVEs that are not done on behalf of, or for, the gang. Almost half of the events described by our participants fall into the non-gang-related category. Past researchers could not distinguish this difference due to how gang members' involvement in PVEs was measured via file records. As described above, our results highlight some distinct features of prison life for gang members that influence their perceptions around

the felt sense that they need and have "no choice" but to use violence, whether on behalf of the gang or not. As previously mentioned, participants spoke of needing to be a gang member "24/7" in prison. For them, being a gang member meant using violence to solve most problems in their lives problems because they could not afford to be seen as weak by anyone, not just rivals. These beliefs differ from those of the non-gang members we spoke to, who described acting in a way (E.g., "keeping my head down") which purposely helped them avoid using violence. However, we only spoke to two non-gang members in our study; therefore, their experiences may not generalise to all non-gang members in prison.

While our results suggest that having a strong gang identity plays a part in both non-gang and gang-related and directed PVEs, we noted some differences between such events. Non-gang PVEs described by our participants were generally more emotionally reactive and impetuous (e.g., in response to a perceived threat, provocation, or frustration). Conversely, gang-directed were more proactive (e.g., calculated and reward-focused). The use of either reactive or proactive violence has not been examined in prior empirical research on prison violence. However, it has been discussed in the literature examining interpersonal violence in the community (Babcock et al., 2000; Keltner & Kring, 1998; Ross & Babcock, 2009). Reactive violence was more closely linked to mood (e.g., fear of abandonment), with offenders lashing out when they become too distressed to regulate negative emotions (Keltner & Kring, 1998). In contrast, proactive violence was more likely to be used for control or power (Babcock et al., 2000). These patterns align with the differences seen between gang and non-gang-related events in our study. Those who described non-gang-related triggers described feeling threatened or emotionally overwhelmed before their PVE and lashing out without much thought (reactive violence). The goal was usually to remove a threat or an overwhelming emotion and was frequently linked to past trauma (e.g., reminded them of being unsafe, powerless previously). On the other hand, those who described gang-related or

directed events thought through a plan (even if it was brief) with a clear goal before the PVE (proactive violence). Goals consisted mainly of gaining power or dominance for control of territory or contraband (e.g., supply of drugs) or as retribution for a perceived act of harm (e.g., drug debt owed) or threat to the gang (e.g., rival gangs making moves to dominate a unit). Therefore, our model gives some insight into different types of violence used by gang members in the prison setting and the reasons for those differences. Our model also highlights the prominent role of contraband and drugs in prison violence involving gang members. This finding is consistent with prior research suggesting gang-related violence occurs in prison as a result of efforts to seize or maintain control of the prison economy (Human Rights Watch, 2001; Maitra, 2020).

**Role of Trauma**

Another prominent feature highlighted in our model is the role of childhood trauma and its impact on participants' failure to develop non-violent coping strategies to manage their emotions or interpersonal conflict. Our interview data repeatedly demonstrated the impact witnessing and being subjected to violence during childhood had on participants' normalisation of violence as an acceptable coping strategy or problem-solving tool, and on the absence of other coping strategies. Participants repeatedly made unprompted links to what they had learned about violence by observing and being victimised during childhood while describing their PVE. They also described continuing to witness and being subjected to or needing to carry out violence once they joined the gang, reinforcing those belief systems developed early in life. These findings are in line with past research which shows gang members experience greater levels of trauma and violence and trauma as children when compared to non-gang members (Gaston et al., 2021; Quinn, Pacella, Dickson-Gomez, et al., 2017). It also adds weight to the notion that rather than protecting members from the adverse events of their childhood, gang membership perpetuates the cycle of violence (Lenzi et al.,

2015; Peterson et al., 2004; Quinn et al., 2017). Our findings also add to the literature that suggests that cumulative exposure to violence throughout the lifetime normalises violent attitudes and behaviours and can lead to psychological desensitisation to violence (Quinn, et al., 2017; Stoddard et al., 2015). As Gaston et al. (2021) highlighted, our research also draws attention to the adverse physiological and psychological outcomes our participants experienced due to their cumulative and chronic exposure to trauma and violence. Similarly, to their participants, our participants reported feeling fearful, anxious, hypervigilant, and angry most of the time. Like many participants in the Gaston et al. (2021) study, our participants considered these normal and natural reactions to life.

The influence of our participants' trauma backgrounds was further witnessed in dissociation during the PVEs, with half of our participants describing having such experiences. We know from past research that repeated childhood abuse exposure can lead to dissociative experiences in adulthood, particularly during subsequent violence perpetration episodes (Apgar, 1999; Draijer & Langeland, 1999; LaMotte & Murphy, 2017; Lipschitz et al., 1996; Webermann & Murphy, 2019). However, these experiences are not highlighted in past research on prison violence. Given research suggesting that high levels of dissociation can perpetuate a cycle of interpersonal violence (Daisy & Hien, 2014) it is an important finding in terms of better understanding why gang members use violence both in general and while in prison. The information also gives insight into how these types of events unfold and end. Participants described using severe violence while dissociating, often causing more damage than initially intended because they had blacked out or could not stop. Typically, they only stopped after intervention from a third party.

Our study also highlights the possible role of lateral violence in initiating PVE. Lateral violence–sometimes known as internalised colonialism–is a response to feeling oppressed or powerless for a long time (Quince, 2021). However, instead of fighting back

against the person's actual oppressor or attacker, the person directs their anger towards their peers to regain some form of power. It is viewed as a form of displaced anger or frustration and used as an explanation for why hurt people often hurt others (Quince, 2021). Several of the participants in our study described this phenomenon during their PVEs. They described looking for someone to take their anger or frustration out on because they could not direct it at the people or institutions who had made them feel that way in the first place. These findings highlight again the complex nature of the prison violence and that factors well beyond the prison wall can influence PVEs.

**Prison Life**

Our model highlights the varying aspects prison regimes and staff behaviour have on PVEs events involving gang members. For example, most of the gang members in our study described giving little thought or care to the presence of prison officers when initiating their PVEs; nor did they give much thought to the possible formal punitive consequences until after the fact. This lack of forethought was particularly evident during the more reactive PVEs which occurred over a shorter period. Instead, in the Pre-Event phase, participants' thoughts and concerns were focused on what their gang or other prisoners might do to them if they did not act and what rewards they might get (e.g., mana from the gang, promotion up the gang ranks, removal of a threat) if they carried out the PVE. One possible explanation for this lack of concern about detection of their violence from prison staff could come back to their perceptions that staff did not care about them and would not protect them from violence. Conversely, they described the gang as a family who cared for them and would protect them from future threats of violence in prison. Therefore, maintaining the loyalty and respect of the gang was at the forefront of their minds during PVEs. Our findings align with those of Gaston et al. (2012), who found that members of the same gang have each other's backs and are always on guard and prepared to protect each other should a conflict arise. Research by

Lindegaard and Gear (2014) also suggests that being part of a gang establishes a sense of safety among members.

The focus on what the gang thought of their actions, rather than any formal punishment they received, was seen again in the Post-Event phase of the model. As seen in the model, men described being treated like a hero by their gang peers. This hero status or reputation stayed with them for years across prisons and provided them with some tangible rewards (e.g., power of others, control of contraband, staff leaving them alone). Gaining this reputation and respect thus outweighed the usually brief formal punishments given to them by the prison authorities. Therefore, typical forms of punishment used by prison staff in the wake of violent events may not be as effective as staff might think or want. Though it must be noted that only one of our participants received a formal judicial punishment (e.g., criminal charges) following his PVE. Nevertheless, this participant said those charges did little to deter his future use of violence in prison.

Our model also highlights other factors of prison life which heightened our participants sense of needing to use violence (See Figure 2). Most of the PVEs described by our participants occurred during the first few months of them being in a new unit, highlighting this period as a possibly a riskier time for violence for them. The men also said the makeup of the gang muster in a particular unit, as well as the prison they were in, also influenced their beliefs around the need for violence. While the make-up of a gang muster has been raised as an influencing variable in prison violence events in prior research (Fahmy et al., 2020), the reasons for that had not been thoroughly examined. Our model describes some of those possible reasons. As mentioned earlier in our discussion on gang overrepresentation, our participants' use of violence was influenced by how many gang members were in the unit with them and whether those members were in the same gang as them, or not. They described needing to use more violence frequently if rivals were present to either maintain the power or

dominance of their gang in a unit, or to establish their personal reputation for protection from future violence.

**Theoretical Implications**

Our model features several risk factors highlighted in prior causal theories of prison violence. For example, our model confirms that specific individual characteristics that people import into prison with them influence their use of violence in prison. These findings are in line with the importation perspective of prison violence. In our model, some of those individual factors included gang identity, violence-supportive schemas, and prior experiences of trauma and use of violence. However, unlike the importation perspective, our model explains why these individual risk factors, like being a gang member, matter and how they play out during different stages of a PVE. These explanations have been missing from prior theories but are essential when creating a theory likely to be used to implement practical steps or policies to reduce violence.

Furthermore, our model highlights how the prison environment, and those who live and work within it, interact to heighten the role of individual risk factors during a PVE. So, while our model also supports the impact of risk factors highlighted in both the deprivation (e.g., feeling powerless) and management perspectives (E.g., staff behaviour) of prison violence, it reinforces that not one of these perspectives alone explains prison violence in isolation. Instead, our model strengthens arguments put forward by interactionist perspectives which highlight how micro and macro-level variables interact and influence each other at different points to either increase or reduce the risk of prison violence (Johnstone and Cooke, 2010). Consistent with the multilevel social control-opportunity perspective (Steiner & Wooldredge, 2020), our model demonstrates the temporal nature of PVEs, and that the interaction of risk factors throughout the pre-event period contributes to the perpetuation of prison violence. Therefore, prison violence theories need to move beyond simply highlighting

risk factors for violence. Instead, they should consider how the cumulation of these risk factors interact at different stages to continue the cycle of violence. Our model also highlights the complex aetiology of prison violence. This complexity has implications for researchers who may try to encapsulate the phenomena in one singular broad theory.

In addition, our model identifies a potential gap in existing prison violence theories regarding the role of trauma and dissociation. While research into the importation perspective has identified individual personality variables as risk factors for prison violence, trauma-related symptoms (e.g., dissociation) have not explicitly been examined. However, this research gap warrants closer inspection, given the research suggesting that gang members experience greater levels of trauma and violence and trauma as children compared to non-gang members (Gaston et al., 2021; Quinn et al., 2017); and due to the links between trauma and violence (Daisy & Hien, 2014). Exploring risk factors for PVE with a trauma-informed lens may highlight risk factors that have not yet been considered when examining gang members' involvement in prison violence.

Lastly, our research is one of only a handful of studies to examine gang violence in prison by speaking directly to gang members. Our participants shared valuable information about previously unidentified psychological constructs involved in PVEs for gang members (e.g., dissociation) and possible explanations for why gang members are overrepresented in prison violence statistics. These explanations have been missing from past theories. Therefore, future prison violence researchers should consider the value of interviewing those directly involved in PVEs in future theory development.

**Practical Implications**

First and foremost, as already acknowledged, prison violence is a wicked problem, with numerous factors inside and outside the prison walls that combine to influence gang

members' involvement. Nevertheless, our study highlights practical implications for addressing prison violence in Aotearoa.

Firstly, our participants' event narratives highlight the role of trauma in PVEs and the need for prison staff to be aware of and acknowledge both past and continuing trauma when interacting with gang members. Part of that process might involve staff–management and frontline–receiving specific training on how to work in a trauma-informed way. This training should include basic information about how the brain responds to threats and how trauma heightens those threat responses (Dempster-Rivett, 2018). Training should also include information about how seemingly neutral situations or actions (e.g., double-bunking, strip searches) may be triggering to people who have experienced past trauma (Dempster-Rivett, 2018). Trauma-informed training for staff has proven helpful in reducing assaults in prisons that have implemented such strategies. For example, a women's prison in the United States which took such an approach saw a drop in both prisoner-on-prisoner assaults and prisoners-on-staff assaults by 54% and 62%, respectively (Benedict, 2014).

The events narratives of our participants also suggest that their treatment needs may be greater than those currently used in offence-focused cognitive behavioural prison treatment programmes (Polaschek et al., 2005) due to the role of trauma in PVE. Therefore, it highlights the importance of treating trauma before or alongside any therapeutic work with this group of men, given the amount of dissociation during PVEs and the severity of violence they used during events where they experienced dissociation. In addition, clinicians may want to consider the suitability of strategies usually taught during treatment to help with self-regulation and identifying unhelpful thinking in the moment. PVEs where dissociation occurred often played out very quickly after a trigger, with participants describing blanking out or losing control early in the event period. Therefore, the usual strategies taught during treatment for violent offending may not be as helpful in these moments. Instead,

psychologists may want to focus more on understanding the contexts and situations in which dissociation occurs to determine at what point intervention may be needed to prevent its occurrence.

The occurrence of dissociation also has implications for how psychologists assess gang members' attitudes towards their violence. For example, clinicians should be careful not to misinterpret statements referencing a loss of memory of, or control during, violent events as denial or minimisation of their offending. However, consider and examine dissociation's possible role as an explanation and treatment target.

Secondly, our results highlight the role of gang identity in PVEs and how the prison ecology can strengthen that identity and the felt need for violence. Many participants felt like staff did not care for them and would not keep them safe, whereas they believed the gang would care for, and protect them in what they described as an unpredictable, negative, and volatile environment. Our participants also spoke of positive reinforcement and protection from the gang outstripping any formal punishment they got due to that volatility. Therefore, prison management should look at ways to foster and strengthen prosocial connections and identities for these men to help move them away from the gang. One possibility would be to bring in positive role models (e.g., former gang members who are now living pro-socially) from outside prison as guest speakers more often. Doing so could help foster positive connections to a world beyond their gang and prison. Furthermore, building a more positive prison culture through the use of programmes (e.g., art) or other activities (e.g., kapa haka) may help strengthen other aspects of these men’s’ identities and create an environment in which these men do not feel the need to rely on the gang for protection and connection as frequently. Greater use of activities such as art, kapa haka, yoga, or mindfulness may also help reduce overall tension within units by giving prisoners positive outlets in which they can channel any built-up frustration or anger to avoid the use of violence. Where practical and

safe to do so, staff may want to consider how they can interact with prisoners to ensure they feel validated as human beings, protected, and secure. Furthermore, consideration should be given to strengthening gang members' cultural connections and identity while in prison to help reduce PVEs. Most of the men in our study identified as Māori. Past research has suggested that cultural engagement is significantly associated with reduced violent recidivism (Shepherd et al., 2017); therefore, implementing cultural programmes more widely in prisons may also help reduce PVEs.

Finally, our model highlights several contextual variables which influence gang members' beliefs about the need to use violence. The first of these was how new to the unit they were, with them describing this as a risky time for violence. Therefore, staff may want to consider additional surveillance of new prisoners to ensure their and other prisoners' safety. Prison routines were also mentioned as impacting PVEs, with participants stating that their PVEs often occurred not long after they were let out of their cells and could interact with other prisoners: highlighting another risky time for violence and a potential time for increased surveillance.

Our participants also highlighted that specific prisons had reputations for being more violent than others (e.g., Auckland Prison). This reputation impacted our participants' violent behaviour on arrival, with them describing a need to "arm up" immediately. Therefore, prison management should be aware of these prison reputations to ensure action is taken to reduce availability of weapons. Increased surveillance of new prisoners may also be required to ensure their and others protection.

Lastly, the make-up of the gang muster was also highlighted as impacting violence levels with greater heterogeneity among gangs within a unit being signalled as impacting our participants need to use violence. Therefore, highlighting the continued importance of prison

staff considering which gangs, and how many members of rival gangs, they want to house together in a unit.

**Strengths, Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

This study has some notable strengths. Firstly, it provides a straightforward yet detailed account of the contributing roles of cognitive, behavioural, affective, and contextual factors during PVEs involving gang members. Secondly, using grounded theory to collect and analyse the interviews allowed the development of a model which explains both commonalities and heterogeneity between events. However, our study also has several limitations.

Firstly, our study had a small sample size which was confined to a small geographical area of Aotearoa New Zealand due to Covid-19 lockdowns thereby limiting the generalisability of the model. While data collection and analysis continued until theoretical saturation of the model occurred, it is not known whether further constructs would have emerged had our sample included gang members from prisons in other geographical areas. Furthermore, our participants consisted only of members of Māori or Polynesian gangs, which could also bias the information obtained. We also had no participants from the Black Power gang, which after the Mongrel Mob has the highest number of imprisoned affiliates (New Zealand Parliament, 2022). It could be that members of different types of gangs think and behave differently during PVEs. Therefore, we recommend future research of this nature be conducted in several different geographic locations and sample a wider range of gang members to test the generalisability of our model.

A second limitation is the use of a participant-led, self-report, process. While using this method enabled us to get detailed accounts of PVEs, these accounts may have been subject to several biases. For example, participants' responses may have been influenced by social desirability which may have led them to leave out certain details of what occurred

during the PVEs, how they really felt at the time, or to minimise their part in the lead-up to the event. It must be noted that in all the PVEs participants chose to discuss they were the apparent victor of the violence. Therefore, it is not known if we would see differences in cognition, affect, and behaviour if participants had chosen to speak about an event in which they ended up more badly injured than the victim. Participants also chose to describe events in which their victims were seriously injured and needed medical care. Therefore, the applicability of the model to less serious events may not be generalisable. Furthermore, details of PVEs discussed may also have been altered or left out due to a “gang code” and not wanting to be seen as a “nark”.

A third limitation is that the model lacks a comparison sample of non-gang members who have been violent in prison. While our model highlights the unique role of gang identity in PVEs, it is not known if other processes such as dissociation are unique to gang members, or whether we would see similar patterns in non-gang members as well. We recommend that future researchers also interview non-gang members who have been violent in prison to examine if there are any differences between groups.

Finally, because grounded theory relies on researchers to conduct their own analyses, it could be subject to unconscious bias or misinterpretation. While attempts were made through-out data collection and analyses to reduce misinterpretation by checking codes with the next group of participants and my supervisory team throughout, bias potentially was not eliminated completely. Therefore, future research should seek to validate or further evolve this model with other gang members.

Several potential areas of research that could be further explored have already been mentioned in the limitations above. But given the very preliminary, exploratory nature of our research in this area there is still much to be uncovered. Our model highlights some differences between gang-directed, gang-related, and non-gang-related events. However, due

to the small sample size, and limited events which fit into each of these categories, we recommend future research explore these and any other differences in more depth with a larger sample. Doing so may highlight specific prison violence pathways which have not yet been fully explained and highlight more specific intervention points.

In addition, we recommend future researchers explore the role of dissociation specifically during violent events given the high occurrence of such events in our study, and the severe injuries caused. Doing so would help clinicians better understand the context and features of episodes dissociative violence and the practical and clinical implications of those.

Finally, our study was limited to male participants. Yet we know that violence is not limited to male prisons (Gama-Araujo et al., 2020;Thomson et al., 2019; Wolff et al., 2006). Therefore, future researchers may want to consider building a descriptive model of institutional violence involving female prisoners to examine if there are any differences between sexes.

**References**

American Psychological Association (n.d.). *APA Dictionary of Psychology.* https://dictionary.apa.org/violence

Apgar, B. (1999). Childhood trauma and dissociation in adulthood. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 60*(3)*,* 379-85.

Ara Poutama Aotearoa: Department of Corrections. (n.d.). *Assaults in Prisons.* https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/statistics/assaults_in_prisons

Athens, L. H., & Rhodes, R. (2017). The creation of dangerous violent criminals. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315099880

Babcock, J. C., Jacobson, N. S., Gottman, J. M., & Yerington, T. P. (2000). Attachment, emotional regulation, and the function of marital violence: differences between secure, preoccupied and dismissing violent and nonviolent husbands. *Journal of Family Violence, 15*, 391–409. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1007558330501

Barak-Glantz, I. L. (1985). *The anatomy of another prison riot. In Prison violence in America* (M. Braswell, S. Dillingham, & R. M. Jr, Eds.). Anderson Publishing Co.

Baron, S. W. (2003). Street youth violence and victimization. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, *4*(1), 22-44. https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838002238944

Beare, M. E., & Hogg, C. (2013). Listening in… to gang culture. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, *55*(3), 421-452. https://doi.org/10.3138/cjccj.2011-E-29

Begle, A. M., Hanson, R. F., Danielson, C. K., McCart, M. R., Ruggiero, K. J., Amstadter, A. B., Resnick, H. S., Saunders, B. E., & Kilpatrick, D. G. (2011). Longitudinal pathways of victimization, substance use, and delinquency: Findings from the National Survey of Adolescents. *Addictive behaviors*, *36*(7), 682-689. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2010.12.026

Benedict, A. (2014). Using trauma-informed practices to enhance safety and security in women's correctional facilities. *National Resource Centre on Justice Involved Women:* CORE Associates.

Bowker, L. H. (1982). *Corrections: The science and the art*. Macmillan.

Bush, J., Harris, D. M., & Parker, R. J. (2016). *Cognitive self change: how offenders experience the world and what we can do about It*. John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119106272

Butler, M., McNamee, C. B., & Kelly, D. (2021). Risk factors for interpersonal violence in prison: evidence from longitudinal administrative prison data in Northern Ireland. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 088626052110063. https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605211006363

Butler, M., Slade, G., & Dias, C. N. (2018). Self-governing prisons: Prison gangs in an international perspective. *Trends in Organized Crime*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12117-018-9338-7

Byrne, J., & Hummer, D. (2007). In search of the "Tossed Salad Man" (and others involved in prison violence): New strategies for predicting and controlling violence in prison. *Aggression and Violent Behavior 12*(5), 531-541. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2007.02.001

Camp, G. M. (1985). *Prison gangs: Their extent, nature, and impact on prisons*. US Department of Justice, Office of Legal Policy, Federal Justice Research.

Camp, S. D., Gaes, G. G., Langan, N. P., & Saylor, W. G. (2003). The influence of prisons on inmate misconduct: A multilevel investigation. *Justice Quarterly*, *20*(3), 501-533. https://doi.org/10.1080/07418820300095601

Cao, L., Zhao, J., & Van Dine, S. (1997). Prison disciplinary tickets: A test of the deprivation and importation models. *Journal of Criminal Justice 25*(2), 103-113. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0047-2352(96)00054-2

Clemmer, D. (1940). *The prison community*. Christopher Publishing House.

Clemmer, D. (1958). *The prison community* (2nd ed.). Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Cohen, L. E., & Felson, M. (1979). Social change and crime rate trends: A routine activity approach. *American Sociological Review*, 588-608. https://doi.org/10.2307/2094589

Colvin, M. (1992). *The penitentiary in crisis: from accommodation to riot in New Mexico*. SUNY Press.

Cooke, D. (1989). Containing violent prisoners: An analysis of the Barlinnie special unit. *British Journal of Criminology*, *29*, 129-143. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.bjc.a047811

Cooke, D. J., Johnstone, L., & Gadon, L. (2007). *Situational risk factors and institutional violence- A qualitative analysis of staff and prisoner perceptions and results of preliminary field-testing of a risk assessment tool designed to evaluate situational risk factors for institutional violence*. Scottish Prison Service. Occasional Paper No.1.

Cooke, D. J., Wozniak, E. & Johnstone, L. (2008). Casting light on prison violence in Scotland: Evaluating the impact of situational risk factors. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour, 35*, 1065–1078. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854808318867

Cooke, D. J. (2020). Casting light on prison violence: Managing situational risk factors'. *Advancing Corrections. Journal of the International Corrections and Prisons Association*, 10, 83-95.

Cunningham, M. D., & Sorensen, J. R. (2007). Predictive factors for violent misconduct in close custody. *The Prison Journal*, *87*(2), 241-253. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885507303752

Cunningham, M. D., Sorensen, J. R., Vigen, M. P., & Woods, S. O. (2011). Correlates and actuarial models of assaultive prison misconduct among violence-predicted capital offenders. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, *38*(1), 5-25. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854810384830

Daisy, N.V., Hien, D.A. (2014). The role of dissociation in the cycle of violence. *Journal of Family Violence, 29*(2):99-107. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-013-9568-z.

Decker, S. H. (1996). Collective and normative features of gang violence. *Justice Quarterly*, *13*(2), 243-264. https://doi.org/10.1080/07418829600092931

DeLisi, M. (2003). Criminal careers behind bars. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*, *21*(5), 653-669. https://doi.org/10.1002/bsl.531

DeLisi, M., Berg, M. T., & Hochstetler, A. (2004). Gang members, career criminals and prison violence: further specification of the importation model of inmate behavior. *Criminal Justice Studies 17*(4), 369-383. https://doi.org/10.1080/1478601042000314883

Dempster-Rivett, K. (2018). Development and implementation of trauma-informed training for women's corrections facilities in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Practice: The New Zealand Corrections Journal, 6*(2), 43-46.

Densley, J. A. (2018). Gang joining. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Criminology and Criminal Justice*. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264079.013.437

Dillulio, J. (1987). *Governing prisons: A comparative study of correctional management.* Free Press.

Draijer, N., Langeland, W. (1999). Childhood trauma and perceived parental dysfunction in the etiology of dissociative symptoms in psychiatric inpatients. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 156,* 379-85.

Drury, A., & Delisi, M. (2011). Gangkill: an exploratory empirical assessment of gang membership, homicide offending, and prison misconduct. *Crime & Delinquency*, *57*(1), 130-146. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128708325051

Eitle, D., Gunkel, S., & Van Gundy, K. (2004). Cumulative exposure to stressful life events and male gang membership. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *32*(2), 95-111. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2003.12.001

Esbensen, F.-A., Winfree Jr, L. T., He, N., & Taylor, T. J. (2001). Youth gangs and definitional issues: When is a gang a gang, and why does it matter? *Crime & Delinquency*, *47*(1), 105-130. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128701047001005

Fahmy, C., Jackson, D. B., Pyrooz, D. C., & Decker, S. H. (2020). Head injury in prison: Gang membership and the role of prison violence. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *67*, 101658. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2020.101658

Farrington, D. P., Piquero, A. R., & Jennings, W. G. (2013). *Offending from childhood to late middle age: recent results from the Cambridge study in delinquent development*. Springer Science & Business Media.

Fischer, D. R. (2001). *Arizona department of corrections: Security threat group (STG) program evaluation, final report*. US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs.

Flanagan, T. (1983). Correlates of institutional misconduct among state prisoners: A research note. *Criminology*, *21*, 41-65. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.1983.tb00249.x

Fleisher, M. S. (1989). *Warehousing violence*. Sage Publications Newbury Park, CA:.

Friedmann, P. D., Melnick, G., Jiang, L., & Hamilton, Z. (2008). Violent and disruptive behavior among drug-involved prisoners: relationship with psychiatric symptoms. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*, *26*(4), 389-401. https://doi.org/10.1002/bsl.824

Frisby-Osman, S., & Wood, J. L. (2020). Rethinking how we view gang members: an examination into affective, behavioral, and mental health predictors of UK gang-involved youth. *Youth Justice*, *20*(1-2), 93-112. https://doi.org/10.1177/1473225419893779

Gaes, G. G., & McGuire, W. J. (1985). Prison violence: the contribution of crowding versus other determinants of prison assault rates. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, *22*, 41-65. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022427885022001003

Gaes, G. G., Wallace, S., Gilman, E., Klein-Saffran, J., & Suppa, S. (2002). The influence of prison gang affiliation on violence and other prison misconduct. *The Prison Journal*, *82*(3), 359-385. https://doi.org/10.1177/003288550208200304

Gama-Araujo, I. S., Bezerra Filho, J. G., Kerr, L., Kendall, C., Macena, R. H. M., Mota, R. S., Ferreira, M., & Pires Neto, R. D. J. (2020). Physical violence inside female prisons in Brazil: prevalence and related factors. *Ciencia & saude coletiva*, *25*(2), 623–632. https://doi.org/10.1590/1413-81232020252.10842018

Gannon, T. A., Rose, M. R., & Ward, T. (2008). A descriptive model of the offense process for female sexual offenders. *Sexual Abuse*, *20*(3), 352-374. https://doi.org/10.1177/1079063208322495

Garbarino, J. (1995). *Raising children in a socially toxic environment*. Jossey-Bass Inc.

Garbarino, J. (2001). An ecological perspective on the effects of violence on children. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *29*(3), 361-378. https://doi.org/https: //psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1002/jcop.1022

Gaston, S., Shamserad, F., & Huebner, B. M. (2021). “Every thought and dream a nightmare”: violence and trauma among formerly imprisoned gang members. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 00938548211040099.

Gendreau, P., Goggin, C., & Law, M. (1997). Predicting prison misconducts. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, *24*, 414-431. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854897024004002

Gilbert, J. (2013). *Patched: The History of Gangs in New Zealand*. Auckland: Auckland University Press.

Gillespie, W. (2005). Racial differences in violence and self-esteem among prison inmates. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, *29*(2), 161-185. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02885734

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A.L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: strategies for qualitative research*. Aldine Transaction.

Glaser, B. (1992). *Basics of grounded theory analysis: Emergence vs forcing*. Sociology Press.

Gottfredson, M. R., & Hirschi, T. (1990). *A general theory of crime*. Stanford University Press.

Griffin, M. L., & Hepburn, J. R. (2006). The effect of gang affiliation on violent misconduct among inmates during the early years of confinement. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, *33*(4), 419-466. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854806288038

Hagedorn, J. M. (2005). The global impact of gangs. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, *21*(2), 153-169. https://doi.org/10.1177/1043986204273390

Hamby, S. (2017). On defining violence, and why it matters. *Psychology of Violence, 7*(2), 167–180. https://doi.org/10.1037/vio0000117

Harer, M. D., & Langan, N. P. (2001). Gender differences in predictors of prison violence: Assessing the predictive validity of a risk classification system. *Crime & Delinquency*, *47*, 513-536. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128701047004002

Harper, G. W., Davidson, J., & Hosek, S. G. (2008). Influence of gang membership on negative affect, substance use, and antisocial behavior among homeless African American male youth. *American Journal of Men's Health*, *2*(3), 229-243. https://doi.org/10.1177/1557988307312555

Hartinger-Saunders, R. M., Rittner, B., Wieczorek, W., Nochajski, T., Rine, C. M., & Welte, J. (2011). Victimization, psychological distress and subsequent offending among youth. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *33*(11), 2375-2385. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2011.08.009

Hennigan, K., Spanovic, M. (2012). Gang dynamics through the lens of social identity theory. In F.A Esbensen & C. Maxson (eds), *Youth gangs in international perspective* (pp. 127-149). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-1659-3_8

Herzog, S., D'Andrea, W., DePierro, J., & Khedari, V. (2018). When stress becomes the new normal: Alterations in attention and autonomic reactivity in repeated traumatization. *Journal of Trauma & Dissociation*, *19*(3), 362-381. https://doi.org/10.1080/15299732.2018.1441356

Hirschi, T. (1969). *Causes of Delinquency*. University of California Press.

Huebner, B. M. (2003). Administrative determinants of inmate violence: A multilevel analysis. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *31*(2), 107-117. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0047-2352(02)00218-0

Human Rights Watch. (2001). *No escape: male rape in United States Prisons*. Human Rights Watch.

Irwin, J., & Cressey, D. R. (1962). Thieves, convicts and the inmate culture. *Social Problems*, *10*(2), 142-155. https://doi.org/10.2307/799047

Johnstone, L., & Cooke, D. J. (2010) PRISM: A promising paradigm for assessing and managing institutional violence: findings from a multiple case study analysis of five Scottish prisons. *International Journal of Forensic Mental Health,* 9(3), 180-191, https://doi.org/10.1080/14999013.2010.526477

Keltner, D., & Kring, A. M. (1998). Emotion, social function, and psychopathology. *Review of General Psychology, 2*(3), 320–342. https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.2.3.320

Kintrea, K., Bannister, J., & Pickering, J. (2010). Territoriality and disadvantage among young people: an exploratory study of six British neighbourhoods. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, *25*(4), 447-465. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10901-010-9195-4

Kintrea, K., & Suzuki, N. (2008). Too much cohesion? Young people's territoriality in Glasgow and Edinburgh. In J. Flint & D. Robinson (Eds.), *Community Cohesion in Crisis? New Dimensions of Diversity and Difference* (pp. 199-218). Policy Press.

Kristine, M. L. (2011). Gangs and violence in prisons. In W. J. Chambliss (Ed.), *Corrections* (pp. 105-119). Sage Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412994101

Kubik, J., Docherty, M., & Boxer, P. (2019). The impact of childhood maltreatment on adolescent gang involvement. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *96*, 104096. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104096

Kubik, J., Schappell D'Inverno, A., Docherty, M., Herrera, C., & Boxer, P. (2017). Addressing the problems of gangs and gang members in the justice system. In J. L. Ireland, C. A. Ireland, N. Gredecki, & M. Fisher (Eds.), *The Routledge International*

*Handbook of Forensic Psychology in Secure Settings* (1st ed., pp. 374-384). Routledge.

Lahm, K. F. (2008). Inmate-on-inmate assault: a multilevel examination of prison violence. *Criminal Justice and Behavior 35*(1), 120-137. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854807308730

LaMotte, A. D., & Murphy, C. M. (2017). Trauma, posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms, and dissociative experiences during men's intimate partner violence perpetration. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy, 9*(5), 567–574. https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000205

Lenzi, M., Sharkey, J., Vieno, A., Mayworm, A., Dougherty, D., & Nylund-Gibson, K. (2015). Adolescent gang involvement: The role of individual, family, peer, and school factors in a multilevel perspective. *Aggressive Behavior*, *41*(4), 386-397. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/ab.21562

Lindegaard, M. R., & Gear, S. (2014). Violence makes safe in South African prisons: Prison gangs, violent acts, and victimization among inmates. *Focaal*, *2014*(68), 35-54. https://doi.org/10.3167/fcl.2014.680103

Lipschitz, D. S., Kaplan, M. L., Sorkenn, J., Chorney, P., & Asnis, G. M. (1996). Childhood abuse, adult assault, and dissociation. *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, *37*(4), 261-266. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0010-440X(96)90005-X

Lyman, M. D. (1989). *Gangland: Drug trafficking by organized criminals*. Thomas Springfield.

Maitra, D. R. (2020). 'If you're down with a gang inside, you can lead a nice life': prison gangs in the age of austerity. *Youth Justice*, *20*(1-2), 128-145. https://doi.org/10.1177/1473225420907974

McCorkle, R., Miethe, T., & Drass, K. (1995). The roots of prison violence: A test of the deprivation, management, and "not-so-total" institution models. *Crime and Delinquency*, *41*, 317-331. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128795041003003

McGuire, J. (2018). *Understanding prison violence: a rapid evidence assessment*. Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/ Government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/737956/understanding -prison-violence.pdf

Mentis, M. T. (1988). Hypothetico-Deductive and Inductive Approaches in Ecology. *Functional Ecology*, *2*(1), 5. https://doi.org/10.2307/2389454

Milliken, P. (2010). Grounded Theory. In N. Salkind (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of research design* (pp. 549-554). Sage Publications, Inc.

Moffitt, T. E. (1993). Adolescence-limited and life-course-persistent antisocial behavior: a developmental taxonomy. *Psychological Review*, *100*(4), 674. https://doi.org/10.1037/ 0033-295X.100.4.674

Morey, L. C. (1991). *Personality assessment inventory*. Psychological Assessment Resources.

Morris, P. K., & Graycar, A. (2011). Homicide through a different lens. *The British Journal of Criminology*, *51*(5), 823-838. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azr038

Mrug, S., Madan, A., & Windle, M. (2016). Emotional desensitization to violence contributes to adolescents' violent behavior. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, *44*(1), 75-86.

Murdoch, S., Vess, J., & Ward, T. (2010). Descriptive model of the offence process of women violent offenders: distal background variables. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, *17*(3), 368-384. https://doi.org/10.1080/13218710903421316

Nadesu, A. (2009). Reconviction patterns of offenders managed in the community: A 60-months follow-up analysis. *Wellington: Department of Corrections*.

National Gang Intelligence Center. (2011). *National gang threat assessment: Emerging trends*. National Gang Intelligence Center.

Newberry, M., & Shuker, R. (2012). Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI) profiles of offenders and their relationship to institutional misconduct and risk of reconviction. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, *94*(6), 586-592.https://doi.org/10.1080/00223891.2012.669220

New Zealand Parliament. (2022). *New Zealand gang membership: A snapshot of recent trends.* https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/library-research-papers/research-papers/new-zealand-gang-membership-a-snapshot-of-recent-trends

Ng-Mak, D. S., Stueve, A., Salzinger, S., & Feldman, R. (2002). Normalization of violence among inner-city youth: A formulation for research. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *72*(1), 92-101. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1037/0002-9432.72.1.92

Novisky, M. A., & Peralta, R. L. (2020). “Gladiator school: returning citizens’ experiences with secondary violence exposure in prison”. *Victims & Offenders*, *15*(5), 594-618. https://doi.org/10.1080/15564886.2020.1721387

One News. (2022, September 1). Gang members increasing number of attacks on prison guards. *One News.* https://www.1news.co.nz/2022/09/01/gang-members-increasing-number-of-attacks-on-prison-guards/

Parliamentary Counsel Office. (2018). *Privacy (Information Sharing Agreement between New Zealand Gang Intelligence Centre Agencies) Order 2018*. https://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2018/0247/32.0/whole.html#LMS131307

Petering, R. (2016). Sexual risk, substance use, mental health, and trauma experiences of gang-involved homeless youth. *Journal of Adolescence*, *48*, 73-81. https://doi.org/ 10.1016/j.adolescence.2016.01.009

Peterson, D., Taylor, T. J., & Esbensen, F.-A. (2004). Gang membership and violent victimization. *Justice Quarterly*, *21*(4), 793-815. https://doi.org/10.1080 /07418820400095991

Polaschek, D. L. L., Hudson, S. M., Ward, T., & Siegert, R. J. (2001). Rapists' offense processes: a preliminary descriptive model. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *16*(6), 523-544. https://doi.org/10.1177/088626001016006003

Polaschek, D.L., Wilson, N.J., Townsend, M.R., & Daly, L.R. (2005) Cognitive-behavioral rehabilitation for high-risk violent offenders: an outcome evaluation of the violence prevention unit. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence,* 20(12), 1611-1627. https://doi.org /10.1177/0886260505280507

Pyrooz, D. C., & Mitchell, M. M. (2020). The use of restrictive housing on gang and non-gang affiliated inmates in US prisons: Findings from a national survey of correctional agencies. *Justice Quarterly*, *37*(4), 590-615. https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825. 2019.1574019

Pyrooz, D. C., Moule Jr, R. K., & Decker, S. H. (2014). The contribution of gang membership to the victim–offender overlap. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, *51*(3), 315-348. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022427813516128

Pyrooz, D. C., Sweeten, G., & Piquero, A. R. (2013). Continuity and change in gang membership and gang embeddedness. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, *50*(2), 239-271. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022427811434830

Pyrooz, D. C., Turanovic, J. J., Decker, S. H., & Wu, J. (2016). Taking stock of the relationship between gang membership and offending: A meta-analysis. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, *43*(3), 365-397. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854815605528

Quince, K. (2021, April 17). Māori and crime: Why hurt people tend to hurt others. *Stuff*. https:// https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/crime/124857880/mori-and-crime-why-hurt-people-tend-to-hurt-others

Quinn, K., Pacella, M. L., Dickson-Gomez, J., & Nydegger, L. A. (2017). Childhood adversity and the continued exposure to trauma and violence among adolescent gang members. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *59*(1-2), 36-49. https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12123

Reisig, M. D. (1998). Rates of disorder in higher-custody state prisons: A comparative analysis of managerial practices. *Crime & Delinquency*, *44*(2), 229-244. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128798044002003

Reisig, M. D. (2002). Administrative control and inmate homicide. *Homicide Studies*, *6*(1), 84-103. https://doi.org/10.1177/1088767902006001005

Rennie, D. L., Phillips, J. R., & Quartaro, G. K. (1988). Grounded theory: A promising approach to conceptualization in psychology? *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne*, *29*(2), 139. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0079765

Ricciardelli, R. (2014). An examination of the inmate code in Canadian penitentiaries. *Journal of Crime & Justice 37*(2), 234-255. https://doi.org/10.1080/0735648X.2012.746012

Ricciardelli, R., & Sit, V. (2016). Producing social (dis)order in prison: The effects of administrative controls on prisoner-on-prisoner violence. *The Prison Journal 96*(2), 210-231. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885515618362

Rittel, H. W. J., & Webber, M. M. (1973). Dilemmas in a general theory of planning. *Policy sciences*, *4*(2), 155-169. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01405730

Ross, J.M., Babcock, J.C. (2009). Proactive and reactive violence among intimate partner violent men diagnosed with antisocial and borderline personality disorder. *Journal of Family Violence,* 24, 607–617. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-009-9259-y

Ross, L., & Arsenault, S. (2018). Problem analysis in community violence assessment: revealing early childhood trauma as a driver of youth and gang violence. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, *62*(9), 2726-2741. https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X17734798

Schenk, A. M., & Fremouw, W. J. (2012). Individual characteristics related to prison violence: A critical review of the literature. *Aggression and Violent Behavior 17*(5), 430-442. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2012.05.005

Schwab-Stone, M. E., Ayers, T. S., Kasprow, W., Voyce, C., Barone, C., Shriver, T., & Weissberg, R. P. (1995). No safe haven: A study of violence exposure in an urban community. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, *34*(10), 1343-1352. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1097/00004583-199510000-00020

Shamir, B., & Drory, A. (1981). Some correlates of prison guards' beliefs. *Criminal justice and behavior*, *8*(2), 233-249. https://doi.org/10.1177/009385488100800208

Shepherd, S. M., Delgado, R. H., Sherwood, J., & Paradies, Y. (2017). The impact of indigenous cultural identity and cultural engagement on violent offending. *BMC public health*, *18*(1), 50. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-017-4603-2

Sherman, S.J., Hamilton, D.L., Lewis, A.C. (1999). Perceived entitativity and the social identity value of group memberships. In: Abrams D, Hogg MA (eds) *Social identity and social cognition*. (pp. 80–110). Malden.

Skarbek, D. (2014). *The social order of the underworld: How prison gangs govern the American penal system*. Oxford University Press.

Stairmand, M., Polaschek, D. L., & Dixon, L. (2021). Perpetrators' perspectives on family violence: An event process model. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *36*(19-20), NP10132-NP10155. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260519873440

Steiner, B., & Wooldredge, J. (2008). Inmate versus environmental effects on prison rule violations. *Criminal justice and behavior*, *35*(4), 438-456. https://doi.org/10.1177 /0093854807312787

Steiner, B., & Wooldredge, J. (2015). Examining the sources of correctional officer legitimacy *The Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology*, *105*(3), 679-703.

Steiner, B., & Wooldredge, J. (2020). *Understanding and reducing prison violence: An integrated social control–opportunity perspective*. Routledge.

Stoddard, S. A., Heinze, J. E., Choe, D. E., & Zimmerman, M. A. (2015). Predicting violent behavior: The role of violence exposure and future educational aspirations during adolescence. *Journal of Adolescence*, *44*, 191-203. https://doi.org/10.1016/ j.adolescence.2015.07.017

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. M. (1997). *Grounded theory in practice*. Sage.

Stretesky, P. B., & Pogrebin, M. R. (2007). Gang-related gun violence: socialization, identity, and self. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *36*(1), 85–114. https://doi.org /10.1177/0891241606287416

Suttles, G. D., & Suttles, G. D. (1972). *The social construction of communities* (Vol. 728). University of Chicago Press Chicago.

Sykes, G. M. (1958). *The society of captives: A study of a maximum security prison.* Princeton University Press.

Tahamont, S. (2019). The effect of facility security classification on serious rules violation reports in California prisons: a regression discontinuity design. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, *35*(4), 767-796. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10940-019-09405-0

Tamatea, A. (2017). The last defence against gang crime: Exploring community approaches to gang member reintegration-part I. *Practice: The New Zealand Corrections Journal*, *5*(2).

Taonui, R., & Newbold, G. (2012). Staunch: Māori gangs in urban New Zealand. In G. W. Streich & J. D. Lewandowski (Eds.), *Urban social capital: civil society and city life* (pp. 159-175). Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.

Thrasher, F. M. (2013). *The gang: A study of 1,313 gangs in Chicago*. University of Chicago Press.

Thomson, N. D., Vassileva, J., Kiehl, K. A., Reidy, D., Aboutanos, M., McDougle, R., & DeLisi, M. (2019). Which features of psychopathy and impulsivity matter most for prison violence? New evidence among female prisoners. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, *64*, 26–33. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijlp.2019.01.001

Useem, B., & Kimball, P. (1991). *States of siege: US prison riots, 1971-1986*. Oxford University Press.

Vigil, J.D. (1988). *Group processes and street identity: adolescent Chicano gang members.* Ethos, 16, 421–445.

Walters, G. D. (2011). Criminal thinking as a mediator of the mental illness–prison violence relationship: A path analytic study and causal mediation analysis. *Psychological Services*, *8*(3), 189. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0024684

Ward, T., Louden, K., Hudson, S. M., & Marshall, W. L. (1995). A descriptive model of the offense chain for child molesters. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *10*(4), 452-472. https://doi.org/10.1177/088626095010004005

Ward, T., Polaschek, D., & Beech, A. R. (2006). *Theories of sexual offending*. John Wiley & Sons.

Webermann, A. R., & Murphy, C. M. (2019). Childhood Trauma and Dissociative Intimate Partner Violence. Violence Against Women, 25(2), 148–166. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801218766628

Wilson, N. J., & Tamatea, A. (2010). Beyond punishment: Applying PRISM in a New Zealand maximum security prison. *The International Journal of Forensic Mental Health, 9*(3), 192–204. https://doi.org/10.1080/14999013.2010.526478

Wolff, N., Blitz, C.L., Shi, J., Bachman, R., Siegel, J.A. (2006). Sexual violence inside prisons: rates of victimization. *Journal of Urban Health, 83*, 835–848. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-006-9065-2

Wolff, N., Blitz, C. L., Shi, J., Siegel, J., & Bachman, R. (2007). Physical violence inside prisons: rates of victimization. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, *34*(5), 588-599. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854806296830

Wooldredge, J. (2020). Prison culture, management, and in-prison violence. *Annual review of criminology*, *3*(1), 165-188. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-criminol-011419-041359

Wooldredge, J., & Steiner, B. (2014). A bi-level framework for understanding prisoner victimization. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, *30*(1), 141-162. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10940-013-9197-y

World Health Organisation. (2002). *World report on violence and health*. https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/summary_en.pdf

Worrall, J. L., & Morris, R. G. (2012). Prison gang integration and inmate violence. *Journal of Criminal Justice 40*(5), 425-432. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2012.06.002

Wright, K. (1991). The violent and victimized in the male prison. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, *16*, 1-25. https://doi.org/10.1300/J076v16n03_01

## Appendix A – Participant Information Sheet

### Participant Information Sheet

Study title: **Understanding violent events involving prisoners who are gang members and prisoners who are not**

Lead investigator: **Nicola Brennan-Tupara** Ethics Ref: HREC(Health)2021#24

You are invited to take part in a research project to understand **violent events involving prisoners who are gang members and prisoners who are not.** The research is part of a bigger project on how to make prisons safer. We are interested to collect and understand your views, experiences, and observations about prison violence. You have been recommended to us as someone who has knowledge that it would be valuable to include in our research.

This information sheet will help you decide if you would like to take part. When we have gone through all the information, if you agree to take part, you will be asked to sign a *consent form.* You will be given a copy of both the information sheet and the consent form to keep.

This piece of the research is being undertaken by Nicola Brennan-Tupara, a Masters student in Psychology at the University of Waikato. Nicola's research is being supervised by Professor Devon Polaschek and Dr Armon Tamatea (*Rongowhakāta; Te Aitanga-A-Māhaki*), both academic staff at the University of Waikato and registered clinical psychologists with a long background in research with people in prisons.

If you agree to take part, we will hold an individual hui with you, either in person or via AVL, in which we will ask you some questions about the topic. The length of the korero will depend a bit on how much you have to say, but we don't think it will be longer than an hour to an hour and a half. We are interested in talking to you about one or more violent events in which you have been the perpetrator, and that you are comfortable talking about in detail. We are really interested in whether violence is different when gang members are involved compared to when the people involved are not gang members. We will also be interested in your views on how prisons could be made safer, based on your thoughts.

Participation is voluntary. Whether or not you take part will not affect how you are treated in prison. If you do decide to take part and then change your mind, that is fine too. Just let us know. If we have already started audio recording the hui we will ask you if we can keep the information you already provided or just wipe the recording completely. You do not need to answer any particular question if you don't want to. You may also withdraw from the project up until two weeks after the interview by contacting the researcher by mail, or asking a prison or therapy staff member to let us know by phone, or email. If you do decide to withdraw from the study, your recording will be wiped.

If you do agree to take part, as a thank-you for your expertise we would like to offer you a voucher (cellular access, supermarket) which you can allocate to a significant other. We will ensure that this voucher reaches the person you nominated to receive it.

The hui will be confidential. We will record just the sound (audio) part of it and later that will be used to make a written version of what was said at the hui. Your name will not be included in that recording. Once we have it written down, we will wipe the audio recording. The written version will be securely stored on University of Waikato servers for 5 years after the findings of the study have been released.

We are planning to interview a number of men in the STURP programmes and we will put together all of the information from all of the hui for analysis. So it will not be possible to tell that you took part or what you said.

The only exception to confidentiality is that if as a result of what you say to us, we think that you are someone else is at immediate risk of serious harm, we might need to break confidentiality to warn someone who could stop that harm. If we do have that concern, we would seek to discuss our concern with you first, if that was possible.

We don’t think there are any immediate risks to you from participating in this research. We will check in with you about how you are feeling during the interview, and if you do become upset while you are talking to us, we will do our best to help you get settled again. And if you need more support than that, we can arrange for you to talk to your therapist or someone you know in the unit, after the interview.

More often participants in research like this report some benefits. They often say that they find taking part is a positive experience, and they like the idea of helping to make prisons safer in the future, which is an aim of the overall research programme.

We will be interviewing around 20 men, and we will analyse the interviews as we go along. When the work is finished, we are likely to write it up for publication in scientific journals and technical reports. We plan to talk about it at conferences too. If you would like, we can send you a summary of the results of the current project to a trusted address in the community. We think the final results will be done by the end of 2022.

Because the information you provide is very valuable us and difficult to get, the research team would also like your consent to possibly use your transcript in future related research projects.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the study at any stage, please do not hesitate to contact the project leads, who will be happy to talk to you:

Professor Devon Polaschek or Dr Armon Tamatea, School of Psychology , Division of Arts, Law, Psychology & Social Sciences, Te Whare Wānanga O Waikato / University of Waikato, Private Bag 3105 , Hamilton 3240
Email: devon.polaschek@waikato.ac.nz ph. 07-8389224
OR armon.tamatea@waikato.ac.nz, Ph: 07-8585157

This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (Health) at the University of Waikato as HREC (Health)2021#24, and by Ara Poutama Aotearoa’s Research and Evaluation Steering Committee. Any questions or concerns about the ethical

conduct of this research may be sent to: Secretary, Human Research Ethics Committee (Health), Te Whare Wānanga O Waikato / University of Waikato, Private Bag 3105 Hamilton 3240; Email: humanethics@waikato.ac.nz

## Appendix B – Participant Consent Form

### Consent Form for either oral or written consent

*Please tick to indicate you consent to the following*

I have read, or have had read to me, the Participant Information Sheet. I have been able to ask and get answers to any questions that I had.

Yes ❑ No ❑

I have been given sufficient time to consider whether or not to participate in this study.

Yes ❑ No ❑

I understand that taking part in this study is my choice and that I may withdraw from the study within TWO weeks of the hui. Withdrawing will not affect my sentence or management under Ara Poutama Aotearoa, and I may request the removal of all my data from the study.

Yes ❑ No ❑

I understand that my participation in this study is confidential and my information will be anonymous in the research analysis.

Yes ❑ No ❑

I understand that a transcript from this research may be used in future studies involving the research team.

Yes ❑ No ❑

I wish to receive a summary of the results from the study.

Yes ❑ No ❑

I wish for a voucher to be sent on my behalf as a thank-you for my participation in this research.

Yes ❑ No ❑

Please send voucher to ___________________________________at this address

_____________________________________________________________________________

**Declaration by participant:**

I consent to take part in this study.

Participant's name:___________________________________________________________

Signature:______________________________________ Date:______________________

OR

Oral consent given, via researcher:

_____________________________________________________

Date:_______________ Unit/Site:___________________________________________

Please send a summary of the results to me at this address (summaries should be available from late 2022).

_____________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

# Appendix C – Ethical Approval

The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Gate 1, Knighton Road
Hamilton, New Zealand

Human Research Ethics Committee
Roger Moltzen
Telephone: +64021658119
Email:humanethics@waikato.ac.nz

10 May 2021

Nicola Brennan-Tupara
School of Psychology
DALPSS
By email: nbtupara@gmail.com

Dear Nicola

**HREC(Health)2021#24 : Gang members and violence: an explorations of relationships within the prison environment**

Thank you for your detailed responses to the Committee feedback on your application.

We are now pleased to provide formal approval for your project but request notification when approval has been obtained from Ara Poutama Aotearoa (NZ Department of Corrections) Research and Evaluation Steering Committee.

Please contact the committee by email (humanethics@waikato.ac.nz) if you wish to make changes to your project as it unfolds, quoting your application number with your future correspondence. Any minor changes or additions to the approved research activities can be handled outside the monthly application cycle.

We wish you all the best with your research.

Regards,

____________________________

**Emeritus Professor Roger Moltzen MNZM**
**Chairperson**
**University of Waikato Human Research Ethics Committee**

# Appendix D – Research Amendment Ethical Approval

The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Gate 1, Knighton Road
Hamilton, New Zealand

Human Research Ethics Committee
Roger Moltzen
Telephone: +64021658119
Email:humanethics@waikato.ac.nz

14 July 2021

Nicola Brennan-Tupara
School of Psychology
DALPSS
By email: nbtupara@gmail.com

Dear Nicola

**HREC(Health)2021#24 : Gang members and violence: an explorations of relationships within the prison environment**

Thank you for notifying us of the approval from Ara Poutama Aotearoa (NZ Department of Corrections) Research and Evaluation Steering Committee and providing the research agreement and the approved RESC application.

We are pleased to provide the formal approval for the change to the method, in that you are now doing event process analysis during the interview, and recruiting via a hui to describe your research instead of sending back transcripts to participants.

Please contact the committee by email (humanethics@waikato.ac.nz) if you wish to make changes to your project as it unfolds, quoting your application number with your future correspondence. Any minor changes or additions to the approved research activities can be handled outside the monthly application cycle.

We wish you all the best with your research.

Regards,

**Emeritus Professor Roger Moltzen MNZM**
**Chairperson**
**University of Waikato Human Research Ethics Committee**