Connections of self-esteem and gang membership

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CONNECTIONS OF SELF-ESTEEM AND GANG MEMBERSHIP

A Thesis

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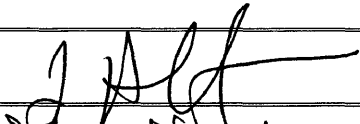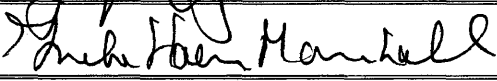Dissertation Publishing

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ABSTRACT

Reasons for gang membership have been hypothesized but very little empirical research has been conducted trying to determine why individuals join and remain in delinquent gangs. Low self-esteem has been suggested as a reason for entering into delinquency and joining a gang. Research has shown gang members have lower overall self-esteem than do non-gang individuals (Wang,1994). An enhancement in this low self-esteem has been suggested as a reason for continuing with gang membership and delinquent behavior. There are mixed results in the research examining the connection of delinquent behavior and increased self-esteem. Kaplan's (1975) self-esteem enhancement theory has not been tested empirically to find out if an increase in self-esteem is a reason for continuing as a gang member. Because delinquency and gang membership are interrelated, the present study will examine Kaplan's self-esteem enhancement theory as a reason for continuing with both gang membership and delinquent behavior.

The cross sectional data from is a diverse national sample of eighth grade students. All of the hypotheses are based on the theory that continued gang membership and delinquency will increase self-esteem. First, overall self-esteem measures of gang members and non-gang individuals are compared. Second, it is hypothesized that the higher overall self-esteem levels will be found for those members with longer time investments in a gang. Third, a new measure of place in the gang, which is trying to determine a possible structure for gangs, will be examined for validity. The measure will then be used to determine if members reporting to be close to the center of the gang have higher overall self-esteem levels than those reporting to be near the outside of the gang.

None of these hypotheses using Rosenberg's overall self-esteem measure support Kaplan's self-esteem enhancement theory.

In recent years, the concept of overall or global self-esteem has been divided into domain specific areas. Research has related school, peer and home based self-esteem to delinquency and gang membership (Spergel, 1995). The present study employs a gang-specific self-esteem scale in order to examine Kaplan's self-esteem enhancement theory. This scale directly asks the gang member if his or her gang is connected to his or her self-assessment. The sample of gang members agreed that the gang was influential in having positive self-esteem. Then, the gang-specific scale is compared to Rosenberg's overall self-esteem measure. The two scales were found to be negatively correlated. Next, the gang-specific self-esteem scale is examined using the same hypotheses as was done with the overall measure. Kaplan's self-esteem enhancement theory was supported when self-esteem was assessed with the gang-specific scale.

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INTRODUCTION

Gangs are an enduring phenomenon with a recently heightened focus. Typical group behavior of gangs has become increasingly more violent throughout time (Spergel 1990; Huff 1990; Curry and Spergel 1992). Research has demonstrated that criminal behavior increases while an individual is a gang member (Esbensen & Huizinga, 1993; Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte, & Chard-Wierschem, 1993) and that the most committed, core members have participated in more of the violent gang activities (Spergel, 1995:85). Consequently, determining why an individual chooses to be part of a gang has become a critical endeavor. Current research has attempted to ascertain motivations for joining and quitting gangs (Huff, 1996; Spergel, 1995), but has not reached a consensus about determining factors. Research about joining or quitting gangs is vital for gang prevention and intervention purposes. Equally important is the question of why adolescents, after joining a gang, choose to continue being in it. Answering this question can provide insight into why some people remain while others leave the gang. Knowing why individuals are in a gang and continue to be would reveal what aspects of a gang entice individuals to continue as members. Knowing this would be extremely helpful in gang prevention and intervention strategies. However, reasons for being or staying in a gang have not been empirically studied, so this study will begin to explore this topic.

The purpose of this study is to examine a theory proposing a reason why an individual would be in and likely stay in a gang. Kaplan's self-derogation theory (1975) states that individuals choose to be part of a gang because gangs and gang delinquent activities provide members with an enhancement in self-esteem. If gang members are

experiencing an enhancement in self-concept while being a gang member it is likely that they would continue to be members. Thus, finding the relationship between self-esteem enhancement and gang membership could help determine possible prevention and intervention strategies to reduce the number of individuals in gangs. This present study will examine Kaplan's self-derogation theory by employing multiple measures to decipher the possibility of a self-esteem enhancement due to gang membership.

In order to explore self-esteem enhancement due to gang membership thoroughly, a review of existing literature about gangs and self-esteem, a detailed description of measures used in this study and a complete layout of research questions and results will be presented. This study will use two different types of self-esteem for assessing a possible self-esteem enhancement. First, a measure of overall self-esteem will be used to compare the self-esteem of gang to non-gang members, members in the gang longer to the newer members and members reporting to be closer to the center to those reporting positions farther from the center. Reasons and theoretical rationale for these comparisons will be discussed in the research questions section. Second, a measure of gang-specific self-esteem will be used to assess self-esteem differences with gang members in the sample as was done with the overall self-esteem measure. The gang-specific measure directly asks the gang member if he or she believes the gang provides an enhancement of self-esteem. Conducting multivariate analysis with both the overall self-esteem measure and one that specifically measures self-esteem from gang membership will provide a complete picture of the self-esteem enhancement due to gang membership possibility.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study will examine the relationship between self-esteem and gang membership. Before this relationship is explored, several important aspects of research on gangs will be explored. The research conducted about gangs has not reached a consensus about the definition of a gang, gang activity, the structure or cohesiveness of gangs, or why people join or quit gangs. Conceptualization of the issues determines how research is conducted and how gangs are viewed. Therefore, existing theory and research related to these factors will be discussed before the connections of self-esteem and gang membership are explored.

GANGS

Definition of Gang

The definition of a gang is one of the most ambiguous aspects about the subject. There are no universally accepted definitions for a gang or illegal gang activity. Malcolm Klein developed a definition over twenty years ago that is still commonly used today. He defines gangs as "any denotable adolescent group of youngsters who (a) are generally perceived as a distinct aggregation by others in the neighborhood; (b) recognize themselves as a notable group (almost invariably with a group name); and (c) have been involved in a significant number of delinquent incidents to call forth a consistent negative response from neighborhood residents and/or law enforcement agencies" (Klein, 1971:111). Many of the law enforcement agencies have criterion to determine if the person is a gang member and whether the criminal behavior was gang related. Most agencies also retain lists of gang members. A few criterion for placing a name on the list

are: admitting to gang membership, being arrested more than once in the company of one or more gang members, being identified by another gang member or informant, residing in a gang's particular area and adopting style of dress, tattoos or other paraphernalia.

Part of the problem with any of these overall definitions is that they ignore the possibility of different types of gangs. Originally, researchers and practitioners were trying to explain gang behavior without addressing the possibility of having gangs with differing purposes and structures. Researchers, since, have attempted to study different types of gangs in detail. In 1986, Jeffery Fagan developed a typology that identifies four types of gangs. First, the social gang that participates in only moderate drug use and offending. Second, the party gang that participates in relatively high use and sales of drugs but with only one major form of delinquency which is vandalism. Third, the serious delinquent gang that is heavily involved in both serious and minor crimes, but has a much lower involvement in heavy drug use and selling. Fourth, the organization gang that is involved heavily in all kinds of crime and involved heavily in drug use and selling. It is much more organized and has a strong link between serious crime and drug use / sales.

Other researchers have developed similar typologies to those developed by Fagan. Klein (1995) developed a more generic division of gang types from his extensive research. The major division came between drug gangs versus street gangs. Because this present analysis does not involve any focus or measure of drug activity, only Klein's street gang typology will be examined in detail. Ten characteristics of street gangs include: 1) versatile 'cafeteria-style' crime; 2) larger structures; 3) less cohesive; 4)

looser leadership; 5) ill-defined roles; 6) code of loyalty; 7) residential territory; 8) members may sell drugs; 9) inter-gang rivalries; 10) younger on average. Klein challenges the idea that most gangs are well organized and focused on drug sales resulting in violent criminal behavior. He suggests that gangs are involved in a wide array of criminal activity and although they are defined groups, they do not have a specific hierarchical leadership structure present.

Spergel (1995) summarized a criminal youth gang as the following:

"This group ordinarily comprises both juveniles and young adults who engage in a range of social and antisocial behaviors. Cliques or members engage repetitively, and at times unpredictably and spontaneously, in violent, predatory, and criminal gain, usually street-based, behaviors. The criminal youth gang may be loosely knit or well organized with established rules but not always consistently implemented rules of conduct. The youth gang may or may not have a name, turf, colors, signs, symbols, and distinctive dress. The values of the youth gang include: mutual support among members, conflict with competing gangs, and lack of trust of established authority, especially the police" (Spergel, 1995:178).

This definition addresses the particular areas researched about gangs. By his definition, Spergel describes the extreme complexity of gangs. There are at least three possible explanations for the vagueness of his definition. One, either there are multiple types of gangs that fit the differing criteria (or each gang is unique); two, gang attributes fluctuate; or three, obtaining reliable information about gangs is difficult and is not being done well. It is just as likely that all three of these options are occurring together. Because these options need to be more thoroughly examined, the following description of gangs and gang members is quite inconclusive.

Gang and Delinquency Correlation

Usually the definition of street gang includes being involved in criminal behavior. This is because society wants to suppress violent and criminal gang behavior rather than the real existence of gangs. Groups that could easily be characterized as gangs would not necessarily have to have the delinquency component. For example a cheer leading or church group of adolescents have many of the same belonging and cohesion properties discussed above. Therefore, the component that makes street gangs the focus of policy is the delinquency in which street gangs involve themselves. This analysis will include delinquency in the definition of a gang member. To be considered a gang member the gang has to have participated in delinquent activity like robbery and stealing (see measures section for exact activities). Therefore, the correlation between delinquency and gang membership is a very important aspect to explore.

Increase in Amount of Delinquency when in Gang

It is widely accepted that members of a gang participate in more delinquency than non-gang individuals (Klein 1995, Spergel 1995, Huff 1996). Nonetheless, the relationship between criminal delinquency and gang membership is too complicated to stop with this general conclusion. Does it mean that delinquent individuals are attracted to the gang and so perpetuate additional delinquency when joined together with other delinquents? Or, is the group membership of the gang the driving force for which new members will do what they are told and therefore become involved with delinquency. In other words, questions about the direction of the causal relationship between delinquency and gang membership have prompted researchers to examine this correlation more extensively.

The Denver Youth Project is a longitudinal survey that examined the gang and delinquency relationship. It compared gang and non-gang individuals over several years. The data from this project clearly demonstrate that even before joining, gang members (to be) were more criminally involved than were non-gang adolescents. Joining a gang led to a significant increase in criminal involvement. And, leaving the gang led back to a lower level of delinquency. These findings were substantiated with an analysis from the Rochester (New York) Youth Project. Rochester was a city that had a much newer gang problem than did Denver at the time of the studies, so results showing the same pattern of delinquency help validate the findings in Denver. Thus, the pattern seems to show that membership is selective towards individuals already involved in criminal activity: once joining the gang the amount of the illegal activity increases.

Thornberry et al. (1993) looked at the delinquency correlation with different types of male gang members using data from a multi-wave panel study, the Rochester Youth Development Study (RYDS). They defined stable members as those who were in the gang for more than two years and transient members as those being in gang for only one year. These definitions were formulated from assuming the stable members would be more committed than the transient members. The stable members exhibited the highest rates of delinquency. Thus, this study also indicates that there is more delinquency being committed while the individual is in the gang.

Increase in Violent Crime when in a Gang

Violent crime is a subsection of overall offending, so it follows that it too would increase while being a member of a gang. However, this doesn't necessarily have to be

the case. Therefore, researchers have looked at other aspects to substantiate the increase in violent behavior. At a city level, Los Angeles and Chicago have experienced an increase in violent gang crime. Gang related homicides have increased, especially in Los Angeles. While these official estimations could be due to measurement error, it is not highly probable (Huff, 1996:44). Also, certain features of gangs may facilitate violence. The typical gang versus gang rivals and the known increased involvement in overall crime would likely present situations prone to violence. Thornberry et al. (1993:73) specifically examined violent crime against the person committed by gang members using the RYDS self-report data. They found that boys are more apt to engage in person offenses when they are active gang members than when they are not.

What is it about gangs that nurture this continued increased delinquency? This is one question that has led researchers to examine the structure and cohesiveness of gangs. However, researchers have not come to a consensus on how gangs operate or are designed to participate in these amounts or types of delinquency. Existing research about structure and cohesiveness of gangs will now be presented.

Structure and Cohesiveness

Gang structure and cohesiveness, including member positions and roles, is another widely debated subject by researchers. One belief about cohesiveness is that "members are drawn to one another to fulfill individual needs, many shared and some conflicting; they do not gather to achieve a common, agreed-upon end. Thus, gang cohesiveness is rather tentative." (Klein, 1995:80). This means that gangs have variable levels of cohesiveness over time. Also, beliefs about gang structure have been debated

and are changing over time. Originally researchers were reporting gangs to have a formal leadership structure. Jankowski's (1991) qualitative research demonstrated that there exists (1) formal leadership structures (for types of leaders and degree of authority), (2) roles and duties of both leaders and regular member, and (3) codes of behavior. Klein (1995), from his extensive research believes that leadership is a situational function that occurs because of context. He believes it does not simply reside with one individual person or persons within a gang.

Gang Member Typologies

Roles of members are interrelated to the structure and cohesiveness of gangs. Roles, in this context, means how connected or involved the member is in the gang. Many researchers have developed gang member typologies to help explain differences in membership. Most all of them have overlapping similarities. Reiner (1992) developed a widely recognized typology of gang members in Los Angeles. He came up with four types: 1) at risk; 2) wannabe; 3) associate; 4)hard core. The 'at risk' members are those who are not really gang members but show a good deal of interest. The 'wannabe's' are usually preteens who know and admire gang members. Many gangs use this term to describe recruits. The 'associates' are at the lower level of gang membership. They are members but not part of the hard core. The 'hard core' members are part of an inner clique and spend most of their time in gang-related activity. They have few friends outside the gang and recognize no authority beyond its existence. Hard core members usually constitute no more than 10-15% of all members of the gang. Klein (1995) believes that gangs are now smaller independent groups which are poorly organized and

less territorial than used to be the case. Consequently, his structure typology consists only of core members and fringe members. Klein has hypothesized that there may even be multiple core groups within a gang because the structure is so loose.

As displayed by the conflicting ideas presented above, there is no consensus on the topics of structure or cohesiveness. What is known is that delinquent gangs exist and the goal is to diminish gang activity. However, in order to diminish gang membership or activity, reasons for joining, quitting or staying need to be identified.

Reasons for Joining a Gang

Much of the research exploring why individuals join gangs has been qualitative and theoretical. Very little systematic quantitative research has been done on individual reasons for joining gangs. The small number of self-report surveys that ask adolescents why they joined a gang, include some variation of these responses: joining for status, belonging, family, power, excitement and protection. It is believed that adolescents especially strive for these items under conditions of social deprivation (Rosenberg & Rosenberg, 1978). Many theorists (Kaplan, 1975; Cartwright, Tomson and Schwartz, 1975) suggest youth join gangs because they are seeking identity and self-esteem.

Reasons for Leaving a Gang

There has been little research concerning why individuals leave the gang. Much of the research suggests that members mature out of being in a gang (Horowitz, 1983; Klein, 1971). Sanchez-Jankowski (1991:61) noted that members could (1) age out, (2) die, (3) go to prison, (4) get jobs ... but he observed no pattern to the way in which they left the gang. Vigil (1990) found that leaving the gang was most often accompanied by

increased ties to social institutions. The institution could be marriage / family or prison. Horowitz (1983) found that it was much more difficult for core members to leave than the "peripheral" or "fringe" members because of their increased involvement in gang activities and gang provided social support. Using a sample of 24 ex-gang members during the mid-1980's, Decker and Van Winkle (1996) reported that the majority left because of the level of violence they personally experienced. They themselves, family or other gang members were victims and were seriously injured.

Time in a Gang

Longitudinal self-report studies have found that most gang members report being in a gang less than one year (Esbensen & Huizinga, 1993; Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte, & Chard-Wierschem, 1993). However, qualitative examination has found that there are a substantial number of members who stay in gangs until adulthood and some even longer (Janowski, Vigil). It is thought that the members who remain are the most committed core members (refer to gang typology section) and the ones who come and go are likely the peripheral members.

Reasons Individuals are in Gangs

Reasons why adolescents stay in gangs could be different from why they join or why they leave. There is little research specifically examining this topic. So, most of these proposed options are formulated from existing research but have not been empirically tested. First, Vigil (1991) and Horowitz (1983) found that gangs provide a source of support and friendship as a viable reason to stay. Second, there may be a fear of retaliation by the gang for leaving, so fear of injury or death may be a reason to stay.

Collins (1979:5) found murder reports of core members or leaders planning to leave.

Third, there may be a fear of continued violence from other gangs due to the reputation of

being part of a certain gang. Therefore, staying in the gang is for protection. Fourth,

gang members could be so detached from societal institutions that they have nothing else

to do with their time. Fifth, the gang might provide members with enhancement in self-

assessment. Therefore members remain in the gang because it provides them with a good

self-concept.

The fifth reason is the one that will be examined in detail. This analysis will

examine if gang members are in gangs because the membership provides a increase in

self-concept. The theory base for this hypothesis comes from Kaplan's (1975) self-

derogation and enhancement theory. Kaplan's theory and existing research on the theory

will now be presented.

KAPLAN'S SELF-DEROGATION THEORY

Howard B. Kaplan developed the self-derogation theory in 1975. In general, the

theory postulates that "deviant responses are regarded as motivated by the earlier

development of self-rejecting attitudes in the course of normative membership group

experiences, and as functioning more or less effectively to assuage the intrinsically self-

rejecting attitudes" (Kaplan 1982: 186). This theory specifically addresses the reciprocal

relationship between self-attitudes and motivated deviant responses.

> "The sustaining self-devaluation in the course of membership group
> experiences results in (1) the loss of motivation to conform to and the
> acquisition of motivation to deviate from the normative structure, and
> (2) the disposition to seek deviant patterns through which an individual
> can achieve self-accepting attitudes" (Kaplan et al., 1984: 271).

Basically, these two propositions have been accepted as the motivational and enhancement effect addressed above. The first proposition is that low self-esteem leads to participation in delinquent activity and the second is that adopting delinquent behaviors will subsequently increase self-esteem. These, in this order, form what could be considered a process. Between the first and second phases of this process, the causal direction is inverted. First, low self-esteem is believed to cause delinquency. After delinquency is committed, continued delinquent behavior is believed to cause an increase in self-esteem.

Kaplan did not specifically include gang membership in his theory. However, the basis of his theory is that continued delinquent activity increases self-esteem and research has shown that gang members participate in a greater frequency of delinquency than do non-gang individuals (refer to literature review). Therefore, gang membership is a natural extension to his theory. Researchers have acknowledged that Kaplan's theory might apply to gang membership, but there are very few studies examining the relationship between self-esteem and gang membership.

Research on Self-Esteem and Gang Membership

Wang (1994) reported that "there is a great deal of research on the self-esteem of adolescents and juvenile delinquents, but little is known concerning the self-esteem of adolescents who are members of gang" (see also Arthur, 1989: Kaplan, 1975). The small amount of research conducted has been mainly qualitative. Anderson (1994) cited low self-esteem as a persistent cause of violence among youth gangs. Janowski (1991:142) referred to the "self-contempt" of gang members as a cause of violence and that the gang

members were violent toward people "who they perceived to show a lack of respect or to challenge their honor."

Beyond the qualitative observations, this author found only one empirical study assessing self-esteem in gang members. A cross-sectional design comparing gang and non-gang individuals was conducted in Orlando Florida (Wang:1994). This study will be described in detail because the same comparison will be made in this analysis. The self-esteem scale was comprised of 25 statements describing both positive and negative feelings of self-esteem. Responses were of a four point Likert-type scale from 0=not true to 3=true. Reliability coefficients (Chronbach's alphas) were .59 and .73, respectively. The sample consisted of 49 gang members and 106 not in gangs. Almost three-fourths of the gang members were African American. This study revealed that gang members of both ethnicities possessed lower levels of overall self-esteem compared to their non-gang peers (Wang, 1994:288).

This summarizes the research available on self-esteem and gang involvement. As is apparent, none of the available research has specifically examined Kaplan's self-esteem enhancement for gang members. However, Kaplan's theory has been tested when looking at delinquent behavior. As discussed earlier, Kaplan's theory involves low self-esteem motivating delinquent behavior and then subsequent delinquent behavior enhancing self-esteem. Therefore, the following research about self-esteem and delinquency tests Kaplan's actual theory. Because gang members participate in a large amount of delinquency, the findings from the following research discussing the

relationship between delinquency and self-esteem is applicable to the relationship between delinquency and gang membership.

Longitudinal Approach

Kaplan(1975,1976,1978,1980) used partitioning and mean residual change scores of individual delinquency items to demonstrate that negative self-attitudes motivate adolescents to adopt deviant behavior and that their self-attitudes are improved as a result. He measured self-esteem levels at three different times and calculated differences between time one and time two and then again between time two and time three. Kaplan concluded that both the derogation and enhancement hypotheses were supported. In an evaluation of Kaplan's work, Wells and Rankin (1983) point out that estimating change scores between each wave of data makes estimating the magnitude of causal effects difficult and does not represent the causal sequence of the variables over the three waves of data simultaneously. Therefore, researchers employed other analytical techniques to evaluate the self-esteem and delinquency.

Wells and Rankin analyzed the Youth in Transition data set using path analytic techniques to model the causal sequence. Controlling for theoretically causal variables (grades, peer and family relations), they found that self-esteem has little affect on subsequent delinquency. They also found no increase in self-esteem resulting from engaging in delinquent activity.

Latent Variable Approach

In the 1980s researchers began to re-specify the causal structure of the two effects. They began using more elaborate multivariate, latent variable (LISEREL)

procedures, which are an improvement over the previous models in several ways. First, the latent-variable approach explicitly includes the effects of measurement error in the analysis. Omitting such effects undoubtedly affected the causal estimates of the previous studies. Second, self-esteem is not required to directly predict delinquent behavior. Rather, it (low self-esteem) causes delinquent dispositions or motivations; which in turn cause delinquent behavior in conjunction with other social variables (Wells, 1989:229). Using an analytic method that incorporates social factors known to impact delinquency has a greater ability to assess the relationship between self-esteem and delinquency.

Bynner, O'Malley and Bachman (1981) employed LISEREL analysis on three waves of data from 1,471 Caucasian boys in order to determine the direction of the relationship. The delinquency items used included questions on theft, vandalism and delinquency in school. The self-esteem scale was the 10 item scale developed by Rosenberg (1978). They found little support for the view that self-esteem influences subsequent delinquency. The stronger paths were actually in the opposite direction suggesting that delinquent activity negatively predicts subsequent self-esteem. However, all path coefficients tended to be relatively small in magnitude. Bynner and colleagues did find some support that those with initial low self-esteem engaged in delinquency more frequently and increased their self-esteem as a result. Finding support for the enhancement effect caused researchers to believe that support for the self-esteem enhancement theory was obscured in earlier analyses because they used models that were inappropriate and too simple (Wells, 1989:230).

McCarthy and Hoge (1984) also conducted a study about the self-esteem and delinquency using LISEREL. This study used the waves of self report data from 1,125 adolescents in grades seven, nine and eleven in two Middle Atlantic cities. Rosenberg, Coopersmith and a conventional self-evaluation scales were used to assess self-esteem. The researchers found the effect of global self-esteem on delinquent behavior to be negligible. Causation was small in magnitude but actually in the opposite direction – the more delinquent behavior, the lower the self-esteem. This finding remained within subgroups of gender, age, race, socioeconomic status, and family structure. Also, they found no support for the enhancement effect (McCarthy and Hoge, 1984:407).

In summary, the research about self-esteem and delinquency has produced mixed results. Some researchers believe that the studies not showing any effect between self-esteem and delinquency are insufficient or using incorrect analytical techniques. If there is an increase in self-esteem due to repeated delinquency, it would be reasonable to expect to find this relationship with gang members because in addition to repeated delinquency they have support by other delinquent individuals. Consequently, this present study will conduct analyses to assess the possibility of a self-esteem enhancement due to gang membership.

In all of the previously mentioned studies testing Kaplan's theory, measures of global or overall self-esteem were used for assessing self-esteem. Global self-esteem is an abstract concept of a person's overall self-perception. There has been a great deal of research done with the concept of self-esteem. Also, there have many scales developed

trying to assess this abstract overall self-perception. To explore a possible enhancement of self-esteem, the definition and properties of global self-esteem need to be reviewed.

GLOBAL SELF-ESTEEM

Through years of research the concept of self-esteem has become defined in two forms. One form is referred to as global self-esteem. This form considers an overall assessment of how a person views him or her self. The definition developed by Rosenberg (1975) is conceptualized as follows: a person with high self-esteem respects himself/herself, but does not necessarily see him/her-self as better than others. The person recognizes his/her limitations and focuses to grow and improve them. A person with low self-esteem has feelings of self-rejection, self-dissatisfaction and self-contempt. The person lacks respect for him/her self and wishes he/she was someone else. A similar conceptual definition was developed by Coopersmith who defined self-esteem as "an expression of approval or disapproval . . . [of] the extent that a person believes him- or herself competent, successful, significant and worthy (Coopersmith, 1981, p. 1-2).

Properties of Global Self-Esteems

Global self-esteem is an abstract concept or feeling not directly tied to any one event or series of events. Adolescents can consider themselves "worthless" without connecting this to any concrete experience (Whaley, 1993:416). However, knowing that self-esteem is not a reflection of a particular event does not tell us what it does reflect. The belief held by many researchers is that global self-esteem is a compilation of past experiences, feelings and beliefs that affect current behavior in every situation. Rosenberg summarized that the assessment of overall self as "... an organization of parts,

pieces and components, and . . . these are hierarchically organized and interrelated in complex ways" (Rosenberg, 1975:73). These notions of global self-esteem suggest that a person's overall self-concept could be different in adulthood than in adolescence because with age they have more experiences, parts and pieces to process into the global opinion

If life events do affect self-esteem, exactly how dynamic self-esteem is and how much influence situations have upon it is of vital importance. Researchers hope self-esteem does not continually fluctuate because it would be very difficult to determine the meaning of a concept that could change at any minute. This is not to say, however, that global self-esteem is constant and never changing. If esteem never changes then making social policy for enhancement of self-esteem is pointless. Researchers, believe that global self-esteem is fairly stable but is not a static property.

The scale that will be used to assess this global self-esteem relationship is Rosenberg's (1975) Global Self-Esteem Scale. A thorough discussion of the scale follows.

Rosenberg Global Self-Esteem Scale

This scale measures the self-acceptance aspect of self-esteem and was originally developed for high school students. The scale includes ten items written with ease of administration, economy of time, unidimensionality and face validity as goals (Wylie, 1989:25). Actual development of the items were not discussed by Rosenberg other than to say it was meant to be a Guttman scale. Numerous studies have employed this scale as a measure of self-esteem, but most are based only on a subgroup of the ten items. There

have been no comparisons of the subscales with the original, and much of the reliability and validity confirmation has been determined with the sub-scales.

Testing of the Rosenberg scale has shown it to be quite positively skewed and have a reliability Cronbach alpha ranging from .74 to .87 on eleven different samples. These are decent coefficients for most standards of reliability. Rosenberg related positive self-esteem to many social and interpersonal skills like less depression and more assertiveness showing construct validity of his scale. With respect to the unidimensionality of the scale studies have produced different results. Using factor loading analysis, findings have been that the items are either unidemensional or load on two factors. When they load on two factors there is considerable agreement across the studies as to which items define the respective factors (Wylie, 1989:28). Rosenberg also made the point that alternating positive and negative statements is an effective way to avoid yea-saying and provide a validity check. Six of the ten items in the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale are included in the self-esteem scale used in this analysis (for specific statements refer to measures section).

As demonstrated, global self-esteem is an abstract overall perception of self. The abstract nature of the global self-esteem has caused researchers to inquire what specific aspects are included and how a person weighs them to develop an overall opinion. Other researchers have developed domain-specific self-esteem scales thought to tap core areas included in the overall assessment of self.

DOMAIN-SPECIFIC SELF-ESTEEM

Domain-specific self-esteem scales assess self-concept in specific areas or domains of life because individuals are thought to have different self-assessments when considering personal characteristics, educational ability, physical image or athletic ability. Hare (1981) developed three domain specific scales assessing self-concept in school, home and peer areas for adolescents. For example Hare's home-based self-concept includes items such as: (1) My family is proud of the kind of person I am; (2) No one pays much attention to me at home. Harter (1990) developed scales of perceived competency in various domains such as athletics, art, reading and math. The perceived competency in an area has a high correlation to the reporting of positive self-esteem in that area. Whaley (1993) developed a cultural identity esteem scale that compared how global esteem relates to cultural identity. Domain specific self-esteem measures can be developed from any of the innumerable aspects of life. Scales developed for family, school and peer esteem have been included in recent gang research.

Existing Research about Gangs using Domain-Specific Scales

Researchers have examined relationships with domain-specific esteem assessment and gang involvement. Curry and Spergel (1990) found that gang involvement was negatively related to home based self-esteem and school-based self-esteem, but positively related to peer-based self-esteem for both Latino and African American. This study uses Hare's domain-specific scales and the Self-Reported Gang Involvement Scale (1987). For gang-related arrests, the most significant relationship was a negative one with school-based self-esteem.

Researchers have compared global and domain-specific scales to determine connections between the scales. Mainly, the interest is to examine what attributes are included in the global assessment. Determining components of global self-esteem would enable researchers to find combinations of the domain specific scales that could represent the global scale.

Relationship Between Global and Domain-Specific Esteem Assessment

Hoelter (1986) and Hoge and McCarthy (1984) have tried to assess the relationship between specific and global evaluations of self. Both came to the conclusion that a combination of specific self-evaluations cannot be equated with measures of global evaluation, even when weighting the domain specific scales in terms of their psychological centrality.

The inability to find a combination of domain specific scales to equate the global scale was also exhibited by in research by Fleming and Courtney (1984). This research produced correlations with Rosenberg and more explicitly defined areas. The results included: self-regard (.78); self-confidence (.51); school ability (.35); physical appearance, (.42); physical ability (.35). These results show that Rosenberg's scale is correlated higher with general scales of self-regard and confidence and lower with the more specific scales of school ability and physical appearance. This pattern of correlations supports the idea that Rosenberg's scale is a overall measure of self-esteem.

The following analysis will explore the relationship between self-esteem and gang membership trying to assess if there is a self-esteem enhancement provided by the gang. In an attempt to do this gang membership and several measures of relationship to a gang

will be used to assess levels of both global and gang-specific self-esteem. Gang-specific self-esteem is very similar to Rosenberg's scale but it attributes the individual's self-concept to the gang. Basically, it is a domain-specifc self-esteem scale for the degree to which the gang influences self-perception. This gang-specific measure will be compared to Rosenberg's scale and will help explore the relationship between self-esteem and gang membership. Also, a new measure of placement in the gang will be examined for validity and used to assess the role of self-esteem with gang membership. The next section will describe the methods and particular measures used.

THE PRESENT STUDY

This study will use data from the national evaluation of the G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education and Training) program[1]. G.R.E.A.T. is a school based gang prevention program that is taught by uniformed police officers during the seventh grade school year. G.R.E.A.T. was initiated by the Phoenix Police Department in conjunction with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) in 1991. The curriculum focuses on teaching adolescents decision making skills in hopes that the student will incorporate the lessons into his or her life. The specific lessons include topics such as cultural sensitivity, prejudice, conflict resolution, leadership, responsibility and goal setting. The students are also educated on the negative consequences of drugs and gangs. The underlying assumption of G.R.E.A.T. is that this type of education, taught by a police officer, will reduce gang and drug involvement. The program consists of trained uniformed officer teaching nine class periods with the lessons lasting between 45 and 60 minutes depending on school schedules. The teaching methods include cooperative learning and interactive discussion as well as lecture. Effective teaching skills are a component taught at a national training seminar, which is required of every officer teaching G.R.E.A.T..

In evaluating the effects of this program the survey instrument assessed demographics, attitudes like those concerning self-esteem, school commitment and impulsivity, and measures of drug use, delinquency and gang affiliation. This array of

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questions is not only applicable in evaluating the effectiveness of G.R.E.A.T., but can give a good general description of attitudes and behaviors of juveniles around the age of 14. The present study uses the G.R.E.A.T. survey instrument to examine the connections of self esteem and gang membership.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The sample consists of 5,935 eighth grade students across the country. The present study focuses on the 522 self reported gang members (specific definition can be found in the Measures section). There was a purposive selection of eleven sites based primarily on three criteria: existence of the G.R.E.A.T. program, geographic diversity and population diversity. First, the school district had to have implemented the program the during the 1993-1994 school year. According to the training data, forty one states had officers trained and able to teach G.R.E.A.T. However, dealings between the police department and schools were different for each site so not all the states had started teaching the program. Selection of schools within sites was also purposive based on whether particular schools were using the curriculum during the 1993-1994 school year and what percentage of the students had received the program. The intended goal was to pick schools in which about half of the students received the program. This would allow comparisons of program effects without the added variation of selection bias when having a control and experimental group from two different schools. However, finding cities with school districts that had taught G.R.E.A.T. to only a portion of the students during the 1993 - 1994 year was challenging. The specific sites included in this study are: Pocatello ID, Torrance CA, Phoenix AZ, Las Cruces NM, Omaha NE, Kansas City MO,

Milwaukee WI, Will County IL, Orlando FL, Philadelphia PA, and Providence RI. Ten of these sites had schools where G.R.E.A.T. had been to some of the students and not to others so comparisons can be made within the same school. Researchers were told that the schools lacked the financial resources to administer G.R.E.A.T to all eighth graders, but it was nearly impossible to determine if there were criteria dictating who received the program. In two sites the comparison groups were separate schools similar in demographic characteristics.

From these eleven cities, the 5,935 eighth grade students included in the sample came from 42 schools. Approximately half of the students participated in the G.R.E.A.T. program. According to the U.S. Census, there are approximately 3,000,000 fourteen year olds (the typical age of an 8th grader) in the U.S.. The current sample accounts for .2% of all 14 year olds in 1995.

There are, however, some external validity problems with this sample. First, this sample does not include adolescents absent from or not enrolled in school. The present analysis focuses on gang members and delinquent behavior, so not including these adolescents could result in incorrect estimations of population characteristics. Second, the sample does not adequately represent the national racial composition of this age group. For a general comparison, table 1 compares the racial and gender composition of all 14 year olds in the year the sample was selected.

TABLE I.

	SAMPLE 1995	U.S. CENSUS DATA Age 14, Year 1995
MALE	48 %	51 %
FEMALE	52 %	49 %
WHITE	40 %	68 %
BLACK	27 %	14 %
HISPANIC	19 %	13 %
ASIAN	6 %	4 %

This table illustrates a large over representation of African Americans, and an over representation of Hispanics. Therefore, using results of this study to estimate nationwide population parameters need to be done with caution.

DATA COLLECTION

The students were surveyed in the spring of 1995, one year following the administration of the G.R.E.A.T. program. Questionnaires were read aloud to groups (classrooms) ranging from 10 to 50. While one researcher read, at least one other was walking around the room to answer questions or curtail talking and other disruptive behavior. According to the research proposal, the teacher was to remain in the classroom but not participate in the survey administration. However, there were times where the teacher did attempt to participate or disappeared from the room entirely. The survey process lasted between 35-40 minutes which usually fit nicely into a single class period.

Questionnaires were administered to all eighth grade students who were present on the designated day and consented to participate in the study.　　Passive consent procedures were used in ten of the eleven sites. In these sites, letters informing parents were mailed or sent home with students prior to day of administration. The average refusal rate for this consent procedure was 5%. The school district in Torrance, CA required active consent so procedures of mailing and calling were conducted to obtain parental consent. On the day of administration the researchers informed the students that participation was voluntary, and that they were allowed to leave any or every question blank. This led to a very small number of additional refusals. The students were also informed that the study was confidential and anonymous.

MEASURES

The self reported items that are used in this present study include many demographic and cognitive variables that need to be specifically described or defined. This section will give a more detailed outline as to what is meant by measures not evident. Table III of Appendix A will include univariate statistics for all measures used.

Sex.　　　The coding for sex is as follows:

1. Male

2. Female

Race.　　　Respondents were originally classified into six categories. The four used in this analysis include:

1. White/Anglo, not Hispanic

2. Black/African-American

3. Hispanic/Latino

4. Other

The 'other' category included any self-identified mixture. Due to a small representation, the American Indian/Native American and the Asian/Pacific Islander responses are included in the 'other' category for this analysis. Race is coded with dummy variables in this analysis with category 1 (White/Anglo, not Hispanic) as the reference group.

Age.   The respondents of this evaluation were all in the eighth grade. However, the actual self reported ages ranged from one to twenty-four with the most viable probably being from twelve to eighteen. The questionnaires including the unrealistic age responses were reviewed by hand as to the validity of the rest of the information. If nearly all of the other questions were believable (there were validity checks in the instrument) then the entire questionnaire remained in the sample. The age responses ranging from 1 to 9 and 20 to 24 were changed to the median age 14. This was done because the sample came from the eighth grade and the typical age of an eighth grade student is 14. The sample showed this with 60% reporting to be 14. Therefore 14 is likely the best possible estimate.

In this analysis, age was categorized into three groups: less than 14, 14 and over 14. The group of 14 year olds were used as the reference group because that was the predominant age of the sample and the average age of eighth grade students.

Self-Esteem. The scale evaluating global self-esteem was a partial modification of Rosenberg's 1976 ten item scale. Six of the ten items were chosen for inclusion. Wording remained quite similar except the statements in the present instrument were all positively worded. Item correlations ranged from .29 to .53 with Chronbach's alpha coefficient of .82. The scale included the following items:

1) I am a useful person to have around.

2) I feel that I am a person of worth, at least as much as others.

3) As a person, I do a good job these days.

4) I am able to do things as well as most other people.

5) I feel good about myself.

6) When I do a job, I do it well.

The responses were in Likert scale format including:

1. Almost Never   2. Not too Often   3. About Half the Time   4. Often   5. Almost Always

A scale score was computed for an individual provided they answered more than two of the items. Any missing responses were replaced with the item mean. The overall mean was then computed from the individual's responses on all six items. This overall mean is an individual's score on Rosenberg's global self-esteem scale. The larger the score, the higher the self-assessment of self-esteem.

School Commitment. This variable is a scale constructed of seven statements about the student's attitude towards aspects of school. One of the seven is worded

negatively to help assess validity. The scale reliability has a coefficient (α) of .81. This section directly follows the self-esteem assessment in the questionnaire. The seven items are:

1) Homework is a waste of time.

2) I try hard in school.

3) Education is so important that it's worth it to put up with things about school that I don't like.

4) In general, I like school.

5) Grades are very important to me.

6) I usually finish my homework.

7) If you had to choose between studying to get a good grade on a test or going out with your friends, which would you do?

Responses to items 1-6: 1. Strongly disagree 2. Agree 3. Neither Agree nor Disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

Responses to item 7: 1. Definitely go with friends 2. Probably go with Friends 3. Uncertain 4. Probably Study 5. Definitely Study

The school commitment scale score for a respondent includes, first, reversing the answers to item one. Then scale scores are computed exactly the same way as the self-esteem scores. The overall mean of scores is an individual's score on school commitment. The larger the score, the more school commitment is exhibited.

Parental Attachment.   Parental attachment was measured by two separate seven point semantic differential scales; one for the mother or mother figure, and one for the father or father figure. Both scales demonstrated high reliability, with alpha coefficients of .84 for mother attachment and .88 for father attachment. During administration students were told to think of their parent or parent-figure to include other adults that fit that role.

The items were:

Can talk about anything	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	Can't talk about anything
Always trusts me	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	Never trusts me
Knows all my friends	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	Does not know any of my friends
Always understands me	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	Never understands me
Always ask her/his advice	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	Never ask her/his advice
Always praises me when I do well	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	Never praises me when I do well

The scales for maternal attachment and paternal attachment are created the same way as the Likert scale items used in this analysis. Provided more than two statements are answered the missing are replaced by the mean for the statement. Then an overall mean from the six items is computed and equal to the scale score for that individual.

For purposes of this analysis, the main focus is on the attachment to a parent or parent figure. It is not concerned with differentiating between mother and father. Therefore, the measure used to assess parental attachment will be the mean of the two scores. If one score is missing then the one for the other parent will be used. This will

give the best estimate for degree of attachment to a parent figure and will help reduce the 10% missing for paternal attachment.

Delinquent Offenses.   This variable contains frequency counts of delinquent activities. The respondent is asked how many times in the past year have they committed certain acts. The seventeen delinquent or illegal activities easily divide into three main categories: status offenses, property offenses and violent person offenses. The scale demonstrated good reliability (alpha coefficient of .8925) with the diverse nature of behaviors. Examples of specific items from each category are:

Minor Offenses

1) Lied about your age to get into some place or to buy something?

2) Avoided paying for things such as movie bus or subway rides?

Property Offenses

1) Purposely damaged or destroyed property that did not belong to you?

2) Illegally spray painted a wall or building?

3) Stolen or tried to steal something worth more than $50?

4) Stolen or tried to steal a motor vehicle?

Violent Person Offenses

1) Hit someone with the idea of hurting them?
2) Attacked someone with a weapon?
3) Used a weapon or force to get money or things from people?
4) Shot at someone because you were told to by someone else?

This scale was computed by using the frequency reported for each question. The high end range of frequencies for these questions in the thousands and the frequencies above 12 amounted to only 1% of responses. Consequently, if the frequency is greater than twelve, it is set to 12 and the new range for all questions became 0 to 12. The mean of all the given frequencies is computed and is the delinquency frequency estimate for an individual. The delinquency offense scale is highly positively skewed, so is logged when used in regression analysis in order to give better effect size approximations.

Gang Membership. The criterion for being considered a gang member requires an affirmative answer to currently being in a gang. If the response is yes, then the individual needed to indicate that his or her gang participated in at least one of the following: (1) get in fights with other gangs, (2) steal things, (3) rob other people and (4) damage or destroy property. Consequently, to be considered a gang member for this analysis, the adolescent must answer affirmatively to currently being in a gang that participates in delinquent activity.

Gang Esteem. This variable is similar to the global self-esteem variable except that the questions are orientated to the gang. It gives a measure of how being in a gang is connected to self concept. The scale showed a good degree of reliability with an alpha coefficient of .85. The three following items are then scaled for an overall score.

1) Being in my gang makes me feel important.

2) Being a gang member makes me feel respected.

3) Being a gang member makes me feel like I'm a useful person to have around.

Responses: 1. Strongly disagree 2. Agree 3. Neither Agree nor Disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

Provided the respondent answered at least 2 of the 3 items, missing values were replaced by the mean of that individual statement. The scale scores are then computed by calculating the mean of the individual responses.

Gang Attachment.

This variable is a scale of items that measure a gang member's feeling of belonging and attachment to his or her gang. The scale score for an individual is computed using the same process as the other variables in this study. If two of the three statements have responses, the mean is inserted for the missing response. The overall score for an individual on gang attachment is the overall mean from responses on the three statements. The scale showed a good degree of reliability with alpha coefficient equaling .86. The specific items include:

1) My gang members provide a good deal of support and loyalty for one another.

2) Being a gang member makes me feel like I really belong somewhere.

4) My gang is like family to me.

Responses: 1. Strongly disagree 2. Agree 3. Neither Agree nor Disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

Time In Gang.

This variable is computed by subtracting the age the gang member reports joining the gang from the age they report being when taking the questionnaire. This gives estimates in years. Time in the gang for this sample ranges from 1 to 17 years. The 17

years in a gang was an individual reporting to be 19 and having joined a gang at age 2. It is possible, though not very probable, to have a nineteen year-old in eighth grade so 17 years in a gang was included in the analysis. For analysis purposes time in the gang will be used either in these one-year increments or will be a defined dichotomous variable comparing members in the gang for over a year to those in the gang a year or less.

Place In Gang.

This question asked the students to indicate where in the gang they consider themselves. Researchers put a pattern of five circles on the board much like a bull's eye. The number 1 was in the center circle continuing to number 5 which was in the outside circle.

The question reads as follows: Suppose the circle on the board represents your gang. How far from the center of the gang are you? Circle the number that best describes your place in the gang?

1   2   3   4   5

The administrator pointed to the smallest circle (1) and identified that this circle represents the center of the gang and that circle (5) is far from the center. Values 1 through 5 for gang placement were used for gang members in this analysis.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS & RESULTS

GLOBAL SELF-ESTEEM

The second part of Kaplan's (1975) self-derogation theory hypothesizes that the

> "adoption of the deviant response has self-enhancing consequences
> since it facilitates intrapsychic or interpersonal avoidance of self-
> devaluing experiences associated with the predeviance membership
> group, serves to attack (symbolically or otherwise) the perceived basis
> of the person's self-rejecting attitudes (that is, representations of the
> normative group structure) and/or offers substitute patterns with self-
> enhancing potential for behavior patterns associated with the genesis
> of self-rejecting attitudes" (Kaplan, 1980:169).

Kaplan directed most of his writing and testing of this hypothesis to deviant actions,

never explicitly including gang membership as a deviant response. In his original

exposition of the theory, however, he does refer to group membership in relation to self-

esteem enhancement, making gang involvement a natural extension to his theory. Kaplan

states that

> "an individual who is apparently a deviant, and therefore dissimilar to
> others in his group, might well seek the company of other "deviants" of
> like characteristics toward the goal of enhancing his self-esteem.
> Through such a process the subject would become increasingly fixed in
> the deviant group since it is now gratifying in its consequences rather
> than disapproved as it once was from the perspective of his former
> interpersonal nexus" (Kaplan, 1975:67).

This idea fits nicely with what is known about delinquent gangs. Two aspects of gangs

suggest that gang membership might lead to an enhancement of self-concept: repeated

delinquency and group support of delinquency. First, research has shown criminal

behavior increases while an individual is a gang member (Esbensen & Huizinga, 1993;

Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte & Chard-Wierschem, 1993). This repeated deviance could

provide potential self-enhancing opportunities as suggested by Kaplan's theory. Second,

these individuals have a deviant group that accepts and promotes delinquent activity. Consequently, gang membership is likely to foster and even enhance the reciprocal relationship between delinquency and increased self-esteem.

There is very little research addressing gang membership and self-esteem enhancement. As mentioned in the literature review, the only empirical study conducted by Wang (1994) found gang members to have lower overall self-esteem than non-gang individuals. This study, however, focused primarily on differences by ethnicity and did not have controls for existence or frequency of delinquent behavior. Frequency of delinquency is an integral part of the Kaplan's theory for two reasons. First, Kaplan's theory requires the previous existence of low self-esteem. The theory asserts that the individual does not receive positive esteem or feedback from society so adopts deviant behavior due to low self-esteem. In other words, the enhancement effect from delinquent activity presupposes a deviant act initiated due to low self-esteem. Consequently, without controlling for existence and frequency of delinquency, the comparison gang and non-gang individuals include individuals that were not rejected from society, so did not develop a low self-esteem leading to delinquent behavior. When trying to assess a self-esteem increase from continued delinquency and gang membership, it does not make sense to include individuals that have always had a relatively high self-esteem. In other words, the comparison needs to be between delinquent gang members and delinquent non-gang individuals.

Second, Kaplan's theory is based on continued delinquency enhancing self-esteem. Extending it to include gang membership adds deviant group support to the

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deviant actions that enhance self-esteem. Therefore, excluding frequency of delinquency

leaves out a main prediction of his theory. Without it, there is no way to distinguish

between individuals who have committed one or two delinquent acts compared to those

who have committed many. Even though Kaplan's theory does not explicitly state when

this enhancement effect would occur, it does predict that the individuals continuing to

commit delinquency are the ones experiencing an enhancement in self-esteem.

This study will examine Kaplan's theory by comparing the self-esteem levels of

gang members with non-gang individuals as Wang did and then redoing the comparison

controlling for frequency of delinquency. It is hypothesized that the added delinquency

controls will alter Wang's findings and provide support for Kaplan's theory.

Hypothesis 1: Gang members will exhibit higher levels of global self-esteem than non-gang delinquent individuals after frequency of individual delinquency is considered.

Results

The entire sample surveyed consisted of 5,935 eighth grade adolescents. There

are 421 (8%) who report being part of a delinquent gang. The sample size for replicating

Wang's analysis, due to missing data, is 5,116. This includes comparing 417 (8.2%) gang

members with 4,699 (91.8%) non-gang individuals. The findings from the bivariate

linear regression, in table II below, are consistent with Wang's study. Gang members

report significantly lower levels of self-esteem than do non-gang individuals (b=-.303,

p=.000). The non-gang sample had a significantly higher mean of 4.0364 while the gang

member sample had a mean of 3.7544 (p=.000).

Table II. Regression Results For Gang and Non-gang Comparison of Global
Self-Esteem.*

Model	b	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
In a Gang	-.303	.038	-.112	-.8022	.000

Dependent Variable: Global Self-Esteem
*No delinquency controls added.

The sample size for delinquent individuals (having responded to committing at

least one of the delinquent activities as described in the measures section) is 4,019. This

analysis compares 374 (9.3 %) gang members with 3,645 (90.7%) non-gang delinquents.

Table III below shows the results of the two hierarchical models. Model 1 includes

controls of age, sex and race to determine differences between gang and non-gang

individuals' global self-esteem. Model 2 adds frequency of delinquent activity in the last

year.

Table III. OLS Regression Results For Gang and Non-gang Comparison of Global
Self-Esteem.*

Model 1	b	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(constant)	4.156	.034			
female	-.092	.020	-.065	-4.648	.000
under 14	.0358	.002	.023	1.629	.103
over 14	-.041	.036	-.016	-1.132	.258
African American	.204	.025	.125	8.191	.000

Hispanic	-.096	.028	-.051	-3.399	.001
other	-.103	.030	-.051	-3.441	.001
In a gang	-.300	.038	-.111	-7.858	.000
F=31.330, R^2= .042					
Model 2					
(constant)	4.301	.037			
female	-.126	.020	-.089	-6.346	.000
under 14	.0218	.022	.014	1.002	.316
over 14	-.027	.036	-.011	-.757	.449
African American	.225	.025	.138	9.134	.000
Hispanic	-.09	.028	-.048	-3.238	.001
other	-.099	.030	-.049	-3.327	.001
In a gang	-.069	.044	-.025	-1.574	.115
Freq. of delinquency	-.240	.022	-.176	-10.766	.000
F=42.534, R^2= .064					

Dependent Variable: Global Self-Esteem
*Respondents have participated in delinquent activity in the last year.

Nearly all regression assumptions were met. Residuals were distributed normally and nominal variables were dummy coded, but the dependent variable only had values ranging between 1 and 5 (this will be the case for all hypotheses tested). There was a mild concern for collinearity between the delinquency and gang membership variables with a correlation of .517. Complying with previous research, this indicates that the gang sample is involved in more delinquency than the non-gang sample (refer to Table I Appendix A for complete zero order correlation matrix). Even though these limitations needed to be mentioned, the OLS regression results will be able to give a good indication of the relationships in question.

The results supported the prediction that Wang's findings would be altered when frequency of delinquency was considered. This is evident by the effect (b) coefficient for gang membership dropping from -.3 to -.069. This changed the results from gang members having significantly lower overall self-esteem to no difference between the two groups. Also, the F value increased (27.4 to 37.8) indicating significant improvement in the model by the added variable. Explained variance was increased from R^2 being .042 to .064. All of these factors demonstrate the need for controlling for frequency of delinquency when assessing self-esteem.

Kaplan's theory, however, was not directly supported by these results. Model 1 which does not control for gang members having higher delinquency scores showed gang members to have much lower self-esteem scores. Model 2 includes a control for frequency of delinquency, and indicates gang members have similar self-esteem levels as do non-gang delinquents. Indirectly, this analysis indicates that higher delinquency levels are connected to lower self-esteem. After removing the frequency of delinquency influence there is no support for gang membership per se enhancing overall self-esteem. Therefore, this analysis found no support for Kaplan's self-esteem enhancement theory. However, there are two major reasons that this analysis could be masking a self-esteem enhancement effect.

First, the analysis controls for frequency but does not control for type of delinquency. The self-report delinquency items range from skipping school to using a weapon or force to obtain something from someone. It is likely that different types of delinquency affect self-concept in different ways. Kaplan tested the enhancement effect

using responses to single items and found effects for some items but not others (Kaplan, 1980:170). However, no research has determined what these differences are or how researchers should address them, so type of delinquency was not included in the present analysis.

Second, there are limitations to using a cross-sectional design in testing Kaplan's theory. A cross-sectional design assumes that these groups of individuals have comparable levels of self-esteem to begin with. It could easily be the case that the individuals who joined the gang had substantially lower self-esteem before joining than the current non-gang individuals used in this comparison. In other words, the gang members self-esteem could have been lower and then increased after joining the gang to become similar to the non-gang individuals. If this is the case, then there is an enhancement effect that this analysis could not detect. However, the only direct way to test this possibility is to employ a longitudinal design to assess self-esteem in individuals before and after they join.

It is evident that there are many concerns and confounding factors when comparing gang and non-gang individuals for self-esteem enhancement. Therefore, this analysis will take other approaches in trying to assess this relationship. In Kaplan's discussion of group membership he wrote that once an individual joined a deviant group, " the subject would become increasingly fixed in the deviant group since it is now gratifying in its consequences..." (Kaplan, 1975:67). Therefore, gang members that are most connected to the gang or have been in the gang for a long time would likely be the ones experiencing self-esteem enhancement. Examining these predictions about

connection and length of time with gang members addresses a limitation in the above

analysis that compared gang and non-gang individuals. If it is the case that gang

members had a lower self-esteem before joining a gang than did non-gang delinquents,

analyzing self-esteem of gangs with only gang members helps eliminate this concern. It

does not address possible individual differences but helps diminish the large differences

that may have existed when comparing gang and non-gang individuals. Therefore, even

though longitudinal data is not available, this indirect test of Kaplan's theory using length

of time in a gang and a measure of place or connection in a gang might provide more

informative results than comparing gang and non-gang individuals.

TIME IN GANG

The hypothesis that the longer an individual is in a gang, the more likely he or she

will experience and exhibit a self-esteem enhancement effect is derived from a number of

ideas. First, group support from the gang is hypothesized to foster self-esteem

enhancement. This support is likely to increase as an individual stays in the gang and

becomes more connected to the other members. Consequently, it would be reasonable to

expect a higher self-esteem for members that have been in the gang longer. Second, it is

reasonable to expect that the individuals in the gang longer have probably committed

more delinquent or criminal behavior than the ones there for a lesser amount of time, so

would be experiencing enhancement from the continued delinquency. Third, it is likely

that gang members continue to be in gangs if they are receiving something positive from

remaining. Kaplan's theory suggests that an increase in self-esteem might be a reason why individuals stay in a gang.

There is one difficulty in testing an enhancement effect by looking at the time a member has invested in the gang. Kaplan's theory and existing empirical research has not determined when this enhancement would occur. It could be that it occurs very soon after joining, or it might take time to become connected and receive gratification from the gang and the increased delinquency. This research will compare members who have been in the gang for over a year to those who have been in the gang a year or less. This division was chosen because research has found that most individuals are in a gang for less than a year (Esbensen and Huizinga, 1993). Receiving self-esteem from the gang could be a predominant reason individuals stay for more than a year. Because frequency of delinquency affected the results in the above analysis and is an integral part of Kaplan's theory, it will be included in this analysis also.

Hypothesis 2: Members who report being part of the gang for over a year will exhibit higher levels of overall self-esteem than the members who report being in a gang for a year or less with and without controls for frequency of delinquency and demographics.

Results

The sample for this hypothesis is 346 gang members. The ordinary least squares regression results (table IV below) do not support hypothesis 2. The results indicate that gang members in the gang for over a year do not report higher overall self-esteem. (b=.0046, p=.967). In fact, the effect (b) coefficient indicates that there are no detectable

differences between members in the gang for less than a year and those in a year or more.

Controlling for frequency of delinquency did not change the non-existent effect of time in

the gang on self-esteem scores. Frequency of delinquency was a significant predictor for

global self-esteem, but in the opposite direction hypothesized by Kaplan (b= - .253,

p=.006). This analysis indicates that higher levels of delinquency are connected to lower

levels of overall self-esteem.

Table IV. OLS Results for Length of Time in a Gang Being Related to Differences in Global Self-Esteem

Model 1	b	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(constant)	4.075	.185			
female	-.252	.105	-.126	-2.389	.017
African American	.416	.135	.195	3.077	.002
Hispanic	-.032	.140	-.015	-.232	.817
other race	-.060	.151	-.024	-.394	.694
In a gang over a year	-.034	.022	-.083	-1.572	.117
F=4.930, R²= .054					
Model 2					
(constant)	4.45	.243			
female	-.317	.108	-.159	-2.936	.004
African American	.357	.108	.168	2.612	.009
Hispanic	-.043	.139	-.019	-.306	.760
other race	-.049	.150	-.020	-.327	.744
In a gang over a year	.0046	.113	.002	.041	.967
Freq. of delinquency	-.253	.092	-.153	-2.744	.006
F=5.163, R²= .064					

Dependent variable is global self-esteem

Time in the gang did not exhibit the hypothesized relationship. This could be due to the problem of not knowing when the enhancement effect would occur. However, it also demonstrated that the gang members reporting more delinquency are reporting lower levels of global self-esteem. The correlation matrix (refer to Appendix A, Table II) showed that gang members who are in the gang longer are participating in greater amounts of delinquency (Pearson correlation = .229, p=.000). The esteem enhancement hypothesis would predict the members in the gang longer that are participating in higher levels of delinquency should exhibit higher self-esteem. Therefore, finding that these members do not exhibit higher esteem is contrary to Kaplan's theory. However, as noted previously, this cross-sectional design can not track changes in self-esteem on an individual level, so it is still possible that this analysis is not detecting an enhancement in self-esteem. Next, the aspect of placement and connection to the gang will be tested to examine support of the self-enhancement theory.

PLACE IN GANG

The place in the gang measurement is one that might be useful for assessing self-esteem enhancement. Conceptually, the measure is meant to determine if there are different members roles, or possibly a hierarchy within a gang. This measure has been used once previously in the Denver Youth Survey, but has never been evaluated. Therefore, an explanation of the question (see measures section for exact question) and a test for construct validity is needed to understand what the question is measuring. This

will help determine if the measure can be meaningfully used in assessing differences in self-esteem.

Face Validity

To determine an individual's place in the gang, the survey instrument asked gang members to relate their gang to concentric circles in a bull's eye format with the smallest circle being the center of the gang and the largest being the outside edge of the gang. It then asked them to report where they are in their gang.

One important aspect of validity is understanding of the question. For this particular question, the respondent would have to understand the bull's eye formation and be able to respond by relating the formation to their gang. An indication of understanding can be obtained by looking at the percentage of respondents who did not answer the question. Comparing this percentage of non-responses to a sample of other questions in the survey instrument can give a good indication of respondent understanding.

Results

Only current gang members (ones responding yes to 'being in a gang now') were directed to answer the question. Of the 5935 respondents, 522 said yes to being currently in a gang. The percent of non-responses, from the 522 respondents answering this question, was 3.83%. Two comparisons of missing data were used to determine understanding to the question. First, 80 questions were extracted from the part of the survey that did not divide respondents due to gang membership. All 5935 respondents were asked to answer these Likert scaled questions. The questions included were about

various aspects and opinions on items such as: school, parents, impulsivity toward life, attitudes towards police These 80 questions had an average of 1.44% for missing responses. Next, the percent missing will be compared to 33 of the gang member questions. This comparison is probably more valid because the same sample should be answering the place in the gang and all comparison questions. These questions included why they joined, activities of the gang, gang attachment and gang-esteem. These items had an average of 4.46 % for missing responses. Given that place in the gang was asked only of gang members and a missing data percentage of 3.83 % is less than the average of the other gang questions, it is reasonable to conclude that the amount missing did not indicate a non-comprehension of the question.

Construct Validity

Construct validity of the place in the gang measure can be assessed by making a number of predictions about how this measure fits into what is already known about gangs. The place in the gang measure presupposes that gangs actually have a structure like the concentric circle pattern. The stacking of circles suggests that a gang has a center and positions considered far and close to this center. Also, the fact that this concentric circle pattern has the smallest circle in the center depicting the gang center and the largest circle outside depicting the edge of the gang implies a small percentage of individuals in the center. The concentric circle pattern suggests a gang having different types of members due to commitment, leadership or both. Using Reiner's (1992) gang member descriptions it is reasonable that those who report being in the center correspond to his

hard core gang members. According to Reiner, hard core members are part of an inner clique and spend most of their time in gang-related activity. They have few friends outside the gang and recognize no authority beyond its existence. They are the most committed members and usually constitute no more than 10-15% of all members of the gang. Reiner's typologies were developed from empirical examination of gang structures in Los Angeles. They are commonly used and are fundamentally similar to typologies developed by other gang researchers. It is reasonable to expect that even with this sample of many gangs, there would be approximately that same percentage of hard core members. Thus, it is hypothesized that this survey will also show around 10 -15 % reporting to be in the center if the bull's eye is appropriately measuring place in the gang.

Hypothesis 3: 10 to 15% of the sample will report being in the center of the gang.

Results

This sample of 404 includes all the individuals fitting the delinquent gang definition. Figure 1 below shows that 25% of respondents indicated being in the center and over half report being in places one or two. The percentages reporting to be in the core of the gang are much larger than the ones in the gang structure typologies developed from Reiner's empirical research. This could be due to a human tendency of wanting to report being one of the most important connected members. However, not all of the respondents reported being in the center and there were at least 36 of the 404 individuals in every circle, so there exists a definite spread. Therefore, even though these results do not exactly comply with Reiner's percentages, there is reason to believe this measure

could still assess place in the gang in a meaningful way. To determine if this is the case,

place in the gang will be examined with other well known theoretical and empirical

constructs.

Figure 1
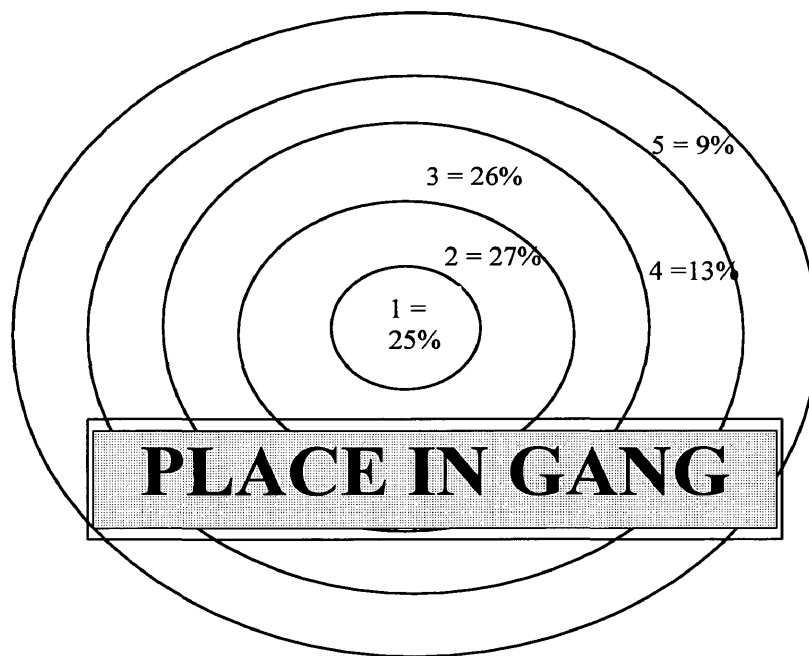
Relationships will be hypothesized looking at time in the gang, amount of violent

crime and parental and school commitment to determine how they compared to place in

the gang. The hypotheses are formed with Reiner's general typology that the hard core

gang members will be found closer to the center of the gang.

Hypothesis 4: *The members closer to the center of the gang will have more time invested*

as a gang member.

This is hypothesized because it likely takes time to become part of that inner

clique and have the member's entire life evolve around the gang.

Results

This hypothesis was found to be correct. With a sample size of 380, the correlation between being closer to the center of the gang and having more time invested was r =.149 (p=.004).

Hypothesis 5: The members near the center of the gang will have participated in more individual violent crime in the last year.

If these members have been in the gang longer (which we know from hypothesis 4), it follows that they would have been involved in more delinquency that has likely escalated to violent offenses. Second, if these are the members that are most committed then they are more likely to be involved in inter-gang rivalry, turf wars, or any other situation defending the gang that leads to violence. Because time in the gang has been found to correspond to being closer in the center, it will be controlled for when examining if individuals near the center participate in more violent crime than the members near the outside of the gang.

Results

The sample size for this analysis was 353 and as in the analyses with the dependent variable of global self-esteem, violent crime has a range from 0 to 12 so does not fit the regression assumption that the dependent variable is continuous. However, the analysis will be able to give good indications of the hypothesized relationships. The results clearly support the hypothesis (refer to Table V below). The closer the member reports being to the center of the gang, the more violent crime the individual has been

involved in during the last year (b=.097, B=.171, p=.001). This was true even after

including the time the individual has been in the gang. Time in the gang still remained a

significant factor in the amount of person crimes committed (b=.930, B=.318, p=.000).

Table V. OLS Regression of Place in the Gang to Frequency of Violent Person Crimes

	b	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(constant)	1.110	.094			
Toward Center of Gang	.097	.028	.171	3.423	.001
Time in the Gang	.930	.015	.318	6.375	.000

Dependent variable is violent person offenses

Hypothesis 6: Gang members near the center of the gang will have a much lower degree

of school commitment and parental attachment but will report higher levels of gang

attachment.

Previous research documents that gang members are found to have both lower

school commitment and parental attachment. Logically, if the gang members are

spending most of their time with the gang, they can not be as committed to school or

spend much time with parents. Much of this time and commitment will go to the gang so

will be evident with higher levels of gang attachment.

Results

The hypothesis that gang members towards the center of the gang will have lower

levels of school commitment and parental attachment was not supported. A decrease in

school commitment was not found to have a significant relationship with being closer to

the center (r =.115, p=.021, N=400). Correlations also showed that parental attachment did not have any correlation with the place in the gang measurement (r =.046, p=.363, N=401). Gang attachment did have a significant relationship to place in the gang. As expected, the attachment increased as the members reported being closer to the center (r =.206, p=.000, N=396). This hypothesis showed the expected increase in gang attachment, but did not exhibit the coinciding decrease with school commitment and parental attachment.

In summary, individuals indicated understanding of the place in the gang question Also, individuals near the center reported a longer time investment, more gang attachment and more violent crime, but did not exhibit the decrease in social norms expected when a gang member would be considered hard core. This measurement might not depict the gang structure expected, but it certainly exhibits the members near the center having greater attachment and commitment to the gang than the members near the outside. The members near the center also exhibit higher levels of delinquency. With the increased commitment and high levels of delinquency, place in the gang has all needed components to test Kaplan's theory. It will be hypothesized that the members near the center of the gang will exhibit a higher self-esteem than do the peripheral members. This is due to the increase in delinquency and commitment to the gang, both of which should contribute to self-esteem enhancement.

Hypothesis 7: Gang members reporting to be in the center of the gang will exhibit higher overall self-esteem than peripheral members. Demographics, time in the gang and frequency of delinquency will be included as controls.

Results

Kaplan's theory was not supported by the results to this analysis (refer to Table VI below). Gang members near the center of the gang had slightly higher self-esteem levels but it was not a significant difference (b=.026, B=.033, p=.578). Also, higher frequencies of delinquency were connected to lower levels of overall self-esteem (b= - .248, B=-.149, p=.012). Place in the gang and gang attachment have a correlation of r =.734 so it was not included in the regression. However, because the correlation is high and positive this analysis indicates that even with greater gang attachment the members near the center do not exhibit higher self-esteem as predicted in Kaplan's theory.

Table VI. OLS Regression of Place in the Gang to Global Self-Esteem

Model 1	b	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(constant)	4.140	.223			
female	-.285	.107	-.144	-2.675	.008
African American	.413	.136	.195	3.028	.003
Hispanic	-.006	.142	-.003	-.049	.961
other race	-.089	.153	-.036	-.584	.560
Towards center of gang	-.0037	.043	-.005	-.088	.930
Time in gang	-.036	.022	-.089	-1.649	.100
F=4.389, R²= .057					
Model 2					
(constant)	4.601	.287			
female	-.350	.109	-.176	-3.218	.001

African American	.371	.175	.175	2.724	.007
Hispanic	-.017	-.008	-.008	-.124	.902
other race	-.082	-.034	-.034	-.544	.587
Towards center of gang	.026	.033	.033	.604	.546
Time in gang	-.017	-.043	-.043	-.763	.446
Freq. of delinquency	-.248	-.149	-.149	-2.526	.012
F=4.734, R^2= .072					

Dependent Variable is global self-esteems

None of the above hypotheses addressing Kaplan's theory have found a self-esteem enhancement effect. Gang members and non-gang individuals were compared, expected relations about connection and time in a gang were examined and none of findings were supportive of gang membership enhancing self-esteem. However, these results do not conclusively prove that an enhancement effect does not exist. As mentioned previously, this analysis is using alternative ways to assess Kaplan's theory in the absence of longitudinal data. The first way was examining global self-esteem of only gang members making predictions about time and place in the gang. A second way to examine the relationship of self-esteem and gang membership is to simply ask the gang member if his or her gang provides an increase in self-concept. As has been done for areas of school, family and peers (refer to literature review, pg 23), a gang-specific self-esteem scale has been developed. If gang members report that the gang provides them with self-esteem then it would be reasonable to continue exploring self-esteem enhancement due to gang membership. The gang-specific esteem scale is a new measure composed of statements from Rosenberg's scale with the addition that the self-perception is provided by the gang. For example, one of the statements included in Rosenberg's

scale is "I am a useful person to have around." The gang-specific esteem scale uses "Being a gang member makes me feel like I am a useful person to have around" (refer to measures section for a complete listing of statements). Because this scale is new and it is composed from Rosenberg's scale, the next step in this analysis is to compare the global and the gang-specific scales.

GLOBAL AND GANG-SPECIFIC SELF-ESTEEM

Rosenberg intended the respondent to be "consciously and or unconsciously taking into account his or her unique set of attributes of varying personal importance" when responding to the statements in his scale (Wylie, 1989:25). A great deal of research has shown that gangs take the place of family and friends and consume a great deal of the adolescent's life (Spergel, 1995). Therefore, it is logical that gang members would be referencing their gang in answering questions about self-concept. The above hypotheses assume that gang membership influences global self-concept, therefore assuming gang members are referencing their gang while answering these questions. However, if the gang is not a primary attribute included in formulating global self-concept then determining whether gangs provide self-esteem using Rosenberg's scale would not be the most accurate avenue.

To explicitly determine whether gang-specific self-esteem is a component of global self-esteem, esteem assessments measured with the global scale will be compared to measures of commitment to accepted social institutions and commitment to gangs.

Gang member's scores on Rosenberg's global self-esteem scale will be compared to measures of school commitment, parental attachment, and gang attachment.

The most direct and important comparison when trying to determine if gang provided self-esteem is a main component of global self esteem is the correlation between responses to the gang-specific self-esteem scale and Rosenberg's global scale. Establishing a positive correlation between the two scales, will give support to self-esteem provided by a gang being included in the respondent's overall self-assessment of self. The other comparisons are included to provide a more complete picture of possible attributes.

First, descriptive data on the gang-specific self-esteem scale will be given. The scale was one through five with one indicating strongly disagree and five indicating strongly agree. If the mean and median are around a four or above then this displays that individuals do see their gang as providing a degree of self-esteem.

Hypothesis 8: Gang members will feel that the gang provides self-esteem.

Results

The data supported this hypothesis. The mean for all items in the gang-specific self-esteem scale is 3.73 with a standard deviation of .8113 and a skewness statistic of -.145. This indicates that gang members on average feel the gang enhances his or her self-esteem. Responses from this scale do provide support for Kaplan's theory. A histogram (Figure 2 below) is provided for a better representation of the results.

Figure 2.

Gang Esteem
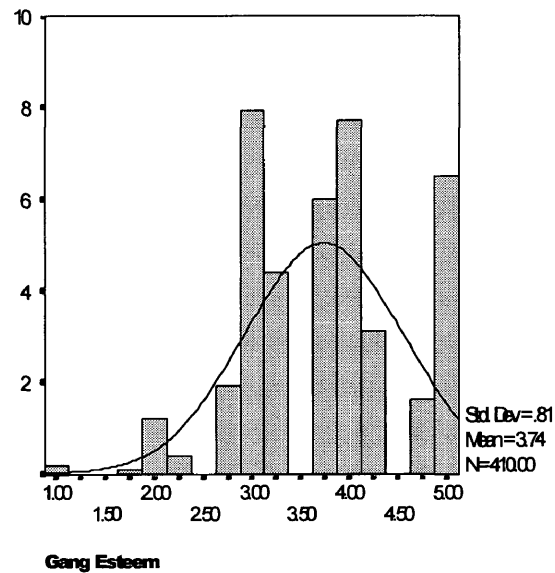
Establishing a positive correlation between the gang-specific scale and

Rosenberg's, will give support to self-esteem provided by a gang being included in the

respondent's overall self-assessment of self. Because support for Kaplan's theory was

found with the gang-specific scale but not the global one, it is likely that gang-specific

self-esteem will not be a predominant component of the global assessment. Thus it will

be hypothesized that there will not be a strong correlation between the two scales.

*Hypothesis 9: Gang member responses to Rosenberg's global self-esteem scale will **not**
be strongly positively correlated to their responses to the gang-specific self-esteem scale
or to the gang attachment scale. Correlation sizes will be smaller than those between the
global self-esteem scale and the school commitment and parental attachment scales.*

Results

This analysis includes all 421 gang members fitting the description provided in the methods section. Measures of gang attachment and gang-esteem were very highly correlated (.734, p = .000, N=410) and the school / family variables were negatively correlated to the gang ones. Descriptive data and the complete bivariate correlation matrix can be found in Appendix A, table 2.

Hypothesis 9 was supported by these data. In fact, both gang attachment and gang-specific self-esteem measures were found to be **negatively** correlated to measurements of global self-esteem. Gang attachment had a negative correlation of r = .111 (p=.025, N=406) and gang-esteem had a negative correlation of r = .144 (p=.004, N=406) with global self-esteem. Finding this significant negative correlation between the gang-specific and the global self-esteem measures indicates that esteem provided by a gang not an aspect measured when using Rosenberg's scale. School commitment had a significant positive correlation of r = .434 (p = .000, N=417) with the global self-esteem scale as did parental attachment (r = .391, p = .000, N=415). This shows that both of these significant factors in an adolescent's life are attributes considered in the formation of global self-esteem.

The results of this analysis indicate that school commitment and parental attachment are included in Rosenberg's global assessment and it is very possible that gang membership is not. This could mean that gangs are not important in forming self-concept or that Rosenberg's global scale is not accurately assessing it. Because the members responded that they agree their gang is providing them with self-esteem and the

members report being attached to the gang (mean = 3.9, on a five point scale -- refer to measures section), it is difficult to believe gangs do not influence self-concept. Therefore, the gang-specific self-esteem scale will be further examined to test Kaplan's theory.

GANG-SPECIFIC SELF-ESTEEM

Because the gang members agreed that the gang influenced this self-concept in positive ways, it is possible that the gang-specific scale might provide a better test of Kaplan's theory of self-esteem enhancement. Therefore, the analysis using time in the gang and place in the gang will be replicated with the gang-specific self-esteem measure. Frequency of delinquency will be included as a control.

Hypothesis 10: The members who report being part of the gang for over a year or report being closer to the center will exhibit higher levels of gang-specific self-esteem than those members who report being in the gang a year or less or being peripheral members. Demographic variables and frequency of delinquency will be included as controls.
Results

The sample size for this analysis was 330 gang members. Partial support was found for the prediction that the members closer to the center of the gang and in the gang longer would exhibit higher gang-specific self-esteem. The hypothesis was supported when frequency of delinquency was not included. The unstanderdized effect size for time in the gang was .056 (B=.164, p=.003). The place in the gang measurement had an

unstandardized effect size of .099 (B=.147,p=.007). However, these effects did not remain after adding frequency of delinquency. The unstandardized effect for time in the gang decreased to .029 (B=.087, p=.125). Place in the gang decreased to .067 (B=.10, p=.066). Frequency of delinquency was a significant factor in determining the gang-specific responses. The more delinquency reported by an individual, the higher the person's gang-specific self-esteem (b=.355, p=.000). This very large effect overshadows the time and place in the gang effects found before frequency of delinquency is added. It is known from the correlation matrix that time and place are significantly correlated to frequency of delinquency, but the results show that frequency of delinquency is a stronger predictor of higher gang-specific self-esteem.

Even though the hypothesis explicitly states that time and place in the gang should be strong predictors of gang-specific self-esteem, finding that an increase in delinquency is a stronger predictor of higher gang-specific self-esteem **still** supports Kaplan's theory. In all of the previous hypotheses with global self-esteem, frequency of delinquency was related to lower global self-esteem. With gang-specific self-esteem, the more delinquency the higher the self-esteem. This indicates a self-esteem enhancement effect since continued delinquency enhancing self-esteem is the main prediction in Kaplan's original theory.

Table VII. OLS Regression Assessing Gang-Specific Self-Esteem

Model 1	b	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(constant)	3.797	.192			
female	.058	.092	.035	.635	.526
African American	-.117	.117	-.065	-1.000	.318
Hispanic	-.145	.122	-.077	-1.194	.233
other	.032	.131	.016	.245	.807
Towards Center of Gang	.099	.037	.147	2.703	.007
Time in Gang	.056	.019	.164	2.999	.003
Model 2					
(constant)	3.135	.242			
female	.152	.092	.091	1.657	.099
African American	-.056	.115	-.031	-.487	.626
Hispanic	-.130	.119	-.069	-1.097	.274
other	.0208	.128	.010	.163	.871
Towards Center of Gang	.067	.036	.100	-1.846	.066
Time in Gang	.0296	.019	.087	1.537	.125
Freq. of delinquency	.355	.082	.254	4.316	.001

Dependent variable is gang-specific self-esteem

DISCUSSION

This study has employed multiple methods for examining whether gang membership enhances self-esteem as predicted in Kaplan's self-derogation and enhancement theory. First, existing analysis by Wang was replicated finding similar results. Gang members reported much lower global self-esteem than did non-gang individuals. Kaplan's theory requires continued delinquent behavior before an enhancement in self-esteem would take place so a major problem with this first analysis was the exclusion of a control for frequency of delinquency. Therefore, the analysis was repeated assessing global self-esteem of only delinquent individuals to compare gang members and non-gang individuals. The importance of adding a frequency of delinquency measure was apparent when the results changed from gang members reporting lower levels of self-esteem to both groups having similar levels. None of these analyses, however, supported Kaplan's theory.

Even after controlling for delinquency, comparing gang members and non-gang individuals is problematic because of the likelihood that gang members had lower self-esteem before joining than do the non-gang individuals. It could be that lower self-esteem prompted the individuals to join gangs of other deviant individuals and after joining the members' self-esteem were raised to be comparable to the non-gang individuals. Therefore, this analysis examined the sample of gang members making predictions about commitment and length of gang membership. Still, results showed no support for Kaplan's theory. The hypotheses that the longer a person is in the gang and the more committed or connected they are (report being in the center) resulting in higher

self-esteem levels were found not to be supported. For both time in the gang and the measurement of place in the gang the effects on global self-esteem were non-existent. Both standardized effect sizes were essentially zero (time = .002, place = .033).

Overall, comparing gang members and non-gang individuals or just evaluating gang members provided no support for Kaplan's theory using Rosenberg's scale for assessing global self-esteem. This essentially means that there is either no enhancement effect, Rosenberg's scale is not measuring it, or the analysis itself is masking the effect. Because this is cross-sectional research, it is highly possible that enhancement effect exists but is not evident when comparing groups of individuals at only one point in time. Longitudinal data were not available for this study, so this option could not be tested. Therefore, this study examined the possibility that Rosenberg's scale is not measuring the existing self-esteem enhancement.

Examining whether Rosenberg's scale does assess esteem enhancement in a specific domain of gangs. It asks gang members if they believe the gang provides an increase in self-concept. This new scale was modeled after domain specific scales such as school, home and peer based self-esteem scales. All of these domain specific scales are believed to be part of the global self-esteem assessment. The gang-specific self-esteem scale used in this analysis was similar to Rosenberg's with the addition that the feeling was provided by the gang. Results showed that gang members agreed the gang provides increased self-concept. When comparing the gang-specific scale to Rosenberg's it was evident with the negative correlation that gang-specific scale was not part of Rosenberg's overall assessment. The negative correlation suggests that gang members

are not referencing the gang when answering overall self-esteem questions. Thus, it is very possible there is an enhancement effect that the overall scale might not detect, so the gang-specific self-esteem scale was used to evaluate the self-esteem enhancement theory.

The same predictions about time and connection to the gang were evaluated with the gang-specific self-esteem scale. Both the longer the individual was in the gang and the closer to the center they reported to be, the higher the responses on the gang-specific esteem scale. These findings are consistent with Kaplan's theory with gang membership and delinquency providing a self-esteem enhancement. Without separating out the effects of frequency of delinquency, both a longer time period in the gang and a place closer to the center of the gang indicated strong connections to higher self-esteem responses. However, frequency of delinquency was found to be the most important factor when determining gang-specific self-esteem. It decreased the effects of both time in the gang and place in the gang. The results were in favor of Kaplan's theory because the individuals with larger frequency of delinquency are the ones reporting higher gang-specific self-esteem. Overall, the results using the gang-specific self-esteem scale supported Kaplan's self-esteem enhancement portion of his theory.

The juxtaposition of the results using Rosenberg's global scale and the gang-specific scale suggests a number of concerns and explanations. First, as suggested earlier, it is possible that Rosenberg's global self-esteem scale does not measure the increase in self-esteem due to a gang so those findings are not applicable. It could be recommended to use a scale specific to gang membership like the one tested above. This, however, does go against the general overall nature of Rosenberg's scale. Rosenberg

created the scale to measure all the important aspects of life as the individual sees them.
It doesn't make a great deal of sense to say that it includes only the societally accepted
aspects. However, Rosenberg's scale was included in the part of the questionnaire with
family and school questions so it could be that those aspects were in the forefront of the
respondent's mind.

A second problem could be that the results to the gang-specific scale are inflated.
It is likely that when answering questions about gang membership, a gang member is
going to respond positively because that is how they think they should respond. If
admitting to gang membership has any sense of superiority or satisfaction to it, the
member is not likely to admit that gang membership doesn't give them a good self-
concept. Consequently, it is possible that gang members do experience an enhancement
in self-esteem while being a gang member but the relationship does need to be further
analyzed. The only way to sort out the conflicting findings when the global scale shows
no enhancement effect while the gang-specific scale does, is to use a research design that
measures self-esteem before joining a gang and again while the person is a gang member.

Completely testing Kaplan's theory can only be done with a longitudinal design.
This design can account for the individual's changes in types of self-esteem over the time
from before joining a gang through to remaining a gang member for a number of years.
Only by tracking an individual's self-esteem changes can the self-enhancement prediction
be assessed. Given that this present study does find support for an increase in gang-
specific self-esteem with being in the gang longer and being more committed, it would

definitely be worthwhile to evaluate the self-esteem enhancement theory with

longitudinal data.

APPENDIX A

Table I. Correlations for Entire Sample (Hypothesis 1)

Correlation	Female	Age	Race	In a gang now	Frequency of Delinquency
Female	1.0				
Age	-.097*	1.0			
Race	.032	.003	1.0		
In gang now	-.107	.131*	.097*		
Frequency of Delinquency	-.187*	.152*	.053*		
N					
Female	5107				
Age	5055	5075			
Race	5048	5014	5067		
In gang now	5107	5075	5067	5149	
Frequency of Delinquency	5016	4989	4976	5057	5057

*. Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Table II. Correlations for Gang Sample

Correlation	Female	Age	Race	Parent Attach	School Commit	Time in gang	Place in gang	Gang Attach	Gang Esteem	Self Esteem	Delinq
Female	1.00										.
Age	-.132*	1.00									
Race	.096	.037	1.00								
Parent Attach	-.122	-.060	-.020	1.00							
School Commit	.049	-.099	-.010	.358*	1.00						
Time in gang	-.055	.366*	-.025	-.063	-.130	1.00					
Place in gang	-.043	-.007	-.054	.046	.115	-.149*	1.00				
Gang Attach	.083	.029	-.009	-.154*	-.289*	.179*	-.206*	1.00			
Gang Esteem	.029	.071	-.011	-.139*	-.300*	.190*	-.176*	.734*	1.00		
Self- Esteem	-.12	-.046	-.055	.391*	.434*	-.036	.025	-.111	-.144*	1.00	
Delinquency	-.22	.152*	.000	-.225*	-.372*	.315*	-.245*	.311*	.287*	-.158*	1.00

N

	Female	Age	Race	Parent Attach	School Commit	Time in gang	Place in gang	Gang Attach	Gang Esteem	Self Esteem	Delinq
Female	415										
Age	408	410									
Race	412	407	414								
Parent Commit	412	407	411	417							
School Commit	412	407	412	415	417						
Time in gang	389	391	388	388	389	391					
Place in gang	398	394	397	401	400	380	404				
Gang Attach	404	399	403	407	406	382	396	410			
Gang Esteem	404	399	403	407	406	382	396	410	410		
Self-Esteem	412	407	412	415	417	389	400	406	406	417	
Delinquency	372	369	371	375	374	351	364	369	369	374	378

*. Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

TABLE III. Descriptive Statistics

SEX

	Not in Gang		In Gang		Total	
Male	2111	45 %	268	64.5 %	2379	46.5 %
Female	2581	55 %	147	35.4 %	2728	53.5 %
Total	4692	100 %	415	100 %	5107	100 %

RACE

	Not in Gang		In Gang		Total	
White	2059	44.3 %	107	25.8 %	2166	42.7 %
African American	1166	25 %	121	29.2 %	1287	25.4 %
Hispanic	783	16.8 %	104	25 %	887	17.5 %
Other	645	13.9 %	82	20 %	727	14.4 %
Total	4653	100 %	414	100 %	5067	100 %

AGE

	Not in Gang		In Gang		Total	
Under 14	1462	31.3 %	61	14.9 %	1523	30 %
14	2832	60.7 %	245	59.8 %	3077	60.6 %
Over 14	371	8.0 %	104	25.3 %	475	9.4 %
Total	4665	100 %	410	100 %	5075	100 %

DESCRIPTIVES FOR GANG SAMPLE

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Self esteem	417	1.00	5.00	3.7544	.9683
School Commitment	417	1.00	5.00	2.8438	.8817
Parent Attachment	417	1.00	7.00	3.9619	1.3966
Time in gang	391	.00	17.00	2.7570	2.4305
Gang Esteem	410	1.00	5.00	3.7389	.8113
Gang Attach	410	1.00	5.00	3.9398	.7936
Logged Self report delinquency--Total	378	.06	2.56	1.4188	.5977

DESCRIPTIVES FOR NON-GANG SAMPLE

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Self esteem	4699	1.00	5.00	4.0364	.6794
School Commitment	4712	1.00	5.00	3.6639	.7174
Parental Attachment	5047	1.00	7.00	4.7360	1.2215

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