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FEMALE GANG INVOLVEMENT IN A MIDWESTERN CITY:

CORRELATES, NATURE AND MEANINGS

by

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Seven months of negotiating with the Institutional Review Board at USC was a nightmare, but out of the struggle came two hidden blessings: the opportunity to work with C. Ronald Huff and Jodi Rice. Ron is, as Cheryl Maxson dubbed him, "the nicest man in the gang field." He served as my on-site supervisor in Columbus, and was more than willing to assist when I called on him, putting me in touch with people in the field, making phone calls on my behalf, and calming my nerves about how to take on what felt like the monumental task of writing the dissertation. He also introduced me to Jodi Rice.

Jodi served as the youth advocate on my project, and we met several times during the data-gathering phase to discuss its progress. My meetings with Jodi always left me feeling invigorated. She was generous with her time, and talking with her gave me greater insight into working and communicating with adolescents. She is a woman I truly admire.

A number of individuals at local agencies facilitated my contact with the young women I interviewed. I owe a debt of gratitude to Carol Johnson and Anne Japinko at Rosemont Center, Jane Carter, Joanne Carter, John Cerbi and Walt Wheeler at the Detention Center, and Duane Casares at Directions for Youth. In addition, I

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so. Each girl touched my life and expanded my

understanding of the world. I still laugh out loud every

time I read the transcript of my interview with Traci, may

she never lose her silly playful side. More than

anything, I see these young women as amazingly

resourceful, though not always in productive ways, in

buildings lives and identities in a dangerous and

sometimes hostile world. To borrow from my friend Tari,

"you gotta give 'em their props."

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I. INTRODUCTION

This project is a weaving together of two specific interests and one social concern. My interests are in the changing nature of gangs resulting from their emergence and growth in new cities, and the place and meanings of gang affiliation among young women in these contexts. My concern is with the detrimental effects recent punitive crime policies are having in the lives of young people: these policies are resulting in a disregard for the social and economic contexts that cause youth crime and gang participation. We are in a time of change as scholars studying gangs. The 1980s and 1990s have witnessed monumental national growth both in gangs, and in the renewed academic study of gangs (Hagedorn, 1988; Huff, 1990; Klein, 1995; Spergel, 1995). Female gang involvement, which until recently was stereotyped or ignored, has also garnered new interest among researchers thanks in part to the work of feminist scholars, who have struggled to bring the study of women's lives more fully into the academic world (for recent work on female gang involvement see Bjerregaard and Smith, 1992; Campbell, 1984a; Chesney-Lind, 1993; Fishman, 1988; Joe and Chesney-Lind, 1995; Lauderback et al., 1992; Moore,

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following lead-in:

> Traditionally in neighborhoods where gang violence
> is a way of life, young women have stayed out of
> the fighting. No more. In the past year or two,
> police from New York to Los Angeles have had to
> confront the emergence of female gangs, and an
> equally deadly kind of female violence.

News correspondent Karen Burnes went on to elaborate:

> In defiance and in defense, they have broken away
> from male gangs, creating a language, a style, and
> a culture outsiders cannot penetrate. They roam
> the streets staking out territory, dealing drugs,
> and asserting their strength and independence. In
> ten years, the FBI says arrests of women for
> violent crimes have increased by 41 percent,
> almost twice as much as violent crimes by men.
> Cops on the street say women are often more
> violent, more brutal than men. And they say much
> of their crime is now related to gang activity.

The public concern surrounding girls in gangs is not
just about their supposed "violent nature" but as importantly
their violation of appropriate femininity and its effects on
their roles as mothers. During the same story, news
correspondent Burnes concluded by suggesting that what is
perhaps most "disturbing" about the presumed rise in female
gangs is that "many of these girls are now mothers, raising a
generation nurtured on violence and hate."

The danger of this sensationalized focus on gangs, and
female gang involvement in particular, is that "virtually
everything we learn about what's really happening comes from
only two urban institutions--police and media--both with
powerful, self-interested motives" (Moore, 1991: 1). As a

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proliferation (Spergel and Curry, 1993; Huff, 1993; Klein and Maxson, 1996). However, in order to build comprehensive and comparable data about gangs across contexts, it is necessary to have some amount of standardization in our definitions. The goal, in my view, is to adopt a definition that is flexible enough to capture differences that may emerge across gangs and gang cities, while providing some means of assuring that we are examining similar phenomena.

Probably the major debate in the field is whether criminal involvement should be part of this definition. Klein's (1971) definition of a gang is one of the most influential and longstanding. He suggests that the term gang refer to a group of youths who:

> (a) are generally perceived as a distinct aggregation by others in their neighborhood, (b) recognize themselves as a denotable group (almost invariably with a group name) and (c) have been involved in a sufficient number of [illegal] incidents to call forth a consistent negative response from neighborhood residents and/or enforcement agencies. (Klein, 1971: 13)

One critique of this approach is that a potential outcome of gang activity (crime) is part of the definition, and as such is tautological (Short, 1990; Bursik and Grasmick, 1995). However, defining gangs as groups that are involved in crime does not preclude examination of variations in criminal involvement, including the types, extent or seriousness of illegal activities. Instead it highlights that crime is a focal point of the group, and one that

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criminal involvement is one of the features of youth gangs
(Bjerregaard and Smith, 1992; Esbensen et al., 1993;
Esbensen and Huizinga, 1993; Fagan, 1990; Thornberry et al.,
1993; Winfree et al., 1992), and members themselves
characterize their groups as such. However, they also resist
this characterization when it becomes totalizing. I believe
it is possible in gang research to recognize the empirical
relationship of street gangs to crime without reifying this
connection. This means not emphasizing crime to the
exclusion of other elements of gangs that make them
noteworthy (for example, the meanings and functions they
serve in youths' lives), and it also means examining and
highlighting the ways in which gang youths resist attempts to
reduce their groups simply to criminal enterprises. In this
project I will do both, while nonetheless defining youth
gangs as groups that, by definition, are involved in crime.

Specifically, my definition of a gang for the purpose
of this project is a partial adaptation of Klein's. A gang
is a group of youths who recognize themselves as a denotable
group and apply the term "gang" to describe their group, and
one that defines itself as criminally involved. Because of
my emphasis on gangs in an emergent city (see below), I
believe Klein's criteria that the group must be recognized by
others in the neighborhood as such and have solicited
negative responses by law enforcement, if applied

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gangs, and as cat fighters, fighting one another for the attentioi. of male gang members (for a fuller discussion, see Campbell, 1984a). It is likely that these research findings are as much a reflection of the frameworks applied to gangs by male researchers and male academics as they are a reflection of the nature of girls' gang participation prior to and into the 1980s (Campbell, 1990a). The few studies during this time that focused on female gang involvement from the perspectives of the girls in gangs provide evidence that young women's roles in these groups were probably broader than most of the literature reflects (Bowker and Klein, 1983; Brown, 1977; Fishman, 1988; Moore, 1991).

The study of young women's participation in gangs, then, has a history of marginalization and invisibility (see Campbell, 1984a, 1990a, 1990b; Chesney-Lind and Shelden, 1992; Moore and Hagedorn, 1996; Taylor, 1993). Overlooking girls' involvement in gangs or depicting them only as peripheral members has meant a failure to examine the significance of gang life for the females involved (Chesney-Lind and Shelden, 1992: 49). This is despite evidence suggesting that females approximate anywhere from ten to 38 percent of gang members (Campbell, 1984a; Chesney-Lind, 1993; Esbensen, 1996; Family and Youth Services Bureau, 1993; Fagan, 1990; Klein, 1971; Miller, 1975; Moore, 1991), that female gang participation may be increasing

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phenomenon. The project is the first prong of a larger study comparing female gang involvement across cities with differing socioeconomic and cultural contexts, and with differing histories of gangs. The focus of this text is Columbus, Ohio. The project includes comparative survey interviews with 21 gang members and 25 non-gang girls, census tract analyses for both groups, and in-depth interviews with the gang members. It explores the correlates of gang involvement among girls, the life contexts shaping their participation in gangs and the meanings they attribute to it, the structures and activities of these gangs and girls' roles within them.

I chose Columbus because it is a city in contrast to the typical gang city of the past. As I will discuss in detail in chapter three, Columbus was chosen as one of my sites for two very specific reasons. First, it is a city in which gangs are a relatively new phenomenon--with their emergence dated around 1986. Second, it is a city that is thriving economically, experiencing both population and economic growth in the last decade. This is in contrast to the many cities which have been devastated by the multiple effects of deindustrialization, including population and job loss among central city residents, outmigration of the middle classes, and the deterioration of social support networks (see Hagedorn, 1988; Wilson, 1987). Columbus is important

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race, ethnicity, gender, age and class contexts. This means emphasizing not only potential differences but also exploring the similarities and variations existing within groups or contexts.

OUTLINE OF THE TEXT

My choice to study young women's gang involvement in a setting such as Columbus (in combination with additional cities), using multiple methodologies, and gang/nongang comparisons, thus allows me to underscore the diversity of gangs and gang affiliation, along with their overlapping similarities. The research is constructed in a way that stresses comparisons--of gang and non-gang girls, with an emphasis on individual, community and structural factors. This research design has allowed me to examine systematically three questions of concern: etiological questions, the meanings and contexts of gang involvement, gang structures and young women's roles within these groups.

Chapter two provides a detailed literature review, assessing our current knowledge of female gang involvement around the dimensions of interest: etiological questions, the meanings and contexts of gang affiliation, gang structures and girls' activities in these groups. It also includes a discussion of female involvement in delinquency and gang-related crime.

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the survey interview, related to socioeconomic and
neighborhood conditions, perceptions of and performance in
school, family relationships and problems, self esteem and
victimization, peer relations and peer delinquency,
involvement in crime, arrests, and exposure to violence.
Potential patterns distinguishing gang and non-gang girls
will be discussed. In chapter six, I examine in more depth
some of the life experiences leading girls to choose to
become gang-involved. Patterns emerged in the surveys and
in-depth interviews suggesting that certain life contexts are
related to girls' decisions to join gangs. Examining how
these contexts motivate girls to become gang-involved
illuminates some of the meanings of gangs in their lives, as
they reveal the needs girls attempt to fulfill through gang
membership. These patterns will be explored, and five case
studies will be presented to illustrate. In addition, the
experiences of three non-gang girls who associate with gangs
will be discussed, highlighting their motivations to
associate with gangs but also to remain non-members.

Chapter seven provides an overview of the structures
and nature of those gangs in Columbus in which girls are
involved. This will include descriptions of the size, gender
composition, age range and territoriality of these groups, as
well as a discussion of leadership and connections to other
cities. I will also discuss how young women achieve status

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<u>NOTES</u>

[1] In fact, in Los Angeles county, 47 percent of all African American males between 21 and 24 years of age are listed in the police gang database, despite the fact that research consistently reveals that only a small proportion of youths in gang-involved communities are gang members (see Reiner, 1992).

[2] For example, a recent (1993) prominent gang homicide occurred in Columbus, Ohio (the study site) in a popular downtown shopping mall. The youth who was killed was a member of a Folks set that local officials had no prior knowledge of.

[3] This phrase is borrowed from Michael Tonry (1995), who uses the phrase to highlight the fact that the War on Drugs has *forseeably* worsened racial disparities in criminal justice, and that policy-makers knowingly adopt policies that are not designed to alleviate drug abuse and crime. Likewise, recent punitive approaches toward gangs do not effectively deal with the causes and meanings of gangs in youths' lives, but do serve political purposes (see Davis, 1990 chapter five).

1992; Taylor, 1993), and these critiques are important. Rather than repeat them in detail here, my preference is to focus instead on what we *have* learned about female gang participation, and use this base of knowledge as a starting point for my work.

While there is a relative paucity of academic research on girls in gangs, there is nonetheless a considerable body of knowledge. In this chapter, I will discuss research findings concerning three areas of interest: first, the correlates of female gang participation, including a discussion of the relationship of gang affiliation with structural factors, individual problems, family relationships, peer relationships, and delinquency; second, the meanings and functions of gang affiliation for young women; and finally, the structures of gangs in which girls are involved and the roles of females within them.

CORRELATES OF FEMALE GANG INVOLVEMENT

Studies which examine the causes of gang participation tend toward two approaches. The first involves the assessment of the relationship of gang affiliation with a number of variables, including structural factors such as neighborhood characteristics, poverty, educational and occupational opportunities; individual factors such as self esteem, sexual experiences and victimization; family

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gang youths from the same communities). They found neither 'social disorganization' (as measured by percent female headed-households, percent on welfare, percent below poverty line, percent of population with less than a high school education, duration of unemployment, racial composition, and population mobility) nor poverty (derived from data on income of principle wage earner in household) as significantly associated with gang membership for females. However, they did find that low expectations for completing school were a significant predictor of gang membership for young women.

This finding on the relationship of female gang involvement and educational expectations has received support in other studies of girls in gangs. Bowker and Klein (1983), for example, report that female gang members were less likely than non-members to intend to finish high school or go to college. Fishman's data from the 1960s reveals that the majority of gang girls were high school dropouts or had extremely high rates of truancy. In addition, the gang girls Quicker spoke with expressed a strong dislike for school, indicating they found it boring and frustrating (1983: 34).

Many researchers point to structural factors to explain female, as well as male gang participation (Campbell, 1990a; Chesney-Lind, 1993; Fishman, 1988; Hagedorn, 1988; Joe and Chesney-Lind, 1995; Quicker, 1983; Taylor, 1993). While this assessment appears to be accurate (Fagan, 1989;

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Once again, few recent studies have tested empirically the relationship of these factors to female gang participation, and results have been mixed. Bowker and Klein (1983) found a relationship between self-esteem and gang membership among females. In contrast, Bjerregaard and Smith report that self esteem was not related to gang membership for males or females in their sample, while early sexual activity was related to gang membership for both sexes:

> Early engagement in sexual intercourse increases the probability of joining the gang by 17% for boys, and by 34% for girls . . . indicating that female gang members are significantly more likely to have engaged in early intercourse than male gang members. (1992: 18)

In nearly all cases, the girls reported becoming sexually active prior to gang affiliation. Moore's (1991) findings on Chicano/a gangs in Los Angeles offer some support for Bjerregaard and Smith's finding that early sexual activity is associated with contemporary gang membership. In addition, research suggests that a history of sexual victimization is related to gang membership for girls (Joe and Chesney-Lind, 1995; Moore, 1991).

Family Variables

The family has long been considered crucial for understanding delinquency and gang behavior among girls (Canter, 1982; Cernkovich and Giordano, 1987; Moore, 1991; Smith and Paternoster, 1987). Weak supervision, lack of attachment to parents and family, the gang involvement of

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and nongang females, making her findings difficult to compare to my work (ie. she may have uncovered broader gendered patterns rather than gendered gang patterns); however, many of her findings are noteworthy. In Moore's study, the girls' mothers were more likely to work outside the home than boys', they were more likely to come from single parent homes, and a higher percentage of girls came from homes where the adults did not work.

On the question of whether gang affiliation is related to having other family members in gangs, Moore (1991: 48) reports that while boys are more likely to join gangs as a result of growing up in the neighborhood around gangs, girls are more likely to join because of a relative or close friend's association with the gang. In their interviews with gang members, Joe and Chesney-Lind (1995) report that 90 percent of the girls (12 of 13) and 80 percent of the boys (28 of 35) reported having a family member who was in a gang; usually this was a sibling. Lauderback et al. (1992) argue that this pattern of gang identification through familial affiliations is more prevalent among Latinas, whereas African American girls are more likely to organize and join gangs independently.

Another factor considered significant in explaining gang affiliation is the existence of family violence in the home. In Joe and Chesney-Lind's study, 55 percent of the

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family, witnessing the arrest of family member(s) growing up, having someone in the home who was physically handicapped or chronically ill, and having a family member die when they were growing up. Her conclusion is that gang members, particularly girls, come from families that are troubled. These studies reveal a myriad of factors within families that may contribute to the likelihood of gang involvement for some girls.

Peer Factors

Evidence suggests that peer influences are important for understanding gang participation among females (Brown, 1977; Bowker and Klein, 1983; Campbell, 1990a, 1990b; Figuiera-McDonough et al., 1981; Giordano, 1978; Morash, 1983). For both males and females, delinquency increases when youths are regular members of a group, and have frequent peer contacts (Bowker and Klein, 1983; Elliott et al., 1985; Giordano, 1978). The more time spent with a delinquent peer group, the more likely a girl is to be delinquent (Giordano, 1978: 130). In addition, the gender of their peer associates is important. Some research has indicated that girls form closer peer attachments than boys do (Giordano et al., 1986). According to Campbell (1990a), while it is often assumed that girls' involvement with delinquent groups results from the influence of delinquent *male* peers, her research on female gang members stresses the importance of the *female* peer

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had a longer tradition of independence and freedom of action than has her white counterpart, the less likely it seems that the black female would need to learn techniques, values and motives from 'the guys.' (Giordano, 1978: 132)

Peer delinquency, then, is crucial for understanding youths' participation in crime. The most important single factor for explaining delinquency among both boys and girls is the delinquency of their peers (Elliott et al., 1985; Morash, 1983). Peer group norms that are favorable towards delinquency also affect rates of delinquency for individual youths (Figueira-McDonough et al., 1981). It is not surprising then that peer delinquency is related to the likelihood a youth will become involved with a gang. Bjerregaard and Smith (1992: 18) conclude that for the youths in their survey, peer involvement with delinquency "was significantly associated with the probability of gang membership for both sexes" (1992: 18).

All of the factors discussed thus far--structural, individual, family, and peer factors--may be part of the key to understanding the participation of girls in gangs. Some, such as sexual abuse and disruptive home environments, may be more salient for girls than boys, while others, such as poverty, lack of opportunities and peer relationships, may affect girls and boys similarly. Next I will turn to literature assessing the functions and meanings of gang membership for its participants, to illuminate further those

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resisting the limitations placed on them by social
definitions of appropriate femininity. I will discuss these
themes in turn.

Belonging, Social Support and Family

For boys, it has long been recognized that "the gang
can serve as a surrogate extended family for adolescents who
do not see their own families as meeting their needs for
belonging, nurturance, and acceptance" (Huff, 1993). The
gang provides youths with a group of peers with whom
friendship and familial relations are established. Recent
evidence reveals that surrogate familial ties are also a
product of female gang participation (Brown, 1978; Campbell,
1990a; Chesney-Lind, 1993; Joe and Chesney-Lind, 1995). As
Brown reports, "the sense of belonging fostered by gang
membership fulfills some very basic psychological needs for
the female gang members in much the same fashion as for the
male gang members" (1977: 223).

Joe and Chesney-Lind (1995) report that the gang is a
place where its members can find a support network that both
acts as a family and provides an outlet to escape from
troubled families. They explore several themes which emerged
from their interviews with gang members. According to these
authors, the gang provides a social outlet for these youths,
offering support, solidarity, and a network of reliable
friends, and it acts as an alternative or surrogate family

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alleviate the boredom experienced by inner city youths, who have few options for recreation and er.+ertainment. Quicker summarizes: "To be in a gang is to be part of something. It means having a place to go, friends to talk with, and parties to attend. It means recognition and respected status" (1983: 80).

Regardless of the specifics, what these inventories tell us and what we know from much research is that youths who participate in gangs often express the importance of the gang in their lives (Moore, 1991: 77). Short and Strodtbeck (1965) argue that self esteem needs are met by the group. The rewards provided by the group--status, companionship, excitement, protection, belonging--facilitate the building of esteem. Furthermore, participation in group activities is less a result of individual "pathology" as it is of group dynamics that encourage member involvement through the provision of self esteem and identity.

Klein and Crawford (1967: 68) point out that gangs can be differentiated from other groups not only because they are socially disapproved, but also because they have a disproportionate number of external sources of group cohesion. These include not only rival gangs, but also law enforcement and community agency practitioners and community members who disparage the gang. It may be that for female gang members, the additional external condemnation resulting

assists young women and men in coping with their lives in chaotic, violent, and economically marginalized communities" (1995). As Campbell points out, many gang youths explain their gang's existence by pointing to the "jungle-like quality" of their neighborhood environments (1987: 459).

In her study of the Vice Queens, a Black female auxiliary gang in Chicago during the 1960s, Fishman (1988) discusses the impact on Black females of growing up in inner city impoverished neighborhoods. The Vice Queens were "socialized to be independent, assertive, and to take risks with the expectations that these are characteristics that they will need to function effectively within the black low income community" (1988: 26). Likewise, Brown (1977) points to the gang as an agent of socialization which teaches girls the survival strategies they need to live in their communities. Additionally, notes Fishman, girls in these communities experienced relatively greater freedom than girls in other social contexts, but along with this greater freedom came less protection. "The gang thus provided girls with opportunities to learn such traditional male skills as fighting skills and taking care of themselves on the streets" (1988: 15).

At the same time, however, girls in gangs still face sanctions for not behaving in gender-appropriate ways. Swart (1991) suggests that the meanings of gang affiliation for

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For example, Campbell argues that "gang girls see themselves as different from their peers. Their association with the gang is a public proclamation of their rejection of the lifestyle which the community expects from them" (1987: 463-464). They reject qualities such as passivity, submissiveness and marianismo, which Campbell defines as the reciprocal qualities to machismo in men. Similarly, Harris' (1988) study of the Cholas, a Latina gang in the San Fernando Valley of Southern California, reveals that the girls adopted an image of themselves that was a rejection of the traditional images of Latinas as subservient.

Taylor's (1993) study of female gang participation in Detroit reveals the existence of a form of "street feminism" among the girls and women he interviewed who were highly critical of the sexism among men on the streets. These women and girls spoke eloquently of the entrenched nature of misogyny on the streets and the difficulties females often face when interacting with males in the urban drug and gang environments. Their critical consciousness is not something commonly documented in other studies of female gang members, and begs for further examination.

CHARACTERISTICS OF FEMALE GANG INVOLVEMENT

Research suggests that female involvement in gangs exists in a number of forms. Some young women are affiliated

gangs in order to understand fully the role these groups play in girls' lives.

In fact, one question that arises, especially among emergent gangs, is whether the young women would classify themselves as members of auxiliary groups, or whether they define themselves simply as part of the larger whole. When they give themselves separate feminized versions of the gang name this is probably the case, but it is unclear how often this occurs among contemporary gangs. Unfortunately, this information is missing from some of the most important current studies of female gang involvement, as the authors do not clearly specify or examine the nature of the gangs from which their female subjects were drawn (see Bjerregaard and Smith, 1992; Joe and Chesney-Lind, 1995). Too often, there is simply an assumption that girls are members of separate auxiliary *or* autonomous gangs.

Given increased popular concern about "new" violent female gangs, some researchers have addressed the question of whether and how female gang involvement has evolved from earlier periods. According to recent historical analyses, girls have long been involved in many of the same forms of gang behaviors as males (violence, crime, drug use), but their participation in these aspects of gang life was overshadowed by researchers' concern with their sexual behavior (Campbell, 1984a; Chesney-Lind, 1993: 334). For

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are often not a point of emphasis. There is some evidence, but it remains mostly sketchy.

In terms of gang size, several researchers have found that female groups tend to be smaller than their male counterparts (Joe and Chesney-Lind, 1995; Moore, 1991). While Joe and Chesney-Lind report that female gangs tend to be smaller in size than male gangs, they don't clarify whether the females they interviewed were members of autonomous female gangs or female groups affiliated with male gangs. In addition, according to Campbell (1990a: 177-178), leadership in gangs established by girls is "usually more diffuse than in boys' groups." Moore reports that the female cliques in her study tended to be less age-graded (1991: 29), and Joe and Chesney-Lind (1995) report that the girls in their study tended to be slightly younger than boys when they joined gangs (age 12 versus 14). Moore also reports that females typically left their gangs at earlier ages than males.

My data suggest that girls see themselves as members of mixed-gender gangs, rather than as female auxiliaries to male gangs (see chapter seven); thus it fruitful to discuss more generally what we know about the structures of gangs. Until the recent growth of gangs in many cities and towns across the United States (see chapter three), the structure of street gangs was described as vertical in nature, consisting

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gangs consisting of alliances between groups of similarly aged youth (Klein, 1995). These structures may be of particular relevance for understanding gangs in a city such as Columbus. Specifically, because they are new forms, gender composition and structure may be different from the past as well.

Requirements for Entree

Research suggests that girls' gang affiliations are often connected to a relative, close friend, or boyfriend's association (Joe and Chesney-Lind, 1995; Moore, 1991). However, "being someone's 'girlfriend' is not enough to gain entry into the female gang" (Campbell, 1990b: 55). According to Lauderback et al. (1992), members emphasize trust, loyalty and toughness when deciding when to let a girl into the gang. Campbell (1992: 9) explains: "Initiation guarantees exclusiveness. The gang will not accept just anyone and this fact alone augments their self esteem which has taken hard knocks from teachers, social workers, police and families."

Quicker (1984: 14-15) notes the following membership criteria for female gang members in the Chicana gangs he studied: first, the girls should not be joining for selfish reasons, such as to seek protection for herself without being willing to give back to the group; second, she must show toughness, and not appear to be someone who will "fold under pressure"; and finally, she must be able to fight. In some

along with Rice's (1963) report on the Persian Queens, a New York based female gang, revealed a male-dominated gang world in which there was little females could do to achieve status. They were cast in one of two roles, sex objects or tomboys, and found themselves in a double bind: when they were feminine, they were viewed by male gang members only as objects of sexual gratification; when they took on traditional male characteristics such as fighting, they were rejected for their deviation from normative gender expectations (see Swart, 1991). Even so, reinterpretation of these findings shows that the girls still engaged in a range of activities. For example, Campbell notes:

> The Molls played hooky, stole, drank, vandalized, and fought. They attempted to gain favor with their male companion group (the Hoods) by emulating and abetting the boys' criminal activities, but *not* by freely dispensing sexual favors to them. (1990a: 171)

Fishman's (1988) reanalysis of data on the Vice Queens illuminates the diversity of girls' gang activities, even in the 1960s. In some ways, their actions do match the stereotypes. For example, the girls sometimes acted as "instigators in inter- and intra-gang fights among boys. They frequently manipulated the boys into fighting over real or alleged insults or 'passes' from male members of enemy gangs" (1988: 12). In addition, they carried weapons and acted as "lookouts" for boys. Fishman explains that for the male gang members, "the Vice Queens had little function

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delinquency that paints these girls as sexually maladjusted and promiscuous (Cohen, 1955; Cowie, Cowie and Slater, 1968; Konopka, 1966; Rice, 1963; Short and Strodtbeck, 1965; Thomas, 1967). This has been fed by the tendency of many researchers to take male gang members' points of view as *the* point of view, or as accurate. One of the most compelling aspects of Moore's (1991) *Going Down to the Barrio* is that she is able to present material from the points of view of both male and female gang members from the same groups. What her study reveals is a complex web from which to understand the situation of girls in gangs: we need to look not just at male/female relations and the sexual double standard that frequently surfaces within them, but also at girls' perceptions and relationships with one another. This includes examining the ways in which their relationships with male gang members bring them status among their female peers, but also the ways in which, as Campbell (1990a: 179) states, "gang girls exert strong normative control over one another's sexuality."

There is clearly a sexual double standard in operation in the relations between male and female gang members, as in American society as a whole (Campbell, 1990a; Fishman, 1988; Horowitz, 1983; Moore, 1991; Swart, 1991). In Moore's study, for example, many of the male gang members from early and more recent cliques admitted that female members were

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males they had slept with, she would be brought "down" to their level.

Typically though, the sexual double standard is reinforced by girls as sanctions against girls they perceive as too sexually active. Girls do not gain status among their peers for sexual promiscuity (Campbell, 1990a; Horowitz, 1983; McRobbie, 1978; Swart, 1991). The young women in Campbell's research of New York street gangs "had club rules which explicitly required serial monogamy" (1987: 452). Likewise, Quicker (1983: 19) notes that having sexual relations with someone else's boyfriend was cause for being thrown out of the gang he studied. Campbell (1987: 452) explains that girls "not only reject sexual activity outside the context of a steady relationship but even reject friendships with 'loose' girls whose reputations might contaminate them by association." On the whole, then, the sexual double standard, enforced by both males and females, tends to disadvantage girls in their relationships with boys, but also interferes with the strength of their own friendship groups. Campbell summarizes:

> The necessity of being attached to a male in order
> to have sexual relations, combined with a
> reluctance to challenge the boy directly over his
> infidelity, had a very divisive effect upon the
> girls' relationships with one another. (1987: 462)

This is not to suggest that girls never challenge their male counterparts' sexist treatment. Lauderback et al.

status among their female peers through their sexual relations with males when they could "keep four or five boys 'on the string' without any boy's knowing of the others, but at the same time, avoiding sexual relationships with too many boys at one time" (1988: 21). In addition, they gained status when they went steady with or had the baby of a high-status Vice King, even though the fathers seldom accepted responsibility. Motherhood provided adult status for these girls.

In general, researchers have noted that motherhood is often an important right of passage among disadvantaged teenage girls (Anderson, 1990; Simons et al., 1991; Stack, 1974). Pregnancy and motherhood also appear to change the dynamics of a girl's gang participation. According to Swart (1991: 49-50), while getting pregnant and becoming a mother "does not necessarily mean that female gang members have to break away from the gang, it does mean that they have to constrain their deviant behavior to the extent that it allows them to be seen as 'good mothers.'" Both Campbell (1987) and Horowitz (1983) note that girls are judged harshly among their peers for failing to take care of their children, for being perceived as "bad mothers." And Moore notes that girls typically leave the gang earlier, usually following a pregnancy. Motherhood is often the link to a "conversion to conventionality" among girls in gangs (Moore, 1991: 114).

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> response to the abuse, both physical and sexual,
> that characterizes their lives at home. (1995: 25)

Joe and Chesney-Lind depict gang girls' fights merely as last resort responses to abuse. While Campbell recognizes that violence and fighting are a normative part of gang girls' activities, recently she has also argued that their motives are not based on choice. Like Joe and Chesney-Lind, Campbell frames their violence as linked to victimization. Using middle class girls as her model of what gang girls would be like if they could, she explains that girls in gangs adopt an instrumental view of aggression rather than using aggression expressively, because to do otherwise would leave them open for exploitation and abuse. She explains: "Openness and trust become weakness and to be weak is to be exploited" (Campbell, 1992: 10).

While this assessment appears somewhat accurate, it does not present the whole story. Gang girls' fighting is not *only* a response to victimization. Other research contradicts this image, or at least paints a more complicated picture of the meanings of fighting in gang girls' lives. According to Brown (1978), fighting provides girls with a means of establishing a reputation "in a milieu where aggression has become a symbolic means for establishing an identity" (Brown, 1978: 227). He describes that fights occur in a number of situations. In addition to fighting other gangs, fights occur within the group, sometimes when two

Delinquent Involvement

It has long been recognized that gang members tend to be more criminally active than non-gang members (Esbensen et al., 1993; Klein, 1971; Thornberry et al., 1993), and this holds for female gang members as well (Bjerregaard and Smith, 1992). According to Klein and Crawford, offense patterns are affected by gang affiliation "because the antecedent deviant values, the requisite skills, and the opportunities for misbehavior are learned and reinforced through association with other members" (1967: 69). In their recent analysis of the relationship between gang membership and delinquent involvement, Bjerregaard and Smith (1992: 14) report: "It is consistently the case that gang members are significantly more likely to have committed delinquent acts and to have used illegal substances than non-gang members." The enhancement effect of gang membership was most noticeable for serious delinquency and marijuana use (see also Thornberry et al., 1993). It was slightly higher for girls for general delinquency, and slightly higher for boys for drug use, but overall there was consistency across the sexes. They summarize:

> The traditional gang literature has generally suggested that gang membership enhances delinquent activity, and particularly serious delinquent activity for males, but not for females. In contrast, our study suggests that for females also, gangs are consistently associated with a greater prevalence and with higher rates of delinquency and substance use. Furthermore, the results suggest that for both sexes, gangs

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drug sales, extortion and property damage the gender

differences were not significant (1990: 196-197). However,

he reports that "prevalence rates for female gang members

exceeded the rates for nongang males" for all the categories

of delinquency he measured. He summarizes his findings in

relation to girls as follows:

> More than 40% of the female gang members were
> classified in the least serious category, a
> substantial difference from their male
> counterparts [15.5%]. Among female gang members,
> there was a bimodal distribution, with nearly as
> many multiple index offenders as petty
> delinquents. Evidently, female gang members avoid
> more serious delinquent involvement than their
> male counterparts. Yet their extensive
> involvement in serious delinquent behaviors well
> exceeds that of nongang males or females. (Fagan,
> 1990: 201)

While researchers report various rates of participation

in delinquent acts for girls, few would dispute that when it

comes to serious delinquency, male gang members are involved

more frequently than female gang members. As Chesney-Lind

points out, none of the recent studies of female gangs

supports emerging cultural stereotypes of hyper-violent

female offenders. The gender differences in serious

delinquency that do emerge may be linked to the structures of

girls' gangs, their roles in these groups, as well as the

functions that gangs provide in their lives.

In the field of gang research I would suggest that this tendency has manifested itself in three ways. First is a focus on girls in gangs as victims of male gang members' sexism. The emphasis here is on how the male gang members perpetuate systems of gender inequality in which females are exploited. Young women attempt to negotiate through a series of double binds, but are unable to take real action on their own behalf because they are unwilling or unable to challenge male gang members' authority, and are even duped into maintaining it (cf. Campbell, 1984a; Swart, 1991).

The second approach is the focus on gang membership as a form of resistance to oppression, but again with victimization at the forefront. For example, Joe and Chesney-Lind (1995) describe the "dismal future" that awaits female gang members in "their bleak communities," and they describe these young women as having "found themselves hanging together after having been abandoned by the fathers of their children, and abused and controlled by other men." They are portrayed as having no agency other than that which results from the consequences of their victimization. Further, they describe the gang to "a haven for coping with the many problems they encounter in their everyday life in marginalized communities" (Joe and Chesney-Lind, 1995: 25).

The third approach is similar to the second, but takes the theme of young women's coming together in the face of

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are not simply victims of male sexism or resistors of it. Rather they actively participate in gender oppression through their attitudes and actions towards one another, simultaneous with these other phenomena. I would suggest that we need to pay attention to what *girls* get out of upholding the gender inequality documented in gangs. Thus, one of my goals in this project is to explore how and why young women in gangs participate in a system of gender inequality that ultimately disadvantages them. This approach will provide additional insights into the meanings and functions of gang involvement for young women, and help move beyond a more simplistic victimization/agency dichotomy that takes a relatively uncritical approach to the attitudes and behaviors of young women in gangs.

III. NATIONAL GANG CONTEXTS AND THE COLUMBUS SETTING

Within the last decade, we have seen extensive evidence of the proliferation of gangs across the United States, into "a growing number of large and small cities, suburban areas, and even some small towns and rural areas" (Spergel and Curry, 1993: 359; see also Hagedorn, 1988; Klein and Maxson, 1989; Winfree et al., 1992). According to Klein (1995), close to an estimated 1,000 towns and cities across the U.S. now report having gangs. For most of these cities, the number of gangs and gang members remains relatively small, making gangs "an increasingly widespread problem that is, nonetheless, not a large problem in most locations" (Klein, 1995: 32). Findings from the Maxson-Klein national gang migration survey reveal that gang emergence in many cities was first recognized prior to the mid-1960s, while the largest growth of new gang cities has occurred from 1985 on (Klein, 1995: 32).

Much evidence has shown that this growth in gangs has occurred independently within a number of cities as a result of the rapid deterioration in living conditions for many Americans caused by structural changes in the U.S. economy, deindustrialization, and the growth of the urban 'underclass'

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unemployment for white youths have basically gone unchanged (Duster, 1987: 303). This lack of alternatives has contributed to the growth of gangs in many cities, and recently has meant that youthful gang members, given less opportunity for maturing out of gangs, are more likely to continue their criminal involvement into adulthood (Hagedorn, 1988, 1991, 1994; Klein, 1995; Moore, 1988, 1991). As Jackson summarizes, "higher crime rates and more youth gangs are among the unintended consequences of the nation's pattern of postindustrial development" (1991: 379).

However, as Klein (1995) points out, these explanations hold up better for some cities and groups than others. In smaller cities or cities with less severe economic problems, they may have less explanatory power even though they remain relevant.[2] A second contributing factor that gang researchers are beginning to pay attention to, particularly in seeking explanations for the emergence of gangs in new cities, is the diffusion of gang culture and style through popular media attention to gangs and the commercialization of gang style (see Klein, 1995: 205-212). Movies, albums, music videos, documentaries, news media's attention to gangs, and the popularity of "various aspects of gang culture--argot, clothing, tattoos, use of hand signals, and so on" (Klein et al., 1995: 110) all contribute to youthful identification with gang culture, and may help explain the simultaneous

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and crime, rather than structural and other behavioral characteristics of gangs in these cities. Hagedorn (1988) and Decker and Van Winkle (1996) provide two of the few depth portraits of gangs in emerging or "new" cities, and both describe cities heavily affected by deindustrialization and population loss.[3]

With an overall research focus in the field on the proliferation of gangs as associated with deindustrialization and related socioeconomic problems, I wanted to choose, in contrast, a city which is experiencing overall economic growth, one without longterm and widespread 'underclass' conditions. In addition, I hoped to choose a city in which gangs were recognized as a relatively new phenomenon. Choosing these focal points allows me to explore the changing nature of gangs in the midwest, particularly their diversification and expansion into a broader range of cities.[4] Given the rapid growth of gang cities, it is important to examine the nature of gangs in new cities, and in cities with varied socioeconomic contexts, in order to better assess and address those factors contributing to the emergence and expansion of gangs.

City selection was accomplished with the combined use of the Maxson-Klein national gang migration survey (see Maxson et al., 1995) and census data. Maxson and Klein's data provided an initial pool of seven cities within the

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Table 3-1 provides population, racial distribution and median household income for Columbus and its home (Franklin) county. Compared to many other large cities, African Americans are a relatively small percentage of the urban

Table 3-1 Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics

	Franklin County	Columbus
Population Size	961,437	632,958
Percent Race/Ethnicity		
White	81.5%	73.2%
African American	15.9%	22.6%
Asian American	2.0%	2.4%
Other	0.4%	1.8%*
Median Household Income	$30,375	$26,651

Source: U.S. Census, 1990

* In Columbus, 1.1% of the population is Hispanic, 0.2% Native American, 0.5% other. I do not have this information for the county.

population (22.6%). As Table 3-1 illustrates, African Americans are 15.9 percent of the county population, but are 22.6 percent of the population in Columbus, which has a median household income nearly $4000 less than Franklin County as a whole. According to Rusk (1995: 12), African Americans are approximately twelve percent of the population in the greater Columbus metropolitan area, which expands just beyond the boundaries of the county. Using per capita income as a measure, comparing Columbus with the greater metropolitan area, Rusk (1995: 33) calculated a city/suburb

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able to grow is that it has aggressively expanded its city limits. -In 1950, the city of Columbus was 39 square miles; by 1990, it was 191 square miles--a change of 385 percent (Rusk, 1995: 17).[7]

As the previous discussion illustrated, the last two decades have witnessed a move from an industrial to a postindustrial age in the United States. Many researchers have focused on the devastating affects of deindustrialization on many urban areas, especially those in the east and midwest. However, some cities such as Columbus have managed to sustain growth even as they lost industrial jobs. In 1973, approximately 21 percent of jobs in the Columbus metropolitan area were in manufacturing, and by 1988 this had declined to 13 percent, with a -14 percent change in manufacturing jobs during this period (Rusk, 1995: 39). Simultaneous job growth during this period was 40 percent (Rusk, 1995: 42).

It is specifically as a result of these changes in Columbus' economy that the city has continued to thrive over the last decades. Table 3-2 shows the industry of employed persons in the city of Columbus. In 1993, over fifty percent of all jobs in the Columbus metropolitan area were in the services and trade sectors of the economy. The services sector grew by 72 percent from 1980 to 1993, followed by FIRE (finance, insurance and real estate) at 50 percent growth and

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particularly those in regions hit hardest by deindustrialization, it still has problems of racial and economic inequality. Deindustrialization has not had the kinds of devastating affects in Columbus that it has had in other cities, where large areas of highly concentrated urban poverty have grown, yet it remains a city with significant racial disparities.

The isolation of the poor, and particular poor African Americans, is of critical importance. A great deal of the economic expansion that has occurred in the greater Columbus area has occurred in the suburbs, with new expansive shopping and business complexes opening on a regular basis, expanding further and further away from the central city. It is true that Columbus does not have large 'underclass' areas, and that much of the suburban growth has occurred within Columbus' city limits. However, there are substantial pockets of impoverished neighborhoods within the city, and given a relatively small population of urban African Americans, these economically isolated neighborhoods also tend to have high concentrations of poor African Americans.[8]

Table 3-3 provides comparative data on important socioeconomic indicators for African Americans and whites in Columbus.[9] What these data reveal is a great deal of racial inequality. Whites' median household income is one and a half times that of African Americans; even the median income

families than whites. In fact, while in absolute terms
African Americans are better off in Columbus than in more
economically troubled cities (for example, with higher median
incomes and with lower rates of poverty), in relative terms
(comparing the gap between African Americans and whites) the
racial disparities in Columbus are equal to or even greater
than in many of these other cities.[10]

In addition, these disparities have been increasing.
While median household income has increased in Franklin
County for both whites and African Americans since 1979, they
have increased more for whites, widening the income gap
between the two groups. In addition, while the poverty rate
for whites remained stable in Franklin County from 1980 to
1990 (9.6 percent), it has increased for African Americans
(from 26.4 percent in 1980 to 29.3 percent in 1990) (Columbus
Metropolitan Human Services Commission, 1995: 12-13). Infant
mortality rates for African Americans are double those for
whites, and this is also a gap that has been increasing in
recent years (Columbus Metropolitan Human Services
Commission, 1995: 17).

One arena in which racial disparities are most visible
in Columbus is in education. As Table 3-3 shows, the
percentage of non-high school graduates is twice as high for
African Americans than whites at ages 18 to 24, and one and a
half times as high for those 25 and over. In addition, in

County schools were 5.2 percent in 1994, but 9.7 percent in Columbus Public Schools—the highest dropout rate in the county. In the 1992-93 school year, Columbus Public Schools had the lowest number of students (21 percent) pass the ninth grade proficiency exam of any school district in the county. Graduation rates in Columbus Public Schools in 1993 were 46 percent, but for Franklin County as a whole they were 63.7 percent (Columbus Metropolitan Human Services Commission, 1995: 6-7).

In addition, there are clear racial disparities in disciplinary actions against students in Columbus Public Schools. Three times more African American than white students were expelled in the 1992-1993 school year. Compared to figures from a decade earlier, the number of African American students expelled nearly tripled, from 66 students in 1983 to 189 students in 1993. For white students, these numbers are 43 and 64 respectively. While more African American students than whites have been expelled every year during this time period, from 1990 on, between two and a half and five times more African American than white students have been expelled each year.[11] In addition, of 23,000 school suspensions in Columbus Public Schools during the 1992-93 academic year, 65.7 percent involved African American students (Columbus Metropolitan Human Services Commission, 1995: 7). Given my focus on the experiences of

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relative gaps between the haves and have-nots in Columbus is so large and visible, and is compounded for African Americans by their small percentage of the population. There may be less physical isolation in Columbus (though it clearly exists), but these other factors contribute additionally to psychological isolation, both for those African Americans trapped in Columbus' inner city areas, and those who find themselves one of a handful of African Americans when in thriving communities in the Columbus metropolitan area.

GANGS IN THE COLUMBUS METROPOLITAN AREA

The increase in the number of gangs and their locations across the United States has resulted in their increasingly diverse forms (Huff, 1993; Winfree et.al., 1992), as well as probable changes in the prevalence and shape of female participation, such as the growth in autonomous female gangs (see Lauderback et al., 1992; Taylor, 1993). According to Vigil and Long (1990: 55), some of these differences "stem from regional and urban differences, particularly adaptation to environmental circumstances and social forces." Given Columbus' social and economic contexts, what then of the gang situation in Columbus?

According to the Maxson-Klein national migration survey, gangs were first recognized in Columbus in 1985 (Maxson et al., 1995). Columbus is often cited by gang

suggests) that many of the gang sets in Columbus are racially mixed groups (Mayhcnd and LaLonde, 1995a), though with a majority of African American members. Gangs in Columbus have adopted "big city" gang names such as Crips, Bloods and Folks, along with the dress styles, signs, and graffiti of these groups. Many local gang workers suggest part of this is media-influenced (Mayhood and LaLonde, 1995b), in addition to the transmission of specific elements of particular gangs' style by members coming from other cities. There are no reports of organized gang migration into Columbus, but as is often the case in cities around the country (see Klein, 1995), there is evidence of individual young people with gang knowledge or involvement moving to Columbus, typically with their families (Huff, 1989). These youths are often looked up to and emulated by youths who are Columbus natives (Mayhood, 1995a), though gangs are and have been primarily a "homegrown" problem (Huff, 1989).

Columbus gangs and/or their members are involved in a variety of known criminal activities, most frequently vandalism, property damage, and minor drug trafficking.[14] The general impression of gangs conveyed by officers I spoke with in the Columbus Police Department is that Columbus gangs are not as visibly active on the streets as gangs in many other cities, and they are more easily approached and confronted by police than gang members in tougher cities.

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serious gang problems as mostly a male phenomenon, but recognized that most gangs in Columbus have female members or affiliates. They also had information on five small all-female gangs in Columbus. These female groups in Columbus are not neighborhood-based, but are believed to have developed in middle and high schools, reportedly cause trouble in and around their schools, on the bus, and at bus drop off points, and are involved in theft, some drug trafficking, and assaults.[17]

Overall then, the picture of Columbus gangs is not particularly surprising. Given their relatively recent emergence in the city, they tend to be small groups, criminally oriented but not especially sophisticated. This may in part be tied to Columbus' lack of large entrenched 'underclass' neighborhoods, to its overall economic success, and greater opportunities for young adults to mature out than are found in cities experiencing economic decline. Given their size and newness, the structures of gangs in Columbus match those described in other cities with emergent gang problems. They can best be characterized as "relatively autonomous, smaller, independent groups, poorly organized and less territorial" than in older gang cities (Klein, 1995: 36). Chapters seven and eight below will provide more detailed information about Columbus gangs, as described by some of their female participants.

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[6] Rusk's work (1995) gives further credence to my site selection. Columbus was one of only two midwestern cities he characterized ashighly elastic. The other was Indianapolis, which did not meet my second criteria of being a new gang city. The emergence of gangs in Indianapolis was in the 1960s (see Klein, 1995).

[7] According to Rusk, Columbus accomplished this growth by "annex[ing] aggressively, driven by two strategic goals: to become the most populous city in Ohio and never to allow itself to become completely surrounded by incorporated suburbs" (1995: 23).

[8] In chapter five, I will present specific evidence of this in the form of census tract analyses of interview subjects' neighborhoods.

[9] Because Hispanics, Asian Americans and other groups are only 4.2 percent of the city's population, and because I have no Hispanic and only one Asian American girl in my sample, my focus here will be exclusively on African American/white differences.

[10] For example, Cleveland provides a striking contrast with Columbus on social and economic indicators, including a more diverse racial composition, an unemployment rate more than double of Columbus', a median income $9000 lower, twice as many households relying on public assistance income, and poverty rates that are double those found in Columbus (U.S. Census, 1990). However, the disparity between African Americans and whites in Cleveland is *less* severe on the majority of measures listed in Table 3-3 above. For example, the poverty rate for African Americans in Cleveland is just over twice that for whites (35.6 percent versus 15.7 percent), while it is more than three times higher in Columbus.

[11] In the 1994-1995 academic year, the number of African American students expelled reached its highest number ever-- 242. During the same period, 69 white students had been expelled.

[12] Much information in this section comes from two meetings and several phone conversations with officers in the Columbus Police Department in early 1996. I met once with Lieutenant Fred Bowditch with the Strategic Response Bureau, and again with Lieutenant Bowditch and Detective Thad Alexander with the department's threat group unit. I had several followup conversations with each.

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IV. METHODOLOGY AND STUDY OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study is to provide a picture of female gang membership, and in particular to focus on a city context in which gangs are a relatively new phenomenon, and have not arisen in the context of entrenched urban 'underclass' conditions. I have drawn on multiple sources of data, including surveys with gang and non-gang girls, census tract information for each interviewee, and in-depth qualitative interviews with gang members and gang affiliates. In the field of research on female gang involvement, there have been several studies which provide qualitative data, typically coming from a small group of girls in one or several gangs (cf. Campbell, 1984a; Fishman, 1988; Lauderback et al., 1992). Recently, we have available survey data which allow for the comparison of females who are in gangs with those who are not (Bjerregaard and Smith, 1992; Fagan, 1990). But to date there have been no attempts to combine these methods, drawing on the unique benefits of each type of study in order to produce a more thorough investigation of girls in gangs. This is a primary objective of my project.

In this chapter, I will first discuss the goals of the

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female gang membership, specifically, what structural, environmental, familial and personal factors lead some girls toward gang affiliation while others in their communities exercise different options. Interviewing gang and non-gang girls provides a basis of comparison on a number of variables (see below). Second, I further examined the contexts in which girls join gangs by exploring through in-depth interviews what they see as the motivating circumstances of their gang involvement. Examining the contexts that shaped their decisions to join, and the reasons they continue to participate, provides insights into the meanings of gangs in the lives of young women. The third thrust of the project involves examining the structures, nature, and activities of gangs in Columbus, and the place of girls and meanings of gender within these groups. This information was initially gathered in the survey interview, then expanded upon in the in-depth interviews. Discussions of the survey instrument and interview guide will provide further clarification of this process (see below).

SAMPLING PROCEDURES

Interviews were conducted with 46 girls (21 gang and 25 non-gang), all of whom lived in areas in the city in which they had at least minimal exposure to gangs.[1] The decision to interview around 50 girls was to provide a sufficient

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representative sample of gang youths, since it avoids drawing
entirely from officially labeled "gang members" (Fagan, 1989;
Hagedorn, 1988).

In this study, I attempted both of these latter
approaches. My primary sources of interview subjects were
local agencies that work with youth. I did not specifically
target agencies working with gang members, nor did I generate
a pool of interview subjects from agency rosters of "known"
gang members. To further avoid over-sampling girls who were
labeled as gang members, I asked agency personnel to refer me
not just to girls believed to be gang members, but also any
other girls living in areas in Columbus where they might have
contact with gangs. Though I attempted snowball sampling
throughout the study, most of my efforts were fruitless
because so many of the girls I interviewed were in
residential facilities. I was successful at snowballing
within agencies, however. Several girls I interviewed were
gang-involved but without staff knowledge. They were
referred to me by other girls I interviewed within
facilities. Because the project was a gang/non-gang
comparison, I was able to arrange interviews with girls
without informing staff that they were gang-involved. Thus
in a limited capacity I was able to interview gang members
who had not been detected by officials.

Before proceeding to a more detailed discussion of the

who counts as a gang member is the character of the gang to which they belong. Specifically, a number of researchers agree that it should be a group that is involved in illegal activities in order for the youth to be classified as a gang member (Fagan, 1989; Esbensen et al., 1993; Esbensen and Huizinga, 1993[3]), given that gangs are by definition "organized to some extent around delinquent conduct" (Thornberry et al., 1993; see also Klein, 1971; Klein and Maxson, 1989; Spergel, 1990; but see Horowitz, 1990; Short, 1990). Additional criteria considered by some researchers include that the youth be able to provide a gang name and report more than six members (Bjerregaard and Smith, 1992; Thornberry et al.,1993), or report involvement in initiation rites, as well as symbolic systems such as colors and signs (Winfree et al., 1992).

Except for the exclusion of non-delinquent "gangs," research suggests that using restrictive measures does not change the substantive conclusions concerning gang members' behaviors when comparing self-defined gang members to those members who meet more restrictive definitions (Bjerregaard and Smith, 1992; Fagan, 1990; Thornberry et al., 1993; Winfree et al., 1992). In fact, Winfree et al. (1992: 34) report that the "self-reported definition of gang membership proved to be a better predictor of gang-related crime than the more restrictive definition," which they speculate may be

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several agencies in the Columbus area, including the county
juvenile detention center, a shelter care facility for young
women (Rosemont Center), a day school within the same
institution, and a local community agency (Directions for
Youth).[5] Referrals for participants were made by agency
staff, and were also made by young women who had participated
in the study and had friends they believed I should talk to.
One additional gang member was referred to me by a previous
interviewee. Contact personnel at the agencies were aware
that the study was a comparison of gang and non-gang girls,
and were asked to refer me to young women who were either
believed to be gang involved, or who lived in areas in
Columbus known to have gangs. Likewise, when I asked young
women if they had friends who might want to participate,
these included gang and non-gang friends. My goal was for
the non-gang comparison sample to be composed of girls who at
the very least had the opportunity to join a gang because
there was some amount of gang activity in their
neighborhoods.[6]

Criteria for selecting non-gang youths was simply that
they did not report gang membership, and they did not
describe their community as one in which gangs were not
present. All of the non- gang youths who were interested in
participating were included in the study unless they did not
fit the above criteria. Thus they included a range of young

This sampling has not provided me with a representative sample of gang and non-gang girls in Columbus . The sample is made up almost entirely of young women who have experienced some level of community agency or juvenile justice intervention. However, it accomplishes several goals. First, a primary concern of the study is to understand the experiences of young women who are at-risk, in the hope that findings from the project can inform more effective public policy aimed at young women. A sample overrepresenting girls who have experienced some intervention is not troubling to me, because these are precisely the young women whose needs I would hope to see more effectively addressed. In addition, the sample meets an important second goal, and that is to have a meaningful comparative population of gang and non-gang girls.

Table 4-1 provides selected demographic information on the sample, specifically the race and age of the girls I interviewed. Approximately three quarters of the sample are African American or mixed-race girls (all of whom were African American mixed with other ethnic groups). About one quarter of the sample are white girls, and one Asian American girl falls in the non-gang category. The distribution by race is fairly even. Non-gang girls are slightly more likely to be younger than gang girls, though this difference is not significant. One quarter of the non-gang girls (versus one

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and the snowballed interview was started at a public library and concluded at the respondent's home. In addition, one of the girls interviewed at the detention center was released prior to the completion of the in-depth interview, which we later conducted at her home.

One potential problem with the sample is the fact that approximately 57 percent (12 of 21) of the gang members came from the Franklin County Detention Center, while only 24 percent (six of 25) of their non-gang counterparts came from this facility. This could lead to a bias characterizing gang members as more seriously delinquent than their non-gang counterparts. However, there is evidence to suggest that the over-representation of gang members from the detention center is not a cause for serious concern in this project. A snapshot view of the detention center taken in June 1995 by the Ohio Department of Youth Services indicates that the detention center does not engage in careful risk assessment to screen for serious offenders, and instead is routinely used to house non-serious offenders. The report revealed that 33 percent of youths locked in the facility were there on "motions" or probation violations, and nearly half of these had been placed on probation for unruly or misdemeanor offenses in the first place (Sanniti, 1995).

I also have reason to believe that there is a good deal of overlap between the girls interviewed in the detention

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or in residential programs), many of the young women I spoke with had been at the facility for several months or more.[8] Rosemont's shelter care program does include young women in its population whose cases are dependency-only (ie., girls who have been removed from their families as a result of abuse or neglect), but only one girl in my sample fell exclusively into that classification.

The overlap between girls from the detention center and Rosemont's shelter care facility also was illustrated in my research process. While my interviewing was sporadic at both locations,[9] I nevertheless encountered girls at one setting that I had interviewed at the other. One young woman I interviewed at the detention center in June 1995 I ran into five months later in Rosemont's shelter care facility; and a young woman I interviewed at Rosemont's shelter care facility in December 1995 I later reinterviewed at the detention center in March 1996.

In addition to this anecdotal evidence, data on arrest and detention provide support for the comparability of girls at the two locations. Of the 22 girls interviewed at Rosemont, 15 (68.2 percent) had been arrested (six of the eight gang members, and nine of the fourteen non-gang members). Furthermore, half of the girls in each category (four gang, seven non-gang) reported having spent time at the detention center, and two others had cases pending.

number, and were provided with the opportunity to contact her prior to making the decision to participate.[10] In addition, I met with Ms. Rice throughout the interview phase of the project to discuss how each interview went and to discuss any problems that arose.

Because parental consent was waived, great diligence on my part was required to assess youths' voluntary participation and informed consent. Girls under age twelve were excluded from participation, and I took particular care with those under age fourteen to assess their competence to provide informed consent.[11] Each participant was initially screened through someone else, either an agency worker or another youth, who approached them about participating in the study. When they expressed interest in participating, they were introduced to me. Potential subjects were given a "Description for Participants" (Appendix A), which outlined in general terms the goals of the study (without mentioning gangs specifically), explained confidentiality, and the voluntary nature of participation, including the right to refuse participation, to refuse to answer any questions, and to terminate the interview at any time. I read this description to potential subjects, solicited questions, then asked if they would like to participate. Participants were paid ten dollars for each interview.

Subjects who are interviewed about their criminal

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unnecessary. This was actually the case in all situations in which abuse arose in the study, probably because I dealt specifically with a population of youths identified through agencies. If the need had arise, I planned to report abuse when intervention had not occurred and the subject was willing to cooperate, as well as when the subject was hesitant to cooperate, but evidence was of serious and continuing abuse and pointed toward the likelihood that reporting the abuse would result in successful intervention. Neither of these situations arose.

Given the outlined risks associated with conducting research on criminally-involved minors who are likely to have histories of victimization, Institutional Review Boards such as that at USC are reluctant to grant permission to students to engage in research of this type. This concern was greater in the case of my project because the research was being conducted in a city and state distant from my immediate faculty advisors. To provide greater supervision and control of my project as a new researcher, the Institutional Review Board required that I have an on-site supervisor in Columbus who was experienced in the type of research I conducted. C. Ronald Huff, Director of the School of Public Policy and Management at the Ohio State University and an experienced gang researcher, served in this capacity. He helped coordinate entree into the field, and was available to deal

peer delinquency and individual delinquent involvement, all of which are empirically linked to gang invo'"ement. Also included are measures of family factors such as attachment to adult caregivers, supervision, abuse, and other family problems, as well as questions addressing personal and psychological issues, including sections on sexual history and self esteem.

While maintaining the majority of scales and measures found in these studies, I also tailored the instrument to address issues of particular relevance for understanding female gang involvement. This includes the addition of a separate section on victimization, perceptions of gender as resulting in blocked opportunities, the gender composition of friendship groups and/or gangs, and whether this involves gender segregation of activities (see below for a detailed discussion of the measures used).

Gang membership was determined in the interview by self-definition. After asking a series of questions about family, school, and activities, I asked girls to describe their group of friends, then asked if they considered this group to be a gang. I followed with the question of whether they consider themselves gang members (see questions 64 through 69 in Appendix B). When they responded affirmatively, we moved to a series of questions about the nature of their gang, including its size, leadership,

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nature and meanings of gang life from the point of view of the girls who are members.[13] While the survey interview provided contextual information such as family background, educational experiences, and the like, the goal of the in-depth interview was to explore aspects of the social worlds of girls who are in gangs. I implemented a numerical system in which the in-depth interviews could be linked back to the survey responses

The interviews were semi-structured and open ended, and all but one were audiotaped. Of the 21 gang members from the survey, 19 participated in the in-depth interview.[14] In addition, three gang-affiliated girls were interviewed, one who was affiliated with an all-male Crips set, one whose friends were primarily Folks but who also had friends in other gangs, and a third who hung out exclusively with gang members but from different gangs.

The in-depth interviews were structured around several groupings of questions. We began by discussing their entree into the gang--how they became involved, when they decided to join, what the initiation was like, how they were feeling, and what other things were going on in their lives at the time. Then we discussed the structure of the gang--its history, size, leadership, organization, and their own place in the group. The next series of questions was about gender within the gang, for example, how females get involved, what

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gang friends respond, whether their friends are all members

of the same gang or members of rival gangs, and how this

affects their friendships, what the benefits of not joining

are, and whether they think they'll join in the future. I

chose to conduct these few non-gang interviews in order to

highlight that there is not a clear, rigid distinction

between gang and non-gang youths. While there are only four

interviews with young women who are affiliates but not

members, I believe they are important for providing a way of

further exploring the meanings of gangs and exploring the

boundaries of gang membership among young women in

Columbus.[16]

METHODOLOGICAL STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

Combining qualitative interviewing with survey research

provides valuable complementary information about the social

worlds of gang-involved girls. My hope with this project was

to bring these methods of gaining knowledge together in

meaningful ways. Given my sample size and

nonrepresentativeness, my goal was not generalizability, but

rich analysis of the nature of and meanings girls attribute

to gang involvement, and the personal, familial, social and

community contexts in which it occurs. In this section, I

will address what I see as some of the strengths of my

combined methodology in meeting these goals, as well as some

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The most notable example of this incongruity between girls' lives and the survey instrument was in questions concerning living arrangements and family relations. It was difficult to capture the living arrangements of many girls, who routinely moved around from one relative to another, were in and out of placements, foster homes, and/or spent time on the streets as runaways. Likewise, it often made little sense to ask about parental attachment or authority given these contexts.

Because many of the questions in the survey asked young women to recall past events, memory is also a consideration. For example, though in general self-reported delinquency scales are considered accurate, reliability and validity are most suspect when dealing with less serious forms of delinquency (Denver Youth Survey, 1990), which are less likely to be remembered accurately especially when engaged in with relative frequency. In my study, I would suggest that questions on the incidence of delinquency (as measured by "how many times in the last six months?" when an item has been responded to affirmatively) were not accurate. Many girls answered these questions without a great deal of reflection. Nonetheless I do believe they are credible indicators of what types of delinquency they are more and less likely to engage in, even if the frequencies themselves can't be trusted.

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goals within the interviews (see below for further discussion).

My research design proved useful for establishing rapport. The survey interview began with relatively innocuous questions (living arrangements, school), and slowly made the transition from these to questions about gang involvement, delinquency, and victimization. In addition, administering the survey interview prior to the in-depth interview allowed a relationship between myself and the interviewee to be established, so that when we initiated the in-depth interview we already had a level of familiarity with one another. Detailed questions in the survey interview about histories of delinquent involvement provided an opportunity to exhibit a neutral, nonjudgmental demeanor, even on the rare occasions when individuals reported brutal acts of violence. Thus, this layer of understanding was already in place when the in-depth interviews occurred.

An additional strength of the combined methodology was that the survey interviews provided collaborative evidence (or triangulation) for the in-depth interviews (see Marshall and Rossman, 1989; Schmitt, 1993). The use of multiple sources of data allows for more systematic and rigorous analysis and increased confidence in the validity and reliability of research findings. An additional form of triangulation came in the form of conversations with staff,

way that was coopting (as if it were my own), but explicitly as someone interested in learning their language and meaning systems.

Of course this process was not entirely successful. I am not a part of their social worlds, and thus was unable to fully adapt their language as my own. In fact, I believe that for me to do so would undermine my credibility. The young women I interviewed know as well as I that we operate in social worlds far removed from one another; my trying to talk like them would be inauthentic, and they would be acutely aware of this. I consciously attempted to adopt parts of the language of interview subjects, and sometimes unconsciously in the course of conversations I adopted terms and phrases in response to theirs. Likewise, this process was reversed: the young women I interviewed sometimes adopted my language when we spoke about various issues, as well as accepting the ways I framed a number of the issues we discussed.

At issue when this occurs is the extent to which my language and perceptions shape the meanings of girls' responses. When they appear to respond based on my framing of issues, are they telling me 'authentic' aspects of their experiences, or have I led them to discuss things in a particular way? Obviously the answer is yes, they do speak about issues in particular ways in response to me. However,

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self-protective purposes, from discomfort resulting from the social distances between themselves and the interviewer (me) or because of concern with impression management and presentation of self. Because I was interviewing adolescents, I also need to consider how age, cognitive development, and/or social development may have shaped interviewees' interpretations of questions, and ability and willingness to respond. The context in which the interviews occurred is also significant. In particular, because many of the young women were in placement, and some were involved in individual or family counseling, their responses may be different than they would have been if interviewed when on the streets. Finally, I will address the veracity of girls' accounts by discussing the ways in which they construct "stories" of the gang based on their interpretations of what it is supposed to be like, rather than what it necessarily is. I will consider these issues further below.

Disclosure, Trust, and Confidentiality

For a variety of reasons, interview subjects may choose not to be forthcoming in their interview responses. Most obviously, the desire to protect oneself from incrimination (particularly when questioned about criminal or "deviant" activities) may lead interview subjects to conceal aspects of their lives from the interviewer. The secretive nature of gangs themselves only exacerbates this problem. Overcoming

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in open areas (such as the visiting room at a juvenile detention center), I stayed aware of our surroundings to ensure against eavesdropping. On separate occasions when this seemed a concern, we paused the interview while persons' were in hearing range, lowered our voices to virtual whispers, moved to a different table, or requested a private interview room to complete the interview. Importantly, I did not wait until girls appeared or stated that they were uncomfortable. Instead I was proactive in reacting to the immediate environment. This type of concern appeared to engender greater trust among the interviewees.

These actions on my part also meant that word of mouth about my project tended to be positive in the settings where multiple interviews took place. This encouraged girls to participate, and to open up during the interviews. In fact, on one occasion when I interviewed a gang member at Rosemont who had been referred by another member, she hesitated during the survey when I started asking questions about her gang's criminal activities. I paused and asked if she was uncomfortable with the line of questions, and she said yes and asked me to wait while she took a break. I am relatively certain she went to the gang member who had referred her for reassurance, because when she came back, she was comfortable and ready to answer the questions, and expressed no further ambivalence in either the survey or the in-depth interview.

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However, when trust is established, the existence of social differences between the interviewer and interviewees can actually provide insights that may not emerge in the context of interviews where the two share similar backgrounds. One advantage of social distance is that "this position may elicit explanations [from interviewees] that are assumed to be known by someone with insider status" (Taylor et al., 1995: 36). In fact, as noted above, social distance means that the interviewee can recognize herself as an expert on a topic of interest to someone typically in a more powerful position vis-a-vis the social structure (in this case, particularly in terms of age, race and education). To find oneself placed in this position can be both empowering and illuminating because one can reflect on and speak about one's life in ways not often available. This is particularly the case for the young women in my study, whose "social location of class, gender, age, and for many, race or ethnicity, places them in a socially marginalized position that does not grant a public hearing of their experience, strength, or knowledge" (Taylor et al., 1995: 18).

For example, social distances between myself and the girls I interviewed led some girls to respond to me in ways that purposely resisted and challenged common stereotypes about adolescents, inner-city youths, and gangs. Many of the girls I spoke with were cognizant of the "controlling images"

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In looking for an explanation of this inflation, my speculation is that it is directly tied to their responses to me as the researcher, and concern with presentation of self. All of the girls I interviewed knew that I was a college student, as this was part of the description for participants we reviewed at the start of the survey. In addition, anecdotal evidence suggests that the majority of girls perceived me to be about ten years younger than I am (or around twenty years old).[22] This perceived closeness of our ages, my known educational achievements, and the fact that the question about grades came early in the survey (question 13), probably account for the overinflation of school performance.

Adolescence

It is important not to treat the interview subjects' age as the sole determinant or predictor of her experiences. Adolescents are in a transitional period of life, becoming increasingly oriented to adults' worlds, though with "rough edges" (Fine and Sandstrom, 1988: 60). As a consequence of their move toward adulthood, "age begins to decrease in importance as a means of differentiating oneself, and other dimensions of cultural differentiation, such as gender and class [and race], become more crucial" (Fine and Sandstrom, 1988: 66).

Nonetheless, studying adolescents presents unique

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These contexts are important to consider when assessing which young women opened up the most during the in-depth interview. I definitely found that, except for a few younger girls who were very talkative (though not always focused), the young women who opened up the most during the in-depth interviews tended to be those who were older (fifteen through seventeen). In addition, since formal operational thought (or an ability to think theoretically) is believed to develop around ages sixteen to eighteen, the older girls tended to have more insight into their behaviors than the younger girls (Blasi and Hoeffel, 1974). These are important considerations to bear in mind when examining the meanings girls attribute to their gang involvement.

Interview Contexts

The choice to interview within institutional settings is not without costs. Agar (1977) has suggested that out-of-context reports from research subjects are often not completely accurate, and may present a more glamorous, exaggerated or smooth picture than is warranted. In my project, I believe that interviewing girls who were primarily located in the detention center or in Rosemont Center's shelter care program affected the pictures some girls presented of their lives in particular ways.

First, a number of the girls in these two placement facilities were involved in either individual or family

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reflection on their past behavior, and toward the construction of positive goals upon their release. Few girls out-and-out rejected their previous peers and activities, but a number of girls vacillated between attachment to their gang and a desire to "do good" on the outside.

Again, an extreme case highlights a more subtle pattern. One girl I interviewed was utterly enthralled with "gang life" in one breath--throwing signs for me and talking about her gang in very animated ways--and in the next breath exclaimed that upon release from the detention center she would be getting out of the gang in order to "straighten up" her life. This back and forth discussion continued for the duration of the interview.

A final contextual problem that arose in the project was that interviewing a number of girls in the same setting sometimes led to more "buzz" about my project than I was comfortable with. In particular, because I was interviewing both gang and non-gang girls, I tried very hard to keep the project from being labeled a "gang" study. Unfortunately, staff members were often the worst culprits in this capacity. At Rosemont Center, though I mentioned to the director of the shelter care program that I wanted the gang element of the study downplayed, she and other staff members openly referred to the project as a study of gangs in front of potential interview subjects. In the most disturbing

The Construction of 'Gang' Stories

Thus far, my discussion has focused on ways to strengthen the accuracy of information gathered in the interviews. These elements of methodology are vital, but should not lead researchers to believe that they are able to truly capture "realities" in the social world. An additional layer that must be considered when examining interview data is the ways interview subjects use the opportunity to refine the stories of their lives, blurring or ignoring the ways their actual experiences fail to fit neatly into the "story" of their experiences. Richardson (1990: 23) notes, "People organize their personal biographies and understand them through the stories they create to explain and justify their life experiences' (see also Mishler, 1986; Riessman, 1993). These stories are typically shaped by "'already established cultural standards'" (Schmitt, 1993: 126), including those of the larger culture, and for gang members, of the gang itself.

Young women's responses in both the survey and in-depth interviews may be affected by their use of cultural stories. For example, in coming to understand and justify why they are gang-involved, young women in gangs may cull from cultural stories and media depictions which emphasize that youths join gangs because of such things as "family problems." As a result, their survey responses may be shaped by their own attempts to explain their involvement in the

insistence on the presence of gender equality within their gangs, even as they provide evidence to the contrary (see chapters seven through nine). Another example is the use of "sexing in" as an initiation into gangs. None of the young women I spoke with said they were sexed in, though it is likely that some were. However, they know that in order to have respect, the appropriate story of initiation for girls is to be beaten in or take blows to the head and/or chest.

Many of the statements young women make about their experiences are, in fact, *two* findings: the adoption and use of cultural frames with which to make sense of their experiences, and evidence of the nature of their social worlds (cf. Miller and Glassner, forthcoming). Though not "true" in the sense of capturing what really happens, this information is nonetheless true in the information it provides about the meanings of gang members' social worlds. As Glassner and Loughlin (1987: 37) note: "The patterns and consistencies in their accounts argue that there is, in fact, a world of shared meanings which they express in the course of talking about their lives."

In this section, I have highlighted many of the strengths of my research, as well as the limitations of data resulting from methodological problems. I have also provided detailed discussions of my sensitivity to these problems and the careful manner in which I dealt with them when possible.

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poverty, educational and occupational opportunities and rates of gang participation (Fagan, 1990; Hagedorn, 1988, 1993; Jackson, 1991). This relationship is presumed to exist for females as well as males (see Campbell, 1984a; Chesney-Lind, 1993; Fishman, 1988; Joe and Chesney-Lind, 1995; Quicker, 1983). However, research also shows that only a minority of youths in impoverished areas are actually gang-involved (Bjerregaard and Smith, 1992; Fagan, 1990).

My goal was to build a sample of gang and nongang girls from the same community contexts, in order to explore what factors might contribute to some young women's choice to join gangs, while others in the same environment do not choose to be gang-involved. Given this research interest, my hope was that gang and nongang girls would closely match on socioeconomic measures gathered from census tracts on their neighborhoods, and that both groups of girls would identify gangs as groups they have some familiarity with in their neighborhoods or lives. Data gathered from census tracts includes the racial composition of the neighborhood, median household income, unemployment rates, the percentage of families falling below the poverty line, the percentage of families that are female-headed, and rates of public assistance. These variables allowed me to check the extent to which the gang and nongang girls are comparable to one another in terms of their neighborhood contexts, and provided

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differences in the experience of girls that may contribute to gang involvement. These included questions about whether the adults in their households worked, the educational attainment of adults in their households, and a measure of residential stability (How long have you lived in the neighborhood where you live now? Of this time, how long have you lived in your present home?). I examined perceived barriers to success using the Barriers to Success Scale adapted from the Denver Youth Survey (questions 170 through 176). (Sample statements: I'll never have as much opportunity to succeed as kids from other neighborhoods; If a kid like me works hard, she can get ahead.) I also added several additional questions to examine whether gender is perceived as a barrier to success. (Sample statements: I'll never have as much opportunity to succeed as a male will; If a woman works hard, she can get ahead.)

While structural factors are of significance for understanding female gang involvement, they nevertheless remain only a partial answer to the question of why some girls join gangs. Even with samples stratified to overrepresent high-risk areas, fewer than one quarter of youths claim gang membership (Bjerregaard and Smith, 1992; Winfree et al., 1991), and other researchers have found no differences in perceived limited opportunities between gang and non-gang youths in these communities (Esbensen et al.,

Youth Survey (questions 14 through 24 in Appendix B).

(Sample statements: Homework is a waste of time; I try hard
in school; Getting good grades is very important to me; I
don't really belong at school.) To examine how they see
themselves at school, I used the school portion of the Hare
Self-Esteem Scale used in a number of youth surveys in the
field (questions 138 through 147 in Appendix B). (Sample
statements: I often feel worthless at school; I am an
important person in my classes.)

Finally, in order to gauge the girls' perceived
relationships with their teachers, I first asked "of all the
teachers you have known, how many have you liked?" Then I
administered a twelve item Teacher Labeling Scale (questions
29 through 40 in Appendix B), adopted from the Denver Youth
Survey. (Sample questions: How much would your teachers
agree that you get along well with other people? That you
break rules? That you are likely to succeed?) The diverse
focus of these questions concerning school allow me to
explore which of numerous school experiences might be more or
less correlated with gang involvement among girls in
Columbus.

Family Factors

The family has long been considered crucial for
understanding delinquency and gang behavior among girls
(Canter, 1982; Cernkovich and Giordano, 1987; Moore, 1991;

the family they feel close to, and who that is.

In addition, I explored their perceptions of parental supervision and discipline. I adopted seven items from a Parental Supervision Scale from the Denver Youth Survey (questions 279-285). (Sample questions: How often do your parent(s)/guardian(s) talk with you about what you did during the day? How often do your parent(s)/guardian(s) know who you are with when you are away from home? How often do you know how to get in touch with your parent(s)/guardian(s) if they are not at home?) To measure parental discipline I asked, "If your parent(s)/guardian(s) had planned some punishment for you, how often can you talk them out of it?"

Finally, to explore other family factors that research suggests may be related to gang involvement among girls, I asked a series of additional questions: whether anyone in the family has been in a gang (and if so whom), whether they have been abused by adults in their family, whether anyone they have regularly lived with has used alcohol or illegal drugs a lot, if anyone in the family has spent time in prison or jail, and whether they have seen adults in their homes hit each other.

Personal Factors

The examination of personal factors continues to be a useful means of exploring differences between those youths in high-risk areas who join gangs with those who do not (Klein,

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first period, and whether they have ever been pregnant. I also asked whether they have ever been sexually assaulted, molested or raped. Finally, as rough measures of conformity to traditionally feminine values, in a scale about things they value in life, I asked the following questions: How important is it to be in love? How important is it to get married? How important is it to be a mother?

Peer Factors

Evidence suggests that peer influences are important for understanding gang participation and delinquency among females, particularly peer delinquency, the gender and age composition of friendship groups, and time spent with peers (Brown, 1977; Bowker and Klein, 1983; Campbell, 1990a, 1990b; Figuiera-McDonough et al., 1981; Giordano, 1978; Morash, 1983). I explored the relationship between gang involvement and peer associations in a number of ways. First I assessed their perceptions of their relationships with peers by using the peer portion of the Hare Self-Esteem Scale (questions 118 through 127 in Appendix B). (Sample statements: I have at least as many friends as other people my age; I wish I were a different kind of person because I would have more friends.) In addition, I asked how important their friends were to them.

Next, I was interested in comparing the compositions of girls' groups of friends, to compare gang and nongang

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Delinquency, Drug Use and Arrests

It has long been recognized that gang members tend to be more criminally active than non-gang members (Esbensen et al., 1993; Klein, 1971; Thornberry et al., 1993), and this holds for female gang members as well (Bjerregaard and Smith, 1992). I incorporated a series of questions to explore the potential differences between gang and nongang girls in their delinquency, substance use, arrests, and exposure to serious violence. First, to measure participation in delinquency, I used a classification scheme for self-reported delinquency from the Rochester Youth Development Study, which includes minor, moderate and serious delinquency, along with alcohol and marijuana use. The following activities were classified as minor delinquency: running away; skipping classes without an excuse; lying about your age to get into someplace or to buy something; being loud or rowdy in a public place where someone complained and got you in trouble; avoiding paying for things like a movie, taking bus rides, or anything else; and trying to steal or actually stealing money or things worth five dollars or less.

Moderate delinquency includes the following: being drunk in a public place; damaging, destroying or marking up someone else's property on purpose; trying to steal or actually stealing money or things worth between five and fifty dollars; taking a car or motorcycle for a ride without

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literature on the correlates of gang involvement for girls, and have explained how my survey explores many of these issues among young women in Columbus. Chapter five will outline the survey results, comparing the experiences of gang and nongang girls.

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closest I came to success was a scheduled interview with a young woman who changed her mind prior to the interview date. None of the agencies I contacted openly denied me permisrion to interview young women, they simply chose not to follow up. Part of the reason for this may be suspicion of researchers and a desire to protect clients; I suspect another part was an unwillingness to take on the additional work necessary to identify clients and assist in scheduling interviews. I do not believe that much bias resulted from the non-participation of these agencies. Each has a client base of "at-risk" youths, and the young women I interviewed report overlap with some of these same agencies. For example, a number had been or were on probation, and several report staying at the shelter for runaways.

[6] In addition to relying on agency personnel to refer me to girls from neighborhoods with some gang activity, I also explored how much contact girls had with gangs by asking a series of questions in the survey about the presence and nature of gangs in their neighborhoods (see questions 70 through 75 in Appendix B), about whether they had friends or family in gangs, and about whether (for non-gang girls) they had ever been approached to join a gang or ever considered joining a gang.

[7] The terms "at-risk" has been criticized by some authors for implications underlying the label. For example, Taylor et al. (1995: 21) note:

> A primary danger of the "at-risk" label is its tendency to shift attention away from the social conditions that place adolescents at risk and locate the risk within the adolescents themselves. This shift places the burden of change on the adolescent and thus relieves the larger society of responsibility for addressing the inequities of race, class, and gender that create conditions of risk. It also emphasizes, often mistakenly, intellectual, social, or emotional deficit.

I will use the term "at-risk" throughout this section, in part because it is a label widely used by both researchers and many of the social workers through which I arranged interviews, and because I believe the term can connote concern for understanding the social conditions affecting the lives of young women. Nonetheless, I would caution the reader to keep this criticism in mind.

[8] In 1995, 278 adolescent girls were placed in Rosemont's Shelter Care program for a total of 7,115 days; the average stay was 25.59 days (Rosemont Center Annual Report, 1995).

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[15] Of the 21 girls I interviewed, 20 were members of mixed-gender gangs and only one was a member of an all-female group. The members of mixed-gender gangs characterized them as integrated, mixed-gender gangs, not male gangs with female auxiliaries. For the interview with the member of an all-female gang, I either rephrased questions in this section, or skipped questions that did not apply. We also talked about the benefits, problems, and meanings of being in an all-female gang.

[16] These issues will be discussed further in chapters seven and eight.

[17] This assessment of the lack of knowledge about how self-reports specifically apply to females was corroborated through my inquiries with several experts on self-report studies, including Dave Huizinga and Terence Thornberry.

[18] The interviews were confidential; I did not disclose any information about my conversations with interview subjects with staff members, regardless of what they confided to me.

[19] I only came across two obvious discrepancies. The first was a young woman who told me her gang-affiliation was with Bloods, though several other gang members at Rosemont told me she was a Folk, and I saw for myself that the young women she hung with at Rosemont were members of Crips and Folks sets, not Bloods. She appeared very gang-involved in the survey interview, and I believe she attempted to mislead me to protect herself and her gang. We were unable to schedule an in-depth interview (see note 13 above for an explanation), but I was planning on asking her about the discrepancy at that time.

The second discrepancy involved a gang member at Rosemont who referred me to a friend of hers, who she claimed was a member of her set. The friend ended up being affiliated with the set but not a member. In this case, I believe the motivation was monetary. At that time, I had agreed to pay girls an additional ten dollars when they referred me to friends who were gang members.

[20] Several examples help illustrate this process. First, throughout the interviews I tried in a variety of ways to get young women to talk openly and explicitly about gender relations in the gang. Because gender equality was a strong (but contradictory) value system among girls, they resisted my efforts to frame discussions in these ways. Stories about gender came out in the interviews, but often not when I asked them to talk about it, because they had their own gendered story of equality to reinforce (see chapter nine). In

addition, when I used words they didn't understand, several young women said so, asking me to define my question in terms they could understand.

A second example is the opposite--an obvious case in which young women have adopted my language, and evidence in the texts that our meanings were shared. The process of getting into the gang was one I referred to as an "initiation," while young women referred to it in a number of ways depending on what occurred: getting beaten in, sexed in, "done it" in, boxed in, jumped in, blessed in, taking blows, taking "six," taking "six licks," and so on. The language they used was descriptive, referring specifically to the activities involved in the "initiation." I used the term "initiation," and probably in response to me, they used the term back to me in describing the process of joining a gang. At issue is whether the meaning of this process is the same to them as the term "initiation" is to me: do they consider the process of joining a serious and formal induction into the group? Evidence from the interviews suggests that the answer is yes. Specifically, in addition to talking about the "initiation" itself, girls make a number of comments indicating that this is the case. For example, they make the distinction between themselves and "false flaggers," who are looked down upon and reportedly beaten up for claiming to be gang members when they haven't actually gone through the process of being put into the gang (initiated). In fact, one young woman reported that her boyfriend, to his dismay, discovered that he had been beaten into his gang by false flaggers, and thus had to undergo a second beating. A second example illustrating the seriousness of the process of joining is when girls discuss getting out of the gang, which they say either can't occur (ie. once you're in it, you're in it for life), or only at a great expense such as being beaten by the gang members more extensively than when they joined. Each of these themes illustrates the extent to which our notions of the process of joining are shared, even though the language is different.

[21] Three interviews come to mind (all non-gang) where the girls seemed terribly bored and inattentive throughout the survey. I assume their motivation for participating was monetary.

[22] After interviews with numerous girls, I was asked my age, and always met with surprise and the disclosure that they assumed I was much younger. In fact, once at Rosemont's Day School I was stopped and asked for a pass by a staff member when I attempted to leave the school, because she assumed I was one of the students.

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V. CORRELATES OF FEMALE GANG AFFILIATION IN COLUMBUS

In the last chapter, I highlighted what the literature suggests concerning the etiology of female gang involvement, and outlined how I examined various facets of girls' lives in my survey. Here I will present findings from the survey along the same dimensions of structural, educational, family, personal, and peer factors, along with differences between gang and non-gang girls in rates of delinquency, marijuana use, and arrest.

STRUCTURAL FACTORS

As expected, both gang and non-gang girls disproportionately come from neighborhoods which fall below Columbus' averages on socioeconomic measures. Table 5-1 provides census measures of median income, rates of poverty, unemployment, public assistance, and female-headed families, along with the percent of African Americans in Columbus. Census tract information gathered during the survey interview allowed me to compare the neighborhoods of the girls in my study with the overall socioeconomic climate of Columbus. Table 5-2 shows where gang and non-gang girls' neighborhoods fall in relation to these city averages. Most of the girls

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Table 5-2 *Neighborhood Characteristics*

	Gang [1] (n=21)	NonGang[1] (n=22)
Median Income		
Below City Average	16 (76.2%)	18 (81.8%)
75% of City Average	13 (61.9%)	11 (50.0%)
50% of City Average	6 (28.6%)	1 (4.5%)
Percent Poverty		
Above City Average	13 (61.9%)	17 (77.3%)
Double City Average	12 (57.1%)	6 (27.3%)*
Triple City Average	5 (23.8%)	4 (18.2%)
Percent Unemployment		
Above City Average	17 (81.0%)	20 (90.9%)
Double City Average	11 (52.4%)	10 (45.5%)
Triple City Average	5 (23.8%)	0 (0.0%)
Percent Public Assistance		
Above City Average	15 (71.4%)	17 (77.3%)
Double City Average	11 (52.4%)	9 (40.9%)
Triple City Average	9 (42.9%)	6 (27.3%)
Percent Female-Headed Families[2]		
Above City Average	14 (73.7%)	18 (90.0%)
Double City Average	7 (36.8%)	7 (35.0%)
Triple City Average	1 (5.3%)	1 (5.0%)
Percent African American		
Above City Average	16 (76.2%)	15 (68.2%)
Double City Average	13 (61.9%)	13 (59.1%)
Triple City Average	11 (52.4%)	8 (36.4%)

[1] three missing cases   Source: U.S. Census, 1990
[2] two missing cases

*p < .05

Another element of neighborhood characteristics that
was important to explore was whether or not young women in

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opportunity to consider joining. I asked girls a series of
questions about the extent of gang activity in their
neighborhoods, and followed up with the non-gang girls by
asking whether they have ever been approached to join a gang
or considered joining. Table 5-3 shows responses to these
questions. While gang members are more likely to recognize
and report gang activity in their neighborhoods, there is not
a single non-gang member in my sample who did not respond
affirmatively to at least one of the questions.[1] Gang
members are significantly more likely to report that there is
"a lot" of gang activity in their neighborhoods, and that
people living on their streets are members of gangs. It may
be that there is more visible gang activity in gang members'
neighborhoods, and that this regular exposure to gangs helps
account for the likelihood a girl will become gang-involved.
However, part of the differences among gang and non-gang
girls may be at the level of awareness--gang members may know
of more gang activity because they are part of it.
Interestingly, non-gang girls are more likely to believe
there is pressure on neighborhood kids to join gangs, and
they are more likely to say that being in a gang is "very
important" to kids in the neighborhood (though neither of
these differences are significant).

Another indication of the nature of girls' neighborhood
contexts is the extent to which they have been exposed to

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Table 5-4 *Exposure to Violence*

	Gang (n=21)	NonGang (n=25)
Physically Assaulted	15 (71.4%)	8 (32.0%)***
Witnessed Violence	19 (90.5%)	15 (60.0%)**
Seen Someone Get Killed	11 (52.4%)	8 (32.0%)

** p < .025
*** p < .01

In addition to neighborhood characteristics and exposure to gangs and violence in the neighborhood, I also examined girls' individual circumstances, including their residential stability, whether the adults in their households work, and the educational attainment of adults in their households, along with perceived barriers to success. As Table 5-5 shows, the majority of girls in the study have moved within the last few years. This is especially the case

Table 5-5 *Residential Stability*

	Gang (n=21)	NonGang (n=25)
12 Months or Less	11 (52.4%)	6 (24.0%)*
24 Months or Less	14 (66.7%)	11 (44.0%)
36 Months or Less	16 (76.2%)	13 (52.0%)

* p < .05

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the family, I examined the same three sets of adults. Table 5-6 shows the results for both sets of questions.[2] Two thirds of girls in each category live with their mothers (14 gang girls and 17 non-gang girls), though most live with some other adult as well. Of these, half (seven) of the gang members' mothers work, while nearly all of the non-gang girls mothers work (16 of 17). The majority of girls in my study do not live with their fathers (15 gang girls and 20 non-gang girls). Of those who do, all (five) of the non-gang girls' fathers work, and two of the six gang members' fathers work. While gang members are less likely than non-gang members to have a parent who works, the majority of girls in both groups live with at least one adult who works. None of the differences are statistically significant.

The majority of both groups of girls live with at least one adult in the household who has finished high school, and nearly half live with an adult who has some higher education. More gang members live with an adult high school graduate (versus non-high school graduate) than non-gang girls. Finally, neither gang nor non-gang girls tended to recognize the barriers imposed by their socioeconomic disadvantage. Mean score for gang members on the Barriers to Success Scale was 2.383, and for non-gang girls it was 2.393.[3] On these variables, there were no significant differences.

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girls are currently attending school, and only a third have received an honor or award at school (versus over half of the non-gang girls). Gang members are more likely to report failing a class at school, getting suspended or expelled from school, and changing schools in the last year. The direction of these relationships are as expected; however, none are significant. Likewise, in terms of grades, the majority of both gang and non-gang girls report getting mostly A's or B's, while only a few report getting D's or F's.[4]

Table 5-8 *Grades*

	Gang (n=21)	NonGang (n=25)
Mostly A's or B's	11 (52.4%)	16 (64.0%)
Mostly C's	8 (38.1%)	6 (24.0%)
Mostly D's or F's	2 (9.5%)	3 (12.0%)

Educational expectations are also not significantly different for gang versus non-gang girls (see Table 5-9). Nearly all of the girls in the study (89.1 percent) believe they will complete their high school education. More gang than non-gang girls report that they will not go beyond high school (38.1 percent versus 20 percent), but the majority of girls in both groups report that they plan to attend college

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The final school-related topic I examined concerned girls' relationships with their teachers specifically how many of their teachers they have liked, and whether they believe their teachers would describe them in negative or positive ways. Table 5-10 shows girls' responses to the question, "Of all the teachers you have known, how many have you liked?" Approximately one third of the respondents in both groups report liking few or none of their teachers. However, twice as many non-gang girls (40 percent, versus 19 percent of gang girls) report liking most or all of their teachers. The largest percentage of gang members report liking half of them. These differences are not significant. Likewise, with the Teacher Labeling Scale, non-gang girls have a slightly lower mean score (2.448) than gang girls (2.939), indicating they are somewhat more likely to believe teachers would describe them in positive rather than negative ways, though these differences are not significant.[7]

Table 5-10 *Attachment to Teachers*

	Gang (n=21)	NonGang (n=25)
None or a Few	7 (33.3%)	9 (36.0%)
Half	10 (47.6%)	6 (24.0%)
Most or All	4 (19.0%)	10 (40.0%)

Table 5-11 shows the living arrangements of gang and non-gang girls. There is no clear pattern of living arrangements for either group of girls, although the largest percentage of both groups live with their mother or their mother and her boyfriend (42.9 percent of gang girls, 48 percent of non-gang girls). In all, eight gang members (38.1 percent) and seven non-gang members (28 percent) report not living with their mothers. There are no discernable differences in living arrangements for gang and non-gang girls. Family stability was measured by asking girls how long they have lived with the adults in their household. The longest period noted was used as the measure. Five gang girls and three non-gang girls report that they have lived with these adults for a year or less. Two gang and four non-gang girls report having lived with these adults from two to five years, while the majority report living with the same adults for seven or more years--fourteen gang girls (66.7 percent) and eighteen non-gang girls (72 percent).

The next set of measures examined the quality of family relationships among gang and non-gang girls. The family portion of the Hare Self-Esteem Scale (questions 126 through 137 in Appendix B) did not yield different results for the two groups. Mean score for gang members is 2.376, and mean score for non-gang members is 2.290.[8] Respondents were also asked if there are adults in the family they feel close to

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to report that their families are very close (42.9 percent versus 20 percent), and this response is nearly statistically significant (p < .10). The other two measures (family fun and time spent together) do not have discernable patterns, although again non-gang girls seem to report less satisfaction with family life than gang girls. There are also no significant differences on measures of parental supervision (mean score for gang members is 1.845 and for non-gang 1.724) or parental discipline (mean score for gang members is 1.700 and for non-gang 1.920).[9]

While the majority of family measures examined thus far do not indicate a relationship between family relationships and gang involvement, my research does suggest that female gang members are more likely to come from homes where other forms of conflict are present, such as violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and the presence of additional gang members. Tables 5-13 and 5-14 show these relationships. A much larger percentage of gang than non-gang members report witnessing violence in the family and experiencing abuse at the hands of one or more family members. They report greater alcohol and drug use in the home as well. Of these variables, drug use and abuse are statistically significant. In addition, gang members are significantly more likely to report experiencing multiple family conflicts, with 61.9 percent (13 girls) noting that four or five of these family problems exists in

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Table 5-14 *Gang Affiliation Among Family Members*

	Gang (n=21) .	NonGang (n=25)
Family Member in Gang	12 (57.1%)	13 (52.0%)
Parent or Sibling in Gang	10 (47.6%)	4 (16.0%)[**]

[**] p < .025

These include cousins, uncles, step and foster siblings, in addition to parents, brothers and sisters.

Further evidence of the significance of the relationship between the gang membership of immediate family members and girls' likelihood of gang involvement comes from examining the four non-gang girls who report having siblings in gangs. Three of the four have brothers in gangs and all three are gang-associates.[11] The fourth non-gang girl has very adverse feelings towards gangs, in part because her older sister, who is a gang member, ran away from home the previous year and has not been heard from since.

Given the nearly equal number of gang members who report very close families (42.9 percent) and the number with immediate family members in gangs (47.6 percent), I explored whether there is a connection between these variables by examining the nine cases of girls who report having very

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Table 5-15 *Eastwood Scale*

	Gang (n=21)	NonGang (n=25)
"Good"		
Mean Score	2.147	1.844
Standard Deviation	.671	.557
"Bad"		
Mean Score	2.488	3.033
Standard Deviation	.740	.794
"Sick"		
Mean Score	2.665	3.028
Standard Deviation	.552	.725

Table 5-16 *Sexual Abuse and Activity*

	Gang (n=21)	NonGang (n=25)
Sexual Abuse	13 (61.9%)	7 (28.0%)**
Age at First Intercourse		
N/A	2 (9.5%)	6 (24.0%)
Prior to Age 13	7 (33.3%)	9 (36.0%)
Age 13 to 15	12 (57.1%)	10 (40.0%)
Number of Sexual Partners		
None	2 (9.5%)	7 (24.0%)
One	6 (28.6%)	11 (44.0%)
Two or More	13 (61.9%)	7 (28.0%)**

   p < .025 when responses are dichotomized so that none and one are compared with two or more

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gang members who report first sexual intercourse as occurring
between the ages of thirteen and fifteen, half report that
they first had sex at age fifteen (versus none of the non-
gang girls). But, of the girls reporting first sexual
intercourse at age twelve or younger, five of the seven gang
members report having sex before age twelve, versus only two
of the non-gang girls.

Gang members are significantly more likely than non-
gang girls to report having sexual intercourse with multiple
partners (when compared with the number of girls reporting no
or one sexual partner). Thirteen of the gang members (61.9
percent) report having sex with two or more partners in the
last year, while only seven (28.0%) non-gang girls report
this. Among girls who are sexually active, mean number of
partners for gang members is 2.39, versus 1.67 for non-gang
girls. Eight gang members (38.1 percent) have had sex with
three or more partners in the last year, versus four (16
percent) of the non-gang girls. This is probably in part a
function of gang members' peer affiliations, since they are
more likely to have adult friends, and friends who are
delinquent (see below). Other researchers have found a
correlation among youths between delinquency and involvement
in "adult" behaviors such as sex (Hirschi, 1969).
Ironically, young women in gangs are very critical of girls
they see as sexually promiscuous (see chapter eight).

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About one third of gang girls appear to adhere to traditional values, stating that love, marriage and motherhood are very important. However a consistent majority do not see these things as important. Non-gang girls are more evenly distributed in their responses, and are more likely to see love, marriage and motherhood as important. Motherhood is where the most dramatic difference is visible, with 52 percent of non-gang girls calling it as very important, while 57.1 percent of gang girls say it is not important at all. These responses may help shed light on the meanings of gang affiliation for girls (see chapter eight).

PEER FACTORS

To examine girls' relationships with their peers, I was first interested in how important their peers are, and whether they perceive themselves as accepted and well-liked by peers, and their reasons for having particular groups of friends. I was also interested in the structure of their peer groups, such as how many friends are in their group, the gender composition of their group of friends, the age range, and whether there are adults in their peer group. Finally, I examined peer group activities, and delinquency as an element of the peer group. Because for gang girls, their peer reference groups are typically the members of their gangs, many of the responses in this section are likely be a

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Table 5-18   Reasons for Gang/Group Membership

	Gang (n=21)	NonGang (n=24)[1]
To make friends	4 (19.0%)	9 (37.5%)
To get a reputation	6 (28.6%)	3 (12.5%)
To fill up empty time	10 (47.6%)	16 (66.7%)
For support and loyalty	11 (52.4%)	17 (70.8%)
To feel important	8 (38.1%)	9 (37.5%)
To feel like you belong to something	13 (61.9%)	8 (33.3%)
To prepare for the future	1 (4.8%)	7 (29.2%)
To avoid home	13 (61.9%)	11 (45.8%)
To keep out of trouble	3 (14.3%)	16 (66.7%)[****]
Members forced you to join	1 (4.8%)	1 (4.8%)
For excitement	15 (71.4%)	18 (75.0%)
To share secrets	4 (19.0%)	16 (66.7%)[***]
To get away with illegal activities	7 (33.3%)	3 (12.5%)
To participate in group activities	7 (33.3%)	16 (66.7%)[*]
To learn new skills	13 (61.9%)	16 (66.7%)
To have a territory of your own	11 (52.4%)	7 (29.2%)
To get your parents' respect	2 (9.5%)	3 (12.5%)
Because someone in your family was a member	9 (42.9%)	5 (20.8%)

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that their friendship groups were all female. Of the two

gang members who report having all female friends, one is a

member of an all-female gang, and the other had recently quit

associating with her gang after being raped by a member, and

was referring to non-gang friends. The majority of both sets

of girls report associating with mixed gender groups (19 gang

members, and 14 non-gang girls). Several of the gang members

clarified that their set of friends is mostly males, with a

few females. Gang members also report having a significantly

larger number of friends in their peer groups than non-gang

girls. Almost half of the gang members report their

friendship groups consist of ten or more members, versus only

three non-gang girls. The majority of non-gang girls (66.7

Table 5-19 *Peer Group Characteristics*

	Gang (n=21)	NonGang (n=25)
Gender of Peers		
All Females	2 (9.5%)	11 (44.0%)
Both Females and Males	19 (90.5%)	14 (56.0%) ***
Number of Peer Group Members		
1-6	5 (23.8%)	16 (64.0%)
7 or more	16 (76.2%)	9 (37.5%) ***
Adults in Peer Group	8 (38.1%)	3 (12.5%) *

* p < .05
*** p < .01

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age. In fact, eight of the gang members (38.1 percent) report having adults in their friendship groups (versus three non-gang girls).

Table 5-20 provides data on girls' responses to what kinds of activities they do with their friends. The majority of respondents report hanging out, watching television and videos, listening to music and dancing with their friends. Non-gang girls are significantly more likely to report shopping and trying to meet guys with their friends, and are also more likely to report going to sports events together-- all conventional activities. Gang members are more likely to report drinking, and especially doing drugs (smoking 'bud') with their friends.

Gang members' peers are also significantly more likely to be delinquent, as shown in Table 5-21. All of the gang members report that their friends engage in illegal activities as a group, while only eight of the non-gang girls report this. Of these eight non-gang girls, five are girls who are gang affiliates and/or whose primary peers are gang members. About three quarters of gang members report that their friends spend a lot or some of their time talking about the illegal things they have done or plan to do, while only five of the non-gang girls report this. Delinquency is thus more of a primary focus of gang members' peer groups than it is for non-gang girls' peer groups.[14]

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Table 5-22 *Delinquency*

	Gang (n=21)	NonGang (n=25)
Minor Delinquency	21 (100.0%)	22 (88.0%)
Mean age at onset	11.0	11.27
Moderate Delinquency	20 (95.2%)	25 (100.0%)
Mean age at onset	10.75	10.24
Serious Delinquency	21 (100.0%)	14 (56.0%)****
Mean age at onset	12.67	12.36
Alcohol Use	21 (100.0%)	18 (72.0%)
Mean age at onset	12.38	12.39
Marijuana Use	21 (100.0%)	14 (56.0%)****
Mean age at onset	12.62	12.93

**** p < .001

In Table 5-22, a girl is classified as having committed delinquency if she answers yes to having ever committed one of a series of delinquent acts classified as minor, moderate or serious. In order to better understand girls' patterns of delinquency, it is also necessary to examine these delinquent acts individually. Tables 5-23, 5-24, 5-25 and 5-26 present data on minor delinquency, moderate delinquency, serious delinquency, and substance use, respectively. These tables list whether girls have ever committed each delinquent act in each category, and whether they have done so in the last six months. Overall what they reveal is that more gang girls have committed a wider range of delinquent acts than non-gang

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Table 5-24 *Moderate Delinquency*

Have you:	Gang (n=21)	NonGang (n=25)
Been drunk in a public place?		
Ever	17 (81.0%)	5 (20.0%) ****
Last six months	16 (76.2%)	5 (20.0%) ****
Damaged, destroyed or marked up someone else's property on purpose?		
Ever	16 (76.2%)	9 (36.0%) ***
Last six months	15 (71.4%)	6 (24.0%) ***
Tried to steal or actually stolen money or things worth between $5 and $50?		
Ever	8 (38.1%)	8 (32.0%)
Last six months	7 (33.3%)	4 (16.0%)
Taken a car or motorcycle for a ride without permission?		
Ever	13 (61.9%)	7 (28.0%) **
Last six months	9 (42.9%)	5 (20.0%)
Thrown objects like bottles or rocks at people?		
Ever	19 (90.5%)	17 (68.0%)
Last six months	14 (66.7%)	8 (32.0%) **
Hit someone with the idea of hurting them?[1]		
Ever	13 (61.9%)	20 (80.0%)
Last six months	8 (38.1%)	9 (36.0%)

* This question concludes "other than what you've already mentioned," referring specifically to affirmative responses to the question "attacked someone with a weapon or with the idea of seriously hurting or killing them?"

** p < .025
*** p < .01
**** p < .001

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Table 5-26 *Alcohol and Marijuana Use*

	Gang (n=21)		NonGang (n=25)	
Have you:				
Drunk beer or wine without your parents' permission?				
Ever	20	(95.2%)	18	(72.0%)
Last six months	18	(85.7%)	13	(52.0%)**
Drunk hard liquor without your parents' permission?				
Ever	16	(76.2%)	11	(44.0%)*
Last six months	15	(71.4%)	6	(24.0%)***
Used marijuana?				
Ever	21	(100.0%)	14	(56.0%)****
Last six months	20	(95.2%)	12	(48.0%)****

* $p < .05$
** $p < .025$
*** $p < .01$
**** $p < .001$

girls, and more of them have committed a range of delinquent acts in the last six months. The most prevalent forms of delinquency among gang members are smoking marijuana and drinking, being drunk in public, skipping classes, and damaging property. More than 70 percent of gang members report engaging in these acts in the last six months. Except for running away and drinking beer or wine, less than half of the non-gang girls have engaged in these forms of delinquency in the last six months. While gang girls have committed a wide range of delinquent acts, they mostly engage in non-

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percentage of gang members have been arrested for status and violent offenses, but these differences are not statistically significant.

SUMMARY

In many aspects of their lives, gang and non-gang girls in this study are quite similar. School performance, educational expectations, family attachment and self esteem are all variables previous researchers indicate as possible risk factors for gang involvement among girls, yet differences among gang and non-gang girls along these variables were not revealed in the survey. Several clusters of factors did emerge as significantly related to gang involvement for girls in Columbus. While overall, structural measures were similar for gang and non-gang girls, gang members did indicate some differences in their neighborhood contexts, as compared to non-gang members. These include a greater likelihood of living in neighborhoods with double the poverty rates of the city as a whole, living in neighborhoods and on streets with gangs and gang members, witnessing and experiencing violence in the neighborhood, and greater residential instability.

Gang members were also significantly more likely to come from families with a great deal of conflict, including violence and child abuse, alcohol and drug abuse, and

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their likelihood of being in mixed gender, mostly male friendship groups. Gang members' peers are significantly more delinquent than are non-gang girls', they tend to have a wider age range of friends and associate with larger groups. Not surprisingly, gang members report greater delinquency than their non-gang counterparts, though most of their delinquent activities tend to emerge in the context of "partying." They have also been exposed to greater violence, probably as a result of their gang involvement. Their arrest patterns are not very different than those of non-gang girls however.

Some of these themes will resurface again in chapters seven and eight. Chapter seven focuses on the structures and characteristics of gangs in Columbus, giving attention to such things as size, age range, gender composition, leadership and organization. Chapter eight expands this discussion of the character of gangs by examining the activities that gang members participate in, including initiation rituals, everyday activities, inter-gang rivalries, and delinquency. In both of these chapters, the place of gender within the gang will be examined.

[6] The Hare Self-Esteem Scale is also a four item scale, where one represents a positive sense of self in relation to others at school, and four represents a negative sense of self.

[7] The Teacher Labeling Scale is a five item scale, with one representing positive teacher perceptions and five representing negative teacher perceptions.

[8] The Hare Self-Esteem Scale is a four item scale, where one represents a positive sense of self in family relationships, and four represents a negative sense of self.

[9] Both of these scales ranged from one to three, with one representing greater supervision or discipline, and three representing less. Stems were often (1), sometimes (2), and almost never (3).

[10] Only two girls report having a parent who is a gang member, and both are gang members themselves.

[11] Two participated in the in-depth interview for gang affiliates. I attempted to do a follow-up interview with the third, but on the scheduled date she was very distracted and wasn't paying attention, so I discontinued the interview.

[12] Scores for the Eastwood Scale range from one to four, with one representing strong agreement with the statement measuring perceptions of self (as good, bad, sick), and four representing strong disagreement with the statement. Stems were very well (1), pretty well (2), a little (3), and not at all (4).

[13] Given the current focus on teen pregnancy, I also asked about whether girls had been pregnant (and the outcomes). Only five gang members report having been pregnant, versus nine non-gang girls. Of the five gang members reporting pregnancy, one was pregnant at the time of the interview and planning to have the baby, two did not go full term, and two had the babies but were not currently raising them themselves. Two of the non-gang girls were currently pregnant, four had babies, and three did not go full term.

[14] During the survey, when a respondent reported that her friends are not delinquent as a group, the next series of questions on types of peer delinquency was skipped. Because the majority of non-gang girls reported that their friends are not delinquent, specific data on peer delinquency was not collected. Presenting a gang/nongang comparison of this data would not be accurate, because girls who said their friends

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VI. CONTEXTS OF GANG INVOLVEMENT

As I discussed in the introduction to this text, it is critical that research on female gang involvement recognizes and highlights the diversity of experiences of girls in gangs. In this chapter, my goal is to present an analysis of the patterns of life contexts that influence girls' choices to join gangs. In the last chapter, I examined the correlates of female gang involvement in Columbus, and several themes emerged that tend to distinguish gang members from non-gang girls. Gang members have a significantly greater likelihood of coming from a family with multiple problems, including violence and substance abuse. Nearly three quarters of the gang members I spoke with report at least three of the following five problems within their home: violence between adults, child abuse, regular alcohol use, regular drug use, and the incarceration of a family member. In addition, nearly half of the gang members have immediate family members in gangs. Finally, there are a number of variables indicating that gang members tend to come from neighborhoods where gang activity and violence are a more visible presence.

The survey uncovered variables that are related to gang

Research suggests that gangs comprise an important element of the social support systems of their members, providing them with identity, status, excitement and belonging, and a way of adapting to constraints imposed by their social and economic environments. "[G]ang members, like any other individuals, experience universal human needs--physical, psychological, and social" (Soriano, 1993: 454), and gangs are a means by which some girls attempt to meet these needs, given particular life contexts.

Themes arose in the in-depth interviews suggesting that certain life experiences and environmental contexts influence girls' choices to become gang-involved. Here I will present four patterns of circumstances that emerged in the interviews as motivating factors leading girls to gang membership, and shaping the meanings of gangs in their lives. The patterns that emerge from the in-depth interviews complement those uncovered in the survey interview. They include a perceived or actual lack of parental relationships;[1] having an adolescent sibling or relative in a gang; gang or criminal involvement as an entrenched family pattern; and exposure to gangs in the neighborhood or through friends. Figure 6-1 gives a visual diagram of where the girls I interviewed fit in this typology of motivating contexts for gang involvement.

These four categories are not cut and dry scenarios in which all girls neatly fit. Instead, they are overlapping

patterns which represent useful ways of differentiating

themes within the interviews. Some girls' experiences fall

clearly into one of the categories, while others fall into

dual categories. Different degrees of influence from these

varying circumstances shape girls' decisions to join gangs,

and influence the meanings they attribute to their gang

involvement. For clarity, I have categorized girls in Figure

6-1 according to the predominant theme(s) the girls discuss

in their interview. Lack of parental relationships resulting

from the types of family conflicts described in the

survey (violence, child abuse, alcohol abuse, drug abuse,

and/or incarceration) is an overarching theme for the

majority of the gang members in the study. Only six young

women do not indicate three or more family problems in the

survey: Angie, Heather, Leslie, Monica, Jennifer, and

Chantell.[2] Of those girls reporting multiple family problems

in the survey, twelve specifically describe (in the context

of the survey, in-depth interview, or both) what they

perceive as a lack of parental relationships which has

influenced their decision to join a gang. Three girls

(Tamika, Cathy and Nikkie) report multiple family problems in

the survey, but do not report that a lack of parental

relationships has influenced their decision to join a gang.

Finally, though Jennifer does not report multiple family

problems, she nonetheless describes how a lack of parental

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can find a support network that both acts as a family and provides an outlet to escape from troubled families. As chapter five revealed, the majority of gang members in my study come from families in which serious problems such as violence, substance abuse, and incarceration exist. For some girls, these problems are serious enough to impair severely their ability to have emotional and physical needs met by the family, due to the absence of a stable and supportive parental relationship with an adult family member.

The most common cause of a 'lack' of family reported by gang girls was a mother addicted to crack or heroin. Keisha is an African American fourteen year old who has spent the last couple of years in and out of placements, spending no more than a few months at a time living at home with her mother. Her neighborhood "ain't nothin' but Folks and Crips," and she joined her set[3] when she was thirteen. She explains, "my family wasn't there for me. My mom smokin' crack and she act like she didn't wanna be a part of my life, so I just choose the negative family, you know what I'm saying." Keisha's story is not unique. Of the girls I interviewed, seven (33.3 percent) related their gang involvement to their mother's addiction: Keisha, Sonita, Veronica, Brandi, Traci, Diane and Stephanie (see Diane's story below).

Other girls report a variety of additional family

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AN ADOLESCENT GANG-INVOLVED FAMILY MEMBER

Some girls who are missing close relationships with the adults in their families can turn to siblings to maintain a sense of family. However, if those siblings are gang-involved, it is likely that the girls will choose to join gangs themselves. As noted in chapter five, gang involvement among immediate family members is significantly related to gang involvement for girls. Nine (42.9 percent) of the girls I interviewed had siblings in gangs: Tamika, Cathy, Veronica, Brandi, Lisa, Michelle, Stephanie, Monica and Nikkie (see Lisa's story below). Of these, only Stephanie and Nikkie do not believe their siblings' involvement significantly influenced their own.[4]

Most often, girls who joined gangs to be with or like their older siblings did so in the context of the types of family problems noted above. For example, Veronica, a fifteen year old African American, joined her set when she was "gettin' ready to be twelve," after her older brothers joined. The gang was "right there in my neighborhood . . . then I seen that my brothers, 'cause I seen my brothers get put in. So then I said I wanna be put in." She goes on to explain:

> I was just doin' what I wanted to 'cause when I
> found out my mom was doin' drugs and stuff, so she
> wasn't never in the house, so she didn't know.
> Then my little brother wanted to get put in. And
> he was only like about six (laugh). And they told
> him no (laugh).

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or whatever I was always with 'em. So I'm
figuring, like, if I'm with 'em, you know, I might
as well just be, you know, officiated with 'em.

Some research suggests that young women who join gangs
because of a sibling then actively recruit additional female
friends to join the group (Klein, 1971). In this study, only
Tamika provide evidence of this sort. She told me that she
was working on putting more young women in her set as a means
of gaining more rank in the group. No other young women with
siblings described this phenomenon, and no young women
described joining because of a female friend who had a
sibling in the gang.

INTERGENERATIONAL CRIME/GANG INVOLVEMENT

The majority of gang members in the study have family
members in gangs. For most, these other family members are
also adolescents, and gang affiliation thus remains a
youthful endeavor. For a few of the girls I interviewed,
their gang-involved family members are adults, and this
appears to shape the context of their gang affiliation. Here
the decision to join a gang doesn't result from an absence of
adult family members, but of learning about gangs and crime
via adults in the family. As a result, their commitment to
the gang is stronger than many of the other girls'. These
girls are atypical cases, but nevertheless represent an
important pattern to examine. As Columbus matures as a gang

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"true" and unwavering in their commitment to the gang. As

Diane passionately noted, "I *love* my cousins. I *love* 'em."

EXPOSURE THROUGH NEIGHBORHOOD AND/OR FRIENDS

For some girls in the study, the decision to become

gang-involved stemmed directly from exposure to gangs through

friends or in the neighborhood. According to Joe and

Chesney-Lind (1995), one function of gangs is to alleviate

the boredom experienced by inner city youths, who have few

options for recreation and entertainment. Quicker summarizes:

"To be in a gang is to be part of something. It means having

a place to go, friends to talk with, and parties to attend.

It means recognition and respected status" (1983: 80).

Likewise, the gang is a means for these girls to adapt to

oppressive living conditions, including poverty, neighborhood

crime, lack of opportunities, racism, and sexism (Brown,

1977; Campbell, 1990a; Fishman, 1988; Vigil and Long,

1990).

To some degree, of course, all of the girls joined as a

result of exposure to gangs in the neighborhood or through

friends. Here I place girls in this category specifically

when they describe their primary reasons for joining as being

drawn by the excitement of gangs, desiring to be with or like

their peers, and/or because it was the thing to do since it

was all around them. Eight girls described their motivations

each joined the set that their neighbor was in. It is
probably not coincidence that of the gang members I
interviewed, these girls were among the youngest when they
joined. Diane began affiliating when she was ten and joined
at eleven; Traci and Nikkie each joined shortly after their
twelfth birthdays. Especially for Traci and Nikkie, the
desire they articulated was wanting to fit in and belong to a
group--typical desires of early adolescents. As Nikkie
notes, "if you ain't in it you just be . . . you just be
feelin' left out. You be like, oh, they all in a gang and
I'm just sittin' here." As a result, she says, "I was like,
'I wanna get in it.' And I got in it."

    Traci had only recently moved to Columbus. Moving to a
new city, she explained that she "wanted to be like other
people." She noticed "all these blue scarves and red scarves
and stuff," found out the boy living in the apartment above
hers was a Crip, and asked him how she could get in. She
explained: "I just wanted to join. I don't know why. I
just had to join a gang. When I moved out here I just *had*
to." Joining the gang was a way to make friends and fit into
a new environment.

    Jennifer, Heather and Leslie became gang-involved after
they were introduced to gang members by a close friend.
Heather, a white fifteen year old who joined when she was
twelve, said of her decision to join:

    I's at my friend Chad's house and they had just

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Erica

Erica is a seventeen year old African American girl who joined a gang at the age of fifteen. She lived with her father and stepmother throughout most of her childhood, until her father and uncle raped her at the age of eleven and she was removed from the home. Since that time, she has been shuffled back and forth between foster homes, group homes, and residential facilities. She has had little contact with her family since she was eleven, because family members turned their backs on her. She explains, "I didn't have *no* family. Because of incidents with my dad and my uncle. After that, they just deserted me and I didn't, I had nothin' else." Though she says her stepmother was the primary person who raised her as a child, their relationship was severely damaged by the rape. "She doesn't, she doesn't believe it. I mean, even after he pleaded guilty she still doesn't believe it."

Erica's childhood up to that point had been filled with violence as well. Her father was physically abusive toward her stepmother, herself and her siblings, and as a young child, Erica witnessed the rape of her biological mother. Both her father and stepmother have spent time in jail, and there was regular alcohol and drug use in the home as she was growing up. As a result, she was a physically aggressive child. She explains, "in elementary school before I even

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sometimes I just don't act like that. I act like
I'm some real mean bully type person.

Her decision to join was in part a search for belonging
and a sense of family. In some ways the gang has met those
needs, and in other ways it has not. As she nears adulthood,
Erica plans to quit associating with her gang, and instead
work on building her future. "I want out of it, as it is
now. I want out of it. I'm trying to get my life back. On
track . . . . 'Cause I'm 17, almost 18." Perhaps because of
her own experiences, Erica doesn't want a family. She does
hope to be more assertive in the future, "without having to
have that gang behind me to do it."

Diane

Diane is a fifteen year old white girl who has been a
gang member since the age of eleven. She was only ten when
she began hanging out with members of the gang, including the
seventeen year old young man who lived next door.

> I think I was about ten and a half years old and
> we started hanging out over there, over at his
> house and all his friends would come over and I
> just got into, just hangin' out, just becomin'
> friends with everybody that was there. And then I
> started smokin' weed and doin' all that stuff and
> then when I turned eleven it was like, well,
> 'cause they seen me get in fights and they seen
> how my attitude was and they said, well I think
> that you would be, you would be a true, a very
> true Lady Crip.

The time she spent with this group, and her decision to
join, were predictable results of her life history up to that

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care of me. I see a man takin' care of me. I'll
still love 'em. I'll still, if they need me I'll
be there. But I think when I get older it's not
gonna be all Crip, Crip, Crip, Crip this, all that
stuff.

Lisa

Lisa is a thirteen year old white girl who joined her
gang shortly before our interview. Her brother Mike had been
a member of the Folks for several years, and when the family
moved to another area of Columbus, he decided to start his
own set in the new neighborhood. At the time that we spoke,
their set had seven members, including Lisa and Mike, Mike's
girlfriend, Lisa's boyfriend, and several additional friends.

Lisa's mother died when she was eleven, and she doesn't
get along well with her father, who is sometimes physically
abusive and spends little time with her. She is very close
to her brother Mike, and wanting to be with him was her
primary reason for joining. Prior to his starting his own
set, Lisa says she "claimed [Folks] because that's what my
brother was so I wanted to be like that too," but she hadn't
considered joining. Then, she explains, "my brother got a
high enough rank from doin' whatever he did to get that rank
to um . . . have his own set." Several weeks before Lisa
joined, her brother's girlfriend (who is her best friend) was
initiated into his new set. Then, she explains:

> One day [Mike's girlfriend] was like, "well, you
> wanna be true?" And I was like, "yeah." And they
> was like, "alright." And they took me behind the
> railroad tracks and kicked the shit outta me and I

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Right now I wish, I kinda wish I never got into it but I'm already in it so, like, um, I just, I don't know. I don't think I'm gonna be that heavy as my brother is. Like, all the time, you know, yeah yeah.

Monica

Monica is a sixteen year old African American, who joined her gang when she was thirteen. She has four older brothers between the ages of 23 and 31, and all are members of the same set. Her father was also in a gang when he was younger (in another city), though he is no longer a member. Her relationship with her mother is strained because of the trouble she gets into, and she has been living with her grandmother for the last few years. She has a close relationship with her father, who was supportive of her decision to join her brothers' set: "He was like, 'Well, it's up to you. I'm not gonna tell you no and I'm not gonna tell you yes. It's up to you."

Monica is the youngest member of her set, and joined because she "wanted to be like" her brothers. She said she "always followed them around," so when they asked her if she wanted to join, she said yes.

My brothers, all four of my brothers were in so I was like, "Alright, I wanna be in a gang." So I used to ride around with them all the time. And then my brother asked me, he said, "Do you wanna be down or what?" I was like, um, "What do I gotta do?" Then he told me . . . . And I was like, "Fine, I'll do it." So I did.

exception.   Perhaps because of the adult role models in her
family, because she "grew up ar~~ind it," Monica is much more
serious about her gang membership. As she explains, "I don't
see myself ever quittin' or anything, like saying 'I don't
wanna be around y'all no more' and just stop doin' it . . . .
I joined for life"

Chantell

Chantell is a fourteen year old African American girl
who joined her gang within the past year. She was twelve
years old when she decided that she wanted to be in a gang,
and began affiliating when she turned thirteen. Chantell
lives with her mother, grandmother and siblings in a
neighborhood where gangs are "just, like, everywhere."
Though she has no contact with her father, her relationship
with her mother is good; she reports none of the other
family problems that many girls report, such as violence or
substance abuse. What she does report is an economically
impoverished neighborhood context in which she "grew up with"
gangs. She explains:

> When I was little, I mean when I was young, I grew
> up around 'em. Just grew up around 'em,
> basically. Then when you grow up around 'em and
> you see 'em so much, until you want to get
> initiated.

I asked her what was going on in her life at twelve
when she decided she wanted to join her gang, and she said,

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what the future holds for them, most girls believe that they will not remain gang and criminally involved into adulthood, but instead will settle into conventional lives. Only those few girls like Diane and Monica, who have gang and/or criminally involved adult role models, expect to remain criminally active into adulthood.

NON-GANG ASSOCIATES

The non-gang girls in the study should be viewed not simply as "non-gang," but as having varied degrees of connection to gangs. They range from those who are appalled by what they see in their communities, to those with some peripheral connections to gangs via family and friends, to those who have strong connections with specific gangs and/or with gang members. According to the survey, nearly a quarter of the non-gang girls (six of 25) report that most of their friends are gang members, an additional six say that half of their friends are in gangs, and thirteen (52 percent) say they have no gang friends. Four non-gang girls have boyfriends who are gang members.

As noted in chapter four, three young women who are not gang members participated in in-depth interviews. I decided to conduct exploratory interviews with them because each reported being associated with primarily gang friends or a particular gang, but had chosen thus far not to join. Julie

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> store and he'll rob the store for a pair of shoes.
> He's just, they're crazy. Don't think about what
> could happen to them.

She hangs out with her gang peers, and commits crimes with

them, but she doesn't take part in specifically gang-related

crimes or conflicts between rival gangs. She explains, "I'm

not gonna have to spend a few years of my life in jail

because of . . . a gang. I mean, if I'm gonna do somethin',

I'm gonna do it for myself not for a clique."

Julie's gang friends come from different gangs, and she

knows them from a variety of places. They include friends

she's grown up with, people she meets at the mall, movie

theaters, skating rinks, the detention center, and people she

meets through relatives and other friends. She is clearly

drawn to certain elements of the excitement of gang life,

particularly her friends' delinquent involvement and overall

"craziness." However, she is strongly opposed to joining a

gang because of the limitations it would place on her. When

I ask her what the benefits of not being a member are, she

responds:

> Just, like, I can hang out, I mean, if I was a
> Crip I couldn't hang out with some of my friends
> that are Bloods 'cause they don't get along. And
> just, I guess, being able to hang out with who I
> want. And, wearing what color I want. I mean,
> that' stupid that, in a certain gang you're not
> allowed wearin' a certain color.

Like Julie, Rachel expresses a strong resistance to

joining gangs because she does not want a group identity to

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girls get in the gang for. But, see, I got my
mom. I got my family that loves me. My mom takes
good care of me. You know what I'm saying?

Unlike Julie and Rachel, Denise is affiliated with a
specific gang, and clearly aligns herself with them. She
says, "a Blood is a Slob to me . . . . I see somebody dressed
in all dred, I look at 'em and go, 'Psssh, whatever.' And I
ain't even in a gang but I still call 'em Slobs." The set
she hangs out with does not have any female members, but she
and a female friend have been spending time with them for the
last year. The members have asked her if she wants to join,
and sometimes she thinks about it, but says at this point, "I
don't think I'm ready to join. I don't feel like getting
beat up." The following conversation illustrates some of the
tensions she is grappling with:

Jody: You said in the other [survey] interview that
       sometimes you think you want to be a member and
       sometimes you don't.

Denise: Yeah, 'cause sometimes we be sittin' there chillin'
         and they all come out with guns and stuff, you know
         what I'm sayin'? They load they shit. They look
         better than the police. They just look hard, you know
         what I'm sayin'? They all got money. Everybody, all
         of 'em got money. And it ain't just like one dollar
         bills. They all got hundreds. And flashin' 'em.
         Everybody come over there. Nobody disrespect 'em.

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You get high. You usually gotta buy, but, they
sell it, they buy it for you, they smoke wit' you.
They smoke wit' you. They got cars, rides, you
don't have no car, you like, call 'em up, "you
wanna take me to the shop?" They like, "yeah, I'll
drop you off, hold on."

An important element of these interviews with Julie,

Rachel and Denise is that they highlight the fluid nature of

gang boundaries. On the one hand, each girl articulates that

she is clearly not a gang member; yet each participates on

some level in the activities of gang members, if not gangs.

Julie says that her friends in rival gangs always try to get

her to "set each other up," yet they trust her not to set

them up. She hangs out with them and commits crimes with

them despite her connections with rival gangs. Rachel has

actually assisted her friends in initiating new members when

they were short-handed. She says "I'm not supposed to jump

people into a gang unless you're in a gang," but her friend

asked her to and "I'd practically do anything for her, 'cause

that's my heart." And Denise is privy to many of the gang

members crimes. These young women derive some of the same

meanings from their gang involvement as gang members,

especially delinquent recreational activities and excitement.

But they have not felt the need for belonging that many gang

members describe as motivating their decisions to join gangs.

NOTES

[1] By "parental relationship," I mean not just mother or father, but any adult family member responsible for raising the girl.

[2] All names are fictitious.

[3] Youths in Columbus refer to their gangs as sets.

[4] Stephanie's involvement was influenced by her mother, however. Her mother's boyfriend is a gang member, and Stephanie's own boyfriend is her mother's boyfriend's cousin and a member of the same gang. Stephanie's main reason for joining was that her boyfriend wanted her to, and her mother "let me do anything I want to."

[5] OG stands for "Original Gangster," and is the term used by girls in Columbus to refer to the leader of their set or gang.

[6] Flags, or rags, are bandannas gang members wear to indicate their gang affiliation. Crips wear blue flags, Folks wear black, and Bloods wear red. Crips and Folks wear them on the right side of their body, and Bloods on the left.

[7] "V's" refers to violations, which are punishments for violating gang rules.

women I interviewed describe the groups they are involved with as gangs, and how this fits with research definitions. Though definitions are contested, one of the most widely used gang definitions is that of Klein (1971), who specifies that gangs are groups of youths who are perceived as a distinct aggregate by others in their neighborhood; recognize themselves as a distinct group, typically with a name and a set of signs and symbols to distinguish the group; and have been involved in a sufficient number of delinquent acts to call forth consistent negative response from neighborhood residents and/or law enforcement.

The majority of gangs in Columbus adopt nationally recognized gang names, most notably Crips, Bloods and Folks. While there are a few independent groups and there are said to be a handful of Vice Lord sets, Crips, Bloods and Folks predominate. As Table 7-1 shows, the majority of female gang members I spoke with were either Folks (57.1 percent) or Crips (28.6 percent). I interviewed two members of Bloods sets and one member of an independent female gang, the Gangster Girlz.[1]

Young women in gangs cull from a similar set of factors as Klein when describing why the groups they are in can be defined as gangs. When asked "what makes the group you're in a gang?" girls focus on the recognition the gang receives by others, their

> Claim their territory. That wear their colors.
> That, uh, they just, they just claim that turf.
> And if, like, someone else comes up wearin' the
> wrong color, I don't care if you don't have a rag
> on or not. If you got this color on, a shirt, a
> hat or anything, you're gettin' beat up.

In addition, as noted in chapter one, young women also

resist the characterization of their gangs as *only* criminally

involved, even when they describe the groups as such. For

example, Leslie laments that people "just concentrates on

that bad stuff that [gangs] are doin'. 'Cause as soon as

they hear about a gang doin' somethin' bad, they're, whew, on

it," while "it's very rare that you hear about a gang doin'

somethin' good" even though she believes they sometimes do.

Likewise, Tamika describes a gang shooting she witnessed,

then perhaps to correct the impression she perceives herself

creating, she immediately comments on how she sees people:

> Just stereotype gang members to be hardcore and to
> always be shootin' at somebody. They don't
> stereotype people that could be a gang member but
> still they could go to school and get straight
> A's. That's stereotyping because I know, I know a
> few gang-bangers who go to school, get straight
> A's, hit the books but still when they on the
> street, you know, they take good care of theirs.
> But they, they takin' care of theirs in school and
> they takin' care of theirs on the street and I
> don't think that's right to stereotype people.

Young women's gang definitions then, are based on

recognized gang names and inter-gang rivalries, symbolic

systems, delinquent involvement, and recognition within the

larger community, even though they sometimes contest these

same definitions. Notably, they also glean some of their

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for the simple fact, the girl that he got pregnant told

her cousin, her cousin got his ass whooped by Kane in

front of his grandfather's house, that day he got put

out. If somethin' like that happened, out, see ya.

Here Keisha is specifically describing a process by which she

is learning how the gang should act based on what she viewed

in a movie, and she is associating her own gang with the

popular image of gangs, though she is unable to describe

specific events in her own gang that are parallel.

In addition, young women have little sense of the

history and origin of their own gangs. Their connection is

to larger cities, or to gangs constructed in the media. When

I ask Stephanie if she knows the history of her gang, she

says she knows a little bit because the members have rented a

movie from the video store and watched it over and over. In

fact, as the following dialogue with Erica illustrates, these

youths have very little actual knowledge of the origin and

history of gangs in general:

Jody: Do you know how long [your gang]'s been around? Or

like the history of it, how it got started?

Erica: No, but I can find out. I heard there's a movie out

on it, how the gang originated, got formed.

Jody: You mean, like, the Folk gang?

Erica: No. Just gangs here, how they got formed.

Jody: Do you know the name of it? the movie?

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Table 7-2 *Gang Characteristics* (n=20)

You can join before you are 13	14	(70.0%)
The gang has established leaders	20	(100.0%)
There are initiation rites or rituals	20	(100.0%)
The gang has a territory it claims as its own	15	(75.0%)
The gang has regular meetings	18	(90.0%)
The gang has specific rules or codes	19	(95.0%)
It has special colors, symbols, signs, clothes	19	(95.0%)
Gang members have specific roles	14	(70.0%)
There are roles for each age group	3	(15.0%)
There are specific roles for males and females	6	(30.0%)
The gang is involved in drug sales	16	(80.0%)

characteristics present in mixed-gender gangs in Columbus, as reported in the survey interviews. All of them have established leaders and specific initiation processes. Except for the Gangster Girlz, all of the sets also have colors, symbols and signs that represent their gang. Most report that their group has regular meetings, specific rules, have some form of territoriality, and that at least some members are involved in drug sales. While the majority also report that gang members have specific roles, these typically

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and narrow age range may reflect the newness of the group, in existence less than ten years and maybe for only a few years. Some of these Compressed gangs have become territorial, but many have not. (Klein and Maxson, 1996: 21)

Young women I interviewed in Columbus described gangs in ways that are in keeping with the characteristics of Compressed gangs. They are mostly small groups, with relatively narrow age ranges, without subgrouping, and with some territoriality. In terms of size, most of the gangs described by interviewees were groups of thirty or fewer members. Six girls (30 percent)[5] described their gangs as having less than twenty members; an additional eleven girls (55 percent) were in gangs with twenty to thirty members. Only three girls (15 percent) said their gangs had 45 to fifty members, and they reported spending most of their time with a smaller clique of gang friends. These numbers are in contrast to descriptions of gangs in new gang cities like St. Louis and Milwaukee. For example, Decker and Van Winkle note that gangs in St. Louis tend to have 200 or more members, and as a result, involve subgroupings. All of the gang members he interviewed were in gangs with subgroups.

Gangs in Columbus ranged in their gender composition. The vast majority were predominantly male, but the groups were mixed-gender. Six girls (30 percent) reported that females were one-fifth or fewer of the members of their set; eight girls (40 percent) were in sets in which females were

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there may be an ethnic component to gendered gang structures
(cf. Campbell, 1984a; Harris, 1988; Moore, 1991; Quicker,
1983).

Of all the members of mixed-gender gangs I spoke with,
only Diane described her gang as having a specific gender
organization: "We're all together, but in a way we're split
just because, 'cause we're ladies and they're the males.
We're Lady Crips and they're the Crips."[6] All of the other
girls I spoke with described no gender divisions in
organization or title. While some spoke of gender
differences in some activities, particularly participation in
serious crime (see chapter eight), most clearly articulated a
belief (even when they provided contradictory evidence in
their descriptions of activities) that their gangs were
gender egalitarian groups in which males and females were
part of the same whole: they were treated the same and
engaged in the same activities (see chapter nine for an
analysis of gendered gang meanings). As Chantell notes again
and again throughout our interview, "It's the same. It's all
the same."

In keeping with Klein and Maxson's Compressed gang,
most of the groups described by girls in Columbus had
relatively narrow age ranges. Two thirds of respondents
reported that the members of their sets are within ten years
in age of one another, while only three describe a span of

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sixteen. As I mentioned in chapter six, young women typically join at young ages as a result of their association with older peers, particularly older teenage males, either in the neighborhood or in their families. Because girls' roles in the gang are less defined than males' around criminal activities, it appears there is sometimes less concern with their "qualifications" (ie. toughness, ability to fight), particularly when they are pre- or early adolescent. Angie's initiation (described in chapter six) is exemplary: she joined her set at age eleven when she started hanging out with a group in her neighborhood, and "they was like, 'oh you wanna be a gang member, you wanna be' and I was like, 'yeah! yeah! I wanna be one!'" It appears they initiated her at the time, not because they felt she would contribute to the gang, but more on a lark because she was a cute kid. Other researchers have noted that female gang members tend to be younger than males and mature out at earlier ages (Moore, 1991; Joe and Chesney-Lind, 1995). Most girls in Columbus clearly articulate a recognition that the gang is a transitional part of their lives, and typically suggest that they will discontinue their gang involvement when they get married and/or have children.[8]

Klein and Maxson report that Compressed gangs may or may not be territorial. In Columbus, there is some territoriality, such as when a particular gang includes

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There is more territoriality reported in new gang cities such as Milwaukee and St. Louis, probably a result of both the context of gang emergence in each city and greater economic motivation among gang members. Hagedorn (1988) and Decker and Van Winkle (1996) each report that gangs emerged in the context of pre-existing rival groups, typically breakdancers. A lack of these rivalries at the time of gangs' emergence in Columbus has likely resulted in their lesser territoriality. In addition, given the economic contexts of Milwaukee and St. Louis, there appears to be more organized economic crime among gangs in these cities as compared to Columbus (see chapter eight). Economic motivations also contribute to territoriality among gangs (Padilla, 1992).

LEADERSHIP

As Table 7-2 shows, all of the girls say that their gang (or set) has established leadership. Each girl reports that the set has one leader, whom they call the OG. Leadership in gang sets in Columbus is almost exclusively male. While LaShawna reports that she is the leader of her set (which has a membership that is two thirds female), all of the other girls (except Jennifer from the Gangster Girlz) report that their OG is a male. In fact, several young women clarified that only males can be leaders. As Leslie says,

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Of the girls who report having an adult leader, only
Monica is in a gang in which the majority of the members are
not adolescents. She is sixteen years old and the youngest
member of her set. The other girls are in groups that are
primarily adolescent, with one or several adult members.
This pattern is reflected in the leadership role some adult
OG's take, which is supervisory in nature. For example,
Erica is in a large Folks set with an OG who is 24 years old.
She hangs out with a small group of adolescent gang friends,
and they check in with their OG:

> He's the leader, just like when we have meetings
> he's the one that does the meetings. We have to,
> or like, I don't know, but. But, uh, like when we
> take off and run from here [Rosemont], we go and
> see him. It's like, he's, I don't know, he's like
> our probation officer. We check in with him all
> the time, so he knows how we're doin' and all that
> he's doin'. And, like, if we're doin' somethin'
> wrong, out of the gang, that we know we're not
> supposed to, he'll check us for it.

It appears that the OG's leadership is accepted
uncritically. Usually this is in part because he is an
adult, and is perceived as particularly powerful or
dangerous; in a few cases it is also because he is
originally from a more hardcore gang city such as Chicago or
Los Angeles. In terms of the former, Veronica describes her
OG as follows: "He's just crazy, but we gotta listen to 'im.
He's just the type that if you don't listen to 'im he gonna
blow your head off. He's just crazy." Likewise, Keisha
responds to the question "what is it about him that makes

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youth because he was from a hardcore gang city. Cathy explains:

> I mean he just came down here, and like the Bloods
> down here, he started hangin' out with people and
> it was like, he knew so much about it and talked
> to them so much, it was like everybody started
> lookin' up to him. And then when people wanted to
> get initiated they just went to him.

Sonita and Leslie, who are both members of Folks sets, each report that their OG is originally from Chicago. The following dialogue with Leslie is illustrative:

Leslie: Our gang was started up in Chicago. And, that's it.
Two, two, the guy, our leader had came back down from
Chicago and started his set up north. And, then, it's
just grown from there.

Jody: Like, what, the north end of Columbus?

Leslie: Yeah. The north, like, right off of High Street.

Jody: Ok. And so, the leader that you are referring to,
would he be the leader of just of your set, or other
sets?

Leslie: Yeah. He's just a leader of our set. The Governor
is just our, the Governor is the leader of the set.
Then, you have, like, the highest one, the highest one
that we have, he doesn't live in Ohio. He lives in
Chicago. And, he's the leader, like, of all sets.

Jody: And, does anybody have any contact with him?

Leslie: The leader of, that, like, of our set, has contact
with him. But, we really don't know who it is. We

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real) with gang members in their old cities. Of gangs in emergent cities such as Milwaukee, Hagedorn summarizes that these groups "tend to follow big-city gang traditions, borrow ideas about big-city gang structure, and respond favorably to the image of big city gangs" (Hagedorn, 1988: 78), though "[t]he use of big-city names and symbols by local gangs indicates a process of cultural diffusion, rather than structural ties." This is the case in Columbus as well.

STATUS AMONG FEMALE MEMBERS

Given that nearly all of the girls are in gangs with male leaders, a corollary question is whether and how young women are able to achieve high status within the gang. As noted above, several girls mention that there is at least one high ranking female in their set, and most could describe those factors most likely to provide young women with status in the gang. Girls gain influence and status within their gangs in two ways: via their connections to influential males, and/or by being particularly hard and true to the set.

Six girls specifically note that high status females in the gang attain that status, at least in part, by their connections to high status males. Typically this is because they are either related to the OG or another high ranking male, or they are the girlfriend of the OG. Veronica says in her gang there's "kind of like the leader for the girls" who

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member: tough, willing to fight, and true (see chapter six).

Eight girls specifically note that females receive status in

the gang when they exhibit these types of characteristics.

Heather describes the most influential female member as "the

hardest girl, the one that don't take no crap, will stand up

to anybody." Likewise, Traci says she's a "girl who's been

in for a long time, [and] hasn't gotten beaten up or run from

Bloods." Diane gives the most thorough description of the

high status females in her set:

> I think I have a influence in the set because
> my mind is so much on makin' money. See, I don't
> care about if you're a Blood or if you're a Crip.
> I mean, I know I'm a Crip. I'm over any Blood
> anyways. You respect me. You either bounce or
> you get bounced. You respect me or you gonna get
> messed up. That's how I see it. But my mind goes
> past that. My mind's all about money. Because I
> love money. I mean, I'm in here [detention] for
> money. I robbed a . . . store for [a large amount
> of money]. I love money. And people look up to
> me because I'm always, I've always got a way.
> "Oh, I found this lick. We're gonna do this."
> "This time we'll do this." People look like,
> Diane, you're only 15. Look at all this. I mean,
> my name is in the book of the Crips for doin' so
> much dirt. So I think, so I know people look up
> to me.
>
> People look up to Janeen just 'cause she's so
> crazy. People just look up to her 'cause she
> don't care about nothin'. She don't even care
> about makin' money. Her, her thing is, "oh, you're
> a Slob? You're a Slob? You talkin' to me? You
> talkin' shit to me?" Pow, pow! And that's it.
> That's it. That's it. She don't care. But this,
> I'd say females, we don't even talk nothin'. When
> it comes down to fightin' or whatever, no more of
> that talk, it completely shuts up. It's all about
> the fists. It's all about doin' what you gotta
> do. We all learn that. We learn that from her.
> 'Cause that's how she was, see? I used to be, I
> used to be, I used to always run at the mouth.
> When I was gettin' ready to fight I'd say, "Aw,

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something goes down that they're there.

Jody: What do you mean by punk?

Erica: Well, they're not a scaredy cat. 'Cause, when you, when you join something like that, you might as well expect that there's gonna be fights. I mean, just a lot of stuff. And, if you're a punk, or if you're scared of stuff like that, then don't join.

Jody: Ok. So how do you know ahead of time?

Erica: Um. Actually, you can tell. Just like, the people, the Folks I hung around with before I got put in I fought all the time when I was with them. I mean, even when I wasn't in it, I fought all the time. I never backed down from anybody. I didn't care, either. So, they knew I wasn't gonna, you can mostly just tell. If you hang around with them before you're put in and they test you before you're put in, with things to see if you'll do it. And that was mostly what was with mine. I fought all the time when I was with them.

One measure of toughness is the ability of the potential member to get through the initiation, which typically involves either taking a set number of "blows" to the head and/or chest, or involves being beaten in by some of the gang members (see chapter eight). Heather describes the initiation as an important event for determining whether someone is "gang material":

When you get beat in if you don't fight back and

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claimin', you tell 'em. Don't say "nothin'."

Jody: Even if it means getting beat up or something?

Cathy: Mmhmm.

In some cases, as Erica noted above, "they test you before you're put in" for qualities such as toughness, willingness to commit crime and loyalty. In the following dialogue, Lisa describes how her brother chooses to let someone join their set:

Jody: What do you look for in somebody that, you know, that you would let them in the gang?

Lisa: It's just, you know, if you, if you like, my brother, to choose someone to get into the gang, he'll go and he'll like um, have 'em go here and then he'll steal somethin' knowin' he'll get caught, he's gonna have the other person steal it or somethin' like that. He's gonna have 'em steal it and he's gonna be with 'em and he's gonna see if that boy would tell that my brother told him to steal this. And then that, or he'll have him go in a mall and steal a pair of shoes and run out the door or whatever. Or have 'em do really anything almost just to, he'll just test 'em. Like, um, or if they seen somebody, you know, comin' up wearin' the wrong color, he'll see if that boy's gonna help 'im beat them boys up. You know what I'm saying? He'll do pretty much like that.

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These ranking systems are part of gang culture and structure diffused from chronic to emerging gang cities that I discussed above. In terms of structure, they raise two issues: first, do the ranks involve role specialization; and second, what are the requirements for moving up the ranks? Almost uniformly, girls note that there are no special roles assigned to individuals according to their rank. Sonita says, "there ain't really no roles, there ain't no parts either, just everybody do everything." Likewise Angie says, "we all do the same thing," and Brandi says there are "not really different roles." Instead, rank comes from primarily from length of time in the gang (and the amount of knowledge that results) and from engaging in criminal endeavors, including economic crimes and fights with rivals. Monica says in her set, ranks are determined "just [by] the length of time you been in there." And Keisha says, "the longer you're in it, the higher you go." Most girls describe criminal acts (doing dirt) as the way to raise your rank. Lisa says you can raise your rank by "beatin' up somebody or somethin', or like fightin' a rival gang. Somethin' like that," and Chantell mentions car-jacking. Likewise, the following dialogue with Sonita highlights the same behaviors:

Sonita: It's like, steps you gotta do. First become a foot
        soldier, and that's just gettin' in, learnin' about it,
        then you become a G and that's when you know almost

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This chapter has described some of the internal dynamics and structures of mixed-gender gangs in Columbus, painting part of the picture of the nature of gangs in the city. In chapter eight, I will continue with this discussion by describing many of the activities of Columbus gangs, including initiation rituals, rules and meetings, everyday activities, interaction with rival groups, and involvement in criminal endeavors.

[11] LaShawna has spent most of her adolescence moving around placement facilities. I can't say with certainty, but my sense is that her set is one that she has created while in placement, with much of the membership made up of girls whom she initiates while being held at the facility. She remains affiliated with the set she joined under in Columbus, but her own set appears to have rather loose boundaries. She even had Rachel, a non-gang member who is "tight" with LaShawna, help her initiate several girls into her set. One of the new initiates Rachel helped put into LaShawna's set had never actually fought before. Rachel says, "she's never been in a fight before but how she got jumped in. That was her first fight ever."

[12] Sonita and Leslie are both from Folks sets, and may in fact be in the same set; thus the OG from Chicago they each describe may be the same young man.

[13] While girls articulate that these qualities are important, it should be noted that there is evidence in many girls' comments that sometimes the qualifications are simply the desire to be a member. Angie's example of being allowed to join at age eleven without having been involved and Rachel's description of her friend who was initiated into LaShawna's set (see note eight) are two examples of this. Likewise, Lisa also notes that her brother's girlfriend, who is a member of her set, has never been in a fight before. This "lack" of qualifications may be unique to girls. At least one girl (Leslie) notes that "guys are more important to the gang than girls are" because they are involved in more crime, therefore it's harder for them to both join and get out of the gang, "'cause, I mean, you can always, you can always find a girl that'll be willing and easier to join the gang.

[14] False flagging is when an individual claims to be a gang member when are not. This is not the same as affiliating with or "claiming" a set, which is a practice gang members accept. False flagging is looked down upon because it means the individual has lied about participating in an initiation.

[15] The Gangster Girlz does not have ranks. There is an OG, who founded the gang, and otherwise all of the members engage in the same activities. Like the mixed-gender gangs, the qualities Jennifer reports they expect of members include being true and willing to fight.

[16] Only Diane describes a more complicated series of ranks that includes nine for the females and ten for the males. She is also the only girl to suggest that each rank has a

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VIII. GANG ACTIVITIES, RIVALRIES AND CRIME

Gang members in Columbus engage in a number of activities, reflective of the fact that they are part of a group that is adolescent in makeup, has a group identity, and is oriented around both inter-group rivalries and crime. In this chapter, I will discuss the everyday activities of gang members, highlighting the place of initiation rituals, inter-gang rivalries, delinquency, and non-criminal behaviors, in order to illustrate the range of activities that gangs and gang members in Columbus engage in. I will make note of the significance of gender in these activities where it emerges as a theme.

INITIATIONS

First and foremost, gangs are groups of adolescents who are seeking recognition, acceptance and companionship among their peers. Initiation into the gang is an important rite of passage for gang members, as they move from affiliation with their group to full membership and participation. The initiate's willingness to subject herself to an assault at the hands of their initiators signals her induction into the group, which promises her love, respect, and acceptance. As

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members for a set period of time (one or several minutes).

Heather describes being beaten in by several male members of her set:

> There's like a bunch of people around and then,
> see, one comes in and you start fighting with that
> one then you fight with that one for about two
> minutes and then another one comes in and you
> fight 'em both for a while and then they just
> gradually pull a bunch of 'em in and then all the
> sudden you're gettin' your butt beat (laugh). . . .
> I cried a little bit, but I didn't show it 'cause
> I was cussin' at 'em. I was mad at 'em. I was
> like, "I can't believe you guys beat me up. I
> hate you guys." (laugh) They's like, "well you
> wanted to be in the gang." I was like, "you're
> not supposed to be hittin' me that hard." (laugh)
> 'Cause I was beat up real bad. I had a black eye
> and some bruises all over me, and these red marks
> around, kick red marks all over my head and stuff.
> I was so mad. I was crying. I was like, "I hate
> all you guys." They was like, "you want to fight
> again?" I was like, "yeah, what's up." I was
> mad.

Tamika was also jumped in by male gang members, but she reports that the males didn't really fight hard: "they was just like, they was taggin' me. It hurted, but you know, it really didn't hurt." Diane was jumped in by three girls:

> I got beat in for sixty seconds and it just, it
> . . . was out in a field behind this little
> backyard. It was like, "You ready, you ready?" I
> was like, "Yeah, I'm ready." I was like, "Do I
> get to fight back?" They was like, "Do what you
> gotta do." I don't wanna get beat down
> regardless. So I just, so what happened was they
> just started throwin' their punches. And I didn't
> cry at all. I'm surprised I didn't cry but after
> sixty seconds I was down on the ground, just like,
> "ooh, ooh." And then when I got up they was like,
> "Oh, give me some love. Give me some love." And
> then they all gave me a hug and then I got down on
> my right knee and they, they put my flag over my
> right shoulder and they blessed me, with the flag,
> they blessed me into their set. Blessing means

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males have to get jumped in and like that. You
know, you seen 'em on TV. And they, they just
figure, well, if you a ‚irl gang member then you
got sexed in. And I, I really didn't. I wasn't
even down for nothin' like that.

None of the young women report having been sexed into
their gangs, and they articulate strong feelings about what
it means to be sexed in, describing girls who were sexed in
as 'other' than themselves. All of them say it is possible
to get sexed into gangs, and most say this is an option even
within their own set (typically it involves having sex with
either all or most male members of the set), however, I was
told consistently that girls who are sexed into their gangs
are not respected. This is both because they are perceived
as sexually promiscuous and because they were not strong
enough to go through a physical initiation (these themes will
be explored in greater detail in chapter nine).

An interesting contrast to the initiations described
here is provided by Hagedorn (1988), who notes that the
majority of the gang members he interviewed described
informal entree into their gangs, rather than structured
initiations like those described by young women in Columbus.
However, Decker and Van Winkle's gangs in St. Louis report
the same types of initiation rites described in Columbus,
including being beaten in, taking blows, committing a crime,
and for females, being sexed in (1996: 69-72). Like the
young women in Columbus, none of the females they interviewed

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Nikkie describes a similar scenario:

> We just, it's just like we got a, our OG, he got a
> house and his girlfriend live with him, and we all
> be over there playin' video games and stuff. We
> just be havin' fun. And sometimes we go to the
> movies, sometimes we steal cars, um, we don't do
> nothin' else really.

As does Monica:

> Play cards, smoke bud,[4] play dominos, play video
> games. That's basically all we do is play. It's
> a, you would be surprised. This is a bunch of big
> kids. It's a bunch of big old kids in my set.
> They will fight over a Nintendo game in a minute.
> They, I mean, they will seriously go out into the
> front yard and go to blows over a Nintendo game.
> They just big ol' kids. We just have fun playin'
> around and stuff like that but when it come time
> to get down to business, you gotta get down to
> business.

For Monica and Diane, getting "down to business" means
involvement in planned criminal activities such as drug sales
in Monica's case, and drug sales and property crimes in
Diane's case. Most of the young women report much less
organized involvement in crime though. For them, it tends to
be sporadic, unplanned, and happened upon rather than
specifically intended. There is some fighting involved in
everyday activities, particularly when gang members walk
around the neighborhood, but it isn't necessarily rival gang
members they are fighting. Erica says she and her friends
walk around the neighborhood "pick[ing] on people," and
"beating people up." She explains: "if somebody's bored and
they have nothin' to do, then they'll start a fight."

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Everybody brings bud. The forties. Sit there and
get fucked up, talk about what we're gonna do,
what we plan on doin' for the next week, how we're
gonna make money, who's tryin' to trip, who, who
is after us, who we're after and it's just set up.

Monica says the members of her set see one another

often enough that they only have meetings on special

occasions, when "you all gotta sit down and discuss something

for real like discuss puttin' somebody else down or something

like that." When something like that comes up, they usually

meet at "somebody's house, closest house to where you at or

whatever." Almost all of the girls report seeing one another

on a daily or near daily basis. Twelve report getting

together with members of their gang every day, four say they

see one another three or four times a week, and two get

together with members one or two times a week.[5]

Ten young women (Angie, Veronica, Lisa, Leslie, Keisha,

Traci, Tamika, Kim, LaShawna and Stephanie) have a boyfriend

who is in their set, though only Stephanie describes her

boyfriend as a primary reason she joined. In terms of

dating, most girls downplay this as a significant element of

their gang interactions. They resist talking about dating,

again most likely a form of resistance to being categorized

as sexual objects within the gang (see chapter nine for

further discussion of this issue). In fact five girls

(Heather, Erica, Cathy, Nikkie and Chantell) say that members

of their set do not go out with one another. Heather says

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and play 'em. They'll like, they'll hit you on your head

like five times." Keisha had a boyfriend in the gang whom

another female gang member had sex with. She describes the

nature of her relationship with the girl now:

> We ain't cool no more. For the simple fact she
> did it to my boyfriend, and, know what I'm sayin'?
> We still, we in the gang, I got love for her but,
> as far as verbally talkin' to her, no. We have
> nothin' to say to each other.

Because they are members of the same set, Keisha has to

maintain some civility toward the young woman who slept with

her boyfriend. One of the rules the majority of girls

describe is that they are required to get along with one

another. LaShawna says "you're not supposed to fight one

another," but it happens:

> Sometimes they beef and everything and then they
> just squash it. Like forget about it, or they
> make up. Whatever, show each other love.
> Regardless, if they get into a scrap though, and
> one of us is there that's over them, we make 'em
> show 'em love anyway. Just tell 'em to squash it
> and if they don't they get a violation.

Additional rules mentioned by young women include the

following: they are supposed to attend scheduled meetings,

and may get a violation for missing them; they are not

allowed to date members of rival gangs; they are supposed to

be true to the gang, and not back down when confronted by

rivals; gang business and knowledge is supposed to be kept

within the gang; and there are rules against using crack

cocaine, even though some members sell it. In fact, most

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INTER-GANG RIVALRIES

Crips and Folks are aligned with one another in
Columbus, typically referring to one another as "cousins."
Thus, both consider Bloods their rivals. Vice Lords are also
rivals of Folks, but they are not a visible presence in
Columbus. Cultural influences shaping Milwaukee gangs are
clearly those of Chicago, with most groups aligned with
either the People or Folks nations; in St. Louis, the
predominant cultural influence is Los Angeles style Crips and
Bloods. Columbus gangs and gang rivalries reflect an
interesting mix of influence from both Chicago and Los
Angeles. As noted in chapter seven, a number of young women
draw the connection between their gangs and those in Chicago
(mostly but not exclusively members of Folks sets), typically
because they know or know of someone from Chicago who is
gang-involved in Columbus. Except for Diane's OG K-Gun,
information about Crips and Bloods appears to be gained more
from media imagery of Los Angeles gangs, rather than contact
with individuals with actual knowledge or experience with
gangs in the city.

One element of gang life involves spending time and
energy challenging and fighting with rival gangs; this
message is a central theme of the cultural imagery of gangs
that youths adopt.[7] The young women I interviewed describe
gang confrontations as likely to occur in places such as the

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are not particularly violent. This distinguishes Columbus from chronic gang cities, as well as other emergent gang cities such as Milwaukee and St. Louis, where gang violence is more prevalent (Decker and Van Winkle, 1996; Hagedorn, 1988; Klein, 1995). In the example described above, Erica and her friends did not pull out guns and shoot at the Bloods they saw, neither did they park the van, jump out and start an altercation. Instead they drove by, and probably engaged in bravado among themselves about what would have happened to those Bloods if they had been walking down the street instead of "stuck" in their van.

Fights in Columbus are usually the result of symbolic confrontations, rather than ongoing "warfare" and retaliations. These motives, and specifically the lack of ongoing retaliatory fighting, also tend to distinguish Columbus gangs from those in different types of gang cities. Gang members announce their gang identity through the use of symbolism--most often colors, flags and hand signs. Traci says, "it seems like everything I do be blue. When I get my hair done I get blue stuff in it and everything." LaShawna explains, "I don't like the color dred [red]. I just wear black all the time." And Tamika says:

> Like we'll go to the mall and I'll have on my blue
> khakis outfit, my blue rag, you know, my pager and
> everything and everybody be like, "Dag!" 'Cause
> my pager is blue. Everybody be like, "Dag!" My
> shoes is blue. My outfit is blue. They be like,
> "Dag, dag, she blued out!"

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face, but they will fight 'em."

This is not to suggest that serious gang violence (including gang-related homicides) does not occur in Columbus, but to show that it is not part of most of the young women's mindset. A few of the girls I spoke with had been involved in serious assaults on rival gang members, and one admitted to having killed a rival gang member in Columbus; but they were by far the exception. This is probably gender-related, but it is also related to the nature of gangs in Columbus: for the most part they have not evolved into extremely violent groups.

In terms of gender, a number of girls point out that they feel the males tend to be more hardcore when it comes to gang rivalries, are more likely to resort to violence and exclude girls from participating (see below), and to leave confrontations with rival female gang members to the females in their own gang. Diane says that male gang members "don't wanna go waste their time hittin' on some little girls. They're gonna go get their little cats to go get 'em." And Lisa remarks:

> Girls don't face much violence as [guys]. They
> see a girl, they say "we'll just smack her and
> send her on." They see a guy. 'Cause guys are
> like a lot more into it than girls are. I've
> noticed that. And they like, well, "we'll shoot
> him."

The dynamics of gender within gang rivalries can work both ways, however. While girls may be shielded from some

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patterns of behavior: "I think it's dumb they have to use weapons and everything. I like to fist fight. But, I always gotta carry somethin' because if somebody pulls somethin' out on me, I'm gonna be ready." So while Columbus gang rivalries have not been particularly violent in the past, there are some early warning signs that gang violence may escalate.

CRIMINAL INVOLVEMENT

Table 8-1 shows the results of survey responses regarding the criminal involvement of gang members and female members in particular. Girls were first asked whether members of their gang engaged in a number of illegal activities, then were asked specifically whether female members engaged in these activities.[8] Girls report slightly more male than female involvement in most crimes, though they report that girls are more likely to steal things worth less than fifty dollars. The two crimes with the largest reported difference between males and females are stealing things worth more than fifty dollars and robbing people. As Traci noted, "girls don't rob people like the guys do. They rob every day, they steal cars, they do stuff like that. Only thing girls do really mostly is smoke bud." In all, nine young women (45 percent) gave identical responses for the categories "members" and "female members." As noted in chapter seven, many young women are firm on the point that

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There are two points I hope to make regarding gang

members' criminal activities. First is that much of their

crime is not organized or planned, but tends to be happened

upon as they hang around the neighborhood, bored, looking for

something to do. I have noted this above in the discussion

of gang rivalries, and it is equally true of other crimes.

Veronica's comments are illustrative:

> When I was leavin' outta here [running from
> Rosemont] to go over to my cousin's house all the
> time and everyday my OG would be over there. And,
> it just seemed like we always had been, it just
> seemed like every day that I was over there we'd
> get in a fight with somebody or somethin'. So.
> Somebody end up gettin' stabbed or cut or
> somethin' or some of the boys be out startin'
> trouble with people. Sit there and robbin' people
> for no, just to be doin' it, just doin' little
> stupid stuff. That's, they have jacked the Pizza
> man. They had stolen the car. They took a cab
> over to my cousin's house and didn't pay for it.
> Just let somebody else pay for it. I don't know
> who paid for it. And then, some of the girls,
> like, some of the girls that ain't in, but they
> just hang around us, they, uh, they stole the car.
> And one of 'em went to jail for it. It was just
> bein' stupid. One of them jacked this girl for a
> dollar. I was like, "y'all are so stupid."

This tends to be the nature of gang crime in general,

though it is also situational to a city like Columbus.

Research suggests that much gang crime tends to be of this

happened-upon variety (Klein, 1995). The difference

distinguishing a city like Columbus, which is both a new gang

city and one in which gangs have thus far remained primarily

a loosely structured adolescent phenomenon, is that those

forms of serious crime often associated with the image of

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(robbing people). However, when I asked what males do when female members aren't around, eight mentioned involvement in crime, including several mentions of drug sales and drive-by's. Comments in the in-depth interviews provide further support that young women tend to be excluded from these types of crimes. LaShawna explains, "we don't really let the females [sell drugs] unless they really wanna and they know how to do it and not to get caught and everything." Keisha says, "I'm the only girl that's in it that is sellin'." Monica is one of two young women in her gang that sells drugs, and she says this is because the other young women do not want to. "They're like, 'No, I ain't gonna do it.' Like, 'I'm scared I'm gonna get caught.'" Erica elaborates:

> It's mostly the guys that does all the selling and the, uh, buying. And, um, with us, as far as females when it goes to selling, we're always supposed to have a male with us. Always. Or, at least two or three males with us all the time. That way, we can't robbed or anything. Or, if somethin' was to go down, we would always have somebody there with us, instead of by ourselves.

Young women also report that they are usually excluded from drive-by's when they occur. The following dialogue with Veronica is illustrative:

Veronica: They [male members] went to go do a drive-by on, um, all of them [people they had fought with]. They wouldn't let us [females] go. But, we wanted to go, but they wouldn't let us.

Jody: What'd they say?

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Other times, girls are excluded because they are perceived as not as capable—a circumstance that young women find frustrating. Chantell says "they [rival gang members] think that you're more of a punk, or that there's a hole in you . . . that they can go right through you. That you just another punk." The following dialogue with Brandi illustrates this pattern within the gang:

Jody: Is there anything about the gang you dislike?

Brandi: Not really. Sometimes I dislike that the boys, sometimes, always gotta take charge and they think, sometimes, that the girls don't know how to take charge 'cause we're like girls, we're females and, like that.

Jody: Can you describe something like that? Like, what happens?

Brandi: Like, a guy'll say, like, they're going to have, like, a shoot-out, sometimes they'll say, the guy'll, I'll be, the girl'll be like sayin' "well, this is what we'll do" then a guy will take charge, "well, you're a girl, you don't know nothin' about that," then, like, we'll get really offended and stuff. But, he's just playin', he says he's just playin' around or somethin'.

Jody: And so, do you ever get to take charge, do you fight to--

Brandi: No, not really. We just let him go ahead and, 'cause he's been in longer, he knows more about it and

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much as the boys would do. I wouldn't. I wouldn't
go out there and kill somebody just 'cause they
wearin' that color. I wouldn't do that. I might
beat 'em up or get me, I might get beat up. But I
would never go out to that certain extent to kill
'em.

This evidence that female gang members tend to be less

involved in serious delinquency than their male counterparts

mirrors the findings of other studies examining gang member

crime patterns (Fagan, 1990; Bjerregaard and Smith, 1992),

as does the data suggesting that young women are excluded by

males from participation in certain types of crime (Bowker et

al., 1980).

This chapter and the last have presented evidence which

suggests that Columbus gangs have not evolved into organized,

violent groups, but very much remain groups of adolescents

looking for trouble, something to do, friendship, belonging,

status and identity. Though Columbus gangs appear to share

many similarities with those described in other emergent gang

cities, the city's socioeconomic character has thus far

provided a buffer that has kept Columbus gangs from showing

some of the more problematic characteristics of gangs in

other cities, such as the failure of older members to mature

out of their gang and criminal involvement, lethal gang

rivalries, and serious economic crime. Young women's roles

in these groups appear to be somewhat contradictory, with the

belief in equality posited while numerous descriptions of

gendered structural inequalities emerge.

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IX. GENDER DYNAMICS IN COLUMBUS GANGS

Chapters seven and eight have provided evidence of the structures and activities of mixed-gender gangs in Columbus, and in doing so, have shed light on the contradictory gender dynamics within these groups. On the one hand is a predominant 'myth system' of gender equality; on the other hand, a very distinct gender hierarchy within the gang, which includes male leadership, the sexual exploitation of some young women, and girls' exclusion from serious gang crime (specifically those types of crime that build status within the group). In this chapter, my goal is to explore how and why these contradictions operate seemingly unnoticed by most of the young women. Specifically, how is it that they can participate in a group that they themselves perceive as justly hierarchical by gender, and yet describe it as one in which young women and men are equals?

To understand the gender dynamics in gangs, it is first necessary to view gangs within the larger gendered contexts of these young women's lives. Gangs are not unique in their gender inequality and sexual exploitation of young women. Instead, they are part of larger social worlds in which these patterns operate. Two social worlds in particular are of

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(Thorne, 1993: 135). Young women find themselves in a contradictory position. Increasingly, they receive status from their peers as a result of their association with and attractiveness to males. At the same time, they are denigrated for their sexual activity, and threatened with the labels "slut" and "ho" (Eder, 1995; Lees, 1993).

Added to these two powerful social worlds are the individual experiences of young women in gangs: many have been sexually abused, have witnessed violence against other women in their lives including adults in their households, and a number have crack-addicted mothers whom they likely know of or have witnessed the degradation of (see chapters five and six). The worlds around them are not particularly safe spaces to negotiate adolescence and identity for these young women. Though the gang reproduces some of these same structures of gender inequality, it is also a space in which there is at least the spoken value of gender equality (though as I will discuss, it is of a very particular sort).

In this chapter, I will further explore the contradictions that emerge in my conversations with young women in gangs. I will start by examining the stated value of gender equality, then discuss the ways in which young women's own values and attitudes towards other females undermine the notion of equality, and finally the ways in which the activities of gang members are based on and

the same response. When I ask if there are differences in the activities of males and females, she says "they basically do the same thing." I ask about member qualifications and she responds, "it's basically the same for both sexes." And of the benefits of gang membership, "it's basically the same for both of 'em." Chantell actually gets frustrated by my line of questioning and repeatedly cuts me off in response:

Jody: You said before that it was about half girls and half guys? Can you tell me more about that? Like you said you don't think there are any differences in terms of what--

Chantell: There isn't.

Jody: Ok, can you tell me more--

Chantell: Like what? There isn't, there isn't, like, there's nothing, boy, girl, white, black, Mexican, Chinese.

Jody: Everybody does the same thing.

Chantell: Yeah.

Erica even makes specific reference to the women's movement in response to a question I ask about whether young women in gangs are perceived differently than males:

> I mean, a lot of people I know look up to it.
> They call it, what, the, the women's rights civil
> group, or somethin' like that, they call it. It's
> funny . . . . They say that, "it's about time you
> got some women involved around here!" (laughs)
> It's funny though, they say that.

One means of describing the reasons for this equality

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qualities does not apply only to girls who aren't in gangs, but to other female gang members as well. This provides them with a justification for male dominance within the gang in terms of leadership and activities, while still allowing them to believe in their individual equal treatment.

CONTRADICTORY ATTITUDES TOWARD FEMALES

Listening to the stories of young women in gangs, it becomes apparent they do not believe all girls are deserving of "equal" treatment and respect by males (and male gang members). In fact, there is a great deal of misogyny underlying the ways in which they talk about other girls. Ironically, this talk involves their descriptions, not just of non-gang girls, but of other girls in gangs. Often they compare the relative strengths of the qualities of male gang members with the perceived weaknesses of female gang members. This undermines their claims of gender equality, but also goes one step further--their descriptions reveal their own support of the gangs' gender hierarchies.

The Devaluation of Girls

A general theme running through many interviews was that these young women devalue other girls in general, instead preferring the company of males. Brandi says, "I don't get along with girls that much." Likewise, Veronica notes, "I never really hang around a whole bunch of girls, I

important to their gangs and less deserving of leadership.

The Sexual Denigration of Girls

The most vivid description of female gang members' participation in the sexual denigration of young women comes from their discussions of girls who are 'sexed in' gangs by having sexual intercourse with multiple male members. As noted in chapter eight, none of the young women I spoke with said they had been sexed into their gangs, though as Erica comments, "if they have, they ain't sayin' nothin'." The young women I spoke with construct gang identities for themselves as tough and true members, and depict girls who were sexed in as easy, nasty and "ho's." Monica says, "if she got sexed in, she would be a ho. Everybody, all of 'em would call her a ho." According to Keisha:

> If you get sexed in, you have no respect. That
> means you gotta go ho'in' for 'em, when they say
> you give 'em the pussy you gotta give it to 'em.
> If you don't you gonna get your ass beat. I ain't
> down for that.

One girl in her set was sexed in and Keisha says the girl "just do everything they tell her to do, like a dummy." Keisha places blame for the situation squarely on the young woman, and not on the young men who exploit her: "But she brought that on herself, by bein' the fact, bein' sexed in." Two girls were sexed into Nikkie's set whom she reports eventually quit hanging around with the set because they were harassed about it so much:

> Everybody told 'em, too. They was like, "why

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Veronica: Mmhmm. Yep. They used to do it all the time.
All the time. I used to think it was funny. If girls
wanna be dumb and fall for it, let 'em. They used to
just think they was in. Used to always just, just, try
to come hang around us.

Jody: And then what would happen?

Veronica: I mean when all the, once all the boys done, you
know, rammed up in 'em, when they through with 'em,
they just find them with another girl and them girls be
gettin' mad. 'Cause, if, if, a girl thinkin' they get
sexed in, they gotta do whatever, whatever the boys
tell 'em to do when they want 'em to do it, right then
and there, in front of whoever. And, I think, that's
just sick. That's nasty, that's dumb.

Part of the reason girls are disrespected for being
sexed in is because they are perceived to have chosen what
Heather describes as "the easy way in." Tamika elaborates:

> That don't make you no woman . . . to let four or
> five niggers run train on you just to get put into
> the gang. To me, it makes you a woman if you gonna
> be bold enough to let someone hit you in your head
> or in your chest six times.

Likewise, Diane says girls get sexed in "because
they're weak. 'Cause they're too, they're too weak to take a
beat down." Girls are not sexed into her set because they do
not bring qualities with them that are important to the gang:
"The girls in my set is true. And they, they've all taken

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her like, "Ooh, man, she a ho, man." But now we look at her like she just our kickin' it partner. You know, however she got in that's her business.

All of these discussions illustrate, by way of contrasting with the 'other,' those characteristics female gang members value in one another. What is noteworthy is that these young women are very disrespectful of girls who are sexually promiscuous, and girls who are sexually victimized or taken advantage of. They are extremely judgmental of other young women, but do not hold young men accountable for the parts they play in these scenarios. Veronica says it doesn't matter if young men are sexually promiscuous, "as long as they hardcore."

Creating this rigid dichotomy between themselves and girls who are sexed into the gang, they can maintain their desired identity within the group, at least in their own eyes. They can believe that the young men in their gang treat and discuss 'other' young women in sexually derogatory ways, young women who deserve it because they are "weak" and "nasty." This distinction allows the young women I interviewed to believe that they are, as Leslie says, "one of the niggers," or "one of the guys." This is a necessary belief in order for the gang to remain a meaningful place for identity, status and positive recognition.

Jody: Ok. And why would you laugh?

LaShawna: 'Cause, what they gonna do? They can't do nothin' about it, nothin' about nothin'. They're probably could be, though, they probably could be hard or whatever. But they wouldn't have no props. They wouldn't get no props.

Jody: What's props?

LaShawna: Like, you know, "yeah, I heard they be doin' all this stuff, man." You just get your props, you know, like "yeah, they bad." "You gotta watch out for them," or somethin' like that. Naw, it's not like that.

Jody: Ok. So they wouldn't get any kind of respect?

LaShawna: Naw.

There is at least a moment where she is torn, and admits that they could be "hard," but her first reaction, like Veronica's, is to laugh, and part of the reason both find the notion ridiculous is because they recognize that without males, the group would not be respected. The true irony here is that if Jennifer's description of her all-female gang, the Gangster Girlz, is any indication, all-female groups are capable of being very hardcore, involved in serious economic crime.[2]

LaShawna's comment that girls "need somebody to protect 'em" is a theme in many interviews. No matter how much they speak of the gang as a place of gender equality, most young

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male and she explains:

> It's just, it's just like, how could I put it?
> Like in a family. Like in a regular family there
> might be the dad and four brothers, and the mom
> and three sisters. And the dad and the four
> brothers, you know, they're guys. They wanna go
> out and do guy stuff and the girls are gonna go
> out and do girl stuff. But when mom says do
> somethin', but dad's over mom and dad says no, you
> do this, then it all go back, then it all goes
> back to dad, you see?

What these young women do not see is that with male

leadership and a tendency to over-value the contributions of

young men and under-value the contributions of young women,

the chance for them to truly be treated as "equals" is slim.

Jennifer makes this point, in distinguishing between the

leader of the Gangster Girlz and the male leaders of mixed-

gender sets:

> They're, it's like when they're in control they
> know it. So they're gonna take advantage of it.
> They like tell stupid things. Like, I know, for
> example, about a part of the Crip gang, the OG got
> mad at one of the members and um made her have sex
> with like 5 different guys, just 'cause he was mad
> at her about something, somethin' petty. Like
> with our OG, she's not like that.

Jennifer's discussion shows none of the benevolent "father

figure" Diane describes. She is not in a mixed-gender gang

herself, so her comments are coming from an outsider looking

in. Nonetheless, she has a number of friends in mixed-gender

gangs that she hangs out with, providing her with some

exposure to them. She comments again later in the interview:

> Most of the girls that I've seen in different
> gangs, they have no respect for themselves.
> They're, they're too easily taken advantage of

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specifically to avoid these types of problems.   As a

necessary means of differentiating themselves from 'other'

girls and maintaining their place in the gang as equals, most

young women try to downplay this aspect of male gang members'

behavior toward them. To look too critically at this

behavior would destroy their tenuous belief in equality. Two

young women though, because of their close connection to one

or more males in the gang, are able to directly observe this

aspect of their gangs. As noted above, Leslie is highly

critical of male gang members' disrespect of females. The

following dialogue reveals the nature of her concerns. She

earlier made a comment that "the girls are mainly used for

sex" and I ask her to elaborate:

Leslie: The talk I was hearin', 'cause they would talk

about, like, 'cause whenever I was with the males I

would be, my boyfriend would be right there. I was

never around the males by myself. So, and they didn't

refer to me like they referred to them [other girls]

because I, 'cause I had a boyfriend that was in there

[the gang]. They referred to the girls that didn't.

They talked, "Yeah, I'm gonna get her," and all this.

"Yeah, uh huh, we need to take her out," and all this

'n stuff. And, I thought that was very disrespectful

. . . . I mean, 'cause, they, gangs, I mean, our leader

had respect for us. But, the guys that were in the gang

Jody: So, you kinda had the inside--

Leslie: Right.

Jody: Because of your boyfriend.

Leslie: If I didn't have him, I'd a been just like one of them.

Jody: And, now, were you friends with the other girls?

Leslie: Oh, I was friends. I would tell 'em, I'd be like, "y'all are stupid. Y'all just need to find one and just be with that one instead of doin' it to every, anything and everybody." And, they would, "oh, girl, they just jokin' around. We just be doin' it," they call it "the low-key" so don't nobody know about it. But, when they say "low-key" or whatever, when they're actually the girls aren't around and the guys are sittin' there talkin'. They're not low-key no more 'cause the guys are braggin', "well yeah, she did this to me," and all this. I mean, it's just stupid.

Jody: So, the girls thought that the guys were being quiet but they really weren't.

Leslie: Right. They was really tellin' everybody and anything about what they did. And, even if they wanted to they added a couple little pieces that didn't happen.

Jody: And, then, how would the guys be when the girls were around?

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However, later she reveals:

> I mean the guys, they have their little comments
> about 'em [girls in the gang] because, I hear more
> because my brothers are all up there with the guys
> and everything and I hear more just sittin'
> around, just listenin'. And they'll have their
> little jokes about "Well, ha I had her," and then
> and everybody else will jump in and say, "Well, I
> had her, too." And then they'll laugh about it.
> So I'll just sit back and just listen and stuff.

I ask, "how does it make you feel being female and hearing

the way that they talk about females?" and Monica responds:

> At first, when I first ever started listening to
> them talk it made me mad and I would jump in and
> say my little piece. And my brother would look at
> me like, "Are you going to sit here and join the
> conversation or just butt in when you get mad?"
> So I just learned to just sit back and just keep
> mine to myself. That's the only person I let get
> smart on me is my brother . . . but everybody else
> I, I'll jump in and say my piece if they make me
> mad and, uh. Because, I mean, it's like, it's
> like I be hearin' guys talk about girls so much.
> I haven't heard no guys talk about me or nothin'
> like that. I know, I mean, there will be guys
> that will talk about me but I've never heard it
> myself. Because I hang around guys most the time.
> And they'll sit back and they'll be like, "Yeah,
> she's a ho. I know all about her." And they'll
> sit back and discuss it with me like, "Yeah, she
> did all of this for me and she did this and this
> and this and then I told her to get up and go
> home." I mean, stuff like that. So, I be like,
> "Oh, you did, for real?" And I just learned to
> say, "Mmhmm. Alright. Mmhmm. Yeah. Whatever."
> I mean, and just listen.

In this passage, Monica reveals her own struggle

between challenging male sexism (which risks alienating her

from the group), and accepting it (which risks self-

alienation). She suggests that she tends to confront the men

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features of gender inequality within their gangs, young women draw on two types of frames. First, they individualize acts they describe and recognize as involving the mistreatment of females. Second, they justify particular acts as deserved because of the behaviors of the young women in question. Sometimes this is because of a specific act, but it is also where the misogynistic beliefs I described above come into play: girls deserve what happens to them because they are weak, or ho's, or bigmouths. In taking these approaches, each of which single out and blame the victims of mistreatment, young women in gangs are adopting methods that are part of larger cultural traditions in the United States. This is particularly the case when we examine the sexual exploitation of women, which historically has and continues to hold women responsible for their victimization (Estrich, 1987; Hatty, 1989; Miller and Schwartz, 1995; Schur, 1984). Female gang members cull from these cultural traditions when they describe and evaluate the exploitation of young women around them.

One means by which girls can uphold their belief in the gang's gender equality in the face of undeniable evidence to the contrary is to describe that evidence as atypical and aberrant, not representative of the overall value system of the gang or its members. This is most apparent in two examples of sexual assault described by young women. Sonita

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women receive the same respect in her gang as young men.

Framing the sexual assaults of young women as exceptional events allows female gang members to ignore the endemic nature of gender inequality in their gangs. What follows is a long excerpt from one of the interviews concerning the young woman's participation in the assault of a rival female gang member.[3] I have included the discussion in its entirety because it illustrates a number of layers to be explored. I should note that it is a unique description. Though several young women describe being or knowing of victims of gang-related rapes, only this one speaks specifically of participating in a retaliatory attack of this nature. She and several of the young women in her set beat the girl, then to their surprise, a group of young men in her set took over the beating, one of them began ripping off the girl's clothes, and the group proceeded to gang-rape her.

Jody: I wanna ask you some more, or ask you to talk again about the situation that you described yesterday about the girl that was in a [rival] set that you guys picked up or that the guys in your set picked up--

Interviewee: Oh, when they raped her?

Jody: Yeah. Now is that something that--

Interviewee: No, that's not somethin', that's not somethin' that goes on. That was because the female was was supposingly goin' out with one of ours, went back and

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their dick in her mouth, makin' her suck their dick,
makin' her, punchin' her, boom! "You better suck, try
to bite." I remember she bit one of my boys and she
just got beat and he brought her face up again. He was
like, "Suck!" Callin' her "Little [rival] Bitch" and
all that stuff. I was like, "Whoa!" I was like, my
people do some violence. But she, she was suckin' this
dude's dick. The other one put his stuff in her butt.
So she's screamin' like, "Ah! Ah!" So she's screamin'
and so after he, the one got his nut off, the other one
spread her legs and started doin' it in the front. And
then I was just sittin' there like, "Oh my goodness" I
mean, me and a group of us already done beat her up, we
already beat her up so she was all beat up plus they
were beatin' on her, callin' her names, callin' her [a
derogatory name for rival], fuckin' her every which
way. I mean, and then we just drug her out, put her in
the trunk and dropped her off [in this park]. I don't
know what happened to her. Maybe she died. Maybe,
maybe someone came and helped her. I mean, I don't
know.

Jody: How did it affect you? Like did it affect, 'cause--

Interviewee: Like my head? Like--

Jody: Yeah.

Interviewee: It just made me feel like, like, like that's,

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hypocrite of me. And they be lookin' like, "Stop
what?" You're like a, you wasn't, I mean, no one was,
she wasn't tellin' her, the [rivals] to stop when old
boy was gettin' beat in his face and he was gettin'
slammed and, you know, when he was doin' all that. So
basically I had no place to say nothin'. And how I
feel about it is, I feel that it was the most brutal
thing I've ever seen in my life and pray to God nothin'
ever happens to me like that. And I pray I don't have
to witness anything like that.

This young woman describes the gang-rape she witnessed
as "*the most brutal thing*" she has ever seen in her life, and
admits to being witness to and taking part in a great deal of
violence. Because of the brutality, it was necessary for her
to engage in serious and multiple rationalizations in order
to maintain her sense of her gang, fellow gang members, and
young women's place and value within her group. She
rationalizes by describing the event as unique, by allowing
herself to believe that the male gang members (her friends)
who participated were not sexually aroused by the attack, and
by describing it as justified because of the girl's prior
actions.

While it is probably true that this gang-rape was an
unusual event, this does not take away from the fact that it
was a gendered act that could take place specifically because

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confrontation. In addition, girls' descriptions of females

as having "big mouths" (see above) is also used as a

justification for their treatment. Keisha explains:

> If the female goin' on so much, she gonna have to
> get her ass beat, she gonna have to suffer the
> consequence. But, it's different for the guys.
> They know how our mouth is. We keep goin' and
> goin' and goin' until we push the limit. Know
> what I'm sayin'?

Justifications for their mistreatment are grounded both

in girls' specific acts, and in their general

characteristics. However, there is more to understanding how

girls make sense of and live with the gender contradictions

they face in their gangs than looking only at the ways they

rationalize what happens. Given the devaluation of young

women, an obvious question is what do girls get out of their

gang affiliation and its treatment of females? In the last

section, I will explore this question, and will address the

corollary question, at what cost?

"Patriarchal Bargains"

It is important to keep in mind, as I described at the

beginning of this chapter, that gangs are not uniquely sexist

groups. They operate within larger social contexts that

include members' past experiences with family members and

other women and men in their lives, the street milieu, and

adolescent social worlds, all of which have gender

hierarchies similar to those existing within gangs. While

the specific nature of gender relations in gangs may be

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themselves as a distinct category of young women. The gang thus offers to provide them with a sense of empowerment.

A number of young women describe being in gangs as providing them with this sense of power. Lisa says that girls in gangs "wanna be like, aw, I'm hard, you know, you can't beat me up. And, when you're in a gang that's how you feel. You just feel like, oh my God, you know, they got my back. I don't need to worry about it." Erica says that being in a gang, "people don't bother you. Especially if they don't know you and they know that, that you're in a gang. They don't bother you. It's like you put that intimidation in somebody." Diane explains that being a Crip means "that I'm to be respected, and if I'm not, you fuckin' with the wrong person, ok. That's what that means. I'm to be respected. That's all it means. I'm a Crip." Leslie says when she joined her gang, "I felt, like, yeah, now I'm gonna be cool, I'm gonna be Miss Thang in the gang and walk around Miss Bad Butt. Nobody can mess with me now because I'm in a gang and all this." She explains that being in the gang "gave me somethin' to stand on my own with, tell people, well look, I'm not gonna take what y'all dishin' out no more."

A related theme is that of protection, and this is where young women's belief in male's greater power over females, regardless of their assertion of gender equality,

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to get out of committing serious crime, more so than young men, because a girl shouldn't have to "risk her whole life" for the gang. In accepting that young men are more central members of the gang, young women can more easily participate in gangs without jeopardizing their adult lives.

There are specific costs associated with the bargain girls strike in their gangs. First, given the assumption that girls are weaker than boys, they have to fight harder to prove how tough they are. Diane explains:

> A female has to show that she's tough. A guy can just, you can just look at him. But a female, she's gotta show. She's gotta go out and do some dirt. She's gotta go whip some girl's ass, shoot somebody, rob somebody or something. To show that she is tough.

In addition, there is a constant threat to the sexual integrity of young women in gangs. Monica laments the assumption people outside gangs have that female members are sexed in (see chapter eight). The fact that there is such an option as "sexing in" serves to keep girls disempowered, because they always face the question of how they got in, of whether they are "true" members. Except for among the members of her set who were present, there is no way for young women to prove how they were initiated. As Denise notes, "I mean, they tell you that [they weren't sexed in], but you don't know how they really got in."

Perhaps the most significant cost of this bargain for young women, though they do not seem to recognize it

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their means of resisting gender oppression appears to be an individualized response of creating gendered gang identities as separate from and 'other than' the girls and women around them in their social environments.

Even as they define themselves as equals, their statements reveal the many ways in which they continue to face forms of disempowerment in relation to young men in their gangs, including a more intense need to prove themselves worthy of respect, and the never-ending threat of sexual denigration born out of the existence of "sexing in" as an accepted initiation ritual. Ironically, as with any "patriarchal bargain," their participation in and support of an oppressive gender structure ultimately maintains their own inequality, assuring that their own power and options remain less than those of the young men in their gangs.

However, gender inequality in gangs is not so different than in other areas of girls' lives; some girls may actually find a better deal in the gang than elsewhere. It provides them with a sense of empowerment (though typically at the expense of other girls), provides them with protection (or the semblance of protection) from other young men (and women), and their marginalization in the group relative to males allows them to see their involvement as comparably transitory. These are key elements of young women's "patriarchal bargain" in Columbus gangs. They live in social

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NOTES

[1] Chantell is an exception. She was consistently firm on the equal activities and value of males and females in her gang, though she did note that being perceived as weak was one of the problems girls face.

[2] This may be where the difference lies--in different motivations driving gang activities. Jennifer's group is not looking for recognition on the streets, but on taking care of their business without drawing attention to themselves. They do not have rivalries (and thus are not oriented toward violence per se), and do not wear colors or throw signs. She notes, "if we's walkin' down the street, you couldn't tell we was in a gang. You'd think we were just a group of girls going to the mall or something." She calls other gangs "sloppy" because they announce the criminal activity they're involved in by their attention-seeking behavior. "We just try not to make mistakes. Like, like, Bloods, if they do somethin', they're gonna write their name on the wall. That, I mean, what the point is that? You're tellin' on yourselves." In contrast, though they are routinely involved in serious economic crimes such as robberies, none of the members of her gang have been caught or arrested for their gang-involved crime.

[3] Because this excerpt provides a detailed description of a serious crime (and chapter six includes demographic information on gang members), I have chosen to conceal the pseudonym and gang affiliation of the young woman who told me the story.

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recent evidence that these new gang cities are growing in number (Spergel and Curry, 1993; Klein, 1995; Maxson et al., 1995). As noted in chapter three, according to the Maxson-Klein national gang migration survey, there are four cities in the U.S. similar to Columbus in size (200,000 to 800,000 people) with a post-1985 emergence of gangs. These include Jacksonville, Nashville, New Orleans, and Portland. Columbus may provide information that is generalizable to these cities, as the relative institutionalization of gang cultures and structures are likely to be similar.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Correlates of Gang Involvement

The first primary concern of the project was to explore what factors may help distinguish female gang members from their non-gang counterparts in areas where gangs are prevalent. Two sets of data emerge from the survey research described in chapter five. These include differences that speak to etiological concerns, as well as differences that likely emerge as a result of gang affiliation or the lack thereof. I will review and discuss each of these sets of findings in turn.

Many researchers have noted the relationship between structural factors such as neighborhood characteristics, poverty, educational and occupational opportunities and rates

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correlation between parental supervision or attachment and female gang involve...ent. My findings did support the conclusion that having a family member in a gang is often related to gang involvement for girls (Bjerregaard and Smith, 1992; Joe and Chesney-Lind, 1995). The strongest family indicators in Columbus are in keeping with a growing body of evidence that girls in gangs frequently experience violence in their families, including sexual abuse (Campbell, 1984a; Joe and Chesney-Lind, 1995; Moore, 1991), and that they often experience other problems in the home such as substance abuse (Moore, 1991). While Moore's work showed that female gang members were more likely than their male counterparts to have these experiences, my project provides evidence that female gang members are more likely than non-gang girls to face these problems as well.

Though some researchers have found a relationship between self esteem and female gang involvement (Bowker and Klein, 1983), my findings parallel those of Bjerregaard and Smith (1992), who do not. Several researchers suggest that early sexual activity is linked to gang participation for girls (Bjerregaard and Smith, 1992; Moore, 1991), but my findings do not show significant differences between gang and non-gang girls on this measure. They do reveal that gang members are significantly more likely to have been sexually abused, and are significantly more likely to report having

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group.

Motivating Contexts Shaping Gang Membership

Given these differences in peer group contexts, it is not surprising that gang members report significantly more involvement in crime and substance use. As discussed in chapter two, research on gangs has consistently shown that gang members tend to be more criminally active than non-gang youth (Esbensen et al., 1993; Fagan, 1990; Klein, 1971; Thornberry et al., 1993). Recent evidence suggests that this tends to hold for females as well (Bjerregaard and Smith, 1992; Fagan, 1990), though female gang members tend to be less involved in serious delinquency than their male counterparts (Fagan, 1990; Bjerregaard and Smith, 1992; Bowker et al., 1980). Information from the in-depth interviews in this project confirm that this pattern holds in Columbus as well, as girls describe a tendency to be less involved in the most serious aspects of gang-related crime.

The survey interviews provide an initial means of differentiating gang and non-gang youth along dimensions that may be related to their decisions to join gangs. These same themes surface again within the in-depth interviews, as girls articulate their reasons for joining gangs, and those aspects of their lives lacking in other ways that they believe the gang can fulfill. The in-depth interviews give more insight into the processes behind the decision to be in gangs, giving

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identity to the group.

Gang Structures and Activities

When we turn to issues of gang structures and activities, and girls roles within these groups, the project provides evidence of the character of gangs in emergent gang cities without serious economic problems. Their discussions provide evidence of the cultural diffusion of gang lore, symbolism and structures, but affirm the reports of other researchers that connections between emergent and chronic gang cities tend to be ephemeral at best, and often more of a vague knowledge than real interaction with gang members in these cities (Hagedorn, 1988; Huff, 1989). Typical gangs in Columbus appear to be small in size, mixed-gender in composition, and include primarily adolescent members. Leaders are sometimes young adults, though only one gang member described her gang as composed primarily of adults. Young women gain status in these gangs via their connection to high-status males, as well as through their abilities to fight and willingness to stand up to rivals. Ranking systems in Columbus gangs are very loose, and appear to have adopted the terminology of larger gang cities.

When it comes to gang activities, Columbus gangs have initiation rites similar to those described in other cities. Their everyday activities typically involve hanging out, getting high, listening to music, watching television, and

relationship to a high-status male, by engaging in the types
of violent and criminal behaviors usually reserved for males,
and through participation in or acceptance of the
mistreatment of other females.

Leadership is male, and ironically, the same young
women who describe their place as one of equality also allude
to an unwillingness on their part to accept leadership at the
hands of another female. They report the sexual exploitation
of females at the hands of male gang members, but attempt to
define themselves as outside of this dynamic. To deal with
these obvious incongruities, they frequently individualize
their own or others' experiences with abuse, and blame other
females for their victimization. By their own choice and as
a result of their exclusion by young men, many often do not
participate in some of the more serious forms of gang related
crime, including serious assaults, drive-by's and drug sales.
These patterns of gendered meanings and behavior coexist in
tension with their desired perceptions of equality.

NEW CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FIELD

Examination of Non-Underclass Emergent Gang City

A number of scholars have noted the recent
proliferation of gangs into more and diverse communities
(Klein, 1995; Maxson et al., 1995; Spergel and Curry,
1993), but there has been little in-depth analysis of gangs

planned economic crime. These gangs appear to be strongly

influenced by the cultural diffusion of information about

gangs, through youths with exposure to chronic gang cities,

and through the media, and are mostly organized around

adolescent pursuits of status and excitement rather than

making money.

Although these groups are thus far not seriously

criminally involved, they do have the potential to become so

to the extent that they continue to grow, and develop their

ideas of what it is to be a "gang" from sensationalized media

sources. Like the "wannabe's" that Winfree et al. (1992)

found to be more involved in gang-related crime than actual

gang members, Columbus gang youths' attempts to prove their

"gangness" may eventually lead to more serious problems.

New Information on Female Gang Involvement and Gang

Structures

A significant new finding of this study is that female

gang involvement in Columbus primarily involves girls'

participation in integrated mixed gender groups rather than

in auxiliary subgroups or in autonomous all-female gangs. As

noted in chapter seven, this new finding may have multiple

causes, including previous researchers' lack of attention to

the structures of gangs in which females are members, a

result of ethnic variations that have not been thoroughly

explored among female gang members, or it may be that young

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male-dominated gangs in which young men are the leaders, have higher status, and control participation in inter-gang rivalries and crime. They also participate in and accept a sexual double standard that sanctions young women's sexual activities without holding young men accountable for the same actions, nor for sexually abusive behaviors toward females. While they articulate the value of their equality, in practice it is not systematic, even if some young women are treated as equals. This evidence suggests that gendered ethnic differences across gangs are probably not as clear or strong as Taylor and others would suggest. There is simply an ideology of equality that is articulated but not upheld.

Theoretical Approach for Understanding Gendered Gang Meanings

The young women in this study articulated a firmly held ideal of their equality within the gang, while at the same time describing and often supporting unequal gender structures and the exploitation of females. While much previous research on the meanings of young women's gang involvement has presented them as victims of male domination who are duped through false consciousness into accepting their place (cf. Campbell, 1984a), victims who are struggling to resist these structures (cf. Joe and Chesney-Lind, 1995), and/or heroic street feminists openly challenging male domination (cf. Taylor, 1993), I suggest here that the contradictory gender meanings and attributes found in mixed-

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own oppression; instead, it provides an additional filter through which to understand the cor⁺radictory nature of gender identity among female gang members.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Findings from this project are an important slice of a much larger picture, of the changing nature of gangs across the United States, and specifically of female involvement in these groups. To truly understand the nature of gangs in the lives of young women and across varied contexts, and to gain a fuller picture of girls' roles in gangs and the meanings of gender within these groups, research needs to move in several directions.

First, we need a great deal more comparative work. While this study provides new information on female gang involvement and new directions of interest, it is limited by the fact that data was gathered in only one city. Once the project is replicated in additional cities, these findings will take on more meaning. Likewise, to understand more generally how gang proliferation is creating new and diverse gangs, comparative work needs to be employed.

Second, researchers should take a more integrated approach to studying gang involvement, such as that taken in this project. Studies which focus exclusively on the correlates of gang membership miss the opportunity to

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involvement and on young women's success in negotiating within their social worlds. Of course we know from other research (and this project provides additional evidence) that economic inequality and its racial distribution is at the heart of the contexts in which most gang members live (Campbell, 1984a; Hagedorn, 1988; Klein, 1995; Vigil, 1988). Broad based social and economic change is needed to help alleviate these structures of inequality, and is one of the most important means of addressing the problem of gangs in Columbus and elsewhere. More specifically, I would propose a focus on two arenas that are typically not part of gang intervention: comprehensive drug treatment programs that include strong family components, and gender studies programming beginning in elementary school.

Funding for drug rehabilitation programs has been decreased in the last decades as the War on Drugs and War on Crime have redoubled efforts to criminalize drug addicts. In addition to these approaches being unsuccessful for solving the problem of drug addiction and its correlation with crime, it has further isolated inner city community residents, who are disproportionately affected by the enactment of these wars (Tonry, 1995). This project provides additional evidence that drug addiction has a serious impact on the female children of addicts.

While organized drug sales by gang members is not a

about gender issues would be a valuable service for both young women and young men. A program such as this that began in elementary school and included an available counseling component, along with both mixed and single gender groups and activities, could help raise young women's and young men's consciousness, and help combat young women's victimization, their tendency to blame other victims, and their generally misogynistic attitudes towards one another.

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Appendix A

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Also, an individual from the community has been located, her name is Jodi Rice, and her role in the research is to be an advocate for the young women that I interview, to make sure that I'm handling the research properly, that no one feels pressured to take part in the study, and to answer any questions you may have before or after your interview, should you decide to go through with it. Her phone number is 614-274-0095. If you aren't sure at this point, and you have questions about the research that you would rather discuss with the advocate before you make a decision, we can postpone our interview and you can contact her first. Then if you decide you want to continue with the interview, we can reschedule.

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Interview number _____

Date of interview   /   /

Interview location   _____

Source of respondent _____

                     _____

Ok, I'd like to begin by having you show me on this map where
you live. You don't have to give me the exact address.

**(SHOW MAP OF RESPONDENT'S NEIGHBORHOOD TO CONFIRM FOR CENSUS
TRACT ANALYSIS)**

Time begin: _____

Time end: _____

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8. Who would you say has been mainly responsible for raising you or bringing you up?
    1) both your parents
    2) your mother
    3) your father
    4) another adult or adults (grandparents, grandmother, aunt, stepmother, etc.) SPECIFY:
    _____

9. How many brothers and sisters, including step and half brothers and sisters, do you have? Can you tell me how old they are, and whether or not they live with you? Let's start with the oldest.
(FOR EACH, WRITE RELATIONSHIP, "L" IF THEY LIVE TOGETHER OR "N" IF THEY DON'T, AND AGE)

Relationship	Live Together?	Age
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

10. Let's talk now about anyone who's actually living in your house. How many people, including yourself, regularly live there?
    _____ people

11. Now I'll ask you some questions about the adults you live with. **(ASK ACCORDING TO THE ADULTS THEY SAID THEY LIVE WITH IN QUESTION 6, IN THE ORDER SPECIFIED IN QUESTION 7)**

    11a. Does (adult 1) usually work?   Y   N
    11b. Does (adult 2) usually work?   Y   N
    11c. Does (adult 3) usually work?   Y   N
    11d. Does (adult 4) usually work?   Y   N
    11e. Does (adult 5) usually work?   Y   N

12a. Can you tell me how far (adult 1) went in school? Would you say:
    1) 8th grade or less
    2) 9th to 11th grade
    3) graduated from high school/GED
    4) some college or technical school
    5) graduated from college or technical school
    6) more than college
    7) other (SPECIFY) _____

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13b. How long is it since you last went to school? _____

13c. What grade were you in? _____

13d. Which of the following best describes the grades
     you were getting?
            1) mostly A's
            2) mostly B's
            3) mostly C's
            4) mostly D's
            5) mostly F's

(IF YES)

13e. Which school do you go to now?
     _____

13f. Do you go full time or part time?
            1) full time
            2) part time

13g. On average, how many days per month do you miss,
     if any?   _____ days

13h. What grade are you in? _____

13i. Which of the following best describes the grades
     you are getting?
            1) mostly A's
            2) mostly B's
            3) mostly C's
            4) mostly D's
            5) mostly F's

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25. If you could go as far as you wanted to in school, how far would you go? Would you:
    1. not graduate from high school
    2. graduate from high school or get a GED
    3. go to college or a technical school
    4. graduate from college or a technical school
    5. do more than college
    6. other (SPECIFY) _____

26. How far do you think you will actually go in school?
    1. not graduate from high school
    2. graduate from high school or get a GED
    3. go to college or a technical school
    4. graduate from college or a technical school
    5. do more than college
    6. other (SPECIFY) _____

27. How far do you think your parents would like you to go in school?
    1. not graduate from high school
    2. graduate from high school or get a GED
    3. go to college or a technical school
    4. graduate from college or a technical school
    5. do more than college
    6. other (SPECIFY) _____

28. Of all the teachers you have known, how many have you liked?
    1. none of them - - >   2. a few of them
    3. half of them   4. most of them
    5. all of them

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Now I'm going to ask you about different ways of handling a serious disagreement, and how often you have used each of them. Ok, look at this card **(FOUR ITEM OFTEN CARD)**, and after each sentence I read you, I'd like for you to tell me how often, that is Often, Sometimes, Rarely, or Never, that this applies to you.

41. How often have you handled a serious disagreement by:

		Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
a.	talking it out	O	S	R	N
b.	threatening someone	O	S	R	N
c.	meeting each other halfway	O	S	R	N
d.	yelling	O	S	R	N
e.	walking away	O	S	R	N
f.	physically fighting	O	S	R	N

42. How often have you seen a family member handle a serious disagreement by:

a.	talking it out	O	S	R	N
b.	threatening someone	O	S	R	N
c.	meeting each other halfway	O	S	R	N
d.	yelling	O	S	R	N
e.	walking away	O	S	R	N
f.	physically fighting	O	S	R	N

43. How often have you seen a friend handle a serious disagreement by:

a.	talking it out	O	S	R	N
b.	threatening someone	O	S	R	N
c.	meeting each other halfway	O	S	R	N
d.	yelling	O	S	R	N
e.	walking away	O	S	R	N
f.	physically fighting	O	S	R	N

(RETRIEVE FOUR ITEM OFTEN CARD)

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(IF YES)

a) What job(s) did you have? _____

b) How many hours a week did you work? _____ hours

c) How many weeks during the school year did you work at this job? _____ weeks

                                             (CIRCLE ONE)

d) How much money were you paid? $_____
    1. an hour
    2. a day
    3. a week
    4. a month

e) Why did you work? (SPECIFY)

_____

_____

49. Did you have a job during <u>last summer</u>?
    1) Yes   2) No (IF <u>NO, GO TO QUESTION</u> 49)

(IF YES)

a) What job(s) did you have? _____

b) How many hours a week did you work? _____ hours

c) How many weeks during the school year did you work at this job? _____ weeks

                                              (CIRCLE ONE)

d) How much money were you paid? $_____
    1. an hour
    2. a day
    3. a week
    4. a month

e) Why did you work? (SPECIFY)

_____

_____

50. Do you get a regular allowance?

1) Yes   2) No

                                    (CIRCLE ONE)

(IF YES)

a) How much? $_____
    1. a day
    2. a week
    3. a month

56. What are your favorite TV shows?
    1. _____
    2. _____
    3. _____
    4. _____
    5. _____

57. On an average weekday (Monday-Friday), how many hours do you listen to music? _____ hours

58. On an average weekend (Saturday-Sunday), how many hours do you listen to music? _____ hours

59. Who are your favorite musical groups or artists?
    1. _____
    2. _____
    3. _____
    4. _____
    5. _____

60. What are your favorite songs or albums?
    1. _____
    2. _____
    3. _____
    4. _____
    5. _____

(CIRCLE ONE)
61. How often do you go to the movies? _____ times wk/mth

62. How often do you rent videos? _____ times wk/mth

63. What are your favorite movies?
    1. _____
    2. _____
    3. _____
    4. _____
    5. _____

Now I'd like to ask you some questions about your friends or the people you hang out with.

64. Is there a group of friends that you hang out with alot?
      1) Yes   2) No

(IF NO)   64a. Do you have any close friends?
               1) Yes   2) No **(IF NO, PROBE; THEN GOTO 68)**

65. How many people, counting yourself, are in this group?
      _____ people

386

Now I want to ask you about how much you think your neighborhood is affected by gangs. For instance:

70. Is there alot of talk about gangs around your neighborhood?
        1) Yes   2) No

71. Is there alot of gang activity around your neighborhood?
        1) Yes   2) No

72. Are any of the people living on your street members of a gang?
        1) Yes   2) No

73. Are there gang rivalries close by?
        1) Yes   2) No

74. Is there pressure on neighborhood kids to join gangs around your neighborhood?
        1) Yes   2) No

75. Among the kids in the neighborhood, how important is it to be a member of a gang? Is it:

        1. Very Important
        2. Somewhat Important, or
        3. Not Important At All

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE FOR GANG MEMBERS AND EX-GANG MEMBERS ONLY--ASK EX-GANG MEMBERS QUESTIONS IN THE PAST TENSE; NON-GANG MEMBERS GOTO QUESTION 101, PAGE 18)

Now I would like to ask you some more questions about your gang.

76. How old were you when you first started "hanging out" with the members of your gang? _____ years

77. At what age did you become a full member? _____ years

78. How many members are there in your gang? _____
        a) How many are female? _____
        b) How many are male? _____

    (if they have a hard time answering this, ask, "of every ten gang members, how many would you say are girls? how many would you say are guys?)

84. Are any of your close friends also members of this gang?
          1) Y-s   2) No

(IF YES)
     a) How many? Would you say:
               1. All of them
               2. Most of them
               3. Half of them
               4. Less than half of them
               5. Hardly any of them

85. Are any of your close friends members of <u>another</u> gang?
          1) Yes   2) No

86. Are any of your close friends <u>not</u> gang members?
          1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES) a) How many? Would you say:
               1. All of them
               2. Most of them
               3. Half of them
               4. Less than half of them
               5. Hardly any of them

87. In addition to your gang, is there another <u>group</u> you
hang around with?
          1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)
     87a) Compared with the time you spend with the gang,
how much time do you spend with the other group? Would you
say you spend:
               1. more time with the gang
               2. about the same time with both, or
               3. more time with the other group

88. How often do you and some of the members from your gang
get together? Do you get together about:
               1. every day
               2. three or four times a week
               3. twice a week
               4. once a week
               5. once every couple of weeks
               6. once a month
               7. less than once a month
               8. never

95. Does anyone in your family think it's ok that you are a member of a gang?   1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)   a. Who?   **(CIRCLE ALL MENTIONED)**
               1. Mother   2. Father
               3. Sister   4. Brother

               5. Other Relative(s) **(SPECIFY)**

_____

_____

Now I want to ask you about the kinds of things that your gang does.

96. Does your gang get involved in community activities?
        1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)   a. what activities?

_____

_____

97. Does your gang provide help to neighborhood residents?
        1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)   a. what does it do?

_____

_____

98. Does your gang take care of or help other kids in the neighborhood?
        1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)   a. what does it do?

_____

_____

99. Does your gang get in fights with other gangs or groups?
        1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)   a. what other groups?

_____
_____

               b. what are the fights about?

_____

_____

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101. I'd like you to think about the group of kids that you are most involved with. Can you think of one?

(IF NO GROUP, PROMPT FOR ONE; IF NONE, GOTO QUESTION 110)

    a. What group is it?

    _____

102. There are lots of reasons people join **GROUPS/GANGS**. Ok, considering **(group/gang mentioned)**, what would you say are the *really* important reasons for you to be a member?

_____
_____
_____
_____

(RECORD RESPONSE/CHECK OFF FROM LIST BELOW)

Now I'm going to read you a list of other reasons why people join **GANGS/GROUPS** and I'd like you to tell me if any of them were important to you for joining your **GANG/GROUP**.

Listen to each statement then tell me if it was important for you.

a. _____ to make friends
b. _____ to get a reputation
c. _____ to fill up empty time
d. _____ for support and loyalty
e. _____ to feel important
f. _____ to feel like you belong to something
g. _____ to prepare for the future
h. _____ to avoid home
i. _____ to keep out of trouble
j. _____ for protection
k. _____ members forced you to join
l. _____ for excitement
m. _____ to share secrets
n. _____ to get away with illegal activities
o. _____ to participate in group activities
p. _____ to learn new skills
q. _____ to have a territory of your own
r. _____ to get your parents' respect
s. _____ because someone in your family was a member
t. _____ to meet guys easily
u. _____ because the group is one you can feel proud of
v. _____ to get money or other things
w. _____ to get money or other things from selling drugs
x. _____ because a friend was a member
y. _____ to get what you don't get from your family
(ADD THIS FOR GANG MEMBERS ONLY)
z. _____ some groups just develop into gangs

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(IF INTERVIEW SUBJECT HAS INDICATED THAT SHE IS A MEMBER OF A MIXED-GENDER GANG, THEN ASK THE FOLLOWING)

106a.   Of the illegal things you said members of your gang do, which ones do female members do? Do female members:

a. steal things worth less than $50	Y	N
b. steal things worth more than $50	Y	N
c. go joyriding in stolen vehicles	Y	N
d. damage or destroy things	Y	N
e. intimidate or threaten people	Y	N
f. rob/strongarm other people	Y	N
g. attack others with the intent to		
seriously hurt them	Y	N
h. sell marijuana	Y	N
i. sell other drugs	Y	N
j. do anything else illegal	Y	N
(IF YES) what?		

_____

_____

107.   Besides the things we've already talked about, do members of your **GANG/GROUP** do things together that are fun and exciting but not illegal?
         1) Yes   2) No

        (IF YES)   a. what do they do?

_____

_____

(FOR MIXED-GENDER GANGS ONLY)

107a.   Do female members of your gang do things together without male members?
         1) Yes   2) No

        (IF YES)   a. what do they do?

_____

_____

107b.   Do male members of your gang do things together without   female members?
         1) Yes   2) No

        (IF YES)   a. what do they do?

_____

_____

FOR NON-GANG ONLY

GANG MFMBERS GOTO QUESTION 116, PAGE 23

110. Since you have been living in your neighborhood, have you ever been approached to join a gang?
        1) Yes   2) No

111. Have you ever thought about joining a gang?
        1) Yes   2) No

              a. why or why not?

_____

_____

112. Are you ever afraid that someone will hurt you if you don't join a gang? Would you say you're:
        1. often afraid
        2. sometimes afraid, or
        3. never afraid

113. Are any of your close friends members of a gang?
        1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)
        a. How many? Would you say:
            1. All of them
            2. Most of them
            3. Half of them
            4. Less than half of them
            5. Hardly any of them

FOR EX-GANG MEMBERS ONLY

NON-GANG GO TO QUESTION 116, PAGE 23

114. When did you quit being a gang member? _____

115. Why did you leave?

_____

_____

ASK ALL RESPONDENTS:

116. Has anyone in your family ever been a member of a gang?
        1) Yes   2) No

With the next set of questions, I am going to read you a statement and I'd like for you to tell me after each one, using this card again **(FOUR ITEM AGREE CARD)** whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement.

118. I have at least as many friends as
     other people my age.   SA   A   D   SD

Would you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree?

119. I am not as popular as other
     people my age.   SA   A   D   SD

120. In the kinds of things that people
     my age like to do, I am at least as
     good as most other people.   SA   A   D   SD

Would you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree?

121. People my age often pick on me.   SA   A   D   SD

122. Other people think I am alot of
     fun to be with.   SA   A   D   SD

123. I usually keep to myself because I
     am not like other people my age.   SA   A   D   SD

124. Other people wish they were
     like me.   SA   A   D   SD

125. I wish I were a different kind
     of person because I would have
     more friends.   SA   A   D   SD

Would you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree?

126. If my group of friends decided to vote
     for leaders of their group, I'd be
     elected to a high position.   SA   A   D   SD

127. When things get tough, I am not a
     person other people my age would
     turn to for help.   SA   A   D   SD

128. My parents are proud of the type of
     person I am.   SA   A   D   SD

400

146. No matter how hard I try, I never
     get the grades I deserve.   SA   A   D   SD

147. I feel that I've been very fortunate
     to have had the kinds of teachers
     I've had since I started school.   SA   A   D   SD

Would you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly
disagree?

(RETRIEVE CARD FROM RESPONDENT)

Ok, now I'm going to ask you a list of things that may
describe people your age. Using this card as a guide **(FOUR
ITEM WELL CARD)**, tell me for each statement I read whether
you think it describes you: very well, pretty well, a little,
or not at all. Ok?

I'm the kind of person who...

        148. Is sort of mixed up   VW   PW   L   N

Does this describe you: very well, pretty well, a little, or
not at all?

I'm the kind of person who...

        149. Is well liked   VW   PW   L   N

        150. Is a good citizen   VW   PW   L   N

        151. Is an unhappy person   VW   PW   L   N

        152. Gets into alot of fights   VW   PW   L   N

I'm the kind of person who...

        153. Is often upset   VW   PW   L   N

Does this describe you: very well, pretty well, a little, or
not at all?

I'm the kind of person who...

        154. Is a bad kid   VW   PW   L   N

        155. Is messed up   VW   PW   L   N

        156. Gets along well with
             other people   VW   PW   L   N

The next set of questions ask about how you feel about your opportunities to get ahead. After each question, I'd like you to tell me, using this card **(FIVE ITEM AGREE CARD)**, whether you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

170. The world is usually good to
     people like me.   SA   A   N   D   SD

Do you: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

171. I probably won't be able to
     do the kind of work I want to
     because I won't have enough
     education.   SA   A   N   D   SD

172. I'll never have as much
     opportunity to succeed as kids
     from other neighborhoods.   SA   A   N   D   SD

173. There is a good chance that some
     of my friends will have lots of
     money.   SA   A   N   D   SD

174. My family can't give me the
     opportunities that most kids
     have.   SA   A   N   D   SD

175. If a kid like me works hard,
     she can get ahead.   SA   A   N   D   SD

Do you: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

176. All I see ahead are bad things,
     not good things.   SA   A   N   D   SD

177. I probably won't be able to do
     the kind of work I want to
     because I'm female.   SA   A   N   D   SD

178. I'll never have as much
     opportunity to succeed as a
     male will.   SA   A   N   D   SD

179. If a woman works hard, she can
     get ahead.   SA   A   N   D   SD

(RETRIEVE CARD FROM RESPONDENT)

404

(IF YES)   a. at about what age did you first do it? _____
                 b. do you usually do it alone or with others? _____
                    1) alone   2) with others
                 c. how many times have you done it in the last six months? _____ times

185. Have you ever been loud or rowdy in a public place where somebody complained and got you in trouble?
          1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)   a. at about what age did you first do it? _____
                 b. do you usually do it alone or with others?
                    1) alone   2) with others
                 c. how many times have you done it in the last six months? _____ times

186. Have you ever begged for money or things from strangers?
          1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)   a. at about what age did you first do it? _____
                 b. do you usually do it alone or with others?
                    1) alone   2) with others
                 c. how many times have you done it in the last six months? _____ times

187. Have you ever made obscene telephone calls?
          1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)   a. at about what age did you first do it? _____
                 b. do you usually do it alone or with others?
                    1) alone   2) with others
                 c. how many times have you done it in the last six months? _____ times

188. Have you ever been drunk in a public place?
          1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)   a. at about what age did you first do it? _____
                 b. do you usually do it alone or with others?
                    1) alone   2) with others
                 c. how many times have you done it in the last six months? _____ times

189. Have you ever damaged, destroyed or marked up someone else's property on purpose?
          1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES) a. at about what age did you first do it? _____
b. do you usually do it alone or with others? _____
1) alone   2) with others
c. how many times have you done it in the last six months? _____ times

195. How about between $50 and $100?
1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES) a. at about what age did you first do it? _____
b. do you usually do it alone or with others? _____
1) alone   2) with others
c. how many times have you done it in the last six months? _____ times

196. How about over $100?
1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES) a. at about what age did you first do it? _____
b. do you usually do it alone or with others? _____
1) alone   2) with others
c. how many times have you done it in the last six months? _____ times

197. Have you ever shoplifted or taken something from a store on purpose (including anything you have already told me about)?
1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES) a. at about what age did you first do it? _____
b. do you usually do it alone or with others? _____
1) alone   2) with others
c. how many times have you done it in the last six months? _____ times

198. Have you ever stolen someone's purse or wallet or picked someone's pocket?
1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES) a. at about what age did you first do it? _____
b. do you usually do it alone or with others? _____
1) alone   2) with others
c. how many times have you done it in the last six months? _____ times

199. Have you ever stolen something that did not belong to you?
1) Yes   2) No

408

(IF YES)   a. at about what age did you first do it? _____
              b. do you usually do it alone or with others?
                   1) alone   2) with others
              c. how many times have you done it in the last six
                   months? _____ times

205.   Have you ever tried to cheat someone by selling them
        something that was not what you said it was or that
        was worthless?
        1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)   a. at about what age did you first do it? _____
              b. do you usually do it alone or with others?
                   1) alone   2) with others
              c. how many times have you done it in the last six
                   months? _____ times

206.   Have you ever attacked someone with a weapon or with
        the idea of seriously hurting or killing them?
        1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)   a. at about what age did you first do it? _____
              b. do you usually do it alone or with others?
                   1) alone   2) with others
              c. how many times have you done it in the last six
                   months? _____ times
              d. how many of these were related to buying or
                   selling drugs? _____

207.   Have you ever thrown objects such as bottles or rocks
        at people?
        1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)   a. at about what age did you first do it? _____
              b. do you usually do it alone or with others?
                   1) alone   2) with others
              c. how many times have you done it in the last six
                   months? _____ times

208.   Have you ever been involved in a gang fight?
        1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)   a. at about what age did you first do it? _____
              b. do you usually do it alone or with others?
                   1) alone   2) with others
              c. how many times have you done it in the last six
                   months? _____ times
              d. how many of these were related to buying or
                   selling drugs? _____

(IF YES)   a. at about what age did you first do it? _____
              b. do you usually do it alone or with others?
                 1) alone   2) with others
              c. how many times have you done it in the last six
                 months? _____ times

214. Have you ever helped another person have sexual
      relations with someone against their will?
      1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)   a. at about what age did you first do it? _____
              b. do you usually do it alone or with others?
                 1) alone   2) with others
              c. how many times have you done it in the last six
                 months? _____ times

215. Have you ever sold marijuana?
      1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)   a. at about what age did you first do it? _____
              b. do you usually do it alone or with others?
                 1) alone   2) with others
              c. how many times have you done it in the last six
                 months? _____ times

216. Have you ever sold crack or rock?
      1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)   a. at about what age did you first do it? _____
              b. do you usually do it alone or with others?
                 1) alone   2) with others
              c. how many times have you done it in the last six
                 months? _____ times

217. Have you ever sold hard drugs such as heroin, cocaine,
      LSD or acid?
      1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)   a. at about what age did you first do it? _____
              b. do you usually do it alone or with others?
                 1) alone   2) with others
              c. how many times have you done it in the last six
                 months? _____ times

218. Have you ever drunk beer or wine without your parent's
      permission?
      1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES) a. at about what age did you first do it? _____
b. do you usually do it alone or with others?
1) alone   2) with others
c. how many times have you done it in the last six months? _____ times

224. Have you ever used heroin?
1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES) a. at about what age did you first do it? _____
b. do you usually do it alone or with others?
1) alone   2) with others
c. how many times have you done it in the last six months? _____ times

225. Have you ever used angel dust or PCP?
1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES) a. at about what age did you first do it? _____
b. do you usually do it alone or with others?
1) alone   2) with others
c. how many times have you done it in the last six months? _____ times

226. Have you ever used tranquilizers?
1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES) a. at about what age did you first do it? _____
b. do you usually do it alone or with others?
1) alone   2) with others
c. how many times have you done it in the last six months? _____ times

227. Have you ever used downers or barbiturates?
1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES) a. at about what age did you first do it? _____
b. do you usually do it alone or with others?
1) alone   2) with others
c. how many times have you done it in the last six months? _____ times

228. Have you ever used uppers, speed or amphetamines?
1) Yes   2) No

414

230c. Do other members of your gang also sell hard drugs
such as heroin, cocaine, LSD or acid?

                    1) Yes   2) No

231. Is your *gang* as a group involved in drug distribution
or sales?
                    1) Yes   2) No

ASK BOTH GANG AND NON-GANG RESPONDENTS THE FOLLOWING:

232. Which of the following most accurately describes *your*
status as a drug seller:
            1) you work alone
            2) you hire others
            3) you act as a middleman
            4) you are hired by others

233. Are the individuals you **HIRE/WORK FOR/ACT AS A MIDDLEMAN
FOR** also members of **A GANG/YOUR GANG?**
                  1) Yes   2) No

                                            (CIRCLE ONE)
234. How much money do you make selling drugs? $_____ hour
                                                     day
                                                     week
                                                     month

                                                        416

236b. When you were arrested for _____, did any of the following happen?

a.	Were you warned and released?	Y	N
b.	Were your parents notified?	Y	N
c.	Were school officials told?	Y	N
d.	Were you referred for counseling?	Y	N
e.	Were you diverted or sent to a treatment program?	Y	N
f.	Did you have to go to court?	Y	N
g.	Were you put on probation?	Y	N
h.	Did you have to pay a fine?	Y	N
i.	Did you have to make restitution?	Y	N
j.	Did you have to do community service?	Y	N
k.	Were you sent to a detention or correctional center?	Y	N
l.	Did anything else happen?	Y	N

(IF YES) What happened?

_____

_____

236c. When you were arrested for _____, did any of the following happen?

a.	Were you warned and released?	Y	N
b.	Were your parents notified?	Y	N
c.	Were school officials told?	Y	N
d.	Were you referred for counseling?	Y	N
e.	Were you diverted or sent to a treatment program?	Y	N
f.	Did you have to go to court?	Y	N
g.	Were you put on probation?	Y	N
h.	Did you have to pay a fine?	Y	N
i.	Did you have to make restitution?	Y	N
j.	Did you have to do community service?	Y	N
k.	Were you sent to a detention or correctional center?	Y	N
l.	Did anything else happen?	Y	N

(IF YES) What happened?

_____

_____

418

236f. When you were arrested for _____, did any of the following happen?

			Y	N
	a.	Were you warned and released?	Y	N
	b.	Were your parents notified?	Y	N
	c.	Were school officials told?	Y	N
	d.	Were you referred for counseling?	Y	N
	e.	Were you diverted or sent to a treatment program?	Y	N
	f.	Did you have to go to court?	Y	N
	g.	Were you put on probation?	Y	N
	h.	Did you have to pay a fine?	Y	N
	i.	Did you have to make restitution?	Y	N
	j.	Did you have to do community service?	Y	N
	k.	Were you sent to a detention or correctional center?	Y	N
	l.	Did anything else happen?	Y	N

(IF YES) What happened?

_____

_____

247. During the past year, how many people of the same sex have you had as sexual partners?

_ _ (number)

248. When having sex with females, have you used any contraception or protection?
1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)   a. what protection have you used?
_____

b. how often did you use protection?
1. almost never
2. sometimes
3. most of the time
4. always

249. How old were you when you had your first period?   _____

250. Have you ever been pregnant?
1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)   a. how many times have you been pregnant?   _____

For each pregnancy, ask:

     year of pregnancy?   outcome?

First
Second   _____   _____
Third   _____   _____
            _____   _____

Now I'd like to ask you some more questions about your family and life at home.

251. How much fun would you say you and your family have together? Would you say:
1. a great deal   3. a little
2. pretty much   4. none at all

252. How much time do you spend talking, playing or doing things with your family? Would you say:
1. a great deal   3. a little
2. pretty much   4. none at all

253. Compared to most families, would you say yours was:
1. very close
2. somewhat close
3. a little close, or
4. not close at all

422

REPEAT THIS SERIES OF QUESTIONS, USING AN ADULT IN THE FAMILY OF THE OPPOSITE SEX OF THE FIRST ONE THE RESPONDENT NAMED, IF AVAILABLE. FOR EXAMPLE, IF THEY NAMED THEIR GRANDMOTHER, ASK WHICH ADULT <u>MALE</u> THEY FEEL CLOSEST TO; IF THEY NAMED THEIR FATHER, ASK <u>WHICH ADULT</u> <u>FEMALE</u> THEY FEEL CLOSEST TO.

RECORD WHICH ADULT: _____

Ok, using the same card again **(FOUR ITEM OFTEN CARD)**, after each sentence I read you, I'd like you to tell me how often, that is: Often, Sometimes, Rarely, or Never, this statement applies to you.

264. I get along well with (adult)   O   S   R   N

Would you say this applies to you: Often, Sometimes, Rarely, or Never?

265. I feel that you can really trust
     (adult)   O   S   R   N

266. My (adult) does not understand me   O   S   R   N

267. My (adult) is too demanding   O   S   R   N

Would you say this applies to you: Often, Sometimes, Rarely, or Never?

268. I really enjoy my (adult)   O   S   R   N

269. I have alot of respect for my
     (adult)   O   S   R   N

270. I think my (adult) is terrific   O   S   R   N

271. I feel very angry towards my
     (adult)   O   S   R   N

272. I feel violent towards my
     (adult)   O   S   R   N

273. I feel proud of my (adult)   O   S   R   N

Would you say this applies to you: Often, Sometimes, Rarely, or Never?

(RETRIEVE CARD FROM RESPONDENT)

424

282. How often do you **parent(s)/guardian(s)** know who you are with then you are away from home?
        1. often   2. sometimes   3. almost never

283. How often do you know how to get in touch with your **parent(s)/guardian(s)** if they are not at home?
        1. often   2. sometimes   3. almost never

284. How often do your **parent(s)/guardian(s)** find time to listen to you when you want to talk to them?
        1. often   2. sometimes   3. almost never

285. How often do your **parent(s)/guardian(s)** know where you are when you're not at home or at school?
        1. often   2. sometimes   3. almost never

286. When your friends have ideas to do something all of a sudden, how often would you say you go along with them?
        1. often   2. sometimes   3. almost never

287. How often have you done things in this group that have ended up getting you in trouble?
        1. often   2. sometimes   3. almost never

288. Family members sometimes get into real arguments with each other. Tell me whether any of these next things happen: Often, Sometimes, or Almost Never. How often have you:

   a. shouted at your **mother/female guardian**?
        1. often   2. sometimes   3. almost never

   b. cursed at your **mother/female guardian**?
        1. often   2. sometimes   3. almost never

   c. struck your **mother/female guardian**?
        1. often   2. sometimes   3. almost never

   d. shouted at your **father/male guardian**?
        1. often   2. sometimes   3. almost never

   e. cursed at your **father/male guardian**?
        1. often   2. sometimes   3. almost never

   f. struck your **father/male guardian**?
        1. often   2. sometimes   3. almost never

289. If your **parent(s)/guardian(s)** had planned some punishment for you, how often can you talk them out of it?
        1. often   2. sometimes   3. almost never

Now I am going to ask you some questions about various kinds of violence and things related to violence that you may have seen or experienced.

During the last few years...

297. Has anyone robbed you or tried to rob you by using force or threat of force?
          1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES) a. how often/how many times? _____
            b. who did it? _____
            c. where did it happen?
                1. home   2. school
                3. neighborhood   4. other
                       (SPECIFY) _____

298. Have you seen someone else get robbed?
          1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES) a. how often/how many times? _____
            b. who did it happen to? _____
            c. who did it? _____
            d. where did it happen?
                1. home   2. school
                3. neighborhood   4. other
                       (SPECIFY) _____

299. Has anyone slapped, punched, hit or kicked you?
          1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES) a. how often/how many times? _____
            b. who did it? _____
            c. where did it happen?
                1. home   2. school
                3. neighborhood   4. other
                       (SPECIFY) _____

300. Have you seen someone else get slapped, punched, hit or kicked?
          1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES) a. how often/how many times? _____
            b. who did it happen to? _____
            c. who did it? _____
            d. where did it happen?
                1. home   2. school
                3. neighborhood   4. other
                       (SPECIFY) _____

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During the last few years...

306. ·Have you seen someone else get sexually assaulted, molested or raped?
         1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)   a. how often/how many times? _____
           b. who did it happen to? _____
           c. who did it? _____
           d. where did it happen?
                1. home   2. school
                3. neighborhood   4. other
                                    (SPECIFY) _____

307. Has anyone threatened you with a knife or gun?
         1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)   a. how often/how many times? _____
           b. who did it? _____
           c. where did it happen?
                1. home   2. school
                3. neighborhood   4. other
                                    (SPECIFY) _____

308. Has anyone attacked or stabbed you with a knife?
         1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)   a. how often/how many times? _____
           b. who did it? _____
           c. where did it happen?
                1. home   2. school
                3. neighborhood   4. other
                                    (SPECIFY) _____

309. Have you seen someone else get attacked or stabbed with a knife?
         1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)   a. how often/how many times? _____
           b. who did it happen to? _____
           c. who did it? _____
           d. where did it happen?
                1. home   2. school
                3. neighborhood   4. other
                                    (SPECIFY) _____

During the last few years...

314. Have you had somebody threaten to kill you?
         1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)   a. how often/how many times? _____
              b. who did it? _____
              c. where did it happen?
                 1. home   2. school
                 3. neighborhood   4. other
                                      (SPECIFY) _____

315. Have you seen someone get killed?
         1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES)   a. how often/how many times? _____
              b. who did it happen to? _____
              c. who did it? _____
              d. where did it happen?
                 1. home   2. school
                 3. neighborhood   4. other
                                      (SPECIFY) _____

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Now I have a few final questions to ask you about the interview.

a. Would you like to explain any of your answers further?

b. Is there anything important I've forgotten to ask you about?

c. Were there any specific questions that made you feel particularly uncomfortable?

d. I know it is difficult to remember all the things I've asked about, but have you deliberately misled me with any of your answers? (answering yes if you have *will not* affect your payment for participating in my study)
                                    1) Yes   2) No

(IF YES) Would you mind telling me the kind of things you misled me about (SPECIFY SECTION OR QUESTION TYPES)

_____

_____

_____

Ok, that concludes the interview. Thank you very much for your time and cooperation. Remember that everything you've told me is confidential. Now that we're finished, are there any questions that you would like to ask me?

Ok, thanks again. I really appreciate it.

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INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Now I would like to continue our interview but in a different way than what we have been doing. Rather than asking you questions where I want you to choose an answer, now I'd like for us to be able to just talk openly about some things. I still have a set of questions that I want to ask you about, but this time it's less structured than before, and I hope it can be more like a conversation. So is it ok that we keep going with the interview?

Just to remind you again, everything you tell me will be kept confidential, and no one will know what we've talked about. After this interview I will have no record of your real name, so your identity will be a secret and no one can link you to what you've said.

Remember that the law might require me to report to the authorities any statements you might make about planning to hurt someone in the future. I won't be asking you questions about that sort of thing now either.

Also, I wanted to remind you again that you don't have to answer any questions you don't want to, or talk about anything you don't feel comfortable talking about, and you can end this portion of interview at any time. If we get through most of the questions in this part of the interview, I'll give you an additional ten dollars.

I would prefer to record our interview so that I will remember the information you tell me as accurately as possible. Once I write down what's on the tape, I will erase it. OK?

ENTREE INTO THE GANG

Now I want to talk to you about your gang. You said before that you are a member of _____ .

How did you start hanging out with _____ ?

When did you decide to become a member?

What happened when you joined _____ ? How did you get in?

Did you have an initiation? What was it like?

How did you choose _____ instead of some other gang?

What were you feeling when you were initiated?

(for example, were you excited or scared or happy or nervous or angry?)

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GENDER

Before, you said that **state gender organization of gang**.

How many other girls are in your gang? How many guys?

Can you tell me more about that?

> (why do you think there aren't more girls?)

> (how do girls usually get involved with the gang? ex. dating member, family member involved)

Do girls and guys do the same things in the gang, or are there things that only girls do and only guys do?

What kind of guy has the most influence in the gang?

What kind of girl has the most influence in the gang?

Describe a girl you look up to in the gang, and tell me what makes you look up to her.

What are the girls like who don't make good members?

Are there girls that you wouldn't hang out with? Why?

Do you think girls contribute anything to the gang that would be missing if it was just guys?

> (like get the group to do things or not do things, make it more fun, things like that?)

What about guys, do they contribute anything that would be missing if it was just girls?

> (like get the group to do things or not do things, make it more fun, things like that?)

GANG INVOLVEMENT (keep gender in mind as a probe)

What does being in _____ mean to you?

> -what do you get from it that you wouldn't get otherwise? (like respect, or fear)

How many of your friends are in your gang?

What kinds of things do you do together?

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MORE GENDER ISSUES

Now I want to go back to what it's like being a *girl* gang member.

What are the benefits of being a girl in the gang?

What are some of the problems girls face being in the gang?

Do you think other people who aren't in gangs (like other youths, teachers, parents) look down on gangs?

Do people outside the gang react differently to girls in gangs than they do to guys?

FINAL QUESTIONS

Why do you think people your age join gangs?

Do you think girls join for the same reasons as guys?

What things do you like about being in your gang?

What do you dislike about it?

Do you think there will be a time in the future when you'll quit the gang?

What things have you learned from the gang that are useful to you today?

When you think about the future, what do you think you'll be doing?
What do you think you'll be like?

What do you like best about yourself?

How would your best friend describe you?

How would your **parent(s)/guardian(s)** describe you?

PROBES

Tell me about that.	Why/why not?
What was that like?	In what way?
How come?	What was the situation?
What do you mean by that?	Who was there?
What happened?	What's the meaning of ---?
Could you tell me more?	

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INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Now I would like to continue our interview but in a different way than what we have been doing. Rather than asking you questions where I want you to choose an answer, now I'd like for us to be able to just talk openly about some things. I still have a set of questions that I want to ask you about, but this time it's less structured than before, and I hope it can be more like a conversation. So is it ok that we keep going with the interview?

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Remember that the law might require me to report to the authorities any statements you might make about planning to hurt someone in the future. I won't be asking you questions about that sort of thing now either.

Also, I wanted to remind you again that you don't have to answer any questions you don't want to, or talk about anything you don't feel comfortable talking about, and you can end this portion of interview at any time. If we get through most of the questions in this part of the interview, I'll give you an additional ten dollars.

I would prefer to record our interview so that I will remember the information you tell me as accurately as possible. Once I write down what's on the tape, I will erase it. OK?

INTRO

I want to start by talking some more about the time you spend with your friends. You said before that you are not a member of a gang, but you have a lot of friends who are in gangs.

How did you start hanging out with these friends?

And you decided you didn't want to become a member? When did you decide this? Why?

What are the benefits of not becoming a member?

Did you tell your friends? How did they react?

Are your friends members of the same gang or different gangs (or different sets of the same gang)?

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GENDER

The gangs that you spend time with, are they mostly males, or females, or both? How many?

Can you tell me more about that?

> (why do you think there aren't more girls?)

> (how do girls usually get involved with the gang? ex. dating member, family member involved)

How did you get involved? a female friend or a boyfriend?

Do girls and guys do the same things in the gang, or are there things that only girls do and only guys do?

What kind of guy has the most influence in gangs?

What kind of girl has the most influence in gangs?

Are there girls that you wouldn't hang out with? Why?

Do you think girls contribute anything to the gang that would be missing if it was just guys?

> (like get the group to do things or not do things, make it more fun, things like that?)

What about guys, do they contribute anything that would be missing if it was just girls?

> (like get the group to do things or not do things, make it more fun, things like that?)

GANG INVOLVEMENT (keep gender in mind as a probe)

What do you like about spendint time with your friends who are in gangs?

> -what do you get from it that you wouldn't get otherwise? (like respect, or fear)

What kinds of things do you do together?

For instance, describe for me how you spend a typical day; like, for example, how did you spend yesterday?

What do you do to have fun?

Do you do anything to make money?

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