

CHARISMATIC ROLE THEORY: TOWARDS
A THEORY OF GANG DISSIPATION

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Christian Bolden, B.S.A.S.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For the greater part of the 20th century gangs were largely transitory due to the relatively rapid assimilation of white ethnic groups into mainstream culture. While gangs have always existed in the U.S. and were common in the 1940s and 1950s, most gangs did not begin to establish permanency in Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York until the late 1960s. This is logical because these three cities have the largest populations and the highest populations densities of unassimilated minorities (Vigil 2002). However, in the late 1980s and early 1990s the media reported a massive explosion of gang emergence throughout the country, designating gangs as a national problem (Knox, McCurrie, Laskey, and Tromanhauser 1996). Whether these reports were accurate has been disputed, but it is certain that they spurred theoretical and empirical investigations. Law enforcement agencies claimed that the rapid emergence of gangs in other cities occurred because gang members migrated with the intention of expanding the criminal empires of the gang nations¹. Others claimed that media showcasing of gang activities inadvertently disseminated gang culture to impressionable youth. The results of investigations into these claims provide evidence that gang migration to expand criminal empires was largely a myth (Quinn and Downs 1993) and that the transplanting of gang members was largely due to families

trying to escape from gang infested areas (Laskey 1996). Furthermore, gang emergence during the 1980s and 1990s was too massive to be accounted for by cultural dissemination through the media (Wells and Weisheit 2001).

Even if the numbers were not totally accurate, and the reasons for the emergence were inconclusive, it is obvious that "permanent" named gangs emerged throughout the United States in the late 1980s and 1990s (Knox et al. 1996).

The U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) reports that this trend may be reversing. These reports show that from 1996 to 2002 there was an overall decrease of 14% in gang membership (Egley and Major 2004). While this is dramatic in itself, the substantive significance is also shown in the demographics. The OJJDP reports that in 1996 the distribution of gang members in age categories was approximately 50% juvenile (under 18) and 50% adult (18+); however, in 2000 63% of gang members were adults and 37% were juveniles (Egley 2002). These statistics indicate that not only is gang membership declining, but also that the decline is predominately among juveniles. Some have theorized that these demographics are the result of law enforcement's lack of concern with younger members and computerized databases that are not purged of inactive gang members (Howell, Moore and Egley 2002). However, research has not investigated these hypotheses. Previous research has been dominated by studies that explore why gangs emerge and why individuals join gangs. Researchers have not explored the dissipation of gangs, particularly declining youth participation. The present study explores these issues and proposes Charismatic Role Theory as a new framework through which we can view these phenomena.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Any study of gang processes must begin with the origin of gangs. Vigil (1988; 1997; 2002) and Moore (1991) have extensively studied how gangs originate. Vigil (2002) maintains that gangs of various ethnic groups (Mexican, Black, Vietnamese, and Salvadoran) occur through what he calls multiple marginality, a macro- social structural concept. Several times in American history there has been immigration of large, economically frustrated white ethnic groups such as the Polish, Irish, and Italians (Vigil 2002). In all cases of white ethnics, the groups were eventually displaced from their lower class status by the immigration of new ethnic groups. The displacement moved white ethnics upward in class and economics. The group's solidarity generated by their initial lower class status allowed the white ethnic groups to create strong political groups as they moved up in class that would eventually dominate cities like Chicago. Ultimately, these white-ethnic groups were assimilated into mainstream American society and lost their ethnic distinction. Other non-white ethnic groups attempted to emulate the preceding white ethnic groups by creating powerful political coalitions during the civil rights era, largely by recruiting militant gang members; however, these non-white groups were ruthlessly suppressed and usually destroyed by law enforcement agencies (Sanchez 2003; Abramson 2003;

Vigil 2002). The ensuing media rhetoric would paint these ethnic groups as criminal or terrorist organizations rather than political groups. The criminal label seems to be the one that stuck.

Non-white ethnic groups were not displaced or at least not displaced in the same manner as white-ethnic groups. The lower-class status of Mexican-Americans who entered the U.S. as a lower social class has continuously been reinforced by constant immigration of Mexicans. The reinforcement causes two problematic aspects for the Mexican-American population. First, the immigration usually occurs in areas such as southern California that cannot economically sustain a massive Latino population (Moore 1991; Vigil 2002). Criminological theorists have indicated that areas with dense populations of non-white, poor immigrants are more likely to produce crime and delinquency (Shaw and McKay 1942), thus the continued immigration of Mexicans is potentially increasing delinquency. Second, the immigration of Mexicans reinforces Mexican cultural norms, which hampers the assimilation of Mexican-Americans into American culture. In effect, this creates a cultural limbo for the second and third generation children of immigrants. These youths are trapped between two cultures and tend to select a personal hodgepodge of cultural norms as a resolution. According to Vigil (2002) this compromise of two cultures is not advantageous to Mexican-American youth, because it alienates youth from their elders who are hostile about traditional cultural norms being rejected. Furthermore, because the youth are poor and not fully assimilated they are rejected or discriminated against by administrators and teachers in the public education system,

because the youth do not meet mainstream middle class standards (Cohen 1955).

Alienation from both cultures is part of what Vigil (2002) calls multiple marginality.

Blacks and Afro-mestizos (people of Black and Native American heritage) who migrated from the south to the west coast enjoyed a brief period of economic equality during World War II, but were displaced by white immigrants and white soldiers returning from the war. Unlike the experience of other ethnic groups, Blacks experienced a downward displacement because they were forced to accept lower paying jobs or forced out of work altogether. Because of institutionalized racist practices of housing discrimination, Blacks were also forced to vacate their homes to make room for white residents (Vigil 2002). The U.S. government attempted to solve the issue of displaced blacks by creating housing projects such as the Watts district, which consisted of 10,000 housing units for low-income blacks (Vigil 2002). What this allegedly benevolent governmental practice actually did was create a dense population of poor ethnic minorities with no capital in their community- an established recipe for crime and delinquency.

Vigil (1997) explains that high rates of poverty altered family structures, creating many single-parent homes with high rates of mental, physical, and sexual abuse. Schools in these areas contributed to marginality because middle-class teachers did not treat members of minority groups the same as other students. Class-based testing resulted in low-income students being tracked as students of lower intelligence. These schools also eventually forced members of non-white ethnic groups out of the academic and into the streets through zero tolerance policies (Vigil 1997). This alienation from home and school gives the appearance to an outsider, that

the youth have rejected society, rather than that society has rejected the youths. Consequently, the profile of youths as antagonists created a hostile and adversarial relationship between youth, the police, and the criminal justice system. Thus, the young are discouraged from seeking help and are untrusting of authorities and other adults. Marginalization through familial abuse, schools, rejection and police harassment created the ideal setting for the emergence of street gangs. These ethnic youth have no one to rely on but each other. This historical perspective provides insight into the emergence of gangs. However, it leaves some questions unanswered (Vigil 1997).

Researchers have also attempted to explain why gang subcultures tend to be more violent. Moore and Vigil (1998) suggest that gangs are not criminogenic (inherently criminal) but rather supportive of members who are delinquent. This would mean that individuals who are considered delinquent by society's standards, are not considered delinquent by the gang. Therefore, the gang accepts the behaviors of delinquent individuals. This is different from most criminological theories because it is stating that not all members of the subculture are delinquent, thus delinquency is not necessary for the gang. The gang is simply more likely to accept delinquent individuals. Furthermore, as previously established, areas with large, dense populations of poor ethnic minorities are likely to produce delinquency and gangs. Moore and Vigil (1989) suggest that Mexican, Salvadoran, and Vietnamese youth coming from homes rife with family violence are more likely to be psychologically disturbed and prone to violence. Any violence that they perpetrate is likely to be attributed to the subculture they belong to regardless of the real motivation.

Jankowski (1991) purports that a primary factor concerning violence is fear. Violence is usually initiated in chance encounters by groups that are disadvantaged numerically or otherwise as a means of gaining the advantage against a perceived threat. The aforementioned ideas do not explain why violence is allowed in gang subcultures or why it is an accepted means of problem resolution.

To explain violence in a subculture, it is necessary to establish four factors: history, temperament, opportunity, and ability. History consists of two parts, the history of the subculture and the history of the individual member. The history of the subculture simply refers to the practice of violence by previous adherents of the subculture who subsequently pass the practice on to newer generations. The history of the individual partly concerns those that are psychologically disturbed due to family violence and partly concerns the individual's experience with social institutions (Vigil 1997). It is a common misconception that institutions of social control are in agreement and that rules are clear and blatant. Education and law enforcement advocate the rule of cowardice (always fleeing from potentially violent encounters), However, the media seems to promote violence through violent movies, and celebratory images of the U.S. at war. Furthermore, parental figures are not unified in their agreement against violence. Some invoke the rule of cowardice, while others encourage their children to physically defend themselves against aggressors (Matza 1990). This rule of cowardice or defense is especially important for boys who are struggling to uphold their concept of manliness. Even the law makes an exception, claiming that a person may resort to violent defense when he is in his own home. Even the law has a concept of maintaining non-cowardice when someone is

threatened in their own haven, as in the presence of their family (Matza 1990). By extension, alienated youth understand the streets of their neighborhood as their home. The premise of these arguments is that the individual delinquent may have a history of receiving contradictory messages about violence.

A second aspect is temperament. This refers to the habit of incurring a fatalistic mood. Matza (1990) explains that youth feel trapped and controlled by their environment and surroundings. The youth are of an age in which they are burdened with more rules than persons of other ages and they feel as if they have no control over their own lives (Matza 1990). The result of this mood is a tendency to lash out and break rules. Doing something delinquent allows the adolescent to regain a sense of control (Matza 1990). While delinquency is not necessarily violent, violence is definitely delinquent.

The third aspect is opportunity. This is a result of what Matza (1990) calls “drift.” Drift is the experience of youth when they are not directly under the influence of social control agencies (i.e. parents, family, law), nor are they under duress to commit delinquent acts. The youth are temporarily free to yield to delinquency or legitimacy. Youth spend a considerable amount of time in this state of drift and commit a considerable amount of delinquent acts for which they are not caught (Matza 1990). Finding out that they can commit a delinquent act and not suffer consequences increases the likeliness that the act will be repeated. This understanding that rules cannot always be enforced encourages the occasions of delinquency.

The final aspect, ability, is what the individual can do in the subculture. Horowitz (1983) describes a machismo-like subculture in which perceived insults are

taken as attacks on one's self-esteem and self-efficacy. These attacks must be answered in a face-saving manner. The problem according to Horowitz (1983) is that the youth are already deficient in social capital. The self-esteem and self-efficacy of these youth are both already low due to alienation from school, lack of support at home, impoverishment, and a fatalistic view of being unable to escape their social class. Hence, the youths have no claim to other mainstream avenues of esteem such as academic achievement, money, or family prestige. An avenue to esteem from which youth are not blocked is physical prowess and propensity for violence. Thus if the subculture condones violence and physical prowess, then it provides an opportunity for advancement and esteem for all members. This esteem is also translated into power outside of the gang arena because of the fear it generates in the general population (Vigil 2002). While the literature has not fully explained violent behavior of gangs, the aspects of history, temperament, opportunity, and ability contribute significantly to understanding gang violence.

There are gaps in the literature concerning a number of issues. The first issue is the emergence of gangs in smaller cities and towns. Previous studies were done primarily in Los Angeles and Chicago, the gang capitals (known as such because of their long history of gangs, and because the modern typologies of gangs- Bloods, Crips, People, Folks, - derived from these cities). Although large, dense populations of poor immigrants and minorities, which have been cited for the emergence of street gangs in L.A. and Chicago, may explain the emergence in New York and other large cities, it does not explain the gang phenomenon in mid-size cities, or rural and suburban areas. The gangs in the larger cities have maintained their size and actually

grown slightly (Egley 2002), yet the phenomenon in other areas appeared in the late 1980s, rose rapidly in the early and mid 1990s, then declined rapidly in the late 1990s.

Many social science studies have been done on the emergence of gangs in mid-western cities. Many of these studies were based on the hypothesis that gangs migrated with the intention of spreading their criminal empire. This belief has consistently been found to have little or no validity (Quinn and Downs 1993). Even the connection between drug dealing and gangs has been found to be spurious by some (Moore 1991). Drug dealers and gangs exist in the same economically impoverished areas, but that does not make them one and the same. Moore's (1991) studies show that the two segments are often opposed to one another, because drug dealing is an illicit enterprise and gangs attract unwanted police attention. Other researchers operated under the assumption that youth were aspiring to gang membership because of the media's sensationalist coverage of gangs. The idea that gangs were spread through cultural dissemination by the media has met with mixed empirical results. Wells and Weisheit (2001) are skeptical of this theory and argue that it is impossible to empirically test it.

Vigil, Moore, and Garcia (1983) explore the spread of gangs through their study of gang members who were not residents of the neighborhood their gang resided in. Though the study concerned expansion in Los Angeles, there is no reason to assume that Vigil et al.'s (1983) conditions of territorial spread could not generate gangs anywhere else in the United States. One condition of territorial spread is migration of gang members. Studies have shown that families trying to escape areas

of gang prevalence move to other cities and states, however, their child or children are already committed to the gang, so they inadvertently transplant gangs to other places (Laskey 1996). Kinship ties between gang members and non-immediate family members in distant areas can also cause territorial spread through dissemination of ideas, attitudes, and beliefs (Vigil et al. 1983). Spread may also occur when non gang-related individuals seek aid from gang members in social or reformatory settings, thus binding themselves to the gang. This potentially incorporates people from non-gang areas, or those who would not join a gang under normal circumstances. And finally the bandwagon or mimicking effect cannot be ignored as Vigil (1988, 2002) notes that some gang sets of the Crips and White Fence admired the attributes of the original gangs and patterned themselves after those gangs. It is important to note that extensions of original gangs (individual members and extended groups) are significantly more violent in efforts to prove themselves and establish their ability to survive (Vigil et al. 1983).

The literature has provided an abundance of information regarding how gangs originate, why they are violent, and why they have spread to other areas. However, the literature has not explained why gang membership has declined in small cities and rural areas. Large cities have reported that their overall gang membership has increased by one percent; however, these large cities still experienced a decrease in juvenile gang membership (Egley 2002). This phenomenon has received little attention despite its importance; hence this will be the focus of my thesis.

The decline of gang membership and youth participation in particular, could be the result of macro-structural factors such as racial housing segregation and

employment discrimination. A reduction in these discriminatory problems may explain the decline of gangs in areas where these discriminatory problems were rampant. While it seems unlikely that discrimination and segregation have been eliminated, there may be areas where these problems have declined. Cities may have a larger proportion of minorities who have assimilated into mainstream culture, or alternately some areas may have a population dominance of minorities, such as the Hispanic majority in the site of this study, San Antonio, Texas.

Another possible factor related to the decline in membership is that in areas where gangs are relatively new, there are no “veteranos” or original gangsters (Vigil 1988), so there is largely an absence of charismatic influence for the continuation of the gang from older generations. Indeed, Winfree, Bernat, and Esbenson’s (2001) comparison of gang membership between a large city and a small one indicated the reasons for per capita gang membership discrepancy was the absence of older gang members in the smaller city. Older members provide positive reinforcement for gang membership in larger cities. My study will develop Charismatic Role Theory, a new theory that offers an explanation for the decline of gang membership by suggesting that the removal of particular members contributes to the decline of gang membership among youth.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

My study is a synthesis of subcultural theories and strain theory. It examines how the presence or absence of charismatic gang members contributes to the emergence, maintenance, and dissipation of gangs. More specifically, it emphasizes the transmission of deviant subcultures through charismatic individuals.

Strain Theory

It is important to examine the causes of deviance, specifically the causes of deviance in delinquent subcultures. Beginning with macro factors, Robert Merton's (1963) theory of social structure and anomie provides insight into the generation of deviance in response to society. Merton explains that institutions in this society consistently encourage the general population to attain a certain status or goal in society. While sometimes this goal can be intellectual advancement or artistic achievement, for the most part the emphasis is on attaining wealth. The ideology directed toward all members of society is that they can achieve this goal and they should achieve this goal. Because the emphasis is given by the broader society, these goals are called culturally favored goals.

The problem with achieving the goal arises because there are societal restrictions on what methods a person can use to achieve the goal. There are specified methods that a person should use, which are the legitimate means. These legitimate means would include going through the education system, obtaining a job, and working one's way up the job ladder. While this ideology purports that everyone can attain the culturally favored goals, in reality opportunities are unequal for different groups of people to use the legitimate means. A lack of access to the legitimate means to achieve culturally favored goals contributes to what Merton (1963) calls anomie. Anomie is defined as the state in which legitimate means and culturally favored goals are unstable or not equally balanced (Merton 1963: 139).

Merton (1963) explains that there are five forms of adaptation to the situation of anomie. The first and most common is conformity, in which a person utilizes the legitimate means (LG) to gain the culturally favored goal (CFG). All other forms of adaptation are considered deviant. The second form is innovation, which is the use of illegitimate means to reach the culturally favored goals. According to Merton (1963) innovation occurs because there is an overemphasis on the goal and not necessarily the means. However, those who choose to innovate are not judged equally. More specifically, an action by a person positioned in a higher status position in society is less likely to be viewed as criminal or wrong as the same action by someone in a lower class position (Merton 1963: 141-144). Since the emphasis is on the goal and rules are enforced arbitrarily, some people innovate by using illegitimate means to reach the goal. Some would suggest that this explains deviant behaviors of gang members such as drug dealing and theft, but this explanation can only tell a small

portion of the story. While it makes sense that gang members deal drugs and steal because they want more wealth and are unable to attain it through legitimate means, it is faulty to assume that all gang members do these things. There are still more deviant behaviors such as fighting, vandalism, and drug consumption that are not explained.

The third mode of adaptation is ritualism (Merton 1963). This occurs when the emphasis on culturally favored goals puts so much stress on a person, that the person rejects the goal and remains content with their lot in life. Although the individual has rejected the CFG, this person has still attained his position by using legitimate means, however he is satisfied at not advancing any further. This mode of adaptation is considered deviant because the person is no longer striving towards what the norms of society declare they should strive for. However this type of deviance is not relevant to the characteristics of gang members.

The fourth mode is retreatism. According to Merton (1963), this adaptation occurs when people have internalized CFGs and LGs and have placed a high value on them, yet their attempts at using the LGs have failed. Because they place a high value on legitimate means, they are morally restrained from using illegitimate means and a high level of frustration occurs. This frustration is resolved by completely rejecting CFGs and LGs through some form of escapism such as drugs, alcohol, vagrancy, or mental breakdowns. This adaptation may possibly describe the use of mind-altering substances and the hedonistic practices of gang members; it still only explains a small portion.

The last mode of adaptation is rebellion. Rebellion is a more collective mode of adaptation in which people reject the accepted CFGs and LGs. Those that have

rejected CFGs and LGs want to replace them with CFGs and LGs that they deem as more fair and accessible to the population (Merton 1963). There is no evidence that this adaptation relates to gang members in anyway. However, Merton (1963) discusses how rebellion is distinguished from resentment (1963: 156), and resentment seems very relevant to the existence of the gang member. Resentment indicates a situation where a person feels envy and hostility towards society or a part of society, and this person feels powerless to express that feeling against society, thus the person continually harbors these feelings. The person is not rejecting society, but has hostile feelings because of an inability to utilize LG's to gain CFG's. Merton (1963) does not discuss resentment further, but the concept seems very similar to ideas expressed by subcultural theorists.

Subcultural Theories

It is easier to understand the situation of anomie by taking a closer look at subcultures and how they relate to legitimate societal institutions. According to Albert Cohen (1955), the situation arises from the differences in working-class and middle-class values. Middle-class values are synonymous with the general values of society. Thus, the culturally favored goals and legitimate means described by Merton (1963) are a part of middle-class values. All sections of society are encouraged to adopt middle-class values and behaviors, even the working-class.

The problem for working-class youth is that working-class parents who have working-class values raise them. The youth are then thrust into public education systems that teach and enforce middle-class standards. These youths are now

competing against middle-class youth in the same setting who have the advantage of being raised with middle-class values and behaviors (Cohen 1955). Furthermore, the teachers and administrators are more likely to favor the actions of middle-class youth because these behaviors conform to the middle-class ideal of appropriate behavior. The behaviors of working-class youths, such as lack of manners, being boisterous, and fidgety, on the other hand, are likely to be considered deviant because they do not conform to middle-class standards (Cohen 1955). These working class youth are seen as deviant and unsuccessful by teachers, administrators, and counselors and are subsequently tracked as having low intelligence or ability. The grace and efforts of school officials are then given almost exclusively to middle-class youth. The working-class youth may begin to feel that the negative stereotypes he incurs are true, or he may believe that he is treated unfairly. Either way, the youth feels that he cannot attain the middle-class standard, although he still desires to attain it (Cohen 1955).

Because of the deviant label that working-class youth receive from middle-class authorities, these youth become ostracized (Adler, Mueller, and Laufer 2001). Cohen (1955) argues that these ostracized individuals find one another and form deviant subcultures. What makes these subcultures deviant? First, the individual behaviors of each member have already been labeled delinquent, so the subsequent actions of these individuals are also likely to be labeled delinquent. Secondly, the subculture forms from the common bond of feeling inadequate or unable to attain middle-class standards. Cohen (1955) argues that the subcultural response is the result of reaction formation. Reaction formation is when the person has internalized the desire to attain middle-class status, but is frustrated with the

perceived inability to attain that status (Freud 1964). Therefore, the person resolves this with a complete reversal, an outright rejection of societal standards, and a creation of another social world- the deviant subculture. Because societal standards are rejected, the youth is now able to commit crime and delinquent acts, because he no longer has to adhere to the rules of society. This seems remarkably similar to the concept of resentment that Merton (1963) discussed, with the added element of action. The societal situation of anomie (Merton 1963) and the middle-class measuring rod (Cohen 1955) explain deviance and deviant subcultures but they still do not tell the whole story.

My research is concerned with those deviant subcultures labeled gangs that have criminal and/or violent attributes. Differential association (Sutherland and Cressey 1974) produces the idea that criminal behavior is learned in intimate groups. Grounded culture and gang delinquency theory follows this in saying that gang culture is taught and maintained by other gang members (Sanders 1997). The avenues of learning are important because they may explain why deviant subcultures differ from one another.

Just as legitimate opportunity is unequally distributed among the social classes, illegitimate opportunity is unequally distributed among the working-class. Cloward and Ohlin (1960) explain that this unequal distribution is the reason there are different types of delinquent subcultures. There are three types of delinquent subcultures, the criminal gang, the conflict gang, and the retreatist gang (Cloward and Ohlin 1960). The criminal gang arises when social conditions provide opportunity for youth to participate in illegitimate profit ventures. What this means is that there are

adult criminals participating in activities for illegitimate financial gain and these adults are willing to utilize the disenfranchised youth as a resource. These youth shadow or model themselves after the adult criminals, making criminal connections and learning criminal methods. Thus, the primary focus of the youth subculture is illegitimate financial gain, which can take place through drug sales, theft rings, or any number of illegal innovations.

This opportunity for illegitimate financial gain does not always exist for frustrated youth. If there are no established adult criminals, then there is no guidance or venues for youth to venture into criminality for financial gain. Cloward and Ohlin (1960) explain that this lack of adult influence leads to the conflict gang. The youth develop their own sense of prestige, which entails toughness and violent capability. Violent behavior is prized and the arena in which this behavior is shown consists of other groups who have developed in the same manner. Hence, combat with other groups that share similar characteristics is the preferred method of attaining status in the conflict gang. While there is nothing to indicate that this type of subculture is more common, the violent aspects of these groups attract media attention and public fear.

The third type of subculture is the retreatist subculture (Cloward and Ohlin 1960). The retreatist subculture emerges when youth fail at both legitimate and illegitimate opportunities. Conditions for criminal and conflict gangs may or may not exist where retreatist subcultures are present, however the youth either lack criminal aptitude, or violent attributes, or suffer from their inability to break internalized moral rules, and at the same time they are unsuccessful at school and/or work. The retreatist

groups escape from reality through the use of esoteric kicks. These escape routes could entail the use of drugs, or sexually deviant behaviors. All deviant subcultures are likely to retain a few characteristics of more than one of the subcultural types, but Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) typology is useful because subcultures are usually dominated by one type.

Strain theory (Merton 1963) sets the social scene for the possibility of deviance. The middle-class measuring rod (Cohen 1955) explains the alienation of working-class youth specifically, and the subsequent formation of subcultures that are hostile to the general social world. Opportunity theory (Cloward and Ohlin 1960) helps us understand the variation in subcultures due to available opportunities. The problem with all of these theories is that they are deterministic. The theoretical premises of determinists operate under the assumption that specific conditions will lead to specific outcomes. Matza (1990) challenges deterministic theories on several points. Firstly, while previous theorists explain the cause of deviance and the formation of subcultures, they do not explain why the deviance is generally limited to the time period of adolescence and why the majority of delinquents mature out of delinquency. If factors that led to delinquent subcultures are inevitable in our current society or the subcultures are destined to be considered deviant, then why don't the individuals continue to be deviant?

Secondly, Matza (1990) argues that deviant subcultures cannot be totally oppositional and hostile to general society because they are consistently encircled and encroached upon by conventional societal agents such as parents, teachers, and law enforcement authorities. In the presence of the aforementioned societal agents, the

youths are likely to conform to conventional ways and acknowledge the legitimacy of the authority of societal agents. If the youth subculture were completely oppositional, then the youth would not recognize the authority of others and not acknowledge any understanding of doing wrong deeds when confronted by these authorities.

Lastly, Matza (1990) argues that assuming youths are committed to delinquent subcultures is entirely incorrect. Delinquent youth participate in conventional society quite often, and are not adverse to it. However, these youths are not committed to conventional society either. Matza (1990) explains that these youths exist in a state of drift, where they may drift in or out of delinquency depending on supervision and temperament. Adolescents are at a significant stage in their life, where they are growing out of childhood, but prevented from becoming adults. They have more rules and restrictions than any other age group. Thus, the youth feel a sense of powerlessness over their lives and futures, which culminates in a tendency to take back control through the use of deviance. Lashing out through deviance gives no indication of committing to deviance. However, successfully committing a deviant act and not being apprehended for the act is likely to inspire more acts of deviance. It is again important to note that drift (Matza 1990) does not suggest a commitment to deviance. In fact, Matza (1990) claims that the popular notion of gangs demanding total unconditional loyalty stems from the constant loss of membership due to members maturing out of the gang, and other members drifting back into conventional lifestyles. Hence, the notion of gang loyalty is suspect since membership changes at a rapid rate.

So far theorists have explained social conditions that increase the likelihood of deviance through adaptations such as innovation and retreatism (Merton 1963). Subcultural theorists were more specific in explaining the development of delinquent subcultures because of the frustration of not achieving middle class status, mainly due to middle class blockades (Cohen 1955). Opportunity theory explained the how different subcultures emerge depending on social factors (Cloward and Ohlin 1960). Matza (1990) explained that delinquency is not inevitable or destined, but rather a condition created by the societal treatment of adolescents. Though the basis of my theory is in the ideas of Merton (1963) and Cohen (1955), my study of the charismatic roles of gang members provides evidence to support the typology of Cloward and Ohlin (1960) and the idea of drift presented by Matza (1990). My study also takes further steps in examining how gangs are maintained rather than developed.

The theory put forth in this thesis is that charismatic youth maintain gangs and recruit new members, and the removal of such members leads to a decline in membership among youth if no other charismatic leaders appear. The assumptions and tenets of this theory are testable, however, it is important to first conduct an exploratory qualitative investigation of a new theory to see if it merits further empirical investigation. If this theory should prove to have merit, then it may be able to shed light on the dissipation of gangs, or lack of juvenile recruitment that is revealed in government statistics. The theory is explained in the following section.

CHAPTER IV

CHARISMATIC ROLE THEORY

Charismatic role theory is ultimately a theory about cultural transmission.

This theory assumes that culture is learned and that particular members of groups teach the culture to others. The foundation of this theory is built on Cohen's (1955), and Merton's (1996) ideas about the motivation of youth to join delinquently labeled subcultures and participate in deviant modes of innovation. Previous theories have not focused on the process of subcultural maintenance, continuation or dissipation.

Charismatic role theory concerns itself with these processes, with the dissipation of gangs as the focal point. More importantly, previous theories have neglected the importance of particular members of the gang, and this theory seeks to rectify this neglect.

This theory argues that there are particular members within gang subcultures that are highly charismatic and that these members are the keys to the continuation of the subculture. Charismatic members inspire a following of other people both intentionally and unintentionally. For this reason I will operationalize charisma as personal charm or fervor that inspires an enthusiastic following of other people. Indeed, Weber (1966: 328) describes the charismatic leader as having some exceptional, heroic, or exemplary quality that allows the leader to set the normative

patterns for others. Jankowski (1991) states that charismatic leaders in gangs differ from Weber's concepts in two ways. First, there is more than one leader and the leadership role is passed around this inner circle of leaders arbitrarily. Secondly, all members of the gang can potentially become a charismatic leader, but those that are not leaders recognize the advanced characteristics of the people who are leaders (Jankowski 1991).

Delinquency in deviant subcultures comes from individuals learning more definitions favorable to lawbreaking than definitions favorable to law abiding (Sutherland and Cressey 1974). For instance, the law would define fighting as an illegal violation of a person's right to not suffer bodily harm; on the other hand, defining fighting as protecting yourself, your family, your friends, and your turf is a definition favorable to breaking the law. The charisma of certain members allows them to provide enough definitions to others that are favorable to committing deviant acts or breaking the law and joining a delinquent subculture. While ostracized youth can easily locate each other, I hypothesize that it takes people of a certain charisma to maintain a nexus that continually unites these youth. For descriptive purposes I will call these charismatic people core gang members. The core gang members by definition are charismatic, are highly committed to the gang, participate in the more serious crimes (specifically acts of violence), and are connection points between peripheral gang members (those members who are not as highly committed to the gang) who may not know each other.

The theory I propose centers on the core gang member. There is usually more than one core member that provides an inner-circle of the gang. This inner circle is

the foundation of the gang where core members and thus prestige are located. The core members set precedents for gang activity that radiate outward. The core members recruit new members either through active selection or by attracting impressionable youth who are impressed by the core member's reputation of street prowess. While indoctrinating new members into the gang, usually through acts of physical violence or bravado, the core members actively select the new generation of core members by including these recruits in the more clandestine and criminal activities. Hence, the new generation is socialized; gang culture has been transmitted and continued.

If much of the emergence of gangs in the U.S. continued in this manner, then dialectically, the gangs began the process of their own destruction. Sensational media coverage attracted attention to gangs, which consisted of primarily young minority males. Gangs were perceived as a threat and a social problem; thus law enforcement reacted strongly toward these groups. Police created specialized gang units to combat this "social problem" and tried using a variety of methods to dismantle the gangs (Katz 2001). However, before the mid-1990s, the status of being a gang member was not illegal², therefore the police could do little but keep a close watch. Core members who committed serious crimes gave law enforcement officials grounds for arrest and prosecution.

With the rapid emergence of various gangs there was inevitable conflict. My hypothesis is that core members are more committed to the gang and the gang culture; hence they are more apt to commit serious violent crimes, because violence is a part of the gang culture. As stated previously in Vigil et al.'s (1983) study of gang

expansion, new gangs are considerably more violent due to their efforts to establish a reputation. When several different gangs emerge, they simultaneously set off a cycle of violence. The core members will be the primary participants in this violence, and they will target the core members of other gangs (their competition). The emergence of gangs in the late 1980s and 1990s occurred at the same time that high-tech automatic weapon availability increased³. This allowed core members to begin bloody campaigns to eliminate core members of other gangs. The media coverage of this inspired strong public backing for law enforcement. New laws were made that allowed gangs to be pursued under organized crime statutes and harsh penalties for gang-related crimes were instituted (Carlie 2005). The bloody campaigns of core gang members resulted in the death of many people and gave law enforcement agencies the opportunity to arrest these members and incarcerate them. Death and incarceration both neutralized core gang members and eliminated charismatic leadership.

If core gang members are removed or eliminated, then the process of gang enculturation (accepting behavior patterns of a subculture) cannot continue. This means that there are fewer people to actively recruit or attract the ostracized youths, and there are fewer people to provide a nexus of connection once these youth locate each other. Gang benefits and ideologies are not modeled for new generations of youth, resulting in fewer reasons to join gangs, fewer available opportunities to join gangs, and fewer definitions favorable to joining gangs or participating in the criminal activity characteristic of gangs. It makes sense to hypothesize that fewer juveniles will are join gangs.

Though it may seem that a decrease in gang membership is beneficial to society, the perception is somewhat misleading. If core gang members are neutralized or eliminated, thereby reducing some of the more violent crimes, the problems that led to the existence of these gang members in the first place are still not addressed. By eliminating these charismatic individuals, the primary accomplishment is that the masses of frustrated, powerless youth are left without anyone to lead them. In effect, this removal of leadership creates a void in which a variety of other problematic behaviors can emerge.

It was this situation of leadership removal that created the modern-day Bloods and Crips. California enjoyed a period during which there was an absence of gang conflict between 1965 and 1970. This Watts riots unified former enemies against police abuses (Alonso 1999). The Black Panther Party, and other black power organizations harnessed the emotional resources of frustrated masses of minority youths. These black power organizations were considered a threat and a social problem by law enforcement authorities, which subsequently participated in aggressive actions against these organizations. Ultimately, these organizations were neutralized by the elimination of charismatic leadership through death and incarceration. Among the masses of the now leaderless minority youth, a semi-charismatic 15 year-old Raymond Washington emerged as a leader. Trying to pattern his group after the Black Panthers, he lacked the experience and the integrity to steer his group in the footsteps of the Black Panthers and his group quickly fell into crime. This group came to be known as the Crips, and their rapid growth and crime sprees caused other groups of frustrated youth to make an alliance called the Bloods to

oppose them (Alonso 1999). As we know, this rivalry and its violent manifestation would spread across the entire U.S.

The origin of the Bloods and Crips is an example of what can happen when a void is created around a people who are potentially volatile. It is possible that the conditions suggested by my theory caused a void that has created a generation of drug users. The reasoning supporting this hypothesis is as follows:

Although an increase in arrests is not necessarily synonymous with an increase in use, tentatively using arrests as a gauge supports my theory. There has been a 60% increase in juvenile arrests for drug violations in the last 10 years (Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Investigations 2002). It is likely that youth have simply moved away from conflict and criminal gangs (Cloward and Ohlin 1960) to subcultural groups not traditionally defined as gangs. These groups- car clubs, party crews, etc. have as their common denominator, high amounts of drug use. In effect these youth may have replaced criminal deviance with the esoteric kicks of retreatist groups (Cloward and Ohlin 1960) to dull feelings of powerlessness. Perceptions of severity may differ but ultimately retreatist groups are not any better than conflict and criminal subcultures. It is possible that the elimination strategy has only removed one problem to create another one. It is likely that emphasis will shift again towards attacking drugs, which will only create another void and allow another social problem to emerge. Furthermore, the removal of charismatic members by law enforcement only displaces the problem because the people are put into prison where they create a steady pool of recruitment for the more organized prison gangs.

CHAPTER V

DATA AND METHODS

This study is an exploratory inquiry; therefore qualitative investigation is best suited for the purpose of this study. While one of the major focal points of this investigation is a preliminary examination of charismatic role theory, this study was open to a grounded theory approach, which allows for alternative explanations for gang dissipation. The study was conducted using fourteen in-depth interviews and one telephone interview with former gang members. Definitions of gangs or gang members are problematic and varied, but they still merit discussion. Reviewing all previous definitions of gangs would provide a seemingly endless litany of definitions, which is not feasible for this work to cover. Instead I will attempt to abbreviate a review of definitions by examining typologies of definitions.

It has been convincingly argued that gangs are not groups. Yablonsky's (1959) study showed that authorities and the media misidentified gangs as organized groups. Yablonsky (1959) found this assumption to be incorrect because the gangs he studied had no measurable number of members, no definition of membership, no specific roles of members, no understood consensus of gang norms, and no clear flow from leadership to action. While Yablonsky's (1959) findings are important, defining something by what it is not is of little value to research. Defining something by what

it is not is also the pitfall of other lexical definitions. Lexical or dictionary definitions are usually created by a certain class, thus the definition is likely to clash with the perspectives of other groups (Ball and Curry 1995).

Some researchers and theorists have used a denotative method of defining gangs. The denotative method is a precise definition that leaves no room for ambiguity, and primarily consists of examples that represent what is being defined. Using the denotative method causes two problems. The first problem is that the denotative term evolves into a connotative expression (Ball and Curry 1995). The term evokes an emotion and the meaning of the term is tied to the emotion. For instance, the terms *erotica* and *pornography* can refer to the same thing depending on the beholder, but the term *pornography* has more of a negative connotation. This connotative issue is the same with the word *gang* as opposed to *crew*, *posse*, *clique*, or *squad*. Secondly, denotative definitions would have to include all applicable examples, and the fact that there is great variation between gangs and continuous changes in gangs makes the task extremely difficult (Ball and Curry 1995).

Another way of defining gangs is through analytic definition. Analytic definition lists the properties of the gang (Ball and Curry 1995). The problem with this type of definition is the tendency to focus on one property and ignore others. A common property in the analytic definition of gangs is violent or criminal behavior (Ball and Curry 1995). Analytic definitions are favored by law-enforcement agencies and some researchers who consider violence or criminal behavior the most salient property of gangs. The perceived saliency of a certain property causes several problems. First, other properties are ignored and overlooked. Secondly, variations

between gangs are ignored. Lastly, violence and criminal behavior is always assumed to be gang-related. Attributing gang motivation to crimes ignores Matza's (1990) argument that the deviant behavior of an individual was a response to the adolescent situation of feeling trapped and controlled rather than a motive of the gang he was apart of. Fleisher (2002) continues this line of reasoning, and indicates that the widely held concept of the gang as a group or an organization is false. Fleisher (2002) studied female members of various gangs in Champaign, Illinois. None of the members knew all of the other members of the gang, and the majority knew less than 10% of the other members. Thus rather than being a unified gang, Fleisher (2002) described members as being a part of a social network. Fleisher (2002) argues against the concept of the gang as a group and classification of crimes as gang-motivated or gang-related because most of these events have nothing to do with the whole group, but everything to do with the small social network of the individuals involved. The saliency of violence as a property of gangs is highly problematic and a major flaw in the use of analytic definitions.

Another alternative way of defining gangs is through synthetic definitions. Synthetic definitions combine other types of definitions and try to place the phenomenon in a broader context (Ball and Curry 1995). Examples of this would be Yablonsky's (1959) definition of the gang as a near-group, which is somewhere in between an organized group and a disorganized mob. While these types of definitions seem better suited for research, there are still a few problematic issues. First, a common mistake is confusing correlated variables with analytic properties. For instance, stating that gangs consist of adolescent males is a correlate not a property

because gangs are not exclusively adolescent or male (Ball and Curry 1995). A second mistake is using causal factors in the definition, and a third problem in synthetic definitions is stating that a group is a gang because other groups, such as law enforcement agencies, define them as a gang (Ball and Curry 1995).

Lastly, some researchers use the implicative method of definition. The implicate method defines gangs as a dynamic process (Ball and Curry 1995). This type of definition is associated with emic methodology, which tries to view the gang through the perspective of the research subject. The problem with this method of definition is that it lacks precision, which is unsatisfactory for those who do not adhere to emic methodology (Ball and Curry 1995).

Previous definitions of gangs have been problematic and future definitions are likely to share the same issues. However, this problematic situation does not negate the necessity of defining the phenomenon. With the understanding that even this definition may be problematic, I will use a part of Ball and Curry's (1995) abstract definition and add correlates that I, the researcher, deem important. Ball and Curry (1995: 240) define a gang as "a spontaneous semisecret, interstitial, integrated but mutable social system whose members share common interests and that functions with relatively little regard for legality but regulates interaction amongst its members." To this definition I will add the correlates of a notion of territoriality and loyalty, an adverse relationship with law enforcement and other institutional authorities, varying frequency of engaging in delinquent acts, and hostility towards other groups with similar characteristics. However, emic methodology will be apparent because the operational definition of gang members in this study will be

anyone who self-identifies as such. The purpose of having a definition other than the operational one is to include people who do not self-identify but still fit all the characteristics.

The respondents were in the age range of 23 to 30. This age group was selected to generate knowledge from the time of interest, which will be the late 1980s to the mid 1990s. Howell et al. (2002) report that nine out of ten localities reported what is termed “late onset gangs,” which are those gangs that appeared between 1986 and 1996. The late onset gangs were distinguished from traditional gangs as having more females, more Caucasians, more racial/ethnic mixture and more middle class teens.

The sample was not limited to any particular group. The respondents varied enough so that most of the major gang nations were represented. The sample consisted primarily of former members of the Bloods, Crips, People, and Sureno affiliation, and although two respondents were intermediately associated with a Folk gang, their primary affiliation was with other groups so there was not any solid representation of the Folk nation gangs. The Nortenos and Stone nation groups were not represented.

The sample consisted of 4 black males, 1 mixed race (black/white) male, 3 Mexican-American males, 1 Puerto Rican male, 4 white males, and 2 Mexican-American females (see table I for demographic breakdown of respondents). This study concerned itself strictly with street gangs. Respondents were accessed through snowball sampling. This technique consists of the researcher locating some members of the targeted population and having those members provide information in locating

potential respondents (Babbie 2002). This sampling procedure is largely used for exploratory purposes. Interviews were conducted on neutral sites during daylight hours as agreed by both the respondent and myself. I gave the subject a consent form and I obtained a signed copy. The interviews were tape-recorded and subsequently transcribed. The respondents were given pseudonyms to protect their identity.

The study was done in San Antonio, Texas because of the known extensiveness of its gang situation. A report by the Texas Attorney General's office (Stanley 1992) stated that San Antonio did report having a gang problem, and that the gangs were using high-powered weaponry such as the AK-47 and the SKS. The entertainment industry also made note of the gang situation in San Antonio when a famous rap artist from California, released a song proclaiming San Antonio to be "just like Compton" (a city adjacent to Los Angeles, notorious for its gang situation and the birthplace of the Piru Bloods). The volatile situation in San Antonio during the time period that this study is concerned with is portrayed by one of the respondents,

Oso: *When I was living in San Diego (California), the gangsters there were like "oh, you are from San Antonio, we heard ya'll are crazy down there."*

Additionally having data from a single city allows me to see local patterns and identify macro-structural factors that may need to be further investigated.

Table I. DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN

| | <i>Age</i> | <i>Race/Ethnicity</i> | <i>Sex</i> | <i>Region of gang involvement</i> |
|--------------------|------------|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|
| Dj Cast | 26 | White | Male | Northeast-Converse |
| Kinkaid | 27 | Black | Male | Northeast |
| Mama T | 26 | Mex-American | Female | Northeast/West |
| Lil' Soldja | 24 | Black/White | Male | Northeast |
| Rush | 28 | Mex-American | Male | Northeast-Universal City |
| Cajun | 27 | White | Male | Northeast-Live Oak |
| T-Note | 25 | Puerto Rican | Male | Newark, NJ Northeast- Schertz |
| Scrappy | 26 | White | Male | Northeast |
| Shuga | 27 | Black | Male | Northeast |
| Pranx | 23 | Black | Male | East |
| Balla | 23 | Black | Male | East |
| Royal | 26 | Mex-American | Male | Central West Northeast |
| Azul | 26 | White | Male | Tulsa, OK |
| Oso | 30 | Mex-American | Male | South |
| Sleek | 23 | Mex-American | Female | Northeast South |

CHAPTER VI

RESULTS: DEFINING GANGS AND GANG MEMBERS

The results of this study shed light on the difficulty researchers and officials have in defining gangs. The aforementioned groups tend to favor stable definitions that can be applied in a variety of circumstances. However, Yablonsky (1959) argued that gangs had no measurable number of members and no definition of membership. Evidence for both arguments were apparent in the accounts of the subjects in my study. For instance, many of the subjects had difficulty defining the number of gang members in their groups. Five of the subjects were a part of the Sa Town Bloods. Responding to the question of how many members were in the gang, the participant's answers were not in agreement,

Dj Cast (26): *Well, I was in a specific set*, S.T.B. 's, which we created, me and my friends in school...I mean in the very beginning it was say 10 friends...I say by the end of one year we had already accumulated a good 30 or so and I swear by the next year we heard about them in different schools and everything and we didn't even know these people. You know they were claiming* our set, so we had already blown up to that status where people would copycat, which was cool.*

Kinkaid (27): *I mean it was lots, but just the ones that I hung with it was pretty much maybe like 10, 10 yeah, maybe a little more.*

Rush (28): *man, at one time like maybe 20 guys I can remember just standing out there on the side looking at them Crips standing up against the Cafeteria at the gray campus at Judson High School. We just, they never fucked with us because there was just too many of us, it was lots of us and we had all*

kinds of sets there and they had Crips there, but I think that pretty much there were more of us than there was of them... but so I would say 20 maybe at the most before everybody started going to alternative school and getting to where they wouldn't go to class anymore.

Scrappy (26): *Ain't no tellin'. I can't say, I'd say, the people I knew, about 50 or 60 of them in that one deal.*

Lil' Soldja (24): *I'd say about 8 that knew.*

While numerical discrepancies are obvious in these accounts, further details about these respondents make the non-matching numbers more significant. Rush seems to include members of other Blood sets in his answer, which may be the case with Scrappy also; however, their accounts do not match. Furthermore Lil' Soldja says that he entered the gang at 15. The other Sa Town Bloods entered the gang at age 14, which places Lil' Soldja's entry into the gang at least three years after the others, yet his count was only 8. While it is possible that the other members had left the gang by this time, it may indicate the occurrence of dissipation. None of the other respondents were from the same group, so comparisons were not possible. However, none of the other respondents could give a definite number of members and most had difficulty even approximating. For instance,

Cajun (D.O.G.): *Well, the group is not black and white...I mean it's fluid, it's not set in stone because there were so many people that were this set and that set and that were different but the same and these people got along and these people didn't get along, but it just really depends. Because I moved so much, I identified with different people at different times, and you know I would say at some point with some of the people I was running around with, I've heard that there is like over 500,000 nationwide, so that is a lot of people, but it really depends upon, you know. I don't know all of them so it's just who you know and who you are really tight with.*

Oso (Klik): *Maybe like five hundred, six hundred people.*

The fact that the respondents could not account for numerical membership in their own gangs does not indicate that they had distorted, inaccurate, or exaggerated perceptions. Yablonsky (1959) notes that members do not really know how many other members there are and what their roles are. This situation may occur because gangs are not the definitive entities that officials have claimed they are. Fleisher's (2002) study also showed that the members knew less than 10% of the members of their gang, and the sub-groups or small social networks were more descriptive of the experience of a gang members relation to the gang. The respondents in this study provided some confirmation of the social network scenario,

Dj Cast: *Well, I think with any group of friends period. I mean you get together with like your work colleagues, no matter how you put it you know, you got people who you know everybody at work is friends, but certain people from work will go out to the bar together or you know go shoot pool together. Same thing with the set, you know you have a set of 30 to 50 dudes, which was a relatively small set but that was our set. 50 dudes, you know all get along, we come together when we need to, but you know, there was just several groups of friends within that group that would hang out more.*

I: *Were there any subgroups or sub cliques in the gang?*

Cajun: *All the damn time, all the damn time. Some people are tighter with others and before you would know it, you might be in the same gang but ya'll are fighting too, because there is just a lot of personalities involved and you know people are different sometimes.*

Fleisher (2002) also pointed out that most of the respondents in the Champaign study had several members of other gangs in their gang social network. Some of the respondents in this study indicated similar situations. **Royal**, a former Big Time King had this to say,

Well when I was younger, we would always break off. It was like 5 or 6 in the immediate group but when we would meet up with people you know,

30, 50 people, just depending on who we met up with because we were just one individual set. But we, we just didn't hang by ourselves you know what I mean, and then not only that but we would hang out with other gangs, um, because we were black (gang color), so you know the BBZ- the Bad Boyz, the Latin Kings, anybody who was black ragers, and red ragers were cool too, at that time, it was just basically the difference between red and black was Mexican and Black (laughs) you know what I mean.*

The social gang network provides a basis for understanding the difficulty in counting gang members. However, not much research has been done concerning people who are affiliated or associated with gangs. Nearly all of the respondents indicated that there were members that were only temporary and not fully affiliated. This was accepted as a normal thing and not looked upon negatively.

Royal: *Yes, you always had them you know...they would always be affiliated, they were there one year, not there the next year, you know what I mean, or they would, they would move, you know, but yeah, you always had some like that. It wasn't a problem, as long as you were down to fight with us; we were cool with that. As long as you had our back and that is basically that.*

People who were temporarily or not fully affiliated with gangs create a quagmire for those attempting to determine the membership of a gang. Words such as affiliate, associate, and wannabe are used to refer to these individuals. However, the line between these individuals and other gang members is thin and often transparent. For example, Pranx is a respondent who grew up and lived most of his life in the Wheatley Courts, a notorious east side neighborhood known for its gang involvement. Pranx was never officially rolled-in, which means he did not participate in the gang's initiation rite in which an individual must withstand a physical attack from several other members simultaneously. Because he did not go through an initiation rite, he does not consider himself an actual member; however, he stated that

he and anyone else who moved into the neighborhood would be "down" with the Wheatley Courts. The word "down" is used by gangs to state that someone is siding with a certain group and will fight for and support that group. Furthermore Pranx went everywhere with that group and although he did not participate in violence, he participated in illicit drug sales, and other criminal activities with the gang. Pranx no longer lives in the Wheatley Courts but maintains frequent associations with the members. He wears the color red daily to represent his affiliation, and will openly declare his association, yet at the same time declare that he is not a member. Other than an initiation rite, the attributes of Pranx are remarkably similar to people that officials normally label as gang members.

Pranx exemplifies the problem of determining who is and who is not a gang member. If an individual has many blatant attributes of a status, then the individual's denial of that status seems insufficient to exclude them from that status. To be clearer, it is difficult to exclude associates and affiliates from gang membership for these reasons,

- 1) Not being a member of a gang does not preclude a person from being a gangster- these individuals still commit crimes in conjunction with the members of a gang.
- 2) Any outside group will not differentiate between the supposed associate and the larger group.
- 3) Law enforcement officials label this individual as a member if he is encountered with the group and especially if they are caught committing crimes together.

4) Opposing groups will consider the supposed associate an enemy and attack him along with the group, and alternately the supposed associate will defend from an attack on a group he is with.

The reasons stated above make the difference between associates/affiliates and members almost negligible to any outside observer, be it law enforcement, social researchers, or other gangs. It can be argued that this type of individual is not likely to initiate attacks on other people, however, their known and flagrant association with a group and representation of its colors and/or symbols are an invitation to conflict with other groups. A report from the Texas Attorney General's office (1992) concerning a gang survey given to Texas cities showed that reported gang membership could vary by a factor of 2 or 3 due to the issue of associates/affiliates. The report noted that there was no uniform definition for what a gang is or who is in it (Stanley 1992). Each police department establishes its own definition. Cities like Houston, Texas made a point of excluding associates/affiliates, while others like El Paso and Corpus Christi included them in their gang files as associate members.

The concept of associate member rather than associate or affiliate seems more accurate due to reasons listed above as well as the perceptions of the gang members themselves. For instance, **Scrappy** a proclaimed member had this to say:

There were some that weren't fully affiliated. Like getting, they didn't get rolled in or nothing like that, they just hung around. There was certain people like that, but the way it was with those people, were just as much as us...because you know they were hanging around us, something happens, they are in it. So really it was like they were a part of it. If you hanging around, you are a part of it, but you are not really a rolled in, true way to get in type stuff.

The account given by **Balla**, an associate, agrees with this description,

Yeah, see like me, I wasn't actually a member but I was real close to them. People actually thought I was (a member) because of how much I hung around them. But you basically, you in or you out. They knew I wasn't in, but they knew I was cool...and I was down for whatever they did, you know what I'm saying, but when it came down to it, you know, I didn't, I didn't claim it like that you know. I basically did everything they went through, I just wasn't you know full time like that you know.

It is evident that associates are very much a part of the gang and gang landscape and therefore should be included as associate members rather than ignored. Before proceeding a few more categories should be discussed.

Wannabes are another category of people that are sometimes excluded from being defined as gang members by law enforcement agencies (Stanley 1992).

Wannabes refers to those members who desire to be in the gang, but are currently not a part of the gang. Although wannabes may not be fully accepted in the gang arena, their activities still mirror that of other gang members and full acceptance is their goal. **Royal** discusses wannabe status in response to being asked at what age he joined a gang,

...fifth grade, a wannabe in sixth and seventh grade, because I don't think nobody truly is, but you can't say a wannabe is not dangerous, you know what I'm saying, they are trying to prove...I guess we were just in that wannabe stage, so I say about sixth grade. Seventh grade is when I got rolled in downtown.

Wannabes are another group that may have not technically joined the gang but are still participating in gang activity. For practical purposes, they can be classified in this study together with associate members. Taking into account the presence of associate members and wannabes, it is easier to understand the confusion of

authorities as well as the gang members as to who is and who is not included in the gang.

Two other categories that require discussion are peripheral members and core members. These groups are always classified as gang members by authorities and others. The report from the Texas Attorney General's office (Stanley 1992) makes these distinctions between the two categories: Core members have a longer history with the gang, usually joining between 10 and 14 years of age and leaving the gang when they are 22 years or older. Whereas peripherals join the gang between 14 and 18 years of age and leave when they are 20 or older. Both groups are involved in violence, but more criminality is found in core members. And although identification with the gang, or using the gang as identification is strong in peripheral members, it is profound in core members. While important, these generalities do not point to the relevance of these differences, which is the function that core members have in the gang.

Core members are more violent and apt to commit more serious crimes, which inspires fear and respect from other members. This fear and respect or charisma is what attracts the peripheral members. The peripheral members lack these aspects and therefore the distinctions that come with those aspects. However, the peripheral members are still highly involved in the gang.

Fluidity of Membership

An unexpected finding that is relevant to gang definitions is fluidity. While it was not a primary concern of this study, and therefore not examined more in-depth, it is important to note that none of the respondents indicated any difficulty leaving the gang. The media propagated idea of blood in- blood out (having to suffer violence to get in and again to get out) was not supported by any of the respondents in this study. A study done in St. Louis also found that leaving the gang was a relatively easy process, with very few people suffering violence, because the attachment between members lessens the propensity to cause harm to each other (Decker and Lauritsen 2002). Matza (1990) explains that the gang's main opponent is attrition because of members maturing and drifting back into legitimacy. Because of the fallout, gangs espouse an ideology of loyalty and lifelong membership, but the reality is that membership in the subculture is more of a temporary phase (Matza 1990).

A more intriguing finding is that more than half of the respondents had switched gangs with relative ease. Two of the remaining respondents belonged to gangs that switched their entire allegiance from one alliance to another. The latter occurrence is relevant to this thesis because the precipitating events revolved around core members. Mama T was a member of the Lil' Watts X3 (LWS 13), a Sureno group. Surenos tend to be represented by blue bandannas. When members of the Ambros, a Folk gang that wore baby blue, shot several members of the LWS 13, killing a core member, the LWS 13 switched their representative color to black and allied with the People nation gangs, losing their alliance with gangs represented by blue. The Wheatley Courts, introduced earlier in conjunction with Pranx, were

initially Crips. An East Terrace Gangster (Crip) accompanied by an Altadena Blocc Crip opened fire on a core member of the Wheatley Courts Gangsters killing the little brother of the intended target. Soon after that, the entire Wheatley Court Gangsters changed their name to Wheatley Court Texas and became Bloods. These events are major alliance shifts and illustrate the importance of core members and actions against them.

There is very little literature about the fluidity of membership. However, the Kansas City Police Department made note of the shift away from traditional gang patterns into what they call "hybrid" or "mutant gangs (Howell, Moore and Egley 2002). These "hybrid" gangs tend to be the ones that appeared in cities that had no gangs prior to the late 80s, early 90s. These gangs have a tendency to mix the gang cultures and symbols of Los Angeles and Chicago groups. The members are more likely to switch gangs, belong to more than one gang, or combine gangs (Howell, Moore, and Egley 2002).

The hybrid gang culture appears to be present in San Antonio from the backgrounds of the respondents (see Table II a). I designated member type from self-identification, and descriptions of participation in violence and criminality, as well as identification with the gang, reasons for joining the gang, and centrality to the overall group. Status as a non-core member is what makes changing gangs easier. All of the members who switched, save one (see below), were either associate or peripheral members. Dj Cast, Shuga, and Royal became core members after they switched. Core members did not switch gangs. All of the members that switched did so for non-

hostile reasons such as moving or simply choosing another affiliation that they believed would be more beneficial,

Balla: *When I was younger I messed with more Crips and when I got older I started messing with Bloods, but when I was older I was more about making money so I chose to hang around the people that were making the most money at the time.*

Furthermore, none of the members suffered negative consequences for switching gangs. The notable exception to this pattern is Cajun, a former core member of the Dope Overthrowing Gangster Crips. After being viciously assaulted by the Tray-Five-Seven Crips, Cajun switched affiliations to the Latin Kings, an enemy of the Crips. Other than Cajun's switch due to betrayal, the fact that core members rarely switch reveals the profound identification that core members have with their gang.

Table II A. RESPONDENTS WHO SWITCHED GANGS

| | <i>Initial Gang</i> | <i>Membership</i> | <i>Switch to</i> | <i>Membership</i> |
|----------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|---|---|
| Dj Cast | Mickey Clan- (Red/People) | Associate | S.T.B. (Red/Blood) | Core |
| Cajun* | D.O.G. (Blue/Crip) | Core | Latin King (Black/People) | Associate |
| T-Note | Dayton Street (New Jersey) | Peripheral | Tray-Five-Seven (Blue/Crip) | Peripheral |
| Scrappy | B.S.V. (Red/Blood) | Peripheral | S.T.B. (Red/Blood) | Peripheral |
| Balla | E.T.G (Blue/Crip) | Associate | D.H.G. (Red/Blood) S.S. Ambro (Baby blue /Folk) | Associate Associate |
| Shuga | Hoover (Blue/Crip) | Peripheral | Conglomerate Crip group (3-5- 7, Rolling 60's, Rolling 30's) | Core |
| Royal | W.S.V. Kingz (Black/People) | Peripheral | B.S.V./N.E.V. (Blood-King) B.T.K./3G (Black/People) | Associate Core |
| Sleek | A.B.C. (Blue/Crip) | Associate | Almighty Vice Lord (Maroon/People) East Side Players (Blue/Crip) Sur 13 (Blue/Sureno) N.S. Ambros (Baby blue/ Folk) | Peripheral Associate Associate Associate |

Table II B. RESPONDENTS WHO DID NOT SWITCH GANGS

| | <i>Gang</i> | <i>Membership</i> |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Kinkaid | Sa Town Bloods | Core |
| Mama T | Lil' Watts X3 (Black/Sureno) | Core |
| Lil' Soldja | Sa Town Bloods | Peripheral |
| Rush | Sa Town Bloods | Peripheral |
| Riddler | Wheatley Courts Gangster (Blood) | Associate |
| Azul | 107 Hoover Crip (Tulsa, OK) | Peripheral |
| Oso | Romos Klik (Red/People) | Core |

CHAPTER VII

CHARISMATIC ROLE THEORY ANALYSIS

The present study explores the value of Charismatic Role Theory, which consists of several major premises.

1) There are Charismatic core members in gangs. I define charismatic core members as gang members who

- participate in comparatively more violence and criminal ventures.
- inspire fear and respect from other members.

2) Core members are the primary recruiters of new members.

3) Core members have been neutralized through death and incarceration.

4) Remaining members and new generations joined retreatist subcultures rather than criminal or conflict gangs (Cloward and Ohlin 1960).

Charismatic Core Members

Previous studies have indicated that although there are no fixed posts as leaders, core members take the lead in different situations (Jackson and McBride 2000), and that these members are above average in intelligence, strength, and agility (Cloward and Ohlin 1960). However, the limited opportunities of the lower class leave the gang as the only outlet for these individuals to show their criminal aptitude or gladiatorial prowess in criminal and conflict gangs (Cloward and Ohlin 1960). The

subjects interviewed for this study unanimously agreed that there were core members.

While some said that there wasn't a core group, the rest of their accounts indicated that there were members who were more feared, respected, and followed,

I: *So tell me about these people that were respected. What would entail that respect, what would qualify them for that?*

Cajun: *...I guess if you were capable of violence and you are capable of not having a conscience, you know a lot of time fear entails respect and if you can instill fear in people then you are definitely respected and the more that you are respected, you know the more you might be considered a leader.*

I: *Would you say that there was a core group?*

Cajun: *I think in, in any culture there is subcultures and different parts of groups that make up you know one whole. But there is always going to be kind of a core group. Just depending upon, there might be you know 20 or 30 of ya'll run tight, but there is only 8 or 9 of ya'll that are just really close, you know where you really count on each other and the rest are kind of you know floating around on the outskirts of things.*

I: *Was there a core group, you said there was different groups, was there like a main group?*

Shuga: *Yeah, like of just the certain ones that you know that like when people go out and do shit, like we were the first ones to be like hey, you know what is going down... We all meet up at my boy #####'s house, and it seemed like it was me and (names several people) and like these were the cat's that kicked it every day, we were the ones that kicked it everyday, all day long it was just us, but a lot of times you catch other people coming around, they are like from a couple of blocks over or something to come kick it with us, because you know that we are always going to be partying or doing something stupid and shit. Yeah, but it was solid, because we were the closest.*

I: *About how many was in that group?*

Shuga: *I would say six.*

I: *How did that group of six affect those other people that came around?*

Shuga: *Oh, it was pretty much like what we said was gold. Whatever we were doing, that is what everybody else around us was doing.*

I: *Were there any other members in the group that a lot of the members would look up to or follow?*

Mama T: *Oh yeah, my brother, everybody looked up to (other name), the main, the older ones because those, they were the older ones and everybody looked up to them, followed them everywhere.*

I: *Were there any leaders?*

Lil' Soldja: *I knew some that were higher ranked, but I don't know as far as people actually leading the gang.*

I: *Okay, tell me about those people you say are higher ranked, is there anything in particular that would make you notice them?*

Lil' Soldja: *They really wouldn't get messed with a lot, like they wouldn't get joked around, people wouldn't joke on them about it or about anything. If they sat there and told you to do something for the gang then you would follow their instructions but if somebody else lower ranked told you to do something, you would look at them like they were stupid.*

Yablonsky (1959) states that there was generally a core of 5 or 6 members that were more psychologically disturbed, so it can be reasoned that these were more violent individuals. The respondents overwhelmingly stated that there were a few members of their gangs that were feared, respected, and followed because they were much more violent and apt to criminality than the other members.

I: *Were there any other members that the group looked up to or followed?*

Scrappy: *There were some that people would look up to them and say hey man, this is the type of G (gangster) I want to be. Yeah, there were some.*

I: *Tell me about these people.*

Scrappy: *There was one person that I knew, a lot of people, I mean this guy, he was just crazy, insane. I mean he would go out and police would be coming down looking for him because he had shot some person or something...and these police be coming down through the neighborhood... he started shooting at them...and they, they turn around and call back-up, but by the time they call back-up, this guy was running off somewhere, you know. And everybody, "he crazy, you know I wanna be like him."*

I: *Were there any other members that the group looked up to or followed?*

Shuga: *...There were a couple of other cats, they were some Rolling 30's or something like that, (names given) they were like the hardest niggas out on the block, people would come out there and be like "they holding it down and shit" and we would be like hey, we are down with them. They would tell us to go do our, go run some shit, and we would go do the shit.*

I: *Were there any leaders?*

Kinkaid: *There really weren't any that I knew of, I'm sure there were but, I mean there were dudes that stood out in different areas, but I didn't know any that could be pointed out as like that is the leader you know.*

I: *So you said there were people who stood out, tell me more about these people?*

Kinkaid: *You know its this guy you would hear about getting into it with other dudes, you know shooting at them or robbing them or whatever.*

I: *Were there certain members of the group you were in that initiated or participated in most of the violence?*

Kinkaid: *Oh yeah, I mean (laughs) there was a few, you know just like the answers that I gave earlier, there is always that one or that couple that is just hard core about it and is just always down to start shit. I mean its cool sometimes, but other times you know it is to get the point across and to the other dudes to let them know that we ain't taking no shit or whatever so it was necessary.*

Dj Cast, another former Sa Town Blood agrees with the sentiments of Kinkaid,

I: *Did the other members look up to these certain individuals?*

Dj Cast: *I think there was different reasons to look up to different people. Uh, another guy that we had, you know, short dude, he was real intelligent, you know people would gain leadership through intelligence, people would gain leadership through willingness to do whatever it took, because a part of being in a gang was bringing the attention to people in your set to let people know that your set is the roughest, so you needed those people that was just off the hinges and that would just snap and just do whatever without caring about nothing except for making their mark in history.*

An interview with a former gangster from Tulsa, Oklahoma was obtained for a preliminary comparison of San Antonio with other cities. Azul confirmed that the gang he belonged to was similar:

I: *Were there select members or certain members that participated in or initiated more of the violence?*

Azul: *Yeah, definitely, some of the guys, they would just you know, just do what they wanted to do. Really no cares, no concerns, you know they knew they knew where they were headed and that was it. There, were definitely some were more violent than others.*

T-Note was an added bonus for comparative value. A proud member of the Dayton Street Posse from Newark, New Jersey, T-Note moved to San Antonio and became affiliated with the Tray-Five-Seven Crips. T-Note also confirms the existence of charismatic members from Dayton Street, who were feared but somewhat benevolent to the other inhabitants. He contrasts the existence of the core members in San Antonio, however,

I: *Okay, you said there wasn't any leaders- like designated leaders in Texas. Were there any other members that the group looked up to or followed?*

T-Note: *Oh, definitely, definitely, but out here it worked more on a fear factor level. It was more like the more you are afraid of this guy, the more control and power he has over what's going on, and in some cases, some cat's life basically. So if you are that afraid of a dude, it is hard to tell him no, you know what I mean, so yeah, I guess you can say they were almost like leaders, but it wasn't like a general. You know he wasn't thinking for what was going to be best for the team. It was just like the best for me, since I got all these niggas scared of me and they think they a part of me and down with me, I'm just going to instill fear, you know I'm going to fuckin' push them around. I'm still going to rob these jokers and they are still going to show me love and respect because they are afraid of me.*

It is apparent from all these accounts that the typology of charismatic core members- members who are feared, respected, and followed, usually due to their volatile attributes- merits validity and should be investigated further.

Recruitment

The second premise of charismatic role theory examined in this study was concerned with the recruitment of new members by the charismatic core members. This premise was not well supported by the data for several reasons. Some subjects did state that there were certain members or groups that were heavily into recruiting,

Cajun: *There was, there is a lot of people that, that I think that in their own personality, they need to feel like they are big and they're bad ass, and so they want to go and recruit little younger members and little weaklings and try to mold them to make themselves feel better so they want to feel like they got a bunch of youngsters looking up to them.*

I: *Of all the different groups that you were affiliated with were any active in recruiting?*

Sleek: *The Ambros were big into that. They had all their little shorties (young members) running around. Yeah, they were all about having new members.*

Other respondents admitted to joining the gang because of their admiration of a core member.

Lil Soldja: *Well, I figured I wanted to follow in my cousin's footsteps, cause I wanted to be like him, I wanted to do what he was doing.*

I: *Were there specific members that the other people really looked up to?*

Lil' Soldja: *Yeah, yeah there were. I used to, I mean I still do, I looked up to my cousin because basically it was everything, the way I looked at it everything revolved around him. If something was going to happen, he was involved with it. If there was money to be made, he was involved with it. If guns needed to be there, he had them, so basically a lot of people looked up to him.*

This premise that gangs actively recruited was not the consensus however. Two interrelated issues emerged concerning recruitment. The first was previously discussed (See Structure and Organization above). If associates/affiliates are considered members then issues of recruiting become extremely complex. This

complexity emerges when determining what recruitment means. Is it the courtship of a potential new member of the gang, or is it actually becoming a new member of the gang. Courtship of a potential member is too difficult of a variable to examine because problems of definition again arise. The actual joining of a new member is simpler, except that there has to be a point at which a person crosses the line from a non-member to a member. An apparent and often used line of determining who is a gang member is the initiation rite which usually consists of fighting several other members at the same time or committing a violent crime. Associates, affiliates, and wannabes have not participated in initiation rites; therefore they are usually excluded from consideration as gang members. I, the researcher reject the idea of excluding associates because the only difference between a proclaimed member and a proclaimed associate was self-identification as such. Associates are still a part of the entities known as gangs. Furthermore, my data indicated that self-identification had little relationship to how others perceived the individual and more intriguingly, had no relationship to initiation rites. Other people identifying a person as a part of the gang seemed more relevant in the experience of respondents than initiation rites did. Thus, I used the judgment of other gang members as the line of demarcation from non-gang member to gang member.

Fleisher (2002) noticed this significance in that only nine out of 54 subjects in the Champaign study participated in initiation rites. Furthermore, from the ethnography of the Freemont Hustlers, it was determined that membership was synonymous with friendship because any friend of a member was also considered a member when that friendship became familiar to the other youth in the network

(Fleisher 2002). Similarly, the respondents in this study indicated no pattern as to when and why initiations occur (see Table III). For comparative purposes we can examine the Sa Town Bloods. Dj Cast and Kinkaid were both core members but only Dj Cast went through an initiation. Lil' Soldja, Rush, and Scrappy were all peripheral members, yet only Lil' Soldja went through an initiation. This indicates that initiations are not a determinate factor in who is and who is not a gang member. This is a significant finding, but it was not in the scope of the present research to investigate. If an individual participates in gang activity, then they are a part of the social network entity known as a gang.

The second emergent issue related to recruitment was a distinction between types of gangs. A typology of gangs arose from the data. This typology consisted of three gang categories: hoods, clans, and the hybrid gangs that Howell et al. discussed (2002).

Hoods are traditional type gangs based in impoverished, densely populated neighborhoods. These gangs commanded total dominance of the neighborhood, and any youth living in the neighborhood is automatically associated with the gang. Because of the racial/ethnic segregation of housing, these gangs are likely to be homogenous in terms of race/ethnicity.

Table III. PARTICIPATION IN INITIATION RITES

| | <i>Member type</i> | <i>Initiation</i> |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Dj Cast | Core | Yes |
| Kinkaid | Core | No |
| Mama T | Core | No |
| Lil' Soldja | Peripheral | Yes |
| Rush | Peripheral | No |
| Cajun | Core | Yes |
| T-Note | Peripheral- (Dayton Street) | No |
| | Associate (Tray-5-7) | No |
| Scrappy | Peripheral- (B.S.V.) | Yes |
| | Peripheral- (S.T.B.) | No |
| Shuga | Peripheral- (Hoover) | Yes |
| | Core- (Crip Group) | No |
| Pranx | Associate | No |
| Balla | Associate | No |
| Royal | Peripheral- (W.S.V.) | Yes |
| | Associate- (B.S.V.- N.E.V.) | No |
| | Core- (B.T.K.- 3.G) | No |
| Azul | Peripheral | Yes |
| Oso | Core | Unknown |
| Sleek | Associate- (A.B.C.) | No |
| | Peripheral- (A.V.L.) | Yes |
| | Associate- (E.S.P.) | No |
| | Associate- (Sur 13) | No |
| | Associate- (N.S.A.) | No |

I: *Why do you think gangs appeared in San Antonio to the extent that they did?*

Pranx: *Because of the, it's just how San Antonio east side is broken up. You have all these housings, and then from the housings is poverty, so that is why the east side is so bad to this day, because all the housing is just broken off into sections. You know you have East Terrace, you have Rigsby, you have Sutton Homes, you have Victoria Courts that used to exist but then they tore them down. So you have all these hoods and then from the hoods, they started cliquing, and then we, you know, hey man, you know, we should be called this. And they feel they the best, and then the other people feel they the best and then from that went on to gangs, they became gang members and so then, they became from that, from how San Antonio was sectioned.*

Clans are family based gangs. They are often small but occasionally large.

These are generally close-knit gangs consisting primarily of family members and their immediate associates. These gangs may share neighborhoods or territories with other gangs and tend not to seek open conflict due to the awareness of their numerical size. Clans tend to be Hispanic gangs, and there seems to be no pattern as to what locality they exist in.

Hybrids are the gangs that have none of the attributes of traditional gangs.

While they may exist in a certain neighborhood, they do not command dominance over the entire neighborhood and other youth living there are not automatically associated with the gang. Many of the members do not live in the neighborhood where they hang out. They have usually taken a namesake of gangs in Los Angeles or Chicago, and the membership consists of mixed race/ethnicity and individuals from mixed-income families. These groups existed primarily in the Northeast and Northwest.

For a discussion of recruitment it is feasible to combine Hoods and Clans, because neither group needs to recruit and membership is endemic in the definition of the group. To be a part of or affiliated with a Hood gang, an individual could simply live in the same neighborhood. Similarly, the membership requirement for a Clan gang was blood relation or close association with the family.

Mama T: (LWS 13/Clan Type)...*All the people that were in the Watts were already people we knew, you know so I had, I don't know of anybody we just barely met or you know met and a couple of months later, boom you are in. It was more like we were family, you know the same people we hung around with, you know it was the same thing we went with. We never had new people or go to parties and kick it with some guys and boom a couple of months later, hey you are in. It was never like that. It was, you know they needed people they knew, they trusted and they knew about.*

I: *O.k. was the gang active in recruiting new people?*

Pranx: (W.C.T./Hood Type) *Nah, they didn't recruit nobody man, all that recruiting stuff, man, you just, it is not really recruiting, you just adapt to your surroundings like I said earlier, there ain't no recruiting in it. They don't go out, hey, you know, you should be down with us, you know, we ruthless. There is none of that man, you just adapt to your surroundings.*

I: *Were the majority of the members any certain racial or ethnic group?*

Pranx: *Mostly blacks...and Hispanics. I mean we had a lot of Hispanics too, just because basically if you moved to that neighborhood, you was going to be down. Like I knew white people like you know, they moved to the Wheatley Courts because of poverty and the next thing you know they down with the Wheatley Courts.*

Unlike Hoods and Clans, Hybrid gangs need to actively recruit. However, of the respondents only Sa Town Bloods said they actively recruited new members. The other respondents of the hybrid gangs gave mixed responses. Some indicated that their groups did not recruit:

Shuga: *It wasn't even a recruiting thing. We never went out like hey ya'll want to be down with us. We never done that, we never done nothing like that. All*

the people that kicked it with us were either already gang members, you know already people that was down with other sets...

Other respondents indicated that recruitment did happen in various connections to core members,

Cajun: *In any group, recruitment happens, I mean, when I, once I was like 17 and I had to come back to San Antonio from when I was in Missouri, I seen a lot of youngsters that were coming up and I was still really active in the lifestyle. I wouldn't necessarily try to recruit them because they would want to be there because they think it's cool you know. They've been looking at you for you know 5 or 6 years and they've heard about you and you know. I've walked into jails at 21, 22, 23, years of age and seen little 17, 18 year olds and I don't even know who the fuck they are, and they are like "hey, man, what's up, man. Hey we did a drive-by together when we were kids, you don't remember, you pistol-whipped me and pushed me out of the car and said I was too young." And so I would say that recruitment happens but really these kids are looking for a sense of belonging, they want to belong to something. They don't belong in their home; they don't feel like they have a family so they want to be loved. They want to be you know feeling like they belong to something, so they really come to you. And then if they are willing to jump through some hoops and help you out and they are, they're helping you out, then you are going to let them ride with you.*

Dj Cast: *Well yeah, I would say those core members. I think the core members were more into recruiting. Anyways more matter of fact for the most part of the real ones that were in it, the core members were the ones who pretty much did the recruiting, it wasn't too much the underlings I would say. They didn't really do much as far as recruiting.*

In summary, most gangs do not need to recruit. Those that did recruit, did not present a clear picture of how active they were in recruiting and whether or not core members did most of the recruiting.

Core Member Neutralization

The third premise of charismatic role theory is the concept that core members were neutralized due to death and incarceration. The sample in the study unanimously confirmed that death and incarceration were common occurrences amongst core members. All of the respondents said that they knew members who had been killed or incarcerated, and many of them noted that it was the core members who suffered these fates,

I: *Was there anything particularly special about these people, the same people that you said earlier that people feared and respected...*

Pranx: *They are all in jail or dead...they are all dead or in jail and a lot of my friends that I grew up with are in jail and a few of them are dead but most of them are in jail like doing long terms, like doing Feds.*

I: *What happened to the rest of the gang?*

Rush: *It just kind of fizzled out to me... I just kind of blew it off, because like I said, someone that meant something to me went to prison and I just wanted to not do that.*

Rush's account is similar to others indicating the important role core members played in the cohesion of the gangs.

T-Note: *My homeboy (name), well this cat was like 17 when he died, I was 16. This mothafucker was a knock out king. I mean he was knocking out 23 year old dudes when he was like 13. I mean he was putting it on grown men to where...You would see a man who had money and was not to be fucked with, tuck his chain* when (name) walked by. And he got shot like 11 times, maybe seven of them in the head. And then that beef was over, because once they killed (name), I guess the dudes that was really riding his coattails, they had no more juice* now, they couldn't just use his name and get respect, so a lot of them cats caught some bullets too because they didn't have their superpower behind them anymore.*

Dj Cast: *Well, the set, like I said you know the people getting girlfriends, eventually getting married. People getting in jail, people getting shot and that core group got just broken up and once the core group got*

broken up, the rest of the members did not have much reason to bang, especially since banging abroad just kind of died down.

Cajun: *At this point, there is, there is gangs that still function under certain names and what not like that but as a kid, you know people that I ran around with, you know they are not together anymore, you know they are all in different prisons or dead or in different places...So in my opinion what I was a part of then is gone and is gone forever.*

One respondent gave additional insight into the post street life of core members. Oso was distinguished from the other respondents because he was the oldest, placing his gang involvement in the late 80s as opposed to the early 90s, which was the gang era of the other subjects.

I: *So why did you stop?*

Oso: *When I got locked up, all my friends got locked up. I seen them in there. Same old thing but just different, how can I say this- morals. They were mafias (prison gangs) in there and all that. Me, I wasn't into all that. When I got out everybody was either gang-related or a biker gang. Me, I just stayed to myself. I don't believe in all the biker gangs or the mafia*

While not in the scope of this thesis, it is important to take note of Oso's observation. The core members who were violent in street gangs are sent to prison where they are indoctrinated into more organized criminal organizations.

The accounts of the subjects in this study make it apparent that core member neutralization is a valid concept to be further examined. Some of the participants also indicated that the neutralization of core members precipitated the dissipation of the gang. This premise of neutralization precipitating the dissipation of the gang is the crux of my theory. The accounts of Dj Cast, Rush, and T-note indicate that dissipation was directly linked to the removal of core members. Similar sentiments were shared by many of the other respondents. This finding suggests that core members are vital to the existence of the gang. However, due to the earlier finding

that recruitment isn't necessarily a function of charismatic core members, more research is necessary to determine how the core members are vital to gang persistence.

Dissipation was not universally the case however. Using the gang typology established earlier, the sample indicated that hybrid and clan gangs dissipated after the neutralization of core members. Hood gangs on the other hand did not dissipate. This situation of non-dissipation may be due to the numerical dominance in Hood gangs. Hood gangs are similar to traditional Los Angeles gangs in that it is not possible to neutralize enough core members to dissipate the gang. This is not to say however, that neutralization of core members had no effect on Hood gangs. The effect will be discussed in the following section.

Dissipation and Alternative structures

The last premise of my theory is that the conditions of frustrated youth still exist after the neutralization of core members. The remaining members and new generations of youth who are not members of conflict gangs would join retreatist subcultures. The groups represented in this study were highly combative and representative of Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) description of conflict gangs. The last premise indicated that there would be a switch to those subcultural groups where people searched for esoteric kicks through sex or drugs (Cloward and Ohlin 1960). The premise found absolutely no resonance in the accounts given by the subjects. Only one respondent suggested that other groups are being joined,

Royal: *Gang banging isn't as popular as it was when I was a kid. Now you got all your tagging crews*, your breaking crews*, shit like that. And there are just chingos of them and nobody really tries to recruit them.*

However, there is no indication given that these groups are retreatist groups or that they are characterized primarily by drug usage. The majority of respondents indicated that the remaining gang members and the new generation have evolved into criminal- oriented subcultures. The street warfare has faded and the remaining groups are entirely concerned with illegitimate financial gain,

I: *If I told you that statistics show that juvenile gang membership is declining, going down, why would you think that would be?*

Pranx: *Everybody is in jail (laughs), they getting caught. They, I mean the police are cutting, trying to crack down on gangs, so everybody is getting caught, and it is just dying down. I wouldn't say dying down, but like I said, people are getting smarter, investing money. Money is going into different places, and you know legal places. I mean it ain't legal, but you know they somehow getting around it from getting caught.*

I: *Do you think the gang situation has gotten better or worse?*

Dj Cast: *Oh, it's gotten tons better. I mean, ain't nobody gang banging. San Antonio, you got very few people who even claim they gang bang now and those people who they gang bang, they are not banging, they are not doing anything. If anything, they are selling drugs; selling drugs don't make you a gang banger.*

I: *If I told you that statistics show that juvenile gang membership has gone way down, what is your opinion on what is causing that?*

Dj Cast: *Now everybody in the entertainment industry seems to be talking about how rich they are, so now the focus has become getting rich, which is very destructive because that means instead of having groups of kids that were concentrated on you know, well we were destructive too, because we were violent towards each other. But now you are going to have people just as concentrated on selling drugs, pushing you name it- crack, heroin, and everything. I think the drugs are going to go way up now, because everybody is just so focused on making money and the jobs and the economy is not going to support you, to make the kind of money that your favorite rappers are out there making. So if you want your Escalade on 20-inch rims and stuff you are going to have to sell drugs.*

I: *Do you think there is a difference between the generation of gang members now and the ones back when you were banging?*

Azul: *Definitely, definitely...when we were younger you know it was a lot more violent it seemed like and as even as we progressed it turned into money and I think that is what it is about now, it is about money. You know that is all it is, it is the color green more than anything else, you know everybody wants to make money. They use their gangs as a way to do that, it provides them with good outlets to clients and things like that.*

I: *If I told you that statistics show that juvenile gang membership is declining, what would you say is causing that?*

Balla: *I would believe it. That is what I thought actually. What is causing that man, people are...it was a fad like I said, I mean, people are more turning to making money you know what I'm saying. They are realizing that killing people and crime for colors or for neighborhoods you know it only gets you so far. But what is really about it is money. Like the older gang members, they realize that, like they bang hard but when they get older they have to depend on themselves more and what you need is money. So now they are getting older, now the younger kids in that environment are looking up to them, and they see the people making money, driving nice cars, this and that and they are trying to emulate that. So they are like, I think they are just trying to, its more towards a funding factor for yourself now, you just trying to survive, you know making money.*

It is important to note that Pranx and Balla were associated with Hood type gangs, the Wheatley Courts and the Denver Heights respectively. It appears that Hybrid and Clan type gangs tended to disappear after the neutralization of core members (See T-note and Rush p.64 for ex.). However, Hood gangs tended to change to a criminal orientation because the remaining older members shifted from open conflict to illegitimate profit and the younger members model themselves after the example of the older members. According to Laskey (1992) this shift to criminal orientation is important because the communities are no longer socially disorganized, they are criminally organized. This criminal orientation may be adverse to the general

norms of society, but nevertheless it is still a form of social organization in which a large portion of the community is working together.

The findings in this study give some support to my theory that the removal of core members is related to the dissipation of the gang. However, because recruitment is not the crux of maintaining the gang, further research is necessary to determine how core members are vital to gang persistence. These findings also lend credence to the possibility that the removal of violent core members is an evolutionary process, which led to the development of the criminal oriented gang. However, there are other potential explanations for the emergence of the criminal oriented gang. If a large number of violent members are removed from society due to death and incarceration, it inevitably increases the legitimate and illegitimate financial opportunities for others. A second possibility, less likely but still viable, concerns the dominance of an alliance. The dissipation of the Northeast hybrid gangs in conjunction with the destruction of some East side neighborhoods created an unintended consequence. The Victoria Courts were completely destroyed and the Alamodome was built in its place. This event dissipated the Fellas, a blue-rag gang allied with the Crips because the former inhabitants were randomly relocated, thus dispersing the gang. Much of the territory of the East Terrace Gangster Crips was also destroyed and severe injunctions forbidding the gang from congregating and wearing colors and symbols representative of the gang, were served against many remaining East Terrace Gangsters. The Wheatley Court Gangster Crips changed to the Wheatley Court Texas Bloods. All these events served to create a prevalence of Bloods remaining on the east side. This does not indicate any victory of one group over another; however, it

does raise the possibility that less occasion for conflict to thrive (Cloward and Ohlin 1960), provided more opportunity for allied cooperation in financial adventures.

Thus, there was more opportunity for illegitimate financial gain and criminal gangs emerged (Cloward and Ohlin 1960). Some of the respondents support this explanation,

Shuga: *Bloods were like overpopulated, like the Crips and shit was minute you know. It was like we had a little section of us you know and like a whole bunch of Bloods you know what I'm saying. So like for every Crip, there was like maybe say three Bloods...*

Balla: *It wasn't too many Crips, there was more Bloods, I feel like there was more Bloods than Crips personally.*

Whether or not these alternate explanations have merit, this study indicates that gangs did change. There is not enough evidence to state that the change was caused by the removal of core members, but there is enough evidence in this study to suggest that this premise should be investigated further.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

This study was methodologically strong because of the diversity of the sample. The respondents were diversified in age, race/ethnicity, and gang affiliations. Highly detailed gang processes and gang experiences were also obtained.

This exploratory thesis opened up several avenues of inquiry. Though the concentration was a preliminary investigation of charismatic role theory, several unexpected insights emerged. The first insight is that gang membership is highly arbitrary and difficult to define. Yablonsky's (1959) definition of the near-group, Fleisher's (2002) definition of the gang social network, and Matza's (1990) explanation of drift are definitions applicable to the respondents in my study. These definitions exemplify that the gang exists as a fluid network of individuals rather than a solid, hierarchical group. Another understudied emergent gang pattern was the hybrid gang (Howell et al. 2002). These late-onset gangs made allowances for gangsters to switch gangs without repercussions and include members of other gangs in their gang social network.

The primary focus of this investigation was charismatic role theory. This theory was examined on four premises, which met with mixed results. The first premise, that there were charismatic core members met with universal agreement

among the respondents. The second premise suggested that these core members recruited the new members. This premise found little support and inadvertently uncovered the irrelevancy of recruitment and initiation rites. Although other research has indicated the extreme importance of initiation rites in gangs (Vigil 1996), the importance has changed for the late-onset, hybrid gangs.

The third premise was that core members were neutralized through death and incarceration. This premise was supported by the accounts of the majority of respondents. Furthermore, some of these accounts indicated that the neutralization of core members directly or indirectly resulted in the dissipation of the gang. This is an important finding that is important for all groups interested in dealing with gangs. Although this research was not extensive enough to be generalized, the implication of this research is that core member removal is related to the dissipation of gangs. If the neutralization of core members did in fact result in the dissipation of the gang, than it is important to investigate further into the functions of the core member in the gang.

The final premise proposed that remaining gang members and newer generations of frustrated youth would begin to join retreatist subcultures. This idea was unsupported. According to the accounts in this study, instead of retreating, the remaining gang members and the newer generations have innovated and become criminally oriented gangs. Financial profit through illegitimate means has become the primary focus of the new generations.

From these results it can be concluded that charismatic role theory needs revision. The accuracy of the first and third premise suggests that the theory is somewhat fruitful in investigating the dissipation of gangs. The second premise,

recruitment, can be eliminated because the respondents did not indicate that core members or any other particular type was vital to the recruitment of others. The last premise while not accurate in describing the dissipation of gangs, was highly useful in examining the evolution of late-onset gangs into criminally oriented gangs.

The findings of this study are easily viewed through the framework of Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) typology of gangs. Late-onset gangs of the 80s and 90s prized violence and combat, exemplifying the conflict gang. Either through elimination of enough competition or the opening of financial avenues, the conflict gangs evolved into criminal gangs focused on illegitimate financial profit (Cloward and Ohlin 1960).

This study suffered from a few weaknesses. The investigation was done with a small qualitative sample. The sample was flawed because it had an overrepresentation of gang members from one region of San Antonio. In addition, a snowball sample was used, which likely increased the homogeneity of the respondents. In spite of these deficiencies, important knowledge was obtained concerning the organizational change of gangs.

Future research should examine the existence of charismatic core members in other locations and the evolution of gang structural changes. More specifically, the functions of the core members in gangs should be examined and the reasons for dissipation of conflict gangs and shift to criminal gangs should be explored. This endeavor further exposed many understudied aspects of the gang subculture and will hopefully inspire more research into the areas of gang initiation and gang fluidity. Comparisons between late-onset localities and traditional gang cities should also

continue. It is pertinent that further investigations into the new generations of gangs continue.

CHAPTER IX

REFLEXIVITY

It is a primary goal of some researchers to remain objective in their research. I personally believe that I remained as objective as possible while conducting this investigation. However, an inherent bias is shown in my selection of the topic and the methodology. I had been involved with gangs for at least half of my teenage years. This was during the time period that this study focuses on, the early to mid-90s. At that time, it seemed that the majority of youth were involved with gangs in some form or fashion. Groups like the rock and roll head bangers, the jocks, and the kickers (cowboy subculture) had characteristics strikingly similar to those of gangs. These groups participated in just as much delinquency as gangs did. The only difference was the attention law enforcement and school authorities gave to the different groups. Above and beyond that, there were simply a lot of gangs at the time. These gangs began to decline statistically and visually in the late 90s, which was a fascinating phenomenon for me, and one of the reasons I decided to do this study.

As I read research and theories of gangs and delinquency in higher education, I was consistently dissatisfied with the literature. Although, I understood the theoretical rationales as something an outside observer would think, most of the theories failed to capture what I had experienced. Much of the research was from the

perspective of law enforcement and academics who were far removed from the arena of their subjects. The type of research produced by the aforementioned groups seemed to have an agenda and their primary focus was criminality, with little regard to anything else. Other theorists seemed to capture the experience of gang members, but ultimately make assumptions that do not seem accurate. For instance, Cohen's (1955) description of the middle-class measuring rod seemed very valid, but the reaction formation and the oppositional subculture do not.

This dissatisfaction with some research and theories has led to my personal bias of adhering to emic methodology. I wanted to understand the gang phenomenon from the worldview of the gang member. More specifically, I felt that the former gang member was an ideal subject because this person would be able to look back at the situation from the standpoint of an adult, negating any possible data corruption due to bravado or macho facades.

I should clarify that there are some theorists and researchers who seem to be much more accurate in their description of gang processes. Yablonsky's (1959) description of gangs resonated with me. From all the groups I was affiliated with, I never recall anyone knowing (or caring for that matter) how many members were in the gang, and who was in the gang. There were core members who were always there, there were weekend warriors, and there were people who would come in from out of town for the weekend and see how much ruckus they could create. All these people were considered part of the gang when they were with us.

Matza's (1990) description of drift also resonated as more valid, because the crime and delinquency that would occur was random and had nothing to do with the

gang. Furthermore, most of the people became conventional citizens with no repercussions.

While I understand the position of those who use etic methodology, I am of the opinion that Weber's concept of Verstehen is better captured with emic methodology. This thesis was an amazing experience and very therapeutic for many of the respondents I interviewed. I believe that more knowledge generated from subjects will help prevent or regulate future gang epidemics.

APPENDIX A

GANG GLOSSARY

Banging (Gang banging) is to participate in gang conflict

Breaking crews are groups of regularly associated people who put together elaborate dance moves, which are performed, spontaneously on the street or in normal venues such as parties and clubs.

Claiming means to represent oneself as being a part of a gang. A person is said to be “claiming” a particular gang.

Juice means power and respect in the streets.

Ragger is a reference to the color of bandanna the gang wore. During the 1980s and very early 1990s alliances called “Circles” were created. The black circle was an alliance of any gangs that wore black bandannas. The red circle was an alliance of Bloods and a few People nation gangs that wore red bandannas and the blue circle was an alliance between Crips and several Folk gangs that wore blue bandannas. By the mid-1990s all of these alliances had dissolved.

Sets are separate gangs that share a common designation or are a part of a gang nation. For instance, Sa Town Bloods and Blood Stone Villains are both Blood sets. The Latin Kings and the Insane Vicelords are sets of the People nation.

Tagging crews are groups of regularly associated people who consider graffiti an art and frequently “tag” or spray paint elaborate images with graffiti.

“Tuck his chain” refers to tucking valuable necklaces into your shirt because you see someone that you fear will rob you.

APPENDIX B

FOOTNOTES

¹The notion that there are gang nations with overarching alliances or criminal empires is misleading. Though the Bloods were initially created as an alliance to oppose the Crips, the Crips have no such attributes. “Crippling” is considered to be a (gangster) lifestyle, not an alliance. Although some Crip gangs may be on friendly terms with each other, they are as likely to be enemies as friends. Indeed some Crip gangs have more bitter rivalries with each other than they do with Blood gangs (Alonso 1999).

²Judges began injunctions against gang members forbidding them to congregate and do other activities starting in the mid-90s.

³President Clinton signed the Brady Bill as law in September of 1994, banning the sale of many semi-automatic weapons. This is notable because the statistics charismatic role theory is based on report trends starting in 1996. Another notable point is that the Brady Bill expired in September of 2004.

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE

Demographic

1. What is your age?
2. How long have you lived in San Antonio?
3. Have you lived in any other city during your teenage or adult years?

Gangs

1. At what age did you join a gang?
2. How long were you a member?
3. Was there a particular reason you chose to join this gang as opposed to other gangs?
4. About how many members were in the gang you belonged to?
5. Were the majority of members any certain racial/ethnic group?
6. How would you describe the ages of the people in the gang?
7. Were they all male (or female)?
8. Were there any sub-cliques in the gang?
- Tell me about them.
9. Were there any leaders? - Tell me about the leaders?
10. Were there any other members that the group looked up to or followed?
- Tell me more about these members.
11. Was there a core group in the gang? Tell me about them?
12. How did the core group affect the other members?
13. Were there members that were only temporary or not fully affiliated?
14. How active was the gang in recruiting new members?
15. Were there certain members who did the main recruiting?
16. What were the qualifications for recruitment?

Violence

1. How often would you say your group participated in violence against other groups?
2. Were there select members of the group that initiated or participated in most of the violence?
3. Describe the other groups that were enemies to your gang.
4. Did any of the members you know die from the actions of another gang? Tell me about that.
5. Did any of the members of your group go to prison for long periods of time? Elaborate on them.

Dissipation or Continuation

1. What is the connection (if any) between the group you were in and the city of the gang nation's origin?
2. Does the gang you belonged to still exist?

IF YES (2)

- 2a. Do you interact with the current members? How?
- 2b. Why did you stop banging?
- 2c. Do you think there is a difference between this generation of gang members and the generation you belong to?

IF No (2)

- 2d. What happened to the gang?
- 2e. What happened to main members of the gang?
3. Why do you think gangs appeared in San Antonio?
4. Do you think the gang situation has gotten better or worse? Why or Why not?
5. If I told you that the statistics show that juvenile gang membership is declining, what would you say is causing that?
6. Is there anything else that you think would be valuable for me to know about gangs in San Antonio?

APPENDIX D

GANG NETWORKS

Almighty ViceLords- (A.V.L.) **Type:** Clan **Affiliation:** Maroon/People

Descriptive: Two affiliates of Vicelords in Chicago and Detroit joined with members of Blood gangs to create this. The network was primarily African-American and operated in the Northeast.

Dissipation: The incarceration of a core member preceded the fading of this group.

Altadena Blocc Crips- (A.B.C.) **Type:** Hybrid

Descriptive: Several small networks operated under this name of a Los Angeles Gang. The group represented existed in the Northeast- Roosevelt district near East Terrell Hills.

Dissipation: A core member was shot, paralyzed, and died shortly after. Another core member was incarcerated. The gang subsequently dissipated. Other groups still operate under this name.

Big Time Kings- (B.T.K.) **Type:** Hybrid **Affiliation:** (Black/People)

Descriptive: Large, primarily Hispanic, West Side group that emerged as one of the primary factions from the break-up of the W.S.V. Kings.

Dissipation: No data

Blood Stone Villains- (B.S.V.) **Type:** Hybrid

Descriptive: Named after a gang originating in California. The majority of Blood gang members that were not from Hood gangs operated under this name. Thus there were and still are countless groups using the name.

Dissipation: Since several smaller networks used the name, the name did not dissipate even when some of these cliques did. Other cliques infamously dominated their neighborhood, shifting towards Hood gangs. Camelot II in the Northeast-Roosevelt district is an example of this. The clique that was represented in this sample dissipated through member dispersion.

Denver Heights Gangsters- (D.H.G.) **Type:** Hood**Affiliation:** Red/Blood**Descriptive:** Also called Denver Heights Texas (D.H.T.). Large, spread out East side neighborhood, consisting primarily of Blacks and Hispanics.**Dissipation:** No dissipation.**Dope Overthrowing Gangsters-** (D.O.G.) **Type:** Hybrid**Affiliation:** Though technically this was a neutral gang represented by the color black, their alliance with the Crips became so profound that the D.O.G.'s began to be considered Crips. Another unrelated gang operated under the name of D.O.G. and was more affiliated with Bloods.**Descriptive:** Small, primarily African-American network operating in the Judson District primarily in the Live Oak area.**Dissipation:** One member killed another. An attack by another Crip group led to a disassociation, and subsequently other core members were killed and incarcerated completely disintegrating the gang.**East Side Players-** (E.S.P.) **Type:** Hybrid **Affiliation:** Blue/Crip**Descriptive:** No data**Dissipation:** No data**East Terrace Gangster-** (E.T.G.) **Type:** Hood **Affiliation:** Blue/Crip**Descriptive:** Large, notorious East side gang, primarily consisting of African Americans.**Dissipation:** While the gang has been plagued by destruction of its' territory, gang injunctions, as well as death and incarceration of many members, the gang is still in existence.**Hoover Crip-** **Type:** Hybrid**Descriptive:** Named after the Los Angeles based group. Although, the members represented in this study were a part of Hoover groups in Tulsa, Oklahoma and Houston, Texas, Hoover's did exist to some extent in San Antonio. However, the usual scenario, was that the Hoover Crip was involved with a conglomerate social network of other Crips. In this case, the network consisted of 3-5-7's, Rolling 60's, and Rolling 30's Crips. This Black and Hispanic group operated in the Northeast-Roosevelt district.**Dissipation:** Incarceration of several members along with a few deaths caused the group to dissipate.**Klik or Romos Klik-** **Type:** Clan **Affiliation:** Red/People**Descriptive:** Gargantuan Hispanic gang in the late 80's with hundreds of purported members, operating on several sides of town.**Dissipation:** An internal dispute caused a huge portion to break off and form the Klan (White/Folks). More groups began to break away such as the Kin (Green/People) and the La Raza Bloods. The remaining portion that had dropped

Romos from the name eventually began to fade. The older core members joined the Mexican Mafia and Biker gangs.

Latin Kings a.k.a Almighty Latin Kings- (L.K. or A.L.K.) **Type:** Hybrid

Affiliation: Black/People

Descriptive: One of the few groups that started as a direct result of Chicago sending representatives to try to exert control over the Kings in San Antonio. This endeavor met with mixed success and led to initial conflict with other King groups. Nevertheless, Latin Kings became a very big social network.

Dissipation: No data.

Lil' Watts X3- (LWS13) **Type:** Clan **Affiliation:** Black/ Sureno

Descriptive: Originated from a Los Angeles gang in the Watts district. This small, primarily Hispanic, family based network operated on the West side and the in the Northeast- Roosevelt district.

Dissipation: After the death of an influential member and the incarceration of several other members for the retaliation that ensued, the reality of the losses caused the remaining members to lose their will to continue, starting a gradual dissipation.

Mickey Clan- **Type:** No data **Affiliation:** Red/People

Descriptive: Small group operating in the Northeast, MacArthur district.

Dissipation: No data

North East Varrio- (N.E.V.) **Type:** Hybrid **Affiliation:** Blood/People

Descriptive: Small, short lived conglomerate of Bloods and former W.S.V. Kings in the Northeast.

Dissipation: When King sets re-emerged, this group was primarily subsumed under the Big Time Kings.

Sa Town Bloods- (S.T.B.) **Type:** Hybrid

Descriptive: Conglomerate gang consisting of members of the Blood Stone Villian, Rigsby Court Gangsters and several other groups that broke off and formed a gang around their social network. This mixed-ethnicity network operated in North East San Antonio, the Roosevelt and Judson districts, Converse and Live Oak.

Dissipation: A violent retaliatory action led to the imprisonment of a core member that was a nexus point in the social network of the group. After his removal the gang dissipated and the other members either became inactive or returned to their original groups.

South Side Ambros/North Side Ambros-**Type:** Hybrid**Affiliation:** Baby Blue/Folk

Descriptive: Named after a Chicago gang, reportedly started by two representatives from Chicago. This was a small, primarily Hispanic group, notorious for its reputation of popularizing drive-by's. The North Side group had more of a racial/ethnic mix.

Dissipation: Many Ambros were prosecuted under organized crime statutes and were given lengthy prison sentences. Some groups still operate under the name today. The North Side network had less of a propensity for violence and did not suffer the same fate.

Sur 13-**Type:** Hybrid**Affiliation:** Blue/Surenos**Descriptive:** No data

Dissipation: Conflict between members from California and members from San Antonio led to a break-up and creation of 210 (San Antonio area code) gangs. Conflict also ensued because other Sureño groups like CA 13 (Brown) and LWS 13 (Black) were enemies with gangs represented by blue.

Third Generation Gangster- (3 G)

Descriptive: Five or six person subset of Big Time Kings. (See Big Time Kings).

Tray-Five-Seven- (3-5-7)**Type:** Hybrid**Affiliation:** Blue/Crips

Descriptive: Named after a California gang. Three core members from different cities met up and created the 3-5-7 Crips in Schertz, Northeast of San Antonio, obtaining a large following from the African-Americans in the area. There may have been other groups known as 3-5-7 in other parts of San Antonio.

Dissipation: Having almost no oppositional gangs in the area, the group began infighting. This fighting ultimately led to one core member killing another core member and the subsequent dissipation of the group.

West Side Varrío Kings – (W.S.V.)**Type:** Hybrid**Affiliation:** Black/People

Descriptive: Gargantuan gang in the late 80's, that reportedly included several hundred Mexican-American members primarily from the West side.

Dissipation: After the incarceration of the leading gang member, a power struggle between the remaining core members ensued that ultimately resulted in the total disbanding of the W.S.V. Kings. Within a year, the former core members began separate gangs which included the Purple Kings (Purple/allied with Crips), Grand Theft Auto (G.T.A./Red), Ruthless Kings (R.K.), Underground Kings (U.G.K.) and Big Time Kings (B.T.K.)

Wheatley Court Texas- (W.C.T.)**Type:** Hood**Affiliation:** Red/Bloods

Descriptive: Large East side housing project consisting of approximately 250 living units. Formerly operating as the Wheatley Court Gangsters, a Crip gang, conflict with other Crip groups caused them to switch over to Bloods.

Dissipation: Did not dissipate.

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VITA

Christian Lamont Bolden was born in Nuremberg, Germany on January 18, 1978, the son of Debra Joyce MacGray (now Masey) and William Thomas Bolden. Christian studied at Judson High School in Converse, Texas in 1995. He completed an Associate of Arts degree at Western Texas College in the Spring of 2000. He received a Bachelor of Science in Applied Sociology Degree at Southwest Texas State University in the summer of 2003. Christian spent the following time period beginning in the Fall of 2003 as a Graduate Assistant, Research Assistant, and Instructor while studying at Texas State University-San Marcos.

Permanent Address: 8050 Swindow Circle
Converse, Tx 78109

This thesis was typed by Christian Bolden.