THE EFFECTS OF GANG MEMBERSHIP ON DEVIANCE IN TWO POPULATIONS: SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS AND ADOLESCENT SERIOUS HABITUAL OFFENDERS

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ABSTRACT

The effect of gang membership on deviance was examined in two populations: students (N=13,949) and youthful serious habitual offenders (N=171). Among students, 14 percent were gang members, former members or wannabes. The serious offenders averaged twenty arrests, and 47 percent were gang members. Among students, gang members were between three and twenty-one times more likely to use drugs, be delinquent, injure someone, become injured, and carry a weapon. Among the students deviance was more strongly associated with gang membership than it was among the serious offenders.

INTRODUCTION

Although there is consensus in research findings of a strong relationship between gang membership and rates of delinquency and drug use, there are substantial differences in explanations of this relationship. Three recent studies illustrate these competing explanations.

Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte, and Chard-Wierschem (1993) employed a longitudinal research design to compare rates of delinquency, drug use and drug sales for male gang members and non-members. Three hypotheses were tested. The first hypothesis, *selection,* was supported if differing rates of offending were found between gang and non-gang youth but no difference in rates of offending was found for individuals when they were (and when they were not) members of a gang. This hypothesis is related to "kinds of person" theories, which suggest that individual propensity to offend is the same with (or without) gang influence (Blumstein, Cohen, Farrington 1988; Gottfredson, Hirschi 1990; Nagin, Farrington, Moffitt 1995).

The second hypothesis, called *facilitation,* was supported if gang youth reported higher rates of offending when they were members versus the time before they became gang members or after they quit the gang. This hypothesis is related to theoretical explanations emphasizing group dynamics, interaction, social learning, and status threats (Short, Strodtbeck 1965) and to some learning theories (Akers 1985). The hypothesis argues that gangs escalate rates of delinquency and drug use among youth who are no more inclined toward (nor more involved in) these behaviors than are other "non gang" youth.

The third hypothesis, designated as *enhancement,* was a mixture of both selection and facilitation. It was supported if youth were more delinquent when they were gang members than when they were not and more delinquent when they were not gang members than youth who never became gang members. Thornberry et al (1993) did not relate enhancement to an existing body of theory, leaving readers to infer that they saw it as a residual category. Enhancement as an explanation of delinquency and drug use can be inferred in a wide range of analyses of the behavior of gang members, for example those of Brown (1965) and Goldstein (1991).

Thornberry et al (1993) interpreted their findings to be most consistent with the facilitation hypothesis for general delinquency, person crimes, drug sales, and drug use. The facilitation explanation was not supported for property crime. A close reading of Thornberry et al (1993) also reveals support for selection, but the support is neither as consistent nor as strong as the support found for facilitation. By implication, enhancement is at work, with facilitation explaining more of the variance than selection. Even though they gathered longitudinal data, since their study measured only the simultaneous occurrence of delinquency and gang membership during coterminous time periods, it was impossible to determine which came first: an increase in delinquency and drug use or gang membership. Furthermore, their study did not distinguish between offenses which were "gang motivated" (and therefore support facilitation) and offenses that were committed by "gang members" but not in the context of gang activity, a distinction emphasized by Maxson and Klein (1990), which would support enhancement.

Another approach to explaining the relationship of gang membership to delinquent behavior and drug use was developed by Fagan (1989). Members of gangs in South

Central Los Angeles, the University Heights section of San Diego, and the west side of Chicago were interviewed to obtain measures of delinquent behavior, drug use and drug sales. Cluster analysis produced four different types of gangs, and each one exhibited a significantly different pattern in the nature and extent of delinquency, drug use and drug sales.

Members of *social gangs* (28% of respondents) were

> involved in few delinquent activities and little drug use other than alcohol and marijuana...low involvement in drug sales...[P]atterns of use reflect[ed] general adolescent experimentation in drug use and delinquency.

A second type of gang, termed the *party gang* (7% of respondents) had few members involved in criminal behavior that was not drug-related or vandalism. In the party gang affiliation was "based on mutually supportive patterns of drug use and dealing to support group and individual drug use."

A third type of gang was termed the *serious delinquent gang*, (37% of respondents). Members showed

> extensive involvements in several types of delinquent acts, both serious and nonserious, and both violent and property offenses...[D]rug use is most likely recreational or social in nature.

Finally, in the *criminal organization* (37% of respondents), the pattern differed from the serious delinquent gang in the "extensive involvement in serious drug use and higher rates of drug sales." Furthermore, rather than social drug use, drug use and selling in the criminal organization reflected a "systemic relationship with other criminal acts."

Fagan (1989) observes this diversity of behavior:

> also exists among general adolescent populations....which suggests that gangs reflect patterns of affiliation and collective behavior that are similar to those of other adolescent subcultures. Accordingly, violence, which historically has been taken as a defining feature of gangs, and drug involvement may more accurately be conceptualized as contingent behaviors among adolescents.

Clearly, both facilitation and selection were implied in Fagan's findings. No doubt, youth selected the type of gang they joined, and they partially determined the kinds of behavior which were identified with the gang while they were members. Clearly, gang membership does not unilaterally produce elevated rates of all types of delinquency and drug related behaviors among gang members, and the diversity among types of gangs provides an opportunity for youth to select types of gangs which mirror their propensities; therefore, gang membership *enhances* delinquency.

In the third study, Esbensen, Huizinga, and Weiher (1993) compared rates of involvement in delinquency and drugs for three groups: 1) gang members, 2) youth who were not gang members and who were not "street" offenders, and 3) youth who reported involvement in street offenses but were not gang members. This investigation controlled for the possibility that rates of delinquency, drug use and drug sales among non-gang youth might have been artificially inflated by a small group of young "career offenders" (as described by Tracy, Wolfgang, Figlio 1990) who were not members of gangs.

The rate of offending by the non-gang street offenders was three times the rate for the non-offenders, but the rate for gang members was twice that of street offenders (Esbensen et al 1993). This finding supported the enhancement explanation, and so did the findings from the measurement of key social-psychological variables that represented five theoretical perspectives.

Research Hypotheses

The literature suggests that the relationship between gang membership and rates of delinquency, drug use and drug sales is mediated by both the type of gang to which one belongs, and by rates of offending regardless of gang membership. These factors figure prominently in our analysis.

In the present study we accounted for the possible influence of different types of gangs on differing dimensions of deviant behavior by asking respondents to identify the "type" of gang (if any) to which they belonged. Following Fagan (1989) we assumed that there were different types of gangs, and that each type had a distinct relation to the nature and extent of delinquency among its members. We identified five categories: 1) confirmed non-member, 2) wannabe, 3) former member, 4) member of a local or neighborhood gang, and 5) member of a local set of a

national gang. We hypothesized that rates of delinquent and deviant behavior would increase for each category beginning with category 1 (lowest) and ending with category 5 (highest). Using these categories we sought to compare the explanations of facilitation and selection by asking respondents about gang membership in the past (former members) and desire to become a member in the future (wannabes).

Additionally, we provided a direct and important test of the impact of gang membership on delinquency among a group of 178 youth identified by the police as the "most serious" juvenile offenders. We also hypothesized that among these serious offenders, gang members would show higher rates of delinquency and deviance than youth who were not.

METHODS

Student Population

The population of 13,949 secondary school students from seven school districts in the Pikes Peak Region of Colorado reported on attitudes and behavior. In contrast to many studies of gang behavior, this one was completed in a suburban county of 450,000 people, with less than 20 percent minority membership.

Instrument

Students completed a questionnaire that contained approximately 100 items. On the instrument, students reported on demographics, gang membership, use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, orientation toward education, involvement in delinquent activities such as trespassing, fighting, stealing, selling drugs and getting into trouble. Also, they reported on how often they felt that someone might try to harm them and how often they carried a gun or knife for self defense.

Scores from similar items were added together to form a scale of use. For instance, frequency of use of beer (and malt liquor) was added to frequency of use of wine (and wine coolers), and to frequency of use of liquor to form a scale of frequency of use of alcohol. Likewise, frequency of use of cigarettes was added to frequency of use of smokeless tobacco to create a scale of frequency of use of tobacco.

Analysis of covariance was used to examine the effect of gang membership on deviance. Previous analyses (Dukes, Martinez, Stein 1995) showed that gang membership and deviance were related to social background variables such as gender, grade in school, racial group, father not a high school graduate, and respondent not living with at least one parent. This analysis was consistent with that of Fagan (1990). These background variables were used as controls in the present analysis.

Two additional controls were used: Self Concept of Academic Ability (Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, Wisenbaker 1972) and Emphasis on Education. Typical of the four items on the scale of Self Concept of Academic Ability was the following one: "When you finish high school, do you think you will be one of the best students, about the same as most, or below most of the students?" Responses were recorded on the following five-point scale: "one of the worst" (1), "below most of the students" (2), "same as most of the students" (3), "better than most of the students" (4), "one of the best" (5). Emphasis on Education was made up of three items. One of the items asked, "How much education would you like to complete?" Answers were recorded on a six-point response scale that ranged from "grade school or less" to "graduate school (doctor, lawyer, Ph.D., etc.)." The other two items asked, "How important to you is getting good grades?," and "How important to you is a successful career as an adult?" Answers were recorded on a five-point response scale anchored by "not important at all," and "very important."

Gang membership was measured by an item that asked, "Would you consider yourself to be a member of a gang?" Responses were recorded using the following categories: "No, never, and I would not like to be a member" (1), "No, but I would like to become a member" (2), "No, not currently, but I was a member of a gang in the past" (3), "Yes, I'm a member of a local or neighborhood gang" (4), and "Yes, I'm a member of a local set of a national gang" (5). The "wannabe" response may "stand in" conceptually for the "party" and "social" gangs in Fagan (1989), while the "local gang" and "national gang" categories may be similar to his delinquent gang and criminal organizations respectively.

Racial categories were recoded using the logic of an "underclass." Native American, Black, and Hispanic were recoded "1," and Asian, White, and Mixed were recoded "0."

Table 1: Adjusted Mean Scores for Substance Use During the Last Thirty Days by Category of Gang Membership: Student Population

	Number	Percentage	Alcohol	Marijuana	Other Drugs	Tobacc
PART A: Rate						
Confirmed Non-members	9477	86	3.23	.62	1.45	2.29
Wannabes	434	4	6.71	1.14	3.62	4.50
Former members	513	5	7.79	1.05	3.22	4.92
Neighborhood Members	251	2	11.24	2.28	6.40	6.15
National Members	348	3	18.78	5.99	26.95	10.39
PART B: Multiplier						
Wannabes vs Confirmed Non-Gang			2.08	1.83	2.50	1.97
Former Members vs Wannabes			1.16	0.92	0.90	1.09
Neighborhood Members vs Former Members			1.44	2.17	1.99	1.25
National Members vs Neighborhood Members			1.67	2.63	4.21	1.69
Total: National members vs confirmed non-gang			5.81	9.66	18.58	4.54

RESULTS

Student Population

Analysis of covariance was performed on the dependent variables. It allowed the examination of the effects of the categorical independent variables of gang membership, gender, racial minority status, and father as less than high school graduate on deviance.

Variables of grade in school, self concept of academic ability, and emphasis on education were interval scales, so they were treated as covariates in the analysis. Due to the large number of cases, statistically significant interactions were observed for almost every measure of deviance; however, compared to the *main effects* they were very small, so they were eliminated from further consideration.

Analyses showed that being a gang member was associated strongly with every measure of deviance. Furthermore, gang membership was a stronger predictor of deviance than being male, older, or a member of a racial minority group. The only variable that came close to (or exceeded) gang membership in strength of prediction was the variable, emphasis on education. While gang membership was associated with increased deviance, emphasis on education was associated with decreased deviance. The effects of emphasis on education are not shown in the analyses below. The effects of the other variables are not shown either. Rather, Part A of Tables 1-3 shows the effects of gang membership after the effects of the control variables have been removed. Specifically, on each table, mean scores have been presented for each category of gang membership. These mean scores were adjusted for the effects of all of the other variables. Since the other variables explaine some variation in the dependent variable (males fight more), when they were controlle the mean fighting decreased (mean number fights by national gang members). In Part B Table 1, the multipliers for each type of gar membership are presented in the order th they were hypothesized.

On Table 1, column 1, the mean numb of times in the last thirty days that non-mem bers used alcohol was 3.23 times. The read should note that the way the scale was co structed meant that if a student drank a be and then drank a wine cooler, this activi would be counted as two occurrences. On th table, the mean alcohol use increased for eac gang category. National gang members r ported a mean use of alcohol of 18.78 time Dividing 18.78 by 3.23 gave a dividend of 5.8 This *multiplier* meant that to arrive at th frequency of use of alcohol by national gar members, one would multiply the reporte frequency of alcohol use of confirmed no members by 5.81. A multiplier of less tha 1.00 indicated that the group had a lower ra of deviance than the one to which it wa compared.

While the multiplier of 5.81 was high, th overall use of alcohol by secondary scho students also was high. Among confirme non-members the adjusted mean of 3.23 mea that on three occasions in the previous mont the respondent drank alcohol. The adjuste mean was 18.78 instances for national gar members. While the figures for both confirme non-members and national gang membe seemed high, compared to national studie the rates of alcohol use by youth in the Pik Peak Region were lower (Dukes, Matthew

Table 2: Adjusted Mean Scores for Delinquency During the Last Year by Category of Gang Membership: Student Population

PART A: Rate	Serious Physical Fight	Group Fight	Hurt Someone Badly	Shoplifting	Trespassing	Sold Drugs
Confirmed Non-members	.65	.31	.35	.92	.65	.19
Wannabes	1.43	.82	.80	1.91	1.34	.36
Former Members	1.88	1.43	1.17	1.74	1.27	.71
Neighborhood Members	2.23	2.14	1.94	2.42	1.84	.91
National Members	2.85	2.68	2.36	2.72	2.25	1.97
PART B: Multiplier						
Wannabes vs Conf. Non-members	2.02	2.65	2.29	2.08	2.06	1.89
Former Members vs Wannabes	1.31	1.74	1.46	.91	.95	1.97
Neighborhood vs Former	1.19	1.50	1.66	1.39	1.45	1.28
National vs Neighborhood	1.28	1.25	1.22	1.12	1.22	2.16
Total National to Non-gang	4.38	8.64	6.74	2.96	3.46	10.37

Hughes 1994).

On another matter, the reader might think that other variables were involved in the relation between gang membership and drinking. Perhaps, national gang members were older than confirmed non-members. Since older students tend to drink alcohol more frequently, maybe it was not gang membership *per se*, but age that was the reason for the dramatic difference in frequency of drinking between confirmed non-members and national gang members; however, age was controlled, so the means on Table 1 for each group were adjusted for differences in age *before* the group means were compared to each other.

On Table 1 the pattern for the other substances was similar to the one for alcohol except that wannabes reported using marijuana and other drugs at a rate that was slightly higher than former gang members. Nevertheless, comparing confirmed non-members with national gang members showed clearly that the frequency of use of these substances was much higher for gang members. Looking at the total row multiplier, national gang members reported 9.66 more instances of marijuana use than confirmed non-members. They reported 18.58 more instances of using other drugs than confirmed non-members, and they reported 4.54 times more instances of using tobacco than confirmed non-members.

The multipliers in Part B of Table 1 show a strong and consistent progression in rates of substance use in the direction hypothesized. Each increasing "level" of gang membership was associated with an increasing rate of use of alcohol and drugs. Only two exceptions were found. Former members showed slightly lower rates of use of marijuana and other drugs than wannabes. This finding is consistent with the findings in the literature review that youth who left gangs showed a decrease in the rate of drug use that was greater than the decrease in all other types of deviance.

The highest single multiplier on Table 1 is the one for the difference in the use of other (hard, illicit) drugs by members of national gangs compared to those in local/neighborhood gangs (4.21). This comparison shows the extent to which drug use is much more characteristic of some types of gangs than others. Finally, attention is directed to the sharp increase in rates indicated by the multipliers ranging from 1.83 to 2.50 between wannabes and confirmed non gang members. Clearly wannabes were much more involved in the use of alcohol and drugs than confirmed non-members even though these respondents were not members of a gang at the time of the study.

On Table 2, adjusted mean scores for measures of delinquency are presented. The patterns of means matched those on the previous table. National gang members reported having gotten into 4.38 times as many physical fights as confirmed non-members. National gang members reported 8.64 times more group fights than confirmed non-members, and they reported hurting someone badly enough to need bandages or a doctor 6.74 times more often. National gang members reported 2.96 times more instances of shoplifting than confirmed non-members, and they reported trespassing 3.46 times more often. Finally, national gang members reported selling illegal drugs 10.37 times more often than confirmed non-members.

Table 3: Adjusted Mean Scores for Getting Into Trouble During the Last Year by Category of Gang Membership: Student Population

PART A: Rate	In Trouble with Police	Traffic Ticket	In Trouble at School	Been Injured with Weapon	Drank Prior to Trouble	In Trouble Due to Gang	Felt Threatened	Carried Weapon*
Confirmed non-members	.37	.14	.77	.20	.30	.14	12.11	1.71
Wannabes	.94	.35	1.55	.61	.75	.72	19.04	3.40
Former Members	1.19	.32	1.68	.90	1.01	1.36	21.16	6.19
Neighborhood Members	1.49	.59	2.02	1.28	1.33	1.97	23.35	9.24
National Members	2.22	1.07	2.35	1.76	2.82	2.90	43.21	13.95
PART B: Multiplier								
Wannabes vs Non-gang	2.54	2.50	2.01	3.05	2.50	5.14	1.57	1.98
Former vs Wannabes	1.26	.91	1.08	1.48	1.35	1.89	1.11	1.82
Neighborhood vs Former	1.25	1.84	1.20	1.42	1.32	1.45	1.10	1.49
National vs Neighborhood	1.49	1.81	1.16	1.38	2.12	1.47	1.85	1.51
Total: National vs Non-gang	6.00	7.64	3.05	8.80	9.40	20.71	3.57	8.16

*A single item was used to measure emphasis on education. Time frame is thirty days, not one year.

Once again the multipliers showed consistent increases in the rates of deviance across the different dimensions of gang behavior. Similar to the finding of Thornberry et al (1993) that was discussed above, the impact of gang membership on rates of delinquency were more modest than the one for alcohol and drugs, but it still is substantial, and it is in the predicted direction with the same "exceptions" as for alcohol and drug use, i.e., former members showed lower rates of two offenses—shoplifting and trespass—than did wannabes. Similar to the pattern for using drugs, the rate of selling drugs increased most for members of national gangs. The multiplier was 2.16 compared to local/neighborhood gang members, and it was 10.17 compared to non-members.

Similarly, group fights and "hurting someone badly" showed greater multiplier effects than those for serious physical fights, shoplifting, and trespass. Except for selling drugs, the rates for all offenses were only slightly higher for members of a national gang than they were for members of neighborhood gangs.

On Table 3, national gang members reported 6.00 times more trouble with police because of "something they had done (not including a traffic ticket)." National gang members reported 7.64 times more traffic tickets than confirmed non-members. They reported 3.05 times more trouble with school authorities. National gang members reported having been injured with a gun or a knife 8.80 times more often than confirmed non-members. Compared to confirmed non-members, national gang members reported that they had been drinking prior to getting into trouble 9.40 times more. On an item that was a direct reflection of gang activity, national gang members reported that they had gotten into trouble as a result of gang activity 20.71 times more often than confirmed non-members. Specifically, fewer than 1 in 7 non-members had gotten into trouble this way (adjusted mean = .14), but national gang members reported almost three instances per respondent (adjusted mean 2.90) during the last year.

All multipliers on Table 3 (except the one for former gang members compared to wannabes for traffic tickets) were in the predicted direction, and the rate of increase across all categories of behavior was consistent. As shown on Tables 1 and 2, the largest increases in rates of trouble also were found on Table 3 between wannabes and non-members. The multipliers for these two categories ranged from 1.57 to 5.14.

Respondents were asked how often they felt that someone might try to harm them at school, going to and from school, while out with friends, and at other times when they were not at home. Responses to these items were added together. Adjusted mean scores are reported on Table 3. Results were surprising. Confirmed non-members reported approximately one dozen (adjusted mean = 12.11 instances per month. National gang members reported 43.21 instances. This figure showed an average of more than one instance per day. The national gang members reported 3.5 times as many instances, but the means fo

Table 4: Average Number of Arrests by Offense Category and Police-Defined Gang Membership for SHO/DI Youth

	Number	Percentage	Part One Offenses	Other Offenses	Total Arrests
PART A: Gang Affiliation					
Non-members	96	53	8.03	10.14	18.18
Affiliates	47	27	6.96	10.66	17.62
Presumed Members	11	6	6.18	14.09	20.27
Confirmed Gang Members	23	13	7.34	13.17	20.52
Total SHO/DIs	171	100			
PART B: Multiplier					
Affiliate Members vs. Non-members			.87	1.05	.97
Presumed Members vs. Affiliate Members			.89	1.39	1.15
Confirmed Members vs. Presumed Members			1.19	.97	1.01
Total: Confirmed Members vs. Confirmed Non-members			.91	1.30	1.13

both groups indicated that the students as a whole did not feel safe from physical harm.

The students were asked how often during the last month they had carried a gun or a knife for self defense. Surprisingly, the mean score for confirmed non-members was 1.71 times. For national gang members the mean was 13.95 times. While the multiplier was 8.16, all groups carried weapons at an alarming rate.

The multiplier for national gang membership for each type of deviant behavior illustrated clearly that gang members had higher rates on every measure, and the rate increased consistently across the five categories of gang membership. But a summary of the influence of gang membership would not be complete without noting that the multipliers were much greater for some types of behaviors than others. The differences provide insight into the nature of behavior within gangs and attraction of gang membership.

For alcohol and drug use, the greater the degree of deviance represented by the drug, the higher was the multiplier (Table 1). Use of alcohol and tobacco are legal for adults. The multipliers for these substances were lowest between gang members and other groups. On the other hand, use of the most serious drugs (labeled "other" in the table, included cocaine, crack, speed, tranquilizers, etc.) was increased the most by gang membership. Overall, gang membership was associated more strongly with high rates of use of the more serious and illegal substances.

Rates of crime and delinquency showed a similar pattern. The greatest difference in rates between gang members and non-members was found for selling drugs. Additionally, group fights and fights involving injury were substantially higher for gang members than for non-members. The smallest differences were observed for self-reported traditionally delinquent offenses of shoplifting and trespassing. In general, the greatest impact of gang membership appeared to be involvement in drugs and fighting, and not participation in property crimes.

The self reports of "trouble" presented in Table 3 confirmed the general observation that the greatest influence on deviant behavior by gangs was found in behavior that specifically was related to gang membership, such as trouble due to gang involvement, carrying and being injured by weapons, and drinking and getting into trouble. The specific behaviors which were least influenced by gang membership were having gotten into trouble with the school or police. The rates of having been in trouble with the police were comparable to those found by Tracy et al (1990). About one-third of their sample of Philadelphia youth had contact with the police, and among respondents having contact, most of them reported only one or two contacts. Less than seven percent of their respondents reported having five or more arrests. Gang members in the present study appeared to have rates of police contact that were about the same as those for career delinquents in Philadelphia in the 1960s and 70s (.37 for non-members indicates that on average, about 1 youth in 3 had some "trouble" with the police).

However, the key theoretical conclusion from the data in Table 4 is that among career offenders, as Blumstein et al (1988) correctly note, membership in a gang does not increase rates of serious personal and property crimes,

but it does seem to elevate rates of "other" crimes, which in the main are presumed to be drug law violations. These data are entirely consistent with the summary of findings by Thornberry et al (1993) presented above, which showed that as "stable" gang members remained in the gang over time, rates of property crime decreased, and rates of drug use and drugs sales increased substantially. Finally one should note this analysis also supports qualitative field work on gangs, notably that of Hagedorn (1988) and Moore (1991).

SERIOUS HABITUAL YOUTHFUL OFFENDERS

The analyses above showed that gang members were involved in rates of deviance that were three to twenty-one times higher than rates for confirmed non-members. These data were gathered from students who were in school, and only a small proportion of these youth were serious offenders. Clearly, many serious offenders were not gang members (Dukes et al 1995) and many of the serious offenders and gang members can be assumed to be not in school.

To get an additional estimate of multipliers, rates of deviance were compared for gang members and non-members among a population of young, serious habitual offenders. These data were based on arrest information that was collected by the Colorado Springs Police Department to identify Juvenile Serious Habitual Offenders. Points were assigned for each arrest. The most serious offenses such as murder, sexual assault, and robbery were scored 6 points. Other offenses were scored lower. Serious Habitual Offenders in need of Directed Intervention (SHO/DIs) were defined as persons between fourteen and eighteen years of age who had accumulated more than sixty points. Unfortunately, no self-report data were available for these youth, but some of them may have been included in the student survey when it was distributed in the schools.

METHODS

Population of Youthful Serious Habitual Offenders

The population was 171 young people 14 through 18 years old who were classified as SHO/DIs in 1994. Compared to the students, a greater percentage of SHO/DIs were Native American, Black, or Hispanic (56%) versus (17%). Also, a greater percentage of SHO/DIs were connected with a gang (see below).

Measures

Using police intelligence data, four c egories of gang membership were examine Non-members, Affiliates, Presumed Ga Members, and Confirmed Gang Membe Non-members had no known connections w gangs. Affiliates were known to associate w gang members. Presumed Gang Membe were thought to be gang members by da analysts at the police department, but t analysts could not positively identify the tee as gang members. Finally, Confirmed Me bers had been positively identified by police members of a particular gang. The non-me bers are conceptually equivalent to the "stre offenders" defined in Esbensen et al (199

In the SHO/DI population, 53 perce were non-members. This figure compares w 14 percent of the students who were nc members, and did not want to be. Therefo gang membership played a much larger role this group of highly delinquent youth, but t central question to be answered by the ana sis was, within the SHO/DIs what was t effect of gang membership on delinquency

Arrests were coded into Uniform Crir Reports, Category One offenses versus other offenses. Category One included crim against persons such as aggravated assa and property offenses such as burglary a larceny. Offenses classified as "other" cluded simple assault and narcotics vio tions. Results are presented on Table 4. Th showed that Confirmed Gang Members h slightly lower rates of arrest for Part O Offenses (7.34) than Non-members (8.0 and they had higher rates of arrest for oth offenses (13.17 versus 10.14). Overall, ave age Total Arrests were 13 percent higher Confirmed Gang Members (20.52) than th were for Non-members (18.18).

As expected, the differences in arre rates among SHO/DIs were much smal than were differences among the studen This finding was expected because all SH DIs were identified as very high rate offende Recall that national gang members in t student population reported a rate of getti into trouble with police that was six times t rate for non-members. Therefore, gang me bership discriminated much more clea among the population of students than it c among the population of highly delinque adolescents.

Among the SHO/DIs no uniform progression in rates of deviance was associated with increasing levels of gang membership. Indeed, confirmed gang members showed lower rates of part one offenses than did non-members. Other offenses, most probably drug related ones, showed an increase among gang members. However, the patterns of behavior for each category of gang membership, among the most serious habitual offenders, were similar to those found by Fagan (1989). The non-members among the SHO/DIs were similar in their pattern of deviance to the "serious criminal gangs" which Fagan described as having high rates of serious crime, and relatively low rates of drug use. The gang "affiliates" among the SHO/DIs showed similar behavior patterns to the "drug oriented gangs", with relatively lower rates of crime and relatively higher rates of drug use. Presumed gang members among the SHO/DIs had the lowest rates of part one offenses, but they had the highest rates of other offenses, similar to Fagan's "party and drugs" type of gang. Finally, confirmed gang members among the SHO/DIs had high rates for both serious *and* other crimes, similar to Fagan's "criminal organization." In fact, police may have made distinctions similar to those of Fagan (1989) in classifying serious offenders as gang members.

COMPARISON OF THE TWO STUDY GROUPS

Because the SHO/DI group was comprised of young offenders who were known by the police to be the most criminal and delinquent youth in the city, the findings regarding their involvement in gangs was especially instructive. It is noteworthy how extraordinarily criminal the SHO/DIs were in an absolute sense as well as in comparison to national gang members in the student population. Since the SHO/DIs averaged almost 20 arrests, the 171 serious offenders accounted for almost 3500 total arrests! By contrast, the national gang members in the student population reported 2.22 police *contacts* in the past year. SHO/DIs averaged about 7 arrests for part one offenses alone, and they averaged an additional 12 arrests for "other" offenses. Clearly, national gang members who were in the school population were dissimilar from the small group of known serious youthful offenders who were gang members. Alternatively, among the SHO/DI group, gang membership was less associated with part one offenses, and it was more associated with "other" offenses than was true for non-members. In conjunction with findings from the student survey, this finding suggested that gang membership elevated drug use and potentially violent offenses to higher levels than it elevated property offenses. More importantly, less than half of the SHO/DIs were identified by police as having been involved with a gang. This finding is surprising because generally, it is assumed that intelligence methods used by police are likely to include incorrectly many non-members or pseudo members as true gang members.

In comparison to the school survey group, non-members in the SHO/DI group may have belonged to any of the non-member categories: confirmed non-members, wannabes, or former gang members. However as the police observed and recorded their criminal and delinquent behavior, there was no basis to assume that these youth had participated in gangs at the same time they were accumulating their extraordinary criminal records. This distinction clearly demonstrates the existence of a small subset of very high rate offenders among youth who are not gang members, a finding similar to that of Esbensen et al (1993).

DISCUSSION

The fourteen percent of youth in the school survey who identified themselves as actual or potential gang members was both surprising and disturbingly high. Although only about one-third of this 14 percent of students claimed to be active members, the estimate was much higher than official appraisals of gang presence in the schools. Conversely, the extent of problem behavior by non-gang students serves as reminder that crime, delinquency, drug use and drug sales are not problems restricted to gang members.

Data from the student survey clearly demonstrated the interaction between "selection" and "facilitation" of crime and delinquency/deviance in relation to gangs. Because age, gender, class, and other factors were controlled statistically, the differences in rates of behavior which varied with gang membership could not be accounted for by simple maturation or mere correlation. For instance, the argument that wannabes were less delinquent than gang members because they were younger was precluded by the statistical analyses. So as young people became more

involved in gangs, they also became more involved in crime, delinquency, and deviant behavior. However, the increase was more pronounced for deviance and gang specific behaviors such as involvement with drugs and fighting. An increase in delinquency due to gang membership (measured by getting into trouble with the police) and property crime (measured by trespassing and shoplifting) were less pronounced.

Greater involvement in gangs was associated with higher rates of deviance of all kinds, and vice versa, suggesting that enhancement was the most appropriate explanation of the relationship. Although wannabes were more involved in deviance than confirmed non-members, they were less involved than former or current members; therefore, the influence of gang membership was explained best by the enhancement model in contrast to Thornberry et al (1993) who favored facilitation. Unfortunately, the data do not allow the tracking of wannabes over time, and we cannot predict if wannabes will revert to a "confirmed" non-member status, or will eventually become gang members. Selection and facilitation (enhancement) also can be seen in the differing rates of deviance between members and former members. Former members have not abandoned substantial involvement in deviance. Their lowered—but not low—rates of deviance may represent a "reversion" to the rate of deviance which they would have exhibited without the influence of the gang and/or prior to gang membership.

The rates of deviance for members of "neighborhood" gangs were lower than those for members of local sets of national gangs. This finding is consistent with the patterns of delinquent behavior associated with "serious" offender gangs and "criminal organizations," respectively, as described by Fagan (1989); therefore, the finding is consistent with the enhancement explanation of the relationship between gang membership and delinquent behavior, drug use and drug sales.

Finally, it is clear that among the most serious and persistent young offenders known to the police (SHO/DIs), the majority had no known relationship to any type of gang. For this seriously delinquent population, a gang is not necessary to facilitate criminal activities. Among this group of very high rate offenders, gang membership was associated with an increase in drug use and sales and a decrease in personal and property crimes. Without doubt, the sources of serious delinquent conduct and criminal behavior for the majority of these serious offenders, are not to be found in gang membership. The finding for both populations points to a very limited role for facilitation as an explanation of the higher rates of crime among gang youth. The analyses support enhancement as the most complete explanation of this relationship.

Our data also raise questions about how to explain delinquency, drug use and drug sales among non-members and the portion of similar activities among gang members that is not due to facilitation through gang membership. Similar findings led Esbensen and Huizinga (1993) to suggest that:

> Since delinquent behavior precedes gang membership...it may well be that gang membership is but a formalized form of co-offending that was initiated within a delinquent peer group in prior years.

Our analysis of the SHO/DI youth are also similar to those of Esbensen et al (1993). They support the notion that gang offending and non-gang offending may grow from similar sources. They analyzed social psychological measures that represented five different theoretical perspectives. They found no statistically significant differences between the gang youth and non-gang street offenders (Esbensen et al 1993).

Our data support the observations of Fagan (1989) that gang involvement and drug involvement can be conceptualized as "contingent behaviors among adolescents." Those factors which might mitigate delinquency should also diminish the gang problem. Recalling that in the student population, commitment to education was an effective predictor of less gang membership and less deviant behavior, a pressing need is for the development of diverse and meaningful academic experiences, the creation of future job opportunities, and the strengthening of economic self support for youth (Wysong, Aniskiewicz, Wright 1994).

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