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## An Analysis of Coping Behaviors Preferred by Regular High School Students in Their Relationship to Gang-Affiliated Students

James Joseph Skomer  
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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

AN ANALYSIS OF COPING BEHAVIORS PREFERRED BY REGULAR  
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP  
TO GANG-AFFILIATED STUDENTS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

BY

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

MAY 1993

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AN ANALYSIS OF COPING BEHAVIORS PREFERRED BY REGULAR  
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP  
TO GANG-AFFILIATED STUDENTS

The purpose of this study was to determine the existence and nature of the relationships between the gender, grade, and ethnic background of regular high school students and the types of coping behaviors chosen by them in selected casual or confrontive associations with gang-affiliated students in a school setting.

To collect the data, a survey which described eight gang-affiliated situations which a regular student may encounter. Members of the sample provided written responses to the open-ended questions which followed the description of each scenario. Responses to the eight questions from each individual survey were analyzed and sorted into categories developed as a result of the responses received. These categories identified a full range of responses, including: avoidance, compliance, continuance, physical provocative, refusal, seeking aid and verbally challenging.

Data were collected from 507 students in three high schools in a large urban-suburban school district in northern Illinois, chosen by a cluster selection technique. In addition to the survey data,

demographic data were collected which identified the students' gender, ethnic background and grade in school.

The response data were disaggregated according to the gender, ethnic background, and grade in school of the sample. A Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) test was used to analyze the significance of the number of observed (actual) responses as compared to the number of expected responses in each response category and for each classification of the disaggregation. In addition, a narrative analysis was provided which identified the similarities, differences, and unique responses of the sample.

The study's results indicate:

1. The gender of regular students may make a difference in the student's response to gang activity.
2. Neither the ethnic background nor the grade in school of the regular student affects the student's response to gang activity.
3. Males are statistically more likely to choose aggressive, confrontational responses, while females are more likely to choose moderate responses.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A study of this magnitude reflects the contributions of many individuals, and is not the result of one person's efforts alone. While these contributions are many and too numerous to mention, the contributions of a few key individuals merit special observance.

The love, support and encouragement of my wife, Laurel, my children, Doug, Kevin, and Caryn, and other members of my extended family are affectionately acknowledged.

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## VITA

The author, James Joseph Skomer, is the son of Joseph and Evelyn Skomer. He was born May 17, 1939, in Chicago, Illinois.

His elementary education began at Brentano Elementary School in Chicago, moved to the Lawrence Township Schools in Lawrence, Michigan, and was completed at the Avondale School in Chicago, Illinois. His secondary education was completed in 1957 at Carl Schurz High School in Chicago, Illinois.

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In August, 1988, Mr. Skomer began his doctoral work at Loyola University of Chicago. This work was completed with the May, 1993 conferring of the degree of Doctor of Education in educational leadership and policy studies.

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## Chapter I

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

#### Introduction

The presence of youth gangs in public high schools is a growing phenomenon. In numbers increasing at an alarming rate, schools across the country are experiencing a significant growth in the youth gang subculture. Once limited geographically to large, urban centers, youth gangs appear with increased frequency in both affluent and impoverished suburban and rural schools.

As a "typical" student, not gang-affiliated, who lives in an area with a definite gang presence, travels to school each day, he may walk through an urban/suburban landscape exemplified by graffiti covered buildings, many vacant and decaying due to the collapsing economic infrastructure. On his way, he may be harassed by carloads of gang members who are looking for a quick thrill, new recruit, or someone to intimidate or extort. Of course, his becoming a victim of a drive-by shooting is a significant possibility, also. The student not only has to select his route to school carefully, ever mindful of whose "territory" he is traversing, but also he must be especially careful of which colors he is wearing. The wrong combination of colors or inappropriate display of popular items of clothing (professional athletic team jackets, hats, college sweatshirts, etc.) may cause him serious trouble if they serve to "identify" him as a gang member.

First, if he is wearing colors associated with a particular gang and is not a member of that gang, those gang members may become offended and retaliate for his "disrespect." Second, a rival gang, viewing his color combination as hostile, may mistakenly regard him as an enemy and take offensive action against him.

Once inside the school, he may face similar graffiti, clothing prohibitions, weapons and hostility in the halls, cafeteria, washrooms, and even classrooms. Stover quotes Roberto Rivera of the Chicago Intervention Network who states,

There's not a kid out there who doesn't know about gangs. It's become a subculture. You have to know to survive. A student who accidentally bumps into a gang member in the hallway . . . will worry more about getting home safely than about his school work.<sup>1</sup>

Within this atmosphere, the student seeks an education--ever mindful of the fact that many of his present and former classmates are "living well" on the profits from drugs, theft, extortion, robbery, burglary, and similar offenses against mankind. While this portrait may sound extreme, it is a situation that is painted with increasing frequency in schools of all sizes and locations and, to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the magnitude of the gang presence, is a fairly accurate portrayal of "life" within a gang infested school-community.

School personnel are not insensitive to the difficulty faced by regular high school students as they associate with gang-affiliated students within the school-community. An abundance of social,

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<sup>1</sup>Del Stover, "Dealing With Youth Gangs in Schools," Education Digest, 52, (February 1987): 30-33.

political, and legal efforts have been put forth to limit the effects and spread of gang activity. Counselors, social workers, and others attempt to counteract the pressures placed on youth to join the gang subculture by working to increase student self-esteem and decision-making skills. These efforts are made in an attempt to strengthen the individual's resolve to resist the gang influence. In an effort to provide for a safe and orderly environment, administrators include the prohibition of gang activity within the school and at school events as a vital segment of the school's discipline code. To enforce its code, a whole range of sanctions for misbehavior are available to the personnel who are charged with maintaining security, including: detentions, parent conferences, Saturday Schools, suspension, expulsion, and arrest.

However, in his article, "Combatting Gang Activities in the Schools,"<sup>2</sup> Alan McEvoy argues that many of the measures schools have taken to address gang problems: "get tough" suspensions and enforcement measures, the suppression of identifiers, heavy police presence, and/or refusal to confront gangs have inadvertently made matters worse. Suspensions and other detachment type enforcement measures often isolate students from the positive school influences of teachers, counselors, coaches, and other regular students. In addition, these measures may increase student resentment toward school by making academic success more difficult thereby reinforcing feelings of failure and resentment, and encouraging the suspended student to attempt to influence others to be suspended or drop out too.

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<sup>2</sup>Alan McEvoy, "Combatting Gang Activities in the Schools," Education Digest, 56, (October 1990): 31.

A heavy police presence or the suppression of identifiers may lead to additional gang confrontation with school authorities or may drive the gang underground, making successful control of the gang more difficult as they find more subtle ways to identify themselves. And, entering into some type of negotiated agreement to ignore the gang's activity or otherwise refusing to confront the gangs in hopes that the gangs will remain less obvious only serves to encourage their growth as others view the school as having a soft or accepting attitude toward gang presence and activity.

The same schools that suffer the effects of increased youth gang activity also house students who are not gang-affiliated. These students who are at times surrounded by a subculture that scorns conventional modes of accepted behavior, seek to survive and become educated. This study attempted to identify and analyze the types of coping strategies students who were not affiliated with youth gangs choose when in casual or confrontive association with gang-affiliated students while attempting to obtain an education in a high school setting.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the existence and nature of the relationships between the gender, grade and ethnic background of regular high school students and the types of coping strategies (s)he prefers in selected casual or confrontive associations with gang-affiliated students in a school setting.

### Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions were employed: "gang-affiliated student" - any high school student who maintains and displays an active identification and affiliation with a youth gang or with youth gang activities; "regular high school student" - any high school student who does not maintain an on-going affiliation with youth gangs or youth gang activity..

### Research Questions

Studies concerning youth gangs have focused on: the historical background of gangs; the youth gang member and his ethnic, socio-economic, psychological and/or sociological character; the environment that fosters or encourages gang membership; governmental or community attempts to discourage, suppress or eradicate the gang culture; and on the development of intervention programs and processes which seek to lead youth away from gangs. The goal of this study was to answer the following three research questions about regular high school students:

1. Is there a relationship between a regular student's gender and the type of coping strategies (s)he prefers in situations involving gang-affiliated students?
2. Is there a relationship between a regular student's grade in school and the type of coping strategies (s)he prefers in situations involving gang-affiliated students?
3. Is there a relationship between a regular student's ethnic background and the type of coping strategies (s)he prefers in situations involving gang-affiliated students?

### Procedure

A survey citing eight situations which a regular student may encounter was developed and administered in May of 1992. The situations themselves were drawn from the every day experiences of deans of students and assistant principals who are responsible for the safety and orderly conduct of students within their schools and describe a variety of typical gang-related incidents that might occur in any typical urban-suburban high school. Members of the sample provided written responses to the open-ended questions which followed the description of the scenarios. (See Appendix A for a copy to the complete survey.) No attempt was made to "lead" the sample to a predetermined set of responses. The responses to the eight questions from each individual survey were analyzed and sorted into categories which were developed as a result of the responses received. The categories identified a full range of responses, including: avoidance, compliance, continuance, physical, provocative, reasoning, refusal, seeking aid, and verbally challenging. (A complete list of responses and their definitions can be found in Appendix B.)

Data were collected from a sample of 507 high school age students in three high schools in a large urban-suburban Illinois school district. The district was chosen because it was microcosm of the various ethnic and socio-economic groups one would find in most urban areas. The three high schools were chosen because they housed students which represented a cross section of these socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. The sample included representatives of these ethnic and socio-economic groups and were selected using a cluster selection technique.



The cluster selection technique was used to provide a random sample base for the survey. As was customary, each school assigned students to a study hall via computer at the beginning of the semester with no restrictions placed on the criteria for the assignment order. Students were clustered in these study halls without regard to their ethnic or socio-economic background, therefore the selection of any particular study hall period would provide a randomly selected set of subjects.

Members of the cluster were those students who had been assigned to a study hall in their high school during the second semester of the 1991-1992 school year. In each of the three high schools, the period during the day which contained the most students was selected to be sampled. All students who had been assigned a study hall that particular period were eligible to complete a survey. Any student who did not wish to participate in the survey was excused from the process. The variety of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds of the sample, using students from all types of circumstances, and the use of the cluster selection technique helped ensure that such circumstances would not bias the study. The use of subjects with a variety of socio-economic backgrounds: wealthy, middle class, near or at the poverty level, etc., increased the possibility that all segments of the population would be represented and that no segment which incurred greater or lesser exposure to the gang presence would dominate the sample. The cluster selection process also decreased the possibility of bias. Students were computer scheduled into study halls by school authorities who placed no constraints into the computer program that

provided the placement. All students then had an equal chance of being scheduled into a given study hall. Since all students had essentially the same chance of being in the one particular study hall chosen for this project, the chance selection of any student was more randomly accomplished. These elements, socio-economic background, chance placement via the computer, and cluster selection, decreased the likelihood any particular bias would prevail in the sample.

Each student provided written responses to the open-ended scenarios found in the survey (Appendix A). These responses were reviewed and, based on the type of response provided, were assigned to one of the response categories (Appendix B). Data were also collected to identify the student's gender, ethnic background and grade in school: these data being necessary to answer the three research questions of the study.

After the responses were reviewed and assigned to response categories, the data were analyzed. The data were disaggregated according to the gender, ethnic background or grade in school of the sample. A Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test was used to analyze the significance of the number of observed responses as compared to the number of expected responses in each response category and for each classification of the disaggregation. In addition, a narrative analysis was provided for each research question which identified the similarities, differences, and unique responses of the disaggregated sample.

### Limitations

The determination of the kind of data which were collected served to place constraints on the scope of the study as did the selection of the population which contributed the data. This study focused on high school age students in a public high school in a large urban-suburban setting. This focus and the qualitative nature of the analysis employed in the study served to create limitations which would prevent the findings from being generalized to elementary or middle school students or to students in other high school communities. In addition, the situations presented in the survey were specific in nature, therefore, the responses identified cannot be used to predict the same population's coping strategy preference in alternative situations. Also, these data focused on the responses the population claimed they would employ in each situation and cannot be identified with the population's actual practice or experience. Finally, eight different gangs operate in the target area from which the regular student sample was obtained. The membership of each of these gangs is multi-ethnic, unlike the gangs of singular ethnicity found in larger urban areas. No attempt was made to factor multi-ethnic characteristic into the study. Regular students are well aware of the identify of the gang members in their area.

These limitations, while providing structure and framework for the study, also created opportunities for additional study which are identified in Chapter IV.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A survey of literature did not yield material that related directly to the coping behaviors preferred by regular high school students in their relationships to gang-affiliated students. However, an abundance of literature covering the general nature of gangs and their effects on schools was available. Chapter II 1) presents a brief discussion of the gang phenomenon from an historical perspective; 2) defines terms; 3) identifies the personal and societal factors which lead to gang involvement by high school youth; 4) describes conditions prevalent in schools which have a gang presence; and 5) identifies intervention techniques which may or may not provide for a successful resolution of the youth gang problem that faces today's schools in America.

#### Historical Perspective

Burns and Dakin state,

Youth gangs reign supreme in many . . . neighborhoods. They generate an atmosphere of terror to maintain their dominance, and at times, their impact is so devastating that the youth of the neighborhood, their main targets, view atrocious assaults to petty offenses as the "normal" response.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Edward Burns and Thomas J. Dakin, "A New Investigative Approach to Youth Gangs," FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, (October, 1989): 20-24.

What is the mystique that draws youths, especially male youths together for the pursuit of illegal or hostile activities? Clark found that the youth gang phenomenon dates back to the mid 300s AD and identifies St. Augustine who, in his Confessions wrote about the pleasures of stealing pears in the company of his young friends stating: "My pleasure was not in those pears, it was in the offense itself, which the company of fellow sinners occasioned."<sup>4</sup> From that time on, in almost every historical period, congregations of youth have been drawn together for a multiplicity of purposes: from greed to survival.

In the United States, the use of the term "gang" starts with the outlaws of the West in the nineteenth century and was applied to those groups (Doolin, Dalton, and James gang, etc.) engaged in the robbery of stage coaches, mines, saloons and banks.<sup>5</sup> Clark notes that, in American cities, the first organized gang, "the Forty Thieves," appeared in 1825 and terrorized New York's Lower Manhattan. Some of the members even sold their services to labor unions and company operators as they battled each other in the rough and tumble world of politics and the labor organization movement. Clark also notes that each wave of immigrants faced hostile gangs as they journeyed to the new world and sought to establish themselves in the United States. Most of the hostility developed through strife between ethnic groups and in turn, caused ethnic gangs to be formed to protect themselves from others and

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<sup>4</sup>Charles S. Clark, "Youth Gangs," Congressional Quarterly Researcher, 1:22, (October 11, 1991), 762, citing quotation from Armando Morales and Bradford W. Sheafor, Social Work: A Profession of Many Faces (1989), p. 415.

<sup>5</sup>Martin Sanchez Jankowski, Islands in the Street: Gangs and Urban Society, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press), 1.

to assert their ethnic pride.<sup>6</sup> Harrington-Lueker adds, "Gangs are likely to take shape whenever there's ethnic or racial change. . . . The newcomers band together for support, then get defensive, and gradually become more cohesive."<sup>7</sup> As Jankowski states:

As the nineteenth century moved toward its end, American society was faced with a new social problem: the social and economic assimilation of millions of immigrant workers from numerous countries into its cities. Within this group of immigrant workers, there was, of course, great variety in the quality of jobs secured and the degree of socioeconomic mobility. Some members of these groups saw an opportunity for socioeconomic mobility in crime and pursued those opportunities. This led to what has since become known as organized crime. . . . To the public's alarm, these organizations became increasingly successful, and by the 1920s and 1930s they were considered the primary social problem of the time. . . . Thus the word "gang," originally used to refer to western outlaws, moved with the end of the frontier into the city, from the frontier wilderness to the urban wilderness.<sup>8</sup>

At first, youth gangs found root in large urban centers which were experiencing a high degree of poverty, a decaying infrastructure, high unemployment, distrust of authority, and a breakdown of the traditional family pattern. In a report to the National Youth Gang Suppression and Intervention Research and Development Program, Spergel et al. state,

The interaction of social disorganization and lack of access to legitimate resources most significantly accounts for the development of serious deviant groups. . . . The defects of family, school, politics, and neighborhood organization, as well as the presence of organized crime and prison

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<sup>6</sup>Clark, "Youth Gangs," 764.

<sup>7</sup>Donna Harrington-Lueker, "Street Gangs are Big Business--and Growing," The Executive Educator, 12, (July 1990): 14-15.

<sup>8</sup>Jankowski, 2.

experience of youth, may be viewed as contributing to or reinforcing gang patterns.<sup>9</sup>

The mere presence of a family disorganization does not lead necessarily to gang affiliation. Other factors including the presence of a peer group that displays antisocial tendencies combined with an aggressive need disposition or deviant character of the youth form a structure that works to produce a youth gang problem. However, Riley states:

The street gang phenomenon is no longer confined to the great metro giants of Los Angeles, Chicago and New York City. Local law enforcement agencies and the FBI now monitor heavy gang activity in Denver, Milwaukee, Omaha, Oklahoma City, Kansas City, and many other cities. . . . In reality, the gang phenomenon transcends cultural, socio-economic, racial, and ethnic lines. It is a societal issue rooted in our homes and institutions, which includes our schools.<sup>10</sup>

But Spergel says, "It is clear that concerns about the street gang problem have increased. However, good data on the nature, scope and seriousness of the problem nationally are as yet unavailable."<sup>11</sup> Due to this limited research and the lack of consensus on a clear definition of what a "gang" is, the breadth and depth of the youth gang problem is not clearly or reliably known. However, contends Riley, street gangs are a microcosm of our national diversity. In various parts of our country one can find gangs whose members are predominantly African-American, Mexican, Japanese, Israeli, Indo-Chinese, Haitian, Cuban,

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<sup>9</sup>Irving A. Spergel et al., Youth Gangs: Problem and Response, (Chicago: School of Social Services Administration, University of Chicago, 1990), 8, 87-JS-CX-K100.

<sup>10</sup>Kevin W. Riley, Street Gangs and the School: A Blueprint for Intervention, Special Issue No. 31. (Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa, 1991), 7-9.

<sup>11</sup>Irving A. Spergel, "Youth Gangs: An Essay Review," Social Service Review, (March 1992): 121-140.

Jamaican, Columbian, Filipino, white, or some mixture of the above cultures. Also hate groups like the Neo-Nazis and "skinheads" who have revived racial separatism and white supremacy issues through their attacks on African-Americans, gays, and Jews can be classified as gangs.<sup>12</sup> Spergel et al. add, based on law enforcement and media reports, the presence of youth gangs can be found across the United States, in Hawaii, Alaska, Puerto Rico and other territories.<sup>13</sup> However, the character of the gang problem appears to differ depending on the extent of community poverty and disorganization, population movement, race and ethnicity, city size, and availability of criminal opportunities.<sup>14</sup> Today, gangs have spread into the middle class areas as a consequence of families with gang-member children moving into the community. These gangs, of any ethnic origin, begin for a variety of reasons: the most common being the breakdown of the family as a cohesive unit and desperate poverty.<sup>15</sup>

Clark defines several of the historical approaches to dealing with the gang problem. In the 1950s and 1960s institutions tried to prevent youngsters from joining gangs and tried to use social services to work with and dilute the enticement of the gang itself; in the 1970s and

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<sup>12</sup>Riley, 7.

<sup>13</sup>Spergel et al, Youth Gangs: Problem and Response, 2.

<sup>14</sup>Spergel, "Youth Gangs: An Essay Review," 121-140.

<sup>15</sup>"Street Gangs of Los Angeles County: A White Paper," a publication of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, July, 1990, 19 pages.



1980s, the emphasis changed to suppression of the gang and its activities and influences.<sup>16</sup> But, as Bryant states, "Today we are arresting more gang members than ever before; we are getting more convictions than ever before, and we are getting longer sentences than ever before. But . . . we have more gangs than ever before."<sup>17</sup> Schools traditionally followed the lead of the other institutions, providing counseling and social work services in the 1960s and firm discipline and a police presence in the 1980s. There is no clear evidence that either technique: prevention or suppression, was effective.

#### Definitions

"Many sociologists have expostulated theory after theory on what a gang is or is not. The following definition is used by law enforcement.

'A gang is any group gathered together on a continuing basis to commit anti-social behavior."<sup>18</sup> In attempting to define "gang,"

anthropologist Walter Goldschmidt states:

All people have the same need for recognition, validation and acceptance from their culture and subcultures. As with gang members, so with yuppies on the career ladders of corporate America, so with faculty members aiming for tenure and departmental chairs, so with Tlingit Indians of southeastern Alaska. . . . In fact, take away the criminal element associated with street gangs and they might be acclaimed as powerful and adolescent networks providing camaraderie, a sense of purpose, socialization skills, and loyalty in the same way that civic, professional, and school-sponsored organizations do. The parallel being

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<sup>16</sup> Clark, 756.

<sup>17</sup> Dan Bryant, "Communitywide Responses Crucial for Dealing With Youth Gangs," Juvenile Justice Bulletin, (September 1989): 1-6.

<sup>18</sup> "Street Gangs of Los Angeles County: A White Paper," 2.

made here between street gangs and conventional organizations is not to justify antisocial gang behavior but rather to point out that the difficulty in defining a street gang can often lead to inappropriate responses when we embark on intervention efforts to curtail them.<sup>19</sup>

Goldschmidt's commentary synthesizes the difficulty of coping with the gang problem. The various legal, social or educational institutions define gangs to meet their institution's needs. A school might define gang as any students who, as a group, disobey regulations; a social definition might be along neighborhood or ethnic lines; while a legal definition might be along statutory or constitutional lines. Each has its purpose and significance for the institution but poses problems as the institutions cooperatively attempt to combat the problem. This lack of clarity in definition often makes the development of a coordinated response difficult if not impossible.

Riley indicates most adolescents belong to some type of group, team, club, clique, or associate with neighborhood friends. These groups operate under unwritten charters which encourage group norms and are characterized by a common goal or interest. The same is true for gangs.<sup>20</sup> Webster defines a gang as 1) "a group working together; a group having informal and usually close social relations"; 2) "a group working to unlawful or antisocial ends."<sup>21</sup> In reality, a gang almost always falls under the first definition but not always the second since one can be a member and not become involved in the criminal activities

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<sup>19</sup> Riley, 12.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>21</sup> Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, rev. ed. (1957), s.v. "gang."

of the group. Therefore, a dictionary definition does not capture the essence of what a gang really is.

### Levels of Involvement

Riley indicates a better way to define gangs is not by what they are but rather by what they do: by the level of involvement of its members. He defines "level of involvement" as the degree to which the members subscribe to the teachings and activities of the gang.

Level 1. Persons displaying Level 1 characteristics have little or no involvement or association with the criminal or violent activities of the gang. At times Level 1 persons are testing their degree of interest but have made no formal or informal commitment to the gang. In most communities 95-100% of its youth fall into this category and are not involved in any gang activity whatsoever.

Level 2. Level 2 persons admire or identify with someone in the gang. Most youth move through various stages in their lives where they identify with role models like athletes, rock or movie stars, parents, teachers, or friends. Commonly called "wannabies," these persons possess idiosyncratic reasons for choosing gang members as their role models and heroes. As with their identification with other celebrities, their idolization includes mimicry of dress and mannerisms which serve to present an image to make one believe they are as they appear.

Level 3. Level 3 persons generally associate with gang members and sometimes participate in gang activity. They may not have made a formal commitment, but are at a dangerous level of involvement. This level usually involves guilt by association which may influence their decision to enter the gang in the future.

Level 4. Level 4 involved persons have been classified as documented gang members by law enforcement groups because they: 1) openly claim membership in the gang; 2) associate with the gang's members on a regular basis; 3) are involved in gang related crime; 4) display gang related identifiers or symbols on their person, clothing, etc. or 5) are named as gang members by a reliable informant.<sup>22</sup>

This categorization by Riley appears to provide a more detailed

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<sup>22</sup>Riley, 12.

working definition of a gang member which can assist school personnel in assessing the extent of gang activity on their campuses. This assessment may also lead administrators to making more effective choices of approaches to the solution of their school's gang problem.

#### Factors Leading to Gang Involvement

In an early study by Frederic Thrasher, which was and continues to be a major influence on gang research, Thrasher asserted that gangs not only emerge from poor and socially disorganized neighborhoods, but the gang's members join because of the lack of opportunity to do anything else. In addition, says Thrasher, those who join lack the skills and drive needed to compete with others for good jobs.<sup>23</sup> The decision to join a gang or to associate with gang members is a highly individualized yet critical one.<sup>24</sup> Most students, well aware of the risks, join gangs for the experiences and adventures that cannot be found elsewhere.

According to Stover,

One characteristic most gang members share is the reason they join the gang in the first place--to fill a vacuum in their lives. . . . Gangs offer kids a lot of things society doesn't offer, including status, a sense of self-worth, and a place of acceptance.<sup>25</sup>

And Jankowski adds:

Gangs are composed of individuals who join for a wide variety of reasons. If there is one pattern in the evidence concerning gang involvement, it is that individuals make a rational choice when deciding to join a gang, stay in a gang or rejoin a gang. Each individual's choice is based on many

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<sup>23</sup>Frederic Thrasher, The Gang: A Study of 1303 Gangs in Chicago, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 1928.

<sup>24</sup>Riley, 16.

<sup>25</sup>Del Stover, "A New Breed of Youth Gang is on the Prowl and a Bigger Threat Than Ever," American School Board Journal, 173, (August 1986): 20.

factors, but, by a substantial margin, the one that is foremost is the assessment of what is best for the individual at the time.<sup>26</sup>

As Horowitz proposes, gang membership does not define the boundaries of individual friendship but may limit the extent to which non-gang affiliates approve of the gang's violence. Generally, non-gang members who associate with gang members do so with the open awareness of the behavioral differences between them. They understand that they can remain as uninvolved bystanders because the gang members symbolically separate themselves from the non-gang youth.<sup>27</sup>

Burke contends students who belong to what he calls "the great disconnected" try to create their own sense of family through the gang because so many of them have no family at home to provide them with affection or a sense of belonging.<sup>28</sup> In "Street Gangs of Los Angeles: A White Paper," the lack of a traditional family organization is identified as the most important factor in the formation of a gang member. Families having hardcore gang members have been found to have certain characteristics in common. They are usually a racial minority group on some form of government assistance and usually lack a male authority figure. If two adults are present, it is usually a common-law type of arrangement with a strong possibility that the male adult has a criminal or drug use background and does not exert positive discipline. Typically, neither adult has more than an elementary education. The

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<sup>26</sup>Jankowski, Islands in the Street; Gangs and Urban Society, 313.

<sup>27</sup>Ruth Horowitz, "Community Tolerance of Gang Violence," Social Problems, 4:5 (December 1897): 437-449.

<sup>28</sup>Jim Burke, "Teenagers, Clothes and Gang Violence," Educational Leadership, September 1991): 11-13.

children exist with little adult supervision and tend to associate with friends of similar backgrounds. If the child becomes involved with crime, the adult tends to make excuses for the child, thereby teaching the children early that they are not responsible for their actions.<sup>29</sup>

In addition, Peterson and Otts cite: 1) low self-esteem, 2) excessive unsupervised time, 3) poor grades, attendance and lack of school involvement, 4) poor communication and decision making skills, 5) dysfunctional families or single parent families, 6) other family members involved in gangs, 7) environmental survival, and 8) various psychological factors as the personal factors which lead to gang involvement.<sup>30</sup> O'Donnell adds personal failure at home, in school and with peers and feels youth join gangs to gain status and enhance their egos.<sup>31</sup> Pride, prestige, peer pressure, adventure, self-preservation, the lure of money, limited life options, and power complete the list of personal factors identified by Riley.<sup>32</sup>

While each is a motivating force which can be satisfied to some degree through conventional, socially acceptable forms of involvement in school and community activities, some individuals reject conventional methods and turn to the gang for fulfillment because the power of gang affiliation commands respect if for no other reason--because of fear.

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<sup>29</sup>"Street Gangs of Los Angeles: A White Paper," 4.

<sup>30</sup>Rusty Peterson and Keith Otts, Glendale Arizona Police Gang Awareness Manual, (Glendale: Glendale Police Department, 1990), 2.

<sup>31</sup>Harriet O'Donnell, "It's Time to 'Gang Up' on a Age-old Problem," PTA Today, (February 1985): 13.

<sup>32</sup>Riley, 16.

According to educator and sociologist Douglas Harrell, such power is even more potent for individuals who have been systematically disempowered. When individuals have no real power, they will strive to out-dress, out-fight, or out-dance their peers. Such actions take on a kind of charismatic, communal power. Unlike the adult culture where the motivation is for economic or political power, in the school culture the power of gang membership quickly places students at the forefront of their peer group, thus enhancing their self-image, however transitory it may be.<sup>33</sup>

As a police officer, Entler takes a differing view and lists four motives for joining gangs: identify and recognition, protection, fellowship and brotherhood, and intimidation.<sup>34</sup>

However, Riley continues, youth who are most at-risk for joining gangs tend to be influenced by another set of dynamics related to their societal circumstances. Despite the promise of the American dream of justice and equality for all, the United States remains a nation of "haves" and "have nots." A growing underclass is characterized by illiteracy, large unemployment, chronic poverty, homelessness, despair, persistent racism, classism and other forms of discrimination: the seeds from which gang antisocial behavior springs. While street gangs are a transcultural phenomenon, they are more prevalent in the impoverished communities and urban ghettos whose residents are seldom white and are closely associated with feelings of alienation, exclusion, and disenfranchisement--factors which contribute to the formation of street gangs. It might be argued that all of us feel some form of alienation and exclusion. However, the "safety nets" that are built into institutions (family, church, school, community, social groups) [who

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<sup>33</sup> Riley, 17.

<sup>34</sup> Brad Entler, Gang Awareness, (Elgin, IL: Elgin Task Force), 3.

normally do not engage in criminal activity as do gangs], allow us to prevail. When institutions themselves contribute to the feelings of alienation and exclusion, the result is likely to be dysfunctional individuals with a high risk to succumb to the gang mystique.<sup>35</sup>

Finally, Stover lists poverty, racial division, broken families, lack of recreational facilities, and high unemployment for adults and teens as societal conditions which foster the growth of youth gangs.<sup>36</sup>

Each of the conditions mentioned to some degree promotes the existence of youth gangs. While the authors cited do not agree to the same list, the conditions identified clearly indicate a broad range of personal and societal factors which may make gang membership a viable choice for certain youth. The choice to be in a gang, associate with gang members, or remain uninvolved serves to satisfy the person's physiological needs and offers safety, love, self-esteem and a sense of belonging. Depending on one's point of view, it may also help members reach a level of self-actualization. These same youth who, because of these conditions, have chosen to become involved with gangs, are likely to be members of a local school system. When they enter the school building or play on the school grounds, they do not leave their gang affiliation behind; they bring it with them into the educational setting.

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<sup>35</sup> Riley, 8-20.

<sup>36</sup> Del Stover, "Dealing With Youth Gangs in the Schools," Education Digest, 52, (February 1987): 30-31.



Gangs and Schools

As Stover states:

In the past two decades, some disturbing trends have appeared that make gang activity a concern for an increasing number of school boards. Urban sprawl, population growth, high local unemployment, and declining local economies are carrying street gangs out of the inner city and into smaller urban areas and suburbs.<sup>37</sup>

As gangs increase their activity in the community which surrounds schools, the effects of their operations appear within the educational institution with increasing frequency also. A recent National Association of Secondary School Principals' publications states, "For far too many of our school districts, the presence of youth gangs has become a serious and unsettling reality."<sup>38</sup> And, according to Harrington-Lueker, no school system is immune to gangs and gang violence. Gangs have spread from large urban areas to the suburbs, to small towns across the country.<sup>39</sup> As Stover reports,

Long considered a phenomenon centered in urban districts, the encroachment of gangs into suburban and rural settings means that school authorities in these settings, like their urban counterparts, may be faced with increased serious disciplinary and security problems.<sup>40</sup>

What happens on the street can and often does occur inside the school, even if the school provides good security and supervision. When traditional overt gang identifiers appear: graffiti, the wearing of colors, or more fights for example, other activities, intimidation of

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<sup>37</sup> Stover, "New Breed of Youth Gang," 20.

<sup>38</sup> "How to Keep Your School and Students Safe," Tips for Principals, a NASSP Publication, (March 1990): 1-2.

<sup>39</sup> Harrington-Lueker, 14.

<sup>40</sup> Stover, "Dealing With Youth Gangs," 30.

students, recruitment, and increased drug-dealing may go unnoticed.<sup>41</sup>

As McEvoy states,

If there are gangs in the community, they will include students, and schools are always implicated in gang problems. . . . The easiest way to identify gang presence is to ask students. They know of gangs long before teachers do, and some of them will brag about them.<sup>42</sup>

Lawton reports that nine percent of 12 to 19 year-olds were victims of crime in their schools during a six month period in 1988-1989. A full 2% of the students in that age range (400,000 in all) were victims of violent crime. Also, 15% of the students surveyed reported gang activity in or around their schools.<sup>43</sup> Burke adds statistics from several California schools which cite riots, possession of weapons, physical attacks, intimidation, and drive-by shootings as increasing notification that gang activity is on the rise in that area.<sup>44</sup> And PTA Today lists a murder on an elementary school playground which was witnessed by students, the presence of uniformed, armed police officers in Chicago high schools, and the organization of parent patrols to supervise high school hallways as evidence of a growth in gang violence in and around schools.<sup>45</sup> Christianity Today reports that, while gangs

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<sup>41</sup> Stover, "Dealing with Youth Gangs," 31.

<sup>42</sup> Alan McEvoy, "Combatting Gang Activities in the Schools," Education Digest, 56, (October 1990): 31-34.

<sup>43</sup> Millicent Lawton, "400,000 Found Victims of Violent Crimes in Schools," Education Week, 9 October 1991, p. 12.

<sup>44</sup> Burke, 11-13.

<sup>45</sup> O'Donnell, 13-15.

still form along racial, ethnic or geographical lines, their activities are fueled more by drug involvement: a more sinister factor.<sup>46</sup>

Harrington-Lueker reports that today's gang threat is more than media hype:

Going beyond copycat groups to sophisticated, and often violent, drug-marketing operations, gangs are a significant threat to the safety and well-being of U.S. schools and communities.<sup>47</sup>

Burke further states, "Students cannot learn if they do not feel safe. No matter how you define safety--emotional or physical--it is necessary in both the school and the classroom."<sup>48</sup>

Spergel, et al. claim that a potential gang member is likely do poorly in school and have little identification with the school staff. They also feel potential gang members do not like school or find school more useful for gang-related activities than academic or social learning processes.<sup>49</sup> In addition, gang members tend to be disruptive and an intimidating presence to students and teachers. Their continued presence at school poses a serious challenge to maintaining order and safety. A student who may have a negative encounter with a gang member in the hallway, for example, will worry more about getting home safely after school than about his school work.<sup>50</sup> Riley adds,

The one commonality among gang members is that virtually all of them currently are, or have been, students in our

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<sup>46</sup> "Gang Activity and Drugs," Christianity Today, (15 January 1990): 17-20.

<sup>47</sup> Harrington-Lueker, 14.

<sup>48</sup> Burke, 11.

<sup>49</sup> Spergel et al, 8.

<sup>50</sup> Stover, "A New Breed of Youth Gang," 31.

schools. Thus the task facing schools is to devise appropriate intervention strategies that can influence students in making positive decisions about their present and future life.<sup>51</sup>

### Interventions

According to Huff, "Schools must make it clear that their first obligation is to ensure an environment conducive to learning, and that means one free from intimidation and assault. . . . a sort of 'neutral zone' where gang warfare [is] largely taboo."<sup>52</sup> Moriarity and Fleming feel:

Suburban school officials who battle gangs by trying to pinpoint the "outsiders" are looking in the wrong direction . . . gangs typically don't invade suburban schools from the outside, sending out gangs members to recruit new members and extend their territory. Instead, gangs grow up almost spontaneously within schools, by default rather than design. And the catalysts are most likely to be transfer students from the city, marginally acquainted with gang paraphernalia and desperately trying to impress their new peers. . . .

With a group of youngsters gathering around, the displaced student from the city gains a sense of importance and leadership status that suburban life might otherwise deny him . . . [and] he begins to realize . . . he can find power within the school walls, and not have to meet the school's expectations to satisfy his own needs.<sup>53</sup>

McEvoy contends there are current strategies that have not demonstrated effectiveness in combatting the gang influence. These include: 1) "get tough" law enforcement measures; 2) heavy police presence on schools grounds; 3) strong suspension policies; 4) banning "colors or clothing; 5) refusing to confront gang presence hoping it

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<sup>51</sup> Riley, 10.

<sup>52</sup> C. Ronald Huff, "Youth Gangs and Public Policy," Crime and Delinquency, 35:6, (October 1989): 524-537.

<sup>53</sup> Anthony Moriarity and Thomas W. Fleming, "Youth Gangs Aren't Just a Big-city Problem Anymore," The Executive Educator, 12:7, (July 1990): 13-16.

will "go away" and 6) generic intervention that treat all gangs alike.<sup>54</sup> "Get tough" law enforcement, heavy police presence on school grounds, and suspension policies, communicate two unfortunate messages: first, the school is not neutral but hostile territory and gang members must be better organized and more secretive to combat police presence; and second, the "siege mentality" that is created by the heavy police presence is highly destructive to learning climate. These also isolate gang members from the positive influences of staff (teachers, administrators, counselors, coaches) and students.

McEvoy also identifies approaches he feels have a better chance of success, namely: 1) creating a neutral zone for all students; 2) securing a truce and conferring on gangs some measure of legitimacy if they take on school-approved tasks or roles; 3) providing students with alternatives--job training, sports, facility access, etc.--which create opportunities for gang members to transfer loyalties to more acceptable groups like intramurals, clubs, music, art, or photography; 4) co-opting leaders for school projects and activities where they can exert positive leadership and provide peer assistance and positive role modeling.<sup>55</sup>

Stover indicates that a strong principal, tough security, attention to gang activity after hours in the community, community support for anti-gang efforts, and greater school-community cooperation

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<sup>54</sup> McEvoy, 31-34.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 31-34.

go a long way toward reducing or eliminating the gang influence in schools.<sup>56</sup> And Huff reports:

Contrary to "common wisdom," teachers who demonstrate that they care about a youth and then are firm but fair in their expectations are rarely, if ever, the victims of assault by gang members. Rather, it is those teachers who "back down" and are easily intimidated who are more likely to be the victims of assault.<sup>57</sup>

Huff's study also contends not one gang member reported a teacher who insisted on academic performance in a caring way was assaulted. These teachers were more respected than those perceived as weak. "Weakness" was to be exploited. Also, overly aggressive approaches by adults, especially police, brought forth anger and vindictiveness toward the authority figure who might have behaved unprofessionally.<sup>58</sup>

#### Conclusion

Jankowski states:

Despite all the research that has been done and all the programs that have been instituted to combat their growth and activity, gangs have vigorously persisted . . . in part because the gangs themselves make concerted organizational efforts to ensure their own survival, and in part because public policy makers . . . either fail to understand gangs or find themselves in a policy quagmire.<sup>59</sup>

Jankowski adds, "Only policies that affect both the individual and the organization's ability to operate can pose serious challenges to gang persistence."<sup>60</sup> Riley states, "The war against street gangs can

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<sup>56</sup> Stover, "Dealing With Youth Gangs," 30-33.

<sup>57</sup> Huff, 531.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 531.

<sup>59</sup> Jankowski, 311.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 317.

be won only when educators attack the root causes--the motivating factors and environmental conditions--that compel students to join gangs in the first place."<sup>61</sup>

As Thompson and Jason state, "Although numerous gang intervention activities have been instituted over the years, few have been evaluated; of those assessed, few proved to be effective in addressing the problem of street gangs in schools."<sup>62</sup> This lack of evaluation only increases the confusion and frustration faced by students and school personnel as they attempt to combat the gang presence. While many programs to provide prevention or intervention strategies float through the educational system, school personnel are at a loss to select strategies that have proved effective since many of these programs are short lived and have not faced long term evaluative scrutiny. And, as Goldschmidt concludes, this lack of clarity may lead to inappropriate responses by administrators who attempt to intervene. Jankowski adds:

As the various agencies and institutions become more entangled with gangs, they cease to focus on eliminating them and become more focused on merely controlling them. Ultimately, this becomes instrumental in enhancing their persistence.<sup>63</sup>

If Jankowski's statement becomes fact and the future finds a persistent gang presence in the educational lives of students who are not gang-affiliated, these non-affiliated students will need to continue to cope as best they can. School personnel can assist in the

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<sup>61</sup> Riley, 10.

<sup>62</sup> David W. Thompson and Leonard A. Jason, "Street Gangs and Preventive Interventions," Criminal Justice and Behavior, 15:3, (September 1988): 323-333.

<sup>63</sup> Jankowski, 319.

development of these coping strategies if they are knowledgeable about the variety of strategies used by non-affiliated students and the extent to which a specific successful strategy may be preferred by particular groups of students. It is information about these coping preferences this study hopes to provide.



## CHAPTER III

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This study surveyed 507 high school students in three high schools in a large urban-suburban school district in northern Illinois and sought to reveal any relationships that exist between the coping strategies preferred by regular students when faced with eight hypothetical situations involving gang-affiliated students and a set of key variables. These variables were the gender, ethnic background and grade in high school of the regular students. These data are presented and analyzed and the findings reported in this chapter in the form of a review of each specific gang-related situation and from the perspective of each research question presented in Chapter I. Also, a discussion of implications based on the findings is presented.

#### Overview of the Data

Data were collected from a sample of high school students using a cluster selection technique to provide a random sample base for the survey. Members of the cluster and, subsequently, the sample were those students who had been assigned to a study hall by their respective high schools. Each member of the cluster was given the opportunity to complete the survey. Those who chose to respond were asked to describe the type of coping strategy they believed they would use if they found themselves in each of the situations. The responders were cautioned to work individually, as if they were currently involved in each situation

presented. All questions pertaining to the situations were open-ended and no attempt was made to "lead" the responder to a category of response.

After the responses of the sample were read and analyzed, they were sorted into categories. All similar responses in each category were then analyzed and a title that best described each category was chosen. The titles chosen were Avoidance, Compliance, Continuance, Physical, Provocative, Reasoning, Refusal, Seeking Aid, Verbally Challenging, and No Response. (A complete definition of each category can be found in Appendix B.) Tables were constructed identifying the results that would be expected to be given, using the Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) test of significance, and the observed or actual responses given by the sample. In addition, demographic data identifying the gender, ethnic background and grade in school of each responder were collected.

Demographic data can be found in Table 1.

Table 1.--Demographic Distribution of the Sample

| Grade | Total      | Gender    |           | Ethnic Background |           |
|-------|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|
|       |            | Female    | Male      | White             | Non-white |
| 9     | 171        | 69        | 102       | 124               | 47        |
| 10    | 112        | 61        | 51        | 70                | 42        |
| 11    | 120        | 70        | 50        | 88                | 32        |
| 12    | <u>104</u> | <u>56</u> | <u>48</u> | <u>77</u>         | <u>27</u> |
| Total | 507        | 256       | 251       | 359               | 148       |

Presentation and Analysis of Data by Situation

The raw data pertaining to student responses to each of the eight survey questions and the analysis of those data follow each situation.

Situation 1

You are in a classroom which is involved in a heated debate on a particular subject led by the teacher. After you state your opinion, another student whom you believe to be a gang member strongly challenges your opinion in a threatening manner. What would you do?

Table 2 displays the numbers of responses given by the sample in each of the ten categories derived from the responses.

Table 2.--Situation 1 Responses of Sample

| Response    | Number | Response             | Number   |
|-------------|--------|----------------------|----------|
| Avoidance   | 93     | Reasoning            | 40       |
| Compliance  | 2      | Refusal              | 0        |
| Continuance | 273    | Seeking Aid          | 11       |
| Physical    | 3      | Verbally Challenging | 70       |
| Provocative | 10     | No Response          | <u>5</u> |
|             |        | Total                | 507      |

Of the 507 students surveyed, 273 (53.8%) chose Continuance, 93 (18.3%) Avoidance, 70 (13.8%) Verbally Challenging, 40 (7.9%) Reasoning, 11 (2.2%) Seek Aid, 10 (2%) Provocation, 5 (1%) No Response, 3 (.6%) Physical, and 2 (.4%) chose Compliance.

Analysis

The largest group of responders (Continuance, 53.8%) chose to continue arguing their position, even when faced with the threatening challenge of the perceived gang-affiliated student. As defined in



Appendix B, the term Continuance means that the responder continues to speak or act without changing in light of the response or activity of the gang-affiliated student(s). (See Appendix B for a complete list of terms and definitions.)

Continuance can be neutral, negative, or positive statements or actions and does not necessarily indicate agreement or disagreement with the gang-affiliated position. This was the only occasion in the eight situations where the choice of Continuance was made on so large a scale. The choice to continue to maintain their position could suggest the responders were less threatened in a one-on-one interaction in the classroom, even if the interaction demonstrated negative or threatening overtones; or, perhaps, as some responders stated in their written responses, there is a belief that gang members do not act individually and do not act out in the midst of a large group of neutral observers. Additionally, the choice of Continuance could suggest that the presence of the teacher in the classroom and the control the teacher was perceived to exercise over the class led students to feel a degree of security maintained by active supervision in the classroom that was not felt elsewhere. When the choice to be Verbally Challenging (13.8%) and Reasoning (7.9%), both indicative of a high degree of comfort in this gang-affiliated situation, are added to Continuance (53.8%), more than three quarters (75.5%) of the sample indicate a positive or neutral choice as opposed to the 18.3% who selected a negative position (Avoidance) and chose to cease contact with the gang-affiliated challenger and withdraw from the situation.

After completing the above analysis of responses of the total sample, the data were investigated to determine if a relationship exists between the responses and the gender, ethnic background, or grade in school of the responders. A Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test of significance was applied to determine if the observed frequency of responses in each set of variables differed in a statistically significant manner from the expected frequency of responses. In an effort to avoid extremely low frequencies, any category of responses which numbered fewer than ten was deleted from the sample as being statistically insignificant. A procedure identical to that which has been described is followed for each of the eight situations presented in the student survey.

### Gender

Table 3 demonstrates the Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test of significance for the data from Situation One as arranged by the gender of the sample.

Table 3.--Situation 1 Responses Arranged by Gender

| Response             | Female    |          | Male      |          | Total     |
|----------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
|                      | Observed  | Expected | Observed  | Expected |           |
| Avoidance            | 54        | 47.15    | 39        | 45.85    | 93        |
| Continuance          | 135       | 138.42   | 138       | 134.58   | 273       |
| Provocation          | 2         | 5.07     | 8         | 4.83     | 10        |
| Reasoning            | 27        | 20.28    | 13        | 19.72    | 40        |
| Seeking Aid          | 7         | 5.58     | 4         | 5.42     | 11        |
| Verbally Challenging | <u>27</u> | 35.49    | <u>43</u> | 34.51    | <u>70</u> |
| TOTAL                | 252       |          | 245       |          | 497       |

\*  $\chi^2 = 15.2473$  (11.070 expected), d.f. = 5

\* Denotes statistical significance at  $P = .05$ .

The results of the Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) test of significance indicates the frequency of female observed responses in the categories of Avoidance, Reasoning, and Seeking Aid was statistically greater than expected, while the frequency of female observed responses in the categories of Provocation and Verbally Challenging was statistically lower than expected.

The opposite is true of the males in the sample. The frequency of male observed responses in the categories of Avoidance, Reasoning, and Seeking Aid was statistically lower than expected, while the frequency of male observed responses in the categories of Provocation and Verbally Challenging was statistically greater than expected. With a Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) value of 15.2473 at five degrees of freedom (d.f.), the observed responses are a statistically significant departure from the expected responses at the .05 level.

The response category of Continuance as defined can be viewed as a neutral response since the responders speech or action in and of itself is neither aggressive or submissive. The student simply continues to speak or act and maintain his or her position in the debate without becoming provocative or submissive toward the gang-affiliated person. When the Continuance category is removed from consideration, one can see a significant difference in the responses of males and females. Of the remaining 117 female responses, 88 (75%) females chose what can be described as more submissive responses: Avoidance, Reasoning, Seeking Aid. In contrast, of the remaining 107 male responses, 51 (48%) males chose the more aggressive responses of Provocation and Verbally Challenging. By selecting more submissive responses, females chose less

confrontive measures than the males of the sample who opt for more aggressive solutions to the situation.

When one reviews the observed responses of the sample (other than Continuance), the typical stereotype of males acting more aggressively and females acting less aggressively appears to hold true in this situation. All responders created their own responses from their perception of the situation and the choices they perceived to be available. Since a check-list of possible choices was not provided on the survey, one can assume the choices made were those the individual felt most appropriate from their background and experiences. Judging from the written responses of the sample, males perceived the gang-affiliated student's manner as threatening and chose a more aggressive response (Provocation or Verbally Challenging) significantly more frequently than expected.

#### Ethnic Background

Situation 1 responses were next viewed in relation to the ethnic background of the responders. Table 4 shows this arrangement.

Table 4.--Situation 1 Responses Arranged by Ethnic Background

| Response             | White     |          | Non-white |          | Total     |
|----------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
|                      | Observed  | Expected | Observed  | Expected |           |
| Avoidance            | 61        | 65.68    | 32        | 27.32    | 93        |
| Continuance          | 212       | 192.80   | 61        | 80.20    | 273       |
| Provocation          | 2         | 7.06     | 8         | 2.94     | 10        |
| Reasoning            | 26        | 28.25    | 14        | 11.75    | 40        |
| Seeking Aid          | 9         | 7.77     | 2         | 3.23     | 11        |
| Verbally Challenging | <u>41</u> | 49.44    | <u>29</u> | 20.56    | <u>70</u> |
| TOTAL                | 351       |          | 146       |          | 497       |

\*  $\chi^2 = 26.158$  (11.070 expected), d.f. = 5

\* Denotes statistical significance at  $P = .05$

The frequency of observed responses of white students was slightly greater than expected in the Seeking Aid category but significantly greater than expected in the category of Continuance. The categories of Avoidance and Reasoning show slightly fewer observed responses than expected, while the Provocation and Verbally Challenging observed responses were significantly fewer than expected.

In the non-white sample, the frequency of observed responses in the Provocation and Verbally Challenging categories was significantly greater than the expected responses, while the frequency of observed responses in the Avoidance and Reasoning categories was only slightly greater. The frequency of observed responses in the Continuance category was significantly less than expected while the Seeking Aid category responses were only slightly fewer than expected.

In the non-white population, the Continuance category showed the greatest number of responses. However, the observed response was approximately 25% less than expected. More non-white responders chose



to alter their response in light of the perceived threatening behavior of the gang-affiliated student. This is the only situation of the eight presented in the survey where a statistically significant difference was noted in the responses when arranged by ethnic background. Written responses from non-white responders indicate less willingness to ignore perceived threats. Many indicate their experience with gang members, mainly negative, requires a response to the threat. In addition, an attitude of "I'm not backing down to anybody" was expressed by several non-whites. Few of the white population indicate similar feelings. Perhaps the white responders had fewer negative experiences with gang members and did not feel the need to respond accordingly; or, as indicated in their written responses, they feel a higher degree of comfort and security in the classroom due to the presence of teacher. However, since this is the only situation out of the eight presented which showed statistically significant differences in observed vs expected responses, care must be taken not to read more into the difference than is indicated.

With a Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value of 26.158 at five degrees of freedom (d.f.), the observed responses are a statistically significant departure from the expected responses at the .05 level.

#### Grade in School

The final step in the analysis of the sample's responses to Situation One was to investigate the responses of the sample in light of the responder's grade in high school. Table 5 shows these responses.

Table 5.--Situation 1 Responses Arranged by Grade

| Response    | Grade 9   |       | Grade 10  |       | Grade 11  |       | Grade 12  |       | Total     |
|-------------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|
|             | Obs       | Exp   | Obs       | Exp   | Obs       | Exp   | Obs       | Exp   |           |
| Avoidance   | 30        | 31.44 | 31        | 20.77 | 12        | 21.52 | 20        | 19.27 | 93        |
| Continuance | 104       | 92.29 | 45        | 60.97 | 63        | 63.17 | 61        | 56.58 | 273       |
| Provocation | 6         | 3.39  | 2         | 2.23  | 2         | 2.31  | 0         | 2.07  | 10        |
| Reasoning   | 7         | 13.52 | 9         | 8.93  | 18        | 8.26  | 6         | 8.29  | 40        |
| Seeking Aid | 4         | 3.72  | 4         | 2.46  | 2         | 2.55  | 1         | 2.28  | 11        |
| Verbally    |           |       |           |       |           |       |           |       |           |
| Challenging | <u>17</u> | 23.66 | <u>20</u> | 15.63 | <u>18</u> | 16.20 | <u>15</u> | 14.51 | <u>70</u> |
| Total       | 168       |       | 111       |       | 115       |       | 103       |       | 497       |

\*  $\chi^2 = 37.4621$  (21.026 expected), d.f. = 12

\* Denotes statistical significance at  $P = .05$

The frequency of observed response that was statistically greater than expected can be found in the categories of Avoidance (Grade 10), Continuance (Grades 9 and 12), Reasoning (Grade 11), and Verbally Challenging (Grade 10). Categories which exhibit observed responses which were significantly less than expected are: Avoidance (Grade 11), Continuance (Grade 10), and Verbally Challenging (Grade 9).

In the Grade 9 sample, the frequency of observed responses of the 104 students who chose Continuance were significantly greater than the frequency of expected responses. Again, as indicated by written student responses, this frequency could suggest that, because of the teacher's perceived influence in the classroom, Grade 9 students seemed more inclined to continue debating the subject than their counterparts in Grades 10 and 11. Another possibility for the Grade 9 students' apparent comfort level could be because the students were new to the high school setting. Perhaps coming from a more controlled and sheltered middle

school setting, the sample may not have experienced negative gang-affiliated intimidation in the classroom before.

The frequency of observed responses (17) in the Verbally Challenging category was less than the 23.66 responses which were expected from the sample. Fewer Verbally Challenging responses could indicate, again, a comfort level due to the teacher's presence; or, a lack of experience with and knowledge of gang members and their perceived threat; or, as indicated in the written responses, an unwillingness to mix in class and out-of-class associations. The frequency of the remaining observed responses was similar to that which was expected.

When Continuance is viewed as a neutral response, the Grade 10 sample finds fewer students than expected maintaining a neutral stance. Only 45 observed responses are shown while almost 61 were expected. Of the remaining Grade 10 responses, the more submissive categories of Avoidance, Reasoning, and Seeking Aid show a 37% greater than expected response, while the frequency of observed responses in the more aggressive Provocation and Verbally Challenging categories show a 23% greater than expected response. Grade 10 is the only grade in which the responders were less likely to choose Continuance than expected. What significance this choice may have is unclear since there does not seem to be agreement as to which direction, aggressive or submissive, the group is going. Perhaps the responders in Grade 10, having one year of high school experience, have more exposure to gang-affiliated students and are more willing to respond, especially in the "safe" classroom. Also, as high school administrators state, 10th graders are more

explosive in nature than 9th graders. The 10 graders were more subdued in 9th grade when they were new to the building and younger. However, the only clear statement is that 25% fewer responders than expected would continue to speak or act as they did before the threatening behavior of the gang-affiliated student.

Grade 11 students were less likely than expected to employ Avoidance as their coping behavior while opting for a greater than expected response in the Reasoning category. Almost twice as many responses (18) were observed in the Reasoning category while 9.26 were expected. This choice could suggest the possible increased maturity level of the Grade 11 students makes this a more acceptable choice. Perhaps Grade 11 responders possess greater verbal skills or have more experience in these situations and react accordingly. However, the above pattern does not continue in to the Grade 12 level where senior students responded essentially as expected. The only statistically significant departure from the expected response of Grade 12 students is found in the area of Continuance where the frequency of observed responses is slightly more than expected.

With a Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value of 37.4621 (21.026 expected) at 12 degrees of freedom, the observed responses are a statistically significant departure from the expected responses at the .05 level.

#### Situation 2

Each morning you arrive at the bus stop and wait for the bus to school. A friendly student, whom you know to be a gang member, talks with you frequently about the gang. Lately, this student has become more aggressive about recruiting you for the gang. Today, the student told you that you must agree to join the gang by next week or pay protection--or else! What would you do?

The presentation and analysis of data for Situation 2 are organized in a manner similar to Situation 1. Table 6 displays responses to Situation 2 as provided by the total sample.

Table 6.--Situation 2 Responses of the Sample

| Response    | Number | Response             | Number    |
|-------------|--------|----------------------|-----------|
| Avoidance   | 58     | Reasoning            | 16        |
| Compliance  | 20     | Refusal              | 233       |
| Continuance | 4      | Seeking Aid          | 121       |
| Physical    | 9      | Verbally Challenging | 22        |
| Provocative | 14     | No Response          | <u>10</u> |
|             |        | Total                | 507       |

Of the 507 observed responses, 233 (45.9%) chose Refusal, 121 (23.8%) Seeking Aid, 58 (11.4%) Avoidance, 22 (4.3%) Verbally Challenging, 20 (3.9%) Compliance, 16 (3.1%) Reasoning, 14 (2.7%) Provocation, 10 (1.9%) provided No Response, 9 (1.7%) Physical, and 4 (.7%) Continuance.

In the sample, the largest group of students surveyed (approximately 46%) would refuse to join the gang outright, without hesitation, while approximately 24% would choose to seek aid from friends, family, school authorities or police to help them stay out of the gang's sphere of influence. Another 24% chose alternative means to avoid accepting or rejecting the gang member's demand outright: Avoidance, Continuance, Physical, Provocation, Reasoning, Verbally Challenging. Twenty of the sample (4%) would chose to comply with the demand to join or pay. (It is interesting to note that police department statistics estimate that 1% of the student sample nationwide

is involved with gangs. The 20 students who chose to comply and join the gang are approximately 4% of the sample: essentially four times greater than the nationwide statistics.)

### Analysis

#### Gender

Table 7 demonstrates the Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test of significance for the data from Situation 2 as arranged by the gender of the sample.

Table 7.--Situation 2 Responses Arranged by Gender

| Response             | Female   |          | Male      |          | Total     |
|----------------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
|                      | Observed | Expected | Observed  | Expected |           |
| Avoidance            | 29       | 29.70    | 29        | 28.37    | 58        |
| Compliance           | 5        | 10.24    | 15        | 9.75     | 20        |
| No Response          | 3        | 5.12     | 7         | 4.88     | 10        |
| Provocative          | 1        | 7.17     | 13        | 6.85     | 14        |
| Reasoning            | 10       | 8.19     | 6         | 7.81     | 16        |
| Refusal              | 124      | 119.33   | 109       | 113.69   | 233       |
| Seeking Aid          | 74       | 61.97    | 47        | 59.03    | 121       |
| Verbally Challenging | <u>7</u> | 11.27    | <u>15</u> | 10.73    | <u>22</u> |
| Total                | 253      |          | 251       |          | 494       |

\*  $\chi^2 = 27.5062$  (14.067 expected), d.f. = 7  
 \* Denotes statistical significance at  $P = .05$

The frequency of female observed responses in the categories of Reasoning and Refusal was slightly greater than expected while the frequency in the Seeking Aid category was significantly greater than expected. However, the frequency of females observed responses in the categories of Compliance, Provocation, and Verbally Challenging was less than expected. The opposite is true of observed male responses. Male observed responses were significantly fewer than expected in the categories of Reasoning, Refusal, and Seeking Aid and higher than

expected in the categories of Compliance, Provocation, and Verbally Challenging. With a Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value of 27.5062 at seven degrees of freedom (d.f.), the observed responses are a statistically significant departure from the expected responses at the .05 level.

The biggest single category of response (233 out of 504) is found in the Refusal category: saying "no" without entering into additional interaction with the gang member(s). This response is in keeping with the national statistics which show approximately 1% of youth are involved in gangs. In the Refusal category, females are more likely and males less likely to say "no." Viewing this choice in light of the responses given in the Compliance category demonstrates a significant difference in male and female preferences. Females chose to comply and join the gang less than half as often as was expected while males chose to comply about 54% more often than expected.

The frequency of response in the Refusal and Compliance categories could be indicative of the perceived roles traditionally assigned to males and females in the gang. According to the literature on gangs, the male role is most often that of participant in and, as time and talent permit, leader of the gang and its activities. They have a voice in the direction the gang takes and can feel a certain degree of prestige and accomplishment affords. Therefore, males can perceive benefits in membership more readily than females.

However, according to the literature, the traditional female role in a gang is less enticing. Females in the gang tend to be "used" by males to satisfy various needs. Traditionally, they act as observers, hide and carry the male's weapons, and provide sexual favors for the

males. They do not participate in the deliberations of the gang and have little or no voice in the decision-making process. In addition, the vast majority of gang members nationwide are male. Therefore it is reasonable to find a greater frequency of males, rather than females, choosing to comply with the gang member's demand to join the gang.

The remaining observed responses fit the common stereotype of the perceived difference between males and females; males seem more aggressive and provocative showing a greater preference for the Provocation and Verbally Challenging categories than expected and a lesser preference for the more moderate responses. Females tend to be less aggressive, showing a greater preference for the more moderate responses of Reasoning and Seeking Aid and a lesser preference for aggression. This is a trend seen throughout the 8 Situations presented in this study.

#### Ethnic Background

When Situation 2 responses are viewed in relation to the ethnic background of the sample, the frequency of observed responses and expected responses is essentially similar. Table 8 displays this frequency.



Table 8.--Situation 2 Responses Arranged by Ethnic Background

| Response             | White     |          | Non-white |          | Total     |
|----------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
|                      | Observed  | Expected | Observed  | Expected |           |
| Avoidance            | 44        | 41.09    | 14        | 16.41    | 58        |
| Compliance           | 13        | 14.17    | 7         | 5.88     | 20        |
| No Response          | 7         | 7.09     | 3         | 2.91     | 10        |
| Provocative          | 10        | 9.92     | 4         | 4.08     | 14        |
| Reasoning            | 10        | 11.34    | 6         | 4.66     | 16        |
| Refusal              | 159       | 165.08   | 74        | 67.92    | 233       |
| Seeking Aid          | 87        | 85.73    | 34        | 35.27    | 121       |
| Verbally Challenging | <u>20</u> | 15.59    | <u>2</u>  | 6.41     | <u>22</u> |
| Total                | 350       |          | 144       |          | 494       |

$$x^2 = 6.702 \text{ (14.067 expected), d.f.} = 7$$

While there are slight variations in response categories, especially in the categories of Refusal and Verbally Challenging, the overall difference in frequency is statistically insignificant. With a Chi-square ( $x^2$ ) value of 6.702 (14.067 expected) at 7 degrees of freedom, the observed responses are not a statistically significant departure from the expected responses at the .05 level.

#### Grade in School

Table 9 displays the arrangement of responses to Situation 2 as organized by the responders grade in school.

Table 9.--Situation 2 Responses Arranged by Grade

| Response    | Grade 9  |       | Grade 10 |       | Grade 11 |       | Grade 12 |       | Total     |
|-------------|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|-----------|
|             | Obs      | Exp   | Obs      | Exp   | Obs      | Exp   | Obs      | Exp   |           |
| Avoidance   | 22       | 20.08 | 6        | 12.91 | 15       | 13.27 | 15       | 11.74 | 58        |
| Compliance  | 11       | 6.92  | 5        | 4.45  | 3        | 4.57  | 1        | 4.05  | 20        |
| No Response | 5        | 3.40  | 2        | 2.23  | 1        | 2.29  | 2        | 2.02  | 10        |
| Provocative | 10       | 4.85  | 0        | 3.11  | 3        | 3.20  | 1        | 2.83  | 14        |
| Reasoning   | 6        | 5.54  | 5        | 3.56  | 3        | 3.66  | 2        | 3.24  | 16        |
| Refusal     | 73       | 80.65 | 57       | 51.88 | 59       | 53.30 | 44       | 47.17 | 233       |
| Seeking Aid | 38       | 41.88 | 30       | 26.94 | 26       | 27.68 | 27       | 24.49 | 121       |
| Verbally    |          |       |          |       |          |       |          |       |           |
| Challenging | <u>6</u> | 7.62  | <u>5</u> | 4.90  | <u>3</u> | 5.03  | <u>8</u> | 4.45  | <u>22</u> |
| Total       | 171      |       | 110      |       | 113      |       | 100      |       | 494       |

$$x^2 = 27.2369 \text{ (32.671 expected), d.f.} = 21$$

The final step in the analysis of Situation 2 was to investigate the sample's responses in relation to the responder's grade in high school. As was the case when the ethnic background of the students was investigated in relation to the frequency of their responses, findings show there is no significant difference in the observed and expected responses of students in grades 9, 10, 11, or 12. With a Chi-square ( $x^2$ ) value of 27.2369 at 21 degrees of freedom, the observed responses are not a statistically departure from the expected responses. Table 9 shows these responses.

### Situation 3

As you leave the lunch line with your purchased food, you and a student you believe belongs to a gang collide and both lunches fall to the floor. It was clearly an accident with neither of you at fault. The gang member states that you are to blame and demands that you pay for the lost lunch. The gang member is then joined by other gang members who repeat the demand for payment. What would you do?

Table 10 displays the total sample's number of responses to Situation 3.

Table 10.--Situation 3 Responses of the Sample

| Response    | Number | Response             | Number    |
|-------------|--------|----------------------|-----------|
| Avoidance   | 46     | Reasoning            | 88        |
| Compliance  | 81     | Refusal              | 166       |
| Continuance | 2      | Seeking Aid          | 35        |
| Physical    | 20     | Verbally Challenging | 34        |
| Provocative | 18     | No Response          | <u>17</u> |
|             |        | Total                | 507       |

Of the 507 students surveyed, 166 (32.7%) chose Refusal, 88 (17.4%) Reasoning, 81 (15.9%) Compliance, 46 (9%) Avoidance, 35 (6.9%) Seeking Aid, 34 (6.7%) Verbally Challenging, 20 (3.9%) Physical, 18 (3.6%) Provocation, 17 (3.4%) No Response, and 2 (.4%) chose Continuance.

#### Analysis

As in Situation 2, the largest group of responses lies in the category of Refusal. However, this situation incurred a significantly smaller Refusal response than did Situation 2. In addition, the responses for Compliance are significantly greater than in Situation 2.

#### Gender

Responses arranged by gender can be found in Table 11.

Table 11.--Situation 3 Responses Arranged by Gender

| Response             | Female    |          | Male      |          | Total     |
|----------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
|                      | Observed  | Expected | Observed  | Expected |           |
| Avoidance            | 20        | 23.23    | 26        | 22.77    | 46        |
| Compliance           | 57        | 40.90    | 24        | 40.10    | 81        |
| No Response          | 10        | 8.58     | 7         | 7.42     | 17        |
| Physical             | 0         | 10.10    | 20        | 9.90     | 20        |
| Provocative          | 0         | 9.09     | 18        | 8.91     | 18        |
| Reasoning            | 46        | 44.44    | 42        | 43.56    | 88        |
| Refusal              | 85        | 83.82    | 81        | 82.18    | 166       |
| Seeking Aid          | 18        | 17.67    | 17        | 17.33    | 35        |
| Verbally Challenging | <u>19</u> | 17.17    | <u>15</u> | 16.83    | <u>34</u> |
| Total                | 255       |          | 250       |          | 505       |

\*  $\chi^2 = 53.6483$  (15.507 expected), d.f. = 8

\* Denotes statistical significance at  $P = .05$

The frequency of observed responses for females was significantly greater than expected in the category of Compliance, while male observed responses were significantly fewer than expected. The opposite is true for the categories of Avoidance, Physical, and Provocative where it can be observed that males responded in a significantly greater number than expected while female observed responses were fewer or non-existent. No females chose to be Physical or Provocative in their observed responses while the male observed responses were at least twice that which were expected. With a Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value of 53.6483 at eight degrees of freedom, the observed responses are a statistically significant departure from the expected responses at the  $P = .05$  level.

In this example, a greater number of females than expected chose to comply with the gang member's demand to pay for the fallen lunch, even though the responder was not at fault. In addition, no females chose to enter into a physical or provocative stance while their male

counterparts' observed responses in the Physical or Provocation categories were more than twice the number expected. Written responses of the female responders indicate a willingness to pay for the lunch rather than experience a potentially assaultive situation. The lunch loss was "no big deal" and "not worth the hassle" that would possibly follow if Refusal was chosen. Following the patterns established in Situations One and Two, females who do not chose to comply, tend to seek a reasonable resolution to the problem. None thought of engaging in some form of physical confrontation. When viewed together, 30% of the females chose the more submissive responses of Avoidance or Compliance, while only 20% of the males made similar choices.

However, it is interesting to note that a large portion of the written responses of females could be seen as indicative of fear. While many of the female responses, on the surface, indicate a minimal level of concern, close analysis of their choice of words and phraseology would suggest a deeper concern for safety than they would like to admit. For example, one responder began by writing, "I'm not afraid, but . . ." and finished with, "I'm not getting messed up over a \$1.50 lunch." Another stated, "Even if it wasn't my fault, I'd have to pay." Both responses indicate a fear of the consequences of non-compliance. These two examples are not unlike many of the female responders' comments. Many seem unwilling to risk the possibility of a negative or physical confrontation over what might be considered an insignificant item. Judging from many similar responses, it would appear that females were more concerned with their personal safety than were the males.

Fifteen percent of the males, apparently being more aggressive, chose a Provocative or Physical response that could escalate the situation into a more serious confrontation. Their written responses indicate a need to maintain their position or "save face" in light of the gang member's demands. In contrast to the female responses, very few of the males responses could be classified as fearful. Remarks of males include, "No one's gonna (sic) make by pay for nothing," and "Let em (sic) try to collect. My friends will back me up." Both remarks indicate less fear than those of the females and are similar to other remarks provided by males. Males seem to be more willing to risk confrontation, perhaps to maintain the "macho" image assigned to them by their peers.

#### Ethnic Background

While there are some small differences in the observed responses as opposed to the expected responses in the Compliance, Physical and Verbally Challenging categories, the sample does not show a significant deviation from the expected. Table 12 displays these findings.

Table 12.--Situation 3 Responses Arranged by Ethnic Background

| Responses            | White     |          | Non-white |          | Total     |
|----------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
|                      | Observed  | Expected | Observed  | Expected |           |
| Avoidance            | 34        | 32.52    | 12        | 13.41    | 46        |
| Compliance           | 62        | 59.26    | 19        | 23.74    | 81        |
| No Response          | 10        | 12.02    | 7         | 4.98     | 17        |
| Physical             | 12        | 14.14    | 8         | 5.86     | 20        |
| Provocative          | 12        | 12.72    | 6         | 5.28     | 18        |
| Reasoning            | 65        | 62.21    | 23        | 25.79    | 88        |
| Refusal              | 118       | 117.35   | 48        | 48.65    | 166       |
| Seeking Aid          | 25        | 24.74    | 9         | 9.96     | 34        |
| Verbally Challenging | <u>19</u> | 24.03    | <u>15</u> | 9.96     | <u>34</u> |
| Total                | 357       |          | 147       |          | 504       |

$$x^2 = 7.912 \text{ (15.507 expected), d.f. = 8}$$

The non-white population is significantly more willing to assume a Verbally Challenging stance than the white population. Perhaps the non-whites have more experience with gangs since the literature states gang membership is heavily non-white nationwide. If so, this experience could encourage a non-compliant response.

However, the significant difference in the expected and observed responses of the non-white population in the Verbally Challenging category could be attributed to cultural differences rather than anything related to gang activity. If the responder's culture displays a more verbal disposition, this could come across in the choice to be Verbally Challenging. Care must be taken not to read too much into this deviation from the expected response.

With a Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) value of 7.912 at eight degrees of freedom, the observed responses are not a statistically significant departure from the expected responses at the .05 level.

Grade

Finally, Situation 3 was investigated in light of the grade of the responder, as has been the procedure throughout the study. Situation 3 responses arranged by grade in school are displayed in Table 13.

Table 13.--Situation 3 Responses Arranged by Grade

| Response    | Grade 9   |       | Grade 10  |       | Grade 11 |       | Grade 12 |       | Total     |
|-------------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|-----------|
|             | Obs       | Exp   | Obs       | Exp   | Obs      | Exp   | Obs      | Exp   |           |
| Avoidance   | 10        | 15.58 | 10        | 10.02 | 13       | 10.84 | 13       | 9.38  | 46        |
| Compliance  | 34        | 27.43 | 15        | 17.96 | 17       | 19.09 | 15       | 16.52 | 81        |
| No Response | 6         | 5.76  | 1         | 3.77  | 6        | 4.01  | 4        | 3.47  | 17        |
| Physical    | 6         | 6.77  | 3         | 4.44  | 4        | 4.71  | 7        | 4.08  | 20        |
| Provocation | 6         | 6.06  | 5         | 3.99  | 4        | 4.24  | 3        | 3.67  | 18        |
| Reasoning   | 32        | 29.80 | 18        | 19.52 | 21       | 20.74 | 17       | 17.95 | 88        |
| Refusal     | 57        | 56.21 | 37        | 36.82 | 41       | 39.12 | 31       | 33.86 | 166       |
| Seeking Aid | 10        | 11.85 | 10        | 7.76  | 8        | 8.25  | 7        | 7.14  | 35        |
| Verbally    |           |       |           |       |          |       |          |       |           |
| Challenging | <u>10</u> | 11.51 | <u>13</u> | 7.54  | <u>5</u> | 8.01  | <u>6</u> | 6.93  | <u>34</u> |
| Total       | 171       |       | 112       |       | 119      |       | 103      |       | 505       |

$$x^2 = 15.4727 \text{ (36.415 expected), d.f.} = 24$$

In the Grade 9 sample, the frequency of the 10 observed responses in the Avoidance category was slightly less than expected, while the frequency of the 34 observed responses in the Compliance category was significantly greater than expected. In Grade 10 and 11, the observed responses in the Verbally Challenging category displayed statistically significant differences than expected: greater observed response (13) than the expected 7.54 in Grade 10; fewer observed responses (5) than the 8.01 expected in Grade 11. In Grade 12, both the Avoidance category and the Physical category show significantly greater observed responses



(13 and 7 respectively) than the expected responses (9.38 and 4.08 respectively). As reported under the Gender classification, student responses range from "It's no big deal" to "My friends will take care of em (sic)." However, none of the responses indicates reasons that could be indicative of the student's grade in school. Student responses were not statistically different than expected. Therefore, since there are few if any differences in expected and actual response by grade level, administrators need not concentrate on the grade level of the students as they try to deal with the school's gang problem.

Viewing the distribution of observed responses by grade as a whole, with a Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value of 15.4727 and 24 degrees of freedom, the observed responses are not a statistically significant departure from the expected responses at the .05 level.

#### Situation 4

Each day, you and your friends sit at the same unassigned place in the cafeteria during lunch. After several weeks of school, some gang members approach your table and tell you they want your seat and you should move to another table. What would you do?

Of the 507 students surveyed, 292 (57.6%) chose Refusal, 120 (23.7%) Compliance, 28 (5.5%) Verbally Challenging, 22 (4.3%) Reasoning, 12 (2.4%) No Response, 11 (2.2%) Seeking Aid, 10 (2%) Provocation, 7 (1.4%) Avoidance, 3 (.6%) Physical, and 2 (.4%) chose Continuance. (Table 14 displays these data.)

Table 14.--Situation 4 Responses of the Sample

| Response    | Number | Response             | Number    |
|-------------|--------|----------------------|-----------|
| Avoidance   | 7      | Reasoning            | 22        |
| Compliance  | 120    | Refusal              | 292       |
| Continuance | 2      | Seeking Aid          | 11        |
| Physical    | 3      | Verbally Challenging | 28        |
| Provocation | 10     | No Response          | <u>12</u> |
|             |        | Total                | 507       |

### Analysis

By far the largest group of students surveyed (57.6%), chose Refusal, an increase of 76% over the same category of response in Situation 3. Surrendering territory, in this case cafeteria table space, seemed to be less palatable to a large segment of the sample than paying for a lost lunch.

Educators who observe students in unstructured environments (cafeterias, waiting areas, etc.) notice that students are "territorial" by nature: congregating in the same areas with essentially the same friends each day. After settling into a routine at the beginning of a school year, students tend to choose the same cafeteria table each day. This then becomes their "domain" and--by informal, unspoken agreement--other students do not sit in those places, choosing instead to stake out a "territory" of their own. The act of giving up one's territory appears to have greater significance than replacing a lunch. When faced with the possible adverse consequences of not paying for a lunch or not moving from a table, responders stake greater value on the territory and are more willing to enter into a confrontation over the issue. Student written comments support this view. While no written comments of the

responders specifically compare Situation 3 to Situation 4 in their writings, their individual responses to both situations indicate a greater willingness to pay for lunches than to change tables.

However, responses of those who chose Compliance (23.6%) in Table 14 showed a significant increase (48%) over Situation 3 also. The second theme suggests it is better to switch than fight and is in direct conflict with the other main theme: Refusal. This large segment of the population would move rather than face a possible confrontive situation, again citing the need to avoid the "hassle" as their reason.

When one analyzes written responses to Situations 3 and 4, the "territorial" aspect of Situation 4 is of greater importance to the responders than the financial aspects of Situation 3. More responders commented about the need to keep their "space" than commented about the potential loss of money. Responders appear to be able to justify paying for the lunch. As one stated, ". . . After all, he has to eat." This theme takes on a humanitarian image as opposed to the "colonial" image of the possession of a seat at a particular table. The table is territory, a possession for one's self. Giving up that possession under duress and perhaps "losing face" in the eyes of one's friends is far less palatable than being "humanitarian."

Faced with all possible solutions, less than 20% of the responders sought a solution other than that of Refusal or Compliance and, of those remaining categories in Situation 4, had few deviant responses meriting discussion. The territorial aspect of the situation suggests a strong polarization of the majority of the responses.

Gender

In this situation, four response categories of the study, Compliance, Provocation, Reasoning, and Refusal show statistically significant differences when comparing the observed responses of male and females against their respective expected responses. With a Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) value of 13.0419 at 6 degrees of freedom, the observed responses are a statistically significant departure from the expected responses at the .05 level. Table 15 shows these data.

Table 15.--Situation 4 Responses Arranged by Gender

| Response             | Female    |          | Male      |          | Total     |
|----------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
|                      | Observed  | Expected | Observed  | Expected |           |
| Compliance           | 66        | 60.85    | 54        | 59.15    | 120       |
| No Response          | 6         | 6.08     | 6         | 5.92     | 12        |
| Provocation          | 1         | 5.07     | 9         | 4.93     | 10        |
| Reasoning            | 16        | 11.16    | 6         | 10.84    | 22        |
| Refusal              | 141       | 148.06   | 151       | 143.94   | 292       |
| Seeking Aid          | 5         | 5.58     | 6         | 5.42     | 11        |
| Verbally Challenging | <u>16</u> | 14.20    | <u>12</u> | 13.80    | <u>28</u> |
| Total                | 251       |          | 244       |          | 495       |

\*  $X^2 = 13.0419$  (12.592 expected), d.f. = 6

\* Denotes statistical significance at  $P = .05$

The frequency of observed responses for females in the categories of Compliance and Reasoning was significantly greater than expected, while the categories of Provocation and Refusal show significantly fewer observed responses than expected. Again, these responses could suggest that females take a more submissive, less provocative stance when compared to males in the same categories. Written responses of females

continue to indicate a more moderate stance is preferred so as to avoid the confrontation Refusal or other aggressive choices may elicit.

Male observed responses show the opposite: fewer observed responses in the categories of Compliance and Reasoning and a greater frequency of observed responses than expected in the categories of Provocation and Refusal. Many males state they would be sitting with friends and conveyed a significant difference in attitude when compared with females. Many males indicated these "friends" would either intercede or "back them up" in a confrontation. This support provides the impetus for a stronger Refusal choice than females who did not indicate a similar feeling. Thus, these males appear to be forming an informal "gang" to counteract the threats of the overt gang. Their willingness to resist or provoke additional confrontation is directly related to their stated belief that their friends would intercede and assist if necessary. Their resistance, could indicate a strong sense of "right and wrong," but, also could indicate a belief that "might makes right." However, the written responses do not indicate which, if any, of the above two themes is held by any individual.

#### Ethnic Background

Situation 4 responses, arranged by the ethnic background of the responders, it below.

Table 16.--Situation 4 Responses Arranged by Ethnic Background

| Response             | White     |          | Non-white |          | Total     |
|----------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
|                      | Observed  | Expected | Observed  | Expected |           |
| Compliance           | 83        | 84.61    | 37        | 35.39    | 120       |
| No Response          | 8         | 8.46     | 4         | 3.54     | 12        |
| Provocation          | 5         | 7.05     | 5         | 2.95     | 10        |
| Reasoning            | 14        | 15.51    | 8         | 6.49     | 22        |
| Refusal              | 207       | 205.87   | 85        | 86.13    | 292       |
| Seeking Aid          | 8         | 7.76     | 3         | 3.24     | 11        |
| Verbally Challenging | <u>24</u> | 19.74    | <u>4</u>  | 8.26     | <u>28</u> |
| Total                | 349       |          | 146       |          | 495       |

$$x^2 = 5.8701 \text{ (12.592 expected), d.f.} = 6$$

Written responses indicate the strong Refusal rate is indicative of the "territorial" concerns of the population. These territorial concerns prompt both white and non-white populations to resist moving for this reason more than any other. As previously stated, the loss of territory is less palatable than the loss of small amounts of money, especially when paying for a ruined lunch can be rationalized as a humanitarian gesture. At the same time, the next largest frequency of response was that of Compliance, which the white and non-white populations chose at approximately the same proportions. A large number of white (24%) as well as non-white (25%) responders state that territory inside the school is not worth fighting over (unless there would be no place for them to go with their friends). Therefore they would, in fact, move to another location.

While there are some small degrees of difference in the categories of Provocation and Verbally Challenging observed responses, they are not significant. With a Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) value of 5.8701 (12.592 expected)

at 6 degrees of freedom, the observed responses are not a statistically significant departure from the expected responses at the .05 level.

### Grade

An investigation of the grade in school variable shows some small differences in the distribution of responses. Table 17 shows this distribution.

Table 17.--Situation 4 Responses Arranged by Grade

| Response    | Grade 9   |       | Grade 10 |       | Grade 11 |       | Grade 12 |       | Total     |
|-------------|-----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|-----------|
|             | Obs       | Exp   | Obs      | Exp   | Obs      | Exp   | Obs      | Exp   |           |
| Compliance  | 47        | 40.73 | 23       | 26.42 | 31       | 28.12 | 19       | 24.73 | 120       |
| No Response | 4         | 4.07  | 3        | 2.64  | 2        | 2.81  | 3        | 2.47  | 12        |
| Provocation | 3         | 3.39  | 1        | 2.20  | 4        | 2.34  | 2        | 2.06  | 10        |
| Reasoning   | 7         | 7.47  | 4        | 4.84  | 5        | 5.16  | 6        | 4.53  | 22        |
| Refusal     | 89        | 99.10 | 71       | 64.30 | 65       | 68.43 | 67       | 60.17 | 292       |
| Seeking Aid | 2         | 3.73  | 5        | 3.73  | 2        | 2.58  | 2        | 2.27  | 11        |
| Verbally    |           |       |          |       |          |       |          |       |           |
| Challenging | <u>16</u> | 9.50  | <u>2</u> | 9.50  | <u>7</u> | 6.57  | <u>3</u> | 5.79  | <u>28</u> |
| Total       | 168       |       | 109      |       | 116      |       | 102      |       | 495       |

$$\chi^2 = 21.7638 \text{ (28.869 expected), d.f.} = 18$$

In the Compliance category there are greater differences in the observed responses of the sample than expected with Grades 9 and 11 showing a greater preference for Compliance, while Grade 10 and 12 students show a lesser preference. Other statistically significant differences can be found the category of Verbally Challenging: Grade 10 and 12 students show significantly fewer than expected observed responses in the Verbally Challenging category, while Grade 9 observed responses are greater than expected. This distribution is out of character for the Grade 9 responders when compared to other situations.

For some reason, Grade 9 responders became more Verbally Challenging when the demand to move their location was made. While no specific theme was indicated in the written responses, one can assume that the "territorial" aspects of the situation came into play. This is an increasingly possible scenario when one considers that most 9th graders came from schools which assigned students to a specific location at lunch. Possibly these students became "attached" to their location in the high school because they "have always done it that way" before. Also, coming from the more sheltered junior high or middle school environment, these students may feel that adult supervisors will be aware of the situation and, if a negative situation developed, would be there to intercede. A third possibility is that, not having significant interaction with gangs in the past, these students do not fully understand the possible ramifications of their response.

While there may be some curious deviations not explained in the written responses, the population as a whole responded in a manner which was expected. With a Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) value of 21.7638 (28.869 expected) at 18 degrees of freedom, the observed responses of the sample distribution by grade as a whole are not a statistically significant departure from the expected responses at the .05 level.

#### Situation 5

For your birthday, your parents surprise you with a Chicago Bulls Team Starter Jacket. Since the Bulls are your favorite athletic team, you happily wear the jacket to school the next day. As you prepare to enter the school, you are greeted by several students who tell you that you cannot wear that particular jacket because it "represents" their gang and you are not a member. What would you do?



Table 18 shows the distribution of responses of the total population to Situation 5.

Table 18.--Situation 5 Responses of the Sample

| Response    | Number | Response             | Number    |
|-------------|--------|----------------------|-----------|
| Avoidance   | 28     | Reasoning            | 25        |
| Compliance  | 111    | Refusal              | 248       |
| Continuance | 9      | Seeking Aid          | 10        |
| Physical    | 0      | Verbally Challenging | 51        |
| Provocation | 5      | No Response          | <u>20</u> |
|             |        | Total                | 507       |

Of the 507 students surveyed, 248 (48.9%) chose Refusal, less than half that number (111) chose Compliance (21.9%), 51 (10.1%) chose Verbally Challenging, 28 (5.5%) Avoidance, 25 (4.9%) Reasoning, 20 (3.9%) No Response, 10 (2%) Seeking Aid, 9 (1.8%) Continuance, and 5 (1%) chose Provocation.

#### Analysis

The two main categories chosen by those surveyed again are those of Refusal (248) and Compliance (111), each the opposite of the other. These two categories encompass more than 70% of the observed responses: more than all other choices combined.

#### Gender

Table 19 demonstrates the Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test of significance for the data from Situation 5 as arranged by the gender of the sample. With a Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value of 16.6573 (12.592 expected) at six degrees of

freedom, the observed responses of males and females are a statistically significant departure from the expected responses at the .05 level.

Table 19.--Situation 5 Responses Arranged by Gender

| Response             | Female    |          | Male      |          | Total     |
|----------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
|                      | Observed  | Expected | Observed  | Expected |           |
| Avoidance            | 12        | 14.26    | 16        | 13.74    | 28        |
| Compliance           | 56        | 56.51    | 55        | 54.49    | 111       |
| No Response          | 8         | 10.18    | 12        | 9.82     | 20        |
| Reasoning            | 21        | 12.73    | 4         | 12.27    | 25        |
| Refusal              | 120       | 126.26   | 128       | 121.74   | 248       |
| Seeking Aid          | 8         | 5.09     | 2         | 4.91     | 10        |
| Verbally Challenging | <u>26</u> | 25.97    | <u>25</u> | 25.03    | <u>51</u> |
| Total                | 251       |          | 242       |          | 493       |

\*  $\chi^2 = 16.6573$  (12.592 expected), d.f. = 6

\* Denotes statistical significance at  $P = .05$

The frequency of observed responses for females was significantly greater than expected in the categories of Reasoning and Seeking Aid, while the categories of Avoidance and Refusal show fewer observed responses than expected. These data are similar to those found in previous situations where females appear to adopt a more moderate stance than their male counterparts.

Males, on the other hand, show observed responses greater than expected in the categories of Avoidance and Refusal and fewer than expected observed responses in the Reasoning and Seeking Aid categories. However, even while refusing to comply, some males indicate they would seek alternate routes to school which hopefully would allow them to wear their new jackets without confronting gang members along the way. Others stated they would avoid confrontation by not wearing the jacket

to school but indicate they would continue to wear it away from school and in other situations in which gang members would not be present. This Avoidance stance would allow them to keep the jacket, thereby passively refusing to comply and, at the same time, avoid direct confrontation with the gang at school. None indicated what would happen if they met gang members unexpectedly away from school while they were wearing the new jacket.

Many males indicate their refusal would also include attempts to avoid confrontation with the gang. However, the males' attitude is more risky than the attitude expressed by females who were more prone to indicate they would return the jacket to the vendor rather than face a possible confrontation. These data for males are in keeping, generally, with their previous, more aggressive stance. They are willing, as they have expressed in previous situations, to be confrontive when faced with an issue important to them, like relinquishing their table "space", but seek less confrontive avenues when the issue is less important. In either case, they would, however, continue to refuse to comply.

#### Ethnic Background

When Situation 5 responses are viewed in relation to the ethnic background of the sample, only one category, that of Reasoning, shows any significant departure from the expected. Table 20 displays these data.

Table 20.--Situation 5 Responses Arranged by Ethnic Background

| Response             | White     |          | Non-white |          | Total     |
|----------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
|                      | Observed  | Expected | Observed  | Expected |           |
| Avoidance            | 19        | 19.82    | 9         | 8.18     | 28        |
| Compliance           | 76        | 78.58    | 35        | 32.42    | 111       |
| No Response          | 13        | 14.16    | 7         | 5.84     | 20        |
| Reasoning            | 22        | 17.7     | 3         | 7.3      | 25        |
| Refusal              | 175       | 175.56   | 73        | 72.44    | 248       |
| Seeking Aid          | 8         | 7.08     | 2         | 2.92     | 10        |
| Verbally Challenging | <u>36</u> | 36.1     | <u>15</u> | 14.9     | <u>51</u> |
| Total                | 349       |          | 144       |          | 493       |

$$\chi^2 = 4.6945 \text{ (12.592 expected), d.f.} = 6$$

In the category of Reasoning, the frequency of observed responses for white subjects was greater than expected, while the frequency of observed responses for non-white subjects was less than expected. However, with a Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value of 4.6945 (12.592 expected) at six degrees of freedom, the observed responses are not a statistically significant departure from the expected responses at the .05 level. Written responses of the white population indicate that, even though they would continue to refuse to comply, they were willing to attempt to "negotiate" a settlement with the gang members. Several regular students stated they would explain that the jacket was a national symbol, not necessarily gang related. Since they did not display any other identifiers indicating gang involvement, the white responders felt they would not be identified as being "disrespectful" to the gang. In addition, many of the white population indicated a belief that reasoning with the gang-affiliated student(s) would produce the desired compromise. Several white responders indicated they have had success with this type of informal negotiation in the past and firmly believed

they could convince the gang member(s) that they were no threat to the gang.

However, non-white responders gave no indication "negotiation" if attempted, would be successful. The majority of non-whites directly refused to comply, period. Statements like, "It's my jacket, I'll wear it if I want," and " Nobody tells me what to wear" are indicative of the non-white attitude expressed in the written comments. While the reasons and processes stated by whites and non-whites may differ, there is no statistically significant difference in the observed and expected responses of this population.

#### Grade

As was the case when arranged by ethnic background, when observed responses to Situation 5 are arranged according to the grade in school of the sample, there is no statistical significance to the distribution of the responses. Table 21 indicates these results.

Table 21.--Situation 5 Responses Arranged by Grade

| Response    | Grade 9   |       | Grade 10  |       | Grade 11  |       | Grade 12 |       | Total     |
|-------------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|----------|-------|-----------|
|             | Obs       | Exp   | Obs       | Exp   | Obs       | Exp   | Obs      | Exp   |           |
| Avoidance   | 6         | 9.48  | 7         | 6.02  | 10        | 6.65  | 5        | 5.85  | 28        |
| Compliance  | 37        | 37.60 | 26        | 23.87 | 30        | 26.34 | 18       | 23.19 | 111       |
| No Response | 9         | 6.73  | 4         | 4.18  | 4         | 4.75  | 3        | 4.18  | 20        |
| Reasoning   | 10        | 8.47  | 5         | 5.33  | 3         | 5.98  | 7        | 5.22  | 25        |
| Refusal     | 82        | 84.01 | 49        | 53.11 | 53        | 58.86 | 64       | 51.81 | 248       |
| Seeking Aid | 4         | 3.39  | 3         | 2.15  | 3         | 2.37  | 0        | 2.09  | 10        |
| Verbally    |           |       |           |       |           |       |          |       |           |
| Challenging | <u>19</u> | 17.28 | <u>12</u> | 10.97 | <u>14</u> | 12.10 | <u>6</u> | 10.66 | <u>51</u> |
| Total       | 167       |       | 106       |       | 117       |       | 103      |       | 493       |

$$x^2 = 19.7957 \text{ (28.869 expected), d.f.} = 18$$

Grades 11 and 12 responders display some small differences in most of the categories. Grade 11 students show greater than expected observed responses in the categories of Avoidance, Compliance, Seeking Aid, and Verbally Challenging, while showing fewer than expected observed responses in the categories of Reasoning and Refusal. Grade 12 students show greater than expected observed responses in the categories of Reasoning and Refusal, while showing fewer than expected observed responses in the categories of Compliance, Seeking Aid, and Verbally Challenging.

It is interesting to note there is a gradual increase in the rate of Compliance as one moves from Grade 9 to Grade 10 to Grade 11. However, at Grade 12 there is a significant drop in the frequency of responders which chose Compliance. At the same time, there is a gradual decrease in the rate of Refusal through the same three grades. At Grade 12, there is a dramatic increase in the Refusal rate. Perhaps the age and maturity level of the twelfth graders makes them less willing to comply and more willing to state directly their Refusal. These small differences, however, do not offset the balance provided by the other grades and other categories. With a Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value of 19.7957 (28.869 expected) at 18 degrees of freedom, the observed responses by grade are not a statistically significant departure from the expected responses at the .05 level.

#### Situation 6

Each day, as you pass from one class to another, you encounter a group of gang members congregating in front of your locker. Each day, as you try to get by them, they harass you by trying to block your way, push you aside, threaten you and/or call you unkind names. What would you do?

Table 22 displays the distribution of responses of the total sample to Situation 6.

Table 22.--Situation 6 Responses of the Sample

| Response    | Number | Response             | Number |
|-------------|--------|----------------------|--------|
| Avoidance   | 113    | Reasoning            | 24     |
| Compliance  | 0      | Refusal              | 0      |
| Continuance | 45     | Seeking Aid          | 128    |
| Physical    | 58     | Verbally Challenging | 47     |
| Provocation | 62     | No Response          | 30     |
|             |        | Total                | 507    |

Of the 507 students surveyed, 128 (25.4%) chose Seeking Aid, 113 (22.8%) Avoidance, 62 (12.2%) Provocation, 58 (11.4%) Physical, 47 (9.3%) Verbally Challenging, 45 (8.9%) Continuance, 30 (5.9%) No Response, and 24 (4.7%) chose Reasoning. No one chose either Compliance or Refusal.

#### Analysis

In this situation, a full two-thirds of the students surveyed chose some form of moderation as a response, as opposed to the remaining third who would enter into some form of confrontive behavior. Those who selected the categories of Avoidance, Continuance, Reasoning, and Seeking Aid would either refrain from becoming involved by continuing on with their business without comment or action, or would try to ameliorate the situation by Reasoning with the gang members or Seeking Aid from others to mediate the situation. The remaining 167 students would prefer Physical or Verbally Challenging responses or some other form of Provocation. Since there was no actual demand placed before the

student by the gang members, it is appropriate that there were no responses in the Compliance or Refusal categories.

The dynamics of Situation 6 may have caused a greater response in the Avoidance and Seeking Aid categories than found in earlier situations. In some of the other situations presented, the responder is more likely to be with friends and is not as likely to be bound by time constraints. However, in Situation 6, the responder faces a group of gang members at a locker during a brief "passing period" from one class to another. The likelihood that the responder is with friends is decreased. Therefore, when up against greater numbers, the responders seem to choose a less aggressive stance, perhaps out of fear. Also, in each of the high schools surveyed, a strict tardy policy which places strong sanctions on those who are tardy is in effect. The ability of the responder to "gather additional forces" within the five minute passing period is decreased, therefore the responder must face the situation alone. Thus, being alone may influence the responder's choice of response. Also, there are additional ways to address the situation without increasing the likelihood of confrontation. Responders indicate they would select a different time to go to their locker, would "move in" with a friend into another locker, or would Seek Aid from building adults. It is also possible that an unstated fear of gangs is responsible for the responders' selections.

### Gender

Once again, when the responses are sorted by gender, statistically significant differences are observed. Table 22 displays these data.



Table 23.--Situation 6 Responses Arranged by Gender

| Response             | Female    |          | Male      |          | Total     |
|----------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
|                      | Observed  | Expected | Observed  | Expected |           |
| Avoidance            | 63        | 57.06    | 50        | 55.94    | 113       |
| Continuance          | 25        | 22.72    | 20        | 22.29    | 45        |
| No Response          | 16        | 15.18    | 14        | 14.85    | 30        |
| Physical             | 14        | 29.29    | 44        | 28.71    | 58        |
| Provocation          | 18        | 31.31    | 44        | 30.69    | 62        |
| Reasoning            | 11        | 12.12    | 13        | 11.88    | 24        |
| Seeking Aid          | 79        | 63.87    | 49        | 63.37    | 128       |
| Verbally Challenging | <u>30</u> | 23.73    | <u>17</u> | 23.27    | <u>47</u> |
| Total                | 256       |          | 251       |          | 507       |

\*  $\chi^2 = 39.7592$  (14.067 expected), d.f. = 7

\* Denotes statistical significance at  $P = .05$

The frequency of female observed responses in the categories of Avoidance, Seeking Aid, and Verbally Challenging was statistically greater than expected. These categories involve 172 responses (67%) and encompass a variety of stances: avoiding the situation completely (Avoidance), Seeking Aid to mediate or otherwise "solve the problem" or Verbally Challenging the gang members' actions. Only 32 students (12.5%) chose some form of aggressive behavior as defined in the Physical or Provocation categories.

Taking all responses in all categories into account, the female behavior can be divided into two main segments: aggressive and non-aggressive. The non-aggressive categories include Avoidance, Continuance, Reasoning, and Seeking Aid and embody 69.5% of the observed responses, while the aggressive responses: Physical, Provocation and Verbally Challenging embody only 24.2% of the observed responses. Clearly, in this situation, the majority of females prefer to "solve the

problem" by means other than being openly hostile. These data demonstrate a moderate, non-aggressive stance in keeping with results determined for females in other situations of this study, and are consistent with other actions preferred by those females. Reasons given for selection of moderate, essentially non-aggressive preferences are similar to those stated previously: willingness to negotiate and the lack of willingness to be confrontive; willingness to seek help from staff; and the possible fear of the gang.

Males, however, continue to assume a different stance. Those categories which show greater than expected observed responses are in the aggressive categories of Physical and Provocation. Add Verbally Challenging (which showed fewer observed responses than expected) to these categories and a full 41.8% of the males prefer an aggressive response compared to 24.2% of the females. Other categories showing a frequency of fewer observed responses than expected include Avoidance and Seeking Aid. All categories displaying fewer observed responses than expected encompass 22.9% of the responses. With a Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) value of 39.7592 (14.067 expected) at 7 degrees of freedom, the observed responses of the sample are a statistically significant departure from the expected responses at the .05 level.

The data suggest that males view physical or verbal harassment as more of a personal challenge to their image than do females. This view is exemplified by the fact that the vast majority of fights in high schools are entered into by males. Males seem more determined to respond to threatening situations with a show of force than do females.

It is no wonder then, that, when faced with the situation described in Situation 6, males assume an aggressive, violent stance as a response.

The "stand and fight" attitude expressed by some males may have encouragement from the parents of the males. Many administrators responsible for discipline indicate that it is not unusual for parents to state, "I've told my son not to start a fight but not to walk away from one, either," when notified their son had been in a fight in school. These parents indicate males more than females are supposed to "take care of themselves." This expectation sets the atmosphere in which the encounter with the gang member takes place. At this point, the "stand and fight" attitude of the student places the administrator squarely between the student and his parent in matters concerning violence. The student may see his parents as supportive and encouraging in his aggressive stance and willingness to fight for his "rights." The administrator looms as an oppositional force, apparently contradicting parental beliefs. The administrator must somehow convince the student that non-violent solutions can be found and instituted which would allow the student to defend his "rights" without entering into violence.

In their written responses, some males indicate that, while they would not start a fight, they would insist on their "right" to access their locker without interference and would resort to violence if necessary. However, the majority of the written responses in the Physical or Provocative categories did not indicate the responder would try peaceful, reasonable means first and then, as a last resort-- violence. Most indicated that the appearance of threatening behavior toward them was enough to initiate the Physical or Provocative response.

The frequency of the males' response which is due to the implied pressure not to "walk away" from a fight is unclear. If the male gets a clear signal from the home front that fighting is "OK" if you are not the one to start the fight, Avoidance or other peaceful solution may not be an appropriate option in the eyes of that male. Also, there is an implied peer pressure at work in this situation. The responder may wonder how his friends and other classmates will perceive his personal "strength" if he walks away.

### Ethnic Background

Table 24 arranges the responses according to the ethnic background of the responder.

Table 24.--Situation 6 Responses Arranged by Ethnic Background

| Response             | White     |          | Non-white |          | Total     |
|----------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
|                      | Observed  | Expected | Observed  | Expected |           |
| Avoidance            | 78        | 79.79    | 35        | 33.21    | 113       |
| Continuance          | 35        | 31.76    | 10        | 13.22    | 45        |
| No Response          | 19        | 21.18    | 11        | 8.82     | 30        |
| Physical             | 39        | 40.95    | 19        | 17.05    | 58        |
| Provocation          | 41        | 43.78    | 21        | 18.22    | 62        |
| Reasoning            | 15        | 16.95    | 9         | 7.05     | 24        |
| Seeking Aid          | 94        | 90.38    | 34        | 37.62    | 128       |
| Verbally Challenging | <u>37</u> | 33.19    | <u>10</u> | 13.81    | <u>47</u> |
| Total                | 358       |          | 149       |          | 507       |

$$x^2 = 6.9517 \text{ (14.067 expected), d.f.} = 7$$

When viewed in relation to the ethnic background of the students, the frequency of Situation 6 observed responses in one category of the white sample (Seeking Aid) and three categories in the non-white sample (Continuance, Reasoning, and Verbally Challenging) showed only slight

deviations from the expected responses. With a Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value of 6.9517 (14.067 expected) at 7 degrees of freedom, the observed responses are not a significant departure from the expected responses at the .05 level.

White and non-white responders to Situation 6 respond as expected. While the literature states a large portion of gang membership is ethnically based, none of the literature surveyed addresses regular student reactions to gang situations. Care must be taken to avoid assuming regular white and non-white students will perform as do gang-affiliated white and non-white students. The responses of regular students do not follow the inclinations of gang-affiliated students. Students, white or non-white, who are not involved in gangs demonstrate little difference in the frequency of the choice of their response to gang-affiliated situations.

#### Grade

As with responses arranged by ethnic background or grade in school for other situations in this study, the frequency of observed responses arranged by the grade in school of the responder does not significantly deviate from the expected responses. Table 25 shows these data.

Table 25.--Situation 6 Responses Arranged by Grade

| Response    | Grade 9   |       | Grade 10  |       | Grade 11  |       | Grade 12  |       | Total     |
|-------------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|
|             | Obs       | Exp   | Obs       | Exp   | Obs       | Exp   | Obs       | Exp   |           |
| Avoidance   | 34        | 38.11 | 21        | 24.93 | 33        | 26.75 | 25        | 23.18 | 113       |
| Continuance | 19        | 15.18 | 8         | 9.94  | 11        | 10.65 | 7         | 9.23  | 45        |
| No Response | 11        | 10.22 | 10        | 6.63  | 4         | 7.1   | 5         | 6.15  | 30        |
| Physical    | 22        | 19.56 | 7         | 12.81 | 14        | 13.73 | 15        | 11.90 | 58        |
| Provocation | 23        | 20.91 | 17        | 13.69 | 11        | 14.67 | 11        | 12.72 | 62        |
| Reasoning   | 7         | 8.09  | 5         | 5.30  | 11        | 5.68  | 1         | 4.92  | 24        |
| Seeking Aid | 40        | 43.17 | 34        | 28.28 | 26        | 30.30 | 28        | 26.26 | 128       |
| Verbally    |           |       |           |       |           |       |           |       |           |
| Challenging | <u>15</u> | 15.85 | <u>10</u> | 10.38 | <u>10</u> | 11.24 | <u>12</u> | 9.64  | <u>47</u> |
| Total       | 171       |       | 112       |       | 120       |       | 104       |       | 507       |

$$\chi^2 = 23.8395 \text{ (32.671 expected), d.f.} = 21$$

No clear pattern of difference exists as one views the responses of students in different grades. The survey of literature itself does not support the presence of a pattern either. One would assume, however, as the student grew older and more mature, the response given would be more in keeping with the standards of conduct set by the school: moderate and non-aggressive. However, this assumption is not supported by the data.

With a Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value of 24.8395 (32.671 expected) at 21 degrees of freedom, the observed responses by grade are not a significant departure from the expected responses at the .05 level.

#### Situation 7

Your very best friend now belongs to a gang. In the past, you and your friend have discussed gang activity but no pressure has been placed on you to join the gang. Today, as you enter the school rest room, you find your friend being beaten up by another student you recognize as a member of a rival gang. What do you do?

Of the 507 students surveyed, 325 (64.1%) chose Physical, 93 (18.3%) Seeking Aid, 65 (12.8%) Avoidance, 9 (1.8%) No Response, 7 (1.4%) Provocation, 5 (1%) Reasoning, and 3 (.6%) chose Verbally Challenging. Table 26 displays these data.

Table 26.--Situation 7 Responses of the Sample

| Response    | Number | Response             | Number |
|-------------|--------|----------------------|--------|
| Avoidance   | 65     | Reasoning            | 5      |
| Compliance  | 0      | Refusal              | 0      |
| Continuance | 0      | Seeking Aid          | 93     |
| Physical    | 325    | Verbally Challenging | 3      |
| Provocation | 7      | No Response          | 9      |
|             |        | Total                | 507    |

#### Analysis

The largest group of responses is found in the category of Physical response. More than 64% of the sample would become physically involved in the altercation, even though they were not initially involved. The fact that the student being beaten was a gang member apparently had little influence when the choice was made to intervene. As one student in the sample wrote, "When your friend's in trouble, you help or you ain't (sic) much of a friend." This attitude was prevalent among the written responses, especially from males. Even those who indicate they would first try to stop the fight by some non-violent means indicate they would enter into a Physical response if other responses failed. This is the only situation in the survey in which the majority of responders, male as well as female, indicate they would resort to a Physical response.

The willingness to respond physically increases as the degree of human endangerment increases. In all other situations portrayed in the study, fewer than 12% of the responses to each situation indicate a Physical response preference. While it is true that more males than females would chose a Physical response, the overall number of responders choosing a Physical response remains relatively low in all situations, exclusive of Situation 7.

However, in Situation 7, a full 64% of the responders would, at one point or another, enter into a Physical response. The difference appears to be that of perceived as opposed to actual endangerment. While the perceived threat of violence would cause some to adopt a Physical stance, actual violence would increase the probability that a responder would chose to help by intervening Physically.

This overwhelming show of support and willingness to intervene in some manner in the case of human endangerment goes beyond the gang question and suggests concerns raised by responders about the gang-affiliation of the antagonist are situational: being of concern when threats are made or personal liberty impeded; being ignored when human endangerment is involved. The possibility of real injury being inflicted on a friend raises the level of potential involvement of regular students. Many regular students stated they would intervene "if" the gang-member friend were being injured. This concern for safety of others outweighs the concern for personal safety since the regular student risks future retaliation by the gang for his interference in the beating.



Other types of "help" can be found in the categories of Reasoning, Seeking Aid and Verbally Challenging, almost 20% of the total observed responses. Only 12.8% of the sample chose to absent themselves from the situation and do nothing (Avoidance).

### Gender

Once again, when the responses of the sample are sorted by gender, the observed responses of the male and female samples differ significantly from the expected responses. Table 27 indicates this difference.

Table 27.--Situation 7 Responses Arranged by Gender

| Response    | Female   |          | Male     |          | Total |
|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------|
|             | Observed | Expected | Observed | Expected |       |
| Avoidance   | 25       | 32.16    | 40       | 32.84    | 65    |
| Physical    | 145      | 160.82   | 180      | 164.18   | 325   |
| Seeking Aid | 69       | 46.02    | 24       | 46.98    | 93    |
| Total       | 239      |          | 244      |          | 483   |

\*  $\chi^2 = 28.9563$  (5.991 expected), d.f. = 2  
 \* Denotes statistical significance at  $P = .05$

As indicated in Table 27, the frequency of observed responses of females was greater than expected in the category of Seeking Aid while fewer responses than expected were found in the Avoidance and Physical categories. These data indicate a strong desire to help in some manner. While there are a large number of female responses indicating a preference for Physical intervention (145), these are roughly 10% fewer than expected. Conversely, the number of female responses in the Seeking Aid category (69) are 50% greater than expected. Even though

more Physical response are indicated than in any other category, it is clear that many females would maintain a more moderate stance, even in the face of human endangerment.

Males continue to display tendencies opposite those of females. A greater frequency of responses is shown in the Avoidance and Physical categories, while a lesser frequency is noted in the Seeking Aid category. Males again display more aggressive tendencies than females. It is interesting to note that the frequency of response of males in the Avoidance category is greater than expected. This response is in disagreement with the more aggressive stance generally taken by males throughout the study. However, a review of the written responses indicate males show a greater willingness to let a gang member get his "just desserts" at the hands of rival gang members. Responders state the gang member knew what he was getting in to when he joined the gang and felt no obligation to place themselves in danger helping a friend who happened to be a gang member. While the overwhelming majority (74%) would aid the gang member-friend, many others (16%) would avoid the situation. Like the males in Situation 6 who would attempt to minimize their exposure to gang retaliation by seeking alternative routes to school or wearing their jacket only where the possibility of observance by gang members was non-existent, some males set limits concerning the incident in Situation 7. However, the overwhelming majority of the males (84%) would intervene or seek help to stop the beating.

### Ethnic Background

The only category of observed response as arranged by the ethnic background of the sample showing a deviation from the expected is that of Physical. Table 28 displays these data.

Table 28.--Situation 7 Responses Arranged by Ethnic Background

| Response    | White     |          | Non-white |          | Total     |
|-------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
|             | Observed  | Expected | Observed  | Expected |           |
| Avoidance   | 47        | 47.24    | 18        | 19.11    | 65        |
| Physical    | 225       | 236.18   | 100       | 95.55    | 325       |
| Seeking Aid | <u>69</u> | 67.58    | <u>24</u> | 27.34    | <u>93</u> |
| Total       | 341       |          | 142       |          | 483       |

$$x^2 = 1.2402 \text{ (5.991 expected), d.f.} = 2$$

More members of the non-white sample chose Physical than expected while fewer members of the white sample chose Physical than expected. However, these are not significantly great deviations. Viewing the ethnic background of the sample as a whole shows that the observed responses, with a Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) value of 1.2402 (5.991 expected) at 2 degrees of freedom are not a statistically significant departure from the expected responses at the .05 level. The responses chosen by regular students do not differ significantly when viewed according to their ethnic background. As stated previously, care must be taken to avoid confusing the choices made by regular students in gang related situations with the choices made by students to become gang members. They are not the same. A students who chooses to become a gang member may respond differently than a regular student in confrontation with a

gang member. While a large portion of gang membership is ethnically based, responses of regular students are not.

### Grade

While some individual categories within grade levels may display a small deviation from the expected responses, the sample as a whole is not significantly different than expected. Table 29 shows this distribution.

Table 29.--Situation 7 Responses Arranged by Grade

| Response    | Grade 9   |        | Grade 10  |       | Grade 11  |       | Grade 12  |       | Total     |
|-------------|-----------|--------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|
|             | Obs       | Exp    | Obs       | Exp   | Obs       | Exp   | Obs       | Exp   |           |
| Avoidance   | 14        | 21.80  | 15        | 14.53 | 14        | 15.88 | 22        | 12.78 | 65        |
| Physical    | 115       | 109.00 | 74        | 72.67 | 80        | 79.40 | 56        | 63.92 | 325       |
| Seeking Aid | <u>33</u> | 31.19  | <u>19</u> | 20.80 | <u>24</u> | 22.72 | <u>17</u> | 18.29 | <u>93</u> |
| Total       | 162       |        | 108       |       | 118       |       | 95        |       | 483       |

$$*X^2 = 11.4484 \text{ (12.592 expected), d.f.} = 6$$

In the Grade 9 category of Avoidance, those surveyed show a lesser frequency of observed responses than expected, and a greater frequency of observed response in the Physical category than expected. Grade 12 student display the opposite tendency: showing a greater frequency of observed responses in the Avoidance category and a lesser frequency of observed responses in the Physical category. However, with a Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) value of 11.4484 at 6 degrees of freedom, the frequency of observed responses is not a statistically significant departure from the expected responses at the .05 level.

It is interesting to note that, while there is no statistical difference in the sample, the Grade 12 students show less inclination to respond physically and more inclination to avoid getting involved. Written responses indicate the belief that (1) the gang member-friend knew what faced him in his choice of lifestyle, or (2) the gang member-friend was getting his "just desserts." In either situation, Grade 12 responses indicate the situation was "not their problem." However, some did indicate they would alert authorities to the situation. This attitude is in contrast with younger students who would intervene at a greater rate because of friendship. Knowing this inclination, administrators can address the younger students and seek to provide viable alternatives to violence.

#### Situation 8

You are running through a near-empty hall, hoping to get to class on time. As you round a corner near your classroom, you accidentally collide with another student and knock the student to the ground. While neither of you know each other personally, you know the other student is a gang member. There are no other students or teachers in the hall at the time. What do you do?

Of the 507 students surveyed, 413 (81.4%) chose Reasoning, 67 (13.2%) Continuance, 15 (3%) No Response, 7 (1.4%) Physical, and 5 (1%) chose Verbally Challenging. Table 30 displays this distribution.

Table 30.--Situation 8 Responses of the Sample

| Response    | Number | Response             | Number    |
|-------------|--------|----------------------|-----------|
| Continuance | 67     | Verbally Challenging | 5         |
| Physical    | 7      | No Response          | <u>15</u> |
| Reasoning   | 413    | Total                | 507       |

Students in all three classifications: Gender, Ethnic Background, Grade in School, responded as expected. The vast majority saw no threat emanating from the gang member. They also accepted responsibility for their part in the accidental collision. Tables 31, 32, and 33 display the distribution of responses, by classification, for these variables.

Table 31.--Situation 8 Responses Arranged by Gender

| Response    | Female     |          | Male       |          | Total      |
|-------------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|
|             | Observed   | Expected | Observed   | Expected |            |
| Continuance | 32         | 34.11    | 35         | 32.89    | 67         |
| No Response | 7          | 7.64     | 8          | 7.36     | 15         |
| Reasoning   | <u>213</u> | 210.25   | <u>200</u> | 202.75   | <u>413</u> |
| Total       | 252        |          | 243        |          | 495        |

$$x^2 = .4485 \text{ (5.991 expected), d.f.} = 2$$

Table 32.--Situation 8 Responses Arranged by Ethnic Background

| Response    | White      |          | Non-white  |          | Total      |
|-------------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|
|             | Observed   | Expected | Observed   | Expected |            |
| Continuance | 46         | 47.64    | 21         | 19.36    | 67         |
| No Response | 7          | 10.68    | 8          | 4.33     | 15         |
| Reasoning   | <u>299</u> | 293.69   | <u>114</u> | 119.31   | <u>413</u> |
| Total       | 352        |          | 143        |          | 495        |

$$x^2 = 4.9952 \text{ (5.991 expected), d.f.} = 2$$

Table 33.--Situation 8 Responses by Grade

| Response    | Grade 9    |        | Grade 10  |       | Grade 11   |       | Grade 12  |       | Total      |
|-------------|------------|--------|-----------|-------|------------|-------|-----------|-------|------------|
|             | Obs        | Exp    | Obs       | Exp   | Obs        | Exp   | Obs       | Exp   |            |
| Continuance | 32         | 22.60  | 14        | 14.75 | 11         | 15.70 | 10        | 13.94 | 67         |
| No Response | 7          | 5.06   | 3         | 3.30  | 3          | 3.52  | 2         | 3.12  | 15         |
| Reasoning   | <u>128</u> | 139.34 | <u>92</u> | 90.94 | <u>102</u> | 96.78 | <u>91</u> | 85.94 | <u>413</u> |
| Total       | 167        |        | 109       |       | 116        |       | 103       |       | 495        |

$$x^2 = 9.9836 \text{ (12.592 expected), d.f.} = 6$$

### Analysis

The vast majority of responses are in the Reasoning category whereby the responder would attempt to reason with, explain or apologize to the other person. Written responses indicate the situation is more that of manners than of gang-affiliation. Student responses ranged from saying "Sorry" and continuing on, to stopping, helping the gang member up and checking to see if (s)he was "OK" before going on. Only 12 students (2.4%) viewed this situation as a threatening situation which would require a Physical or Verbally Challenging response. No arrangement of the variables: gender, ethnic background, or grade in school, produced a frequency of observed responses that was a statistically significant departure from the expected responses.

In this situation, as written responses indicate, regular students assumed the responsibility for their actions. The fact that the "victim" was gang-affiliated had little effect on their response choice. (Some did say that, while they felt responsible and would make amends, they would be "on guard" and see what the gang members response would

be.) The regular students' upbringing dictates an apologetic or explanatory response: gang membership notwithstanding.

### Summary

This overview and analysis of the data on a situational basis were presented in a general way to provide a foundation for further investigation. Next, the data are analyzed in relation to the specific research questions on which this study was based.

### Analysis of the Data in Relation to the Specific Research Questions

Chapter I reported the goal of this study was to investigate the data and answer three research questions. In this section of Chapter III, those questions are presented and analyzed.

#### Is there a relationship between a regular student's gender and the type of coping strategies (s)he prefers in situations involving gang-affiliated students?

A situation by situation review of the male and female observed responses which were significantly different from those expected was undertaken and produced the following data. The frequency of female responses was greater than expected 15 times: Avoidance (2), Compliance (2), Reasoning (4), Refusal (1), Seeking Aid (5), and Verbally Challenging (1). In addition, the frequency of female observed response was less than expected 16 times: Avoidance (2), Compliance (1), Continuance (1), Physical (3), Provocation (5), Refusal (2), and Verbally Challenging (2). These data indicate that females are more likely than males to choose a more moderate response (Reasoning and



Seeking Aid) and less likely to choose aggressive responses (Physical and Provocation) in confrontational situations.

By contrast, male observed responses were greater than expected 17 times: Avoidance (3), Compliance (1), Continuance (1), Physical (3), Provocation (5), Reasoning (2), and Verbally Challenging (2). In addition, the frequency of male observed responses was less than expected 13 times: Avoidance (1), Compliance (2), Reasoning (3), Refusal (1), Seeking Aid (5), and Verbally Challenging (1). These data indicate that males tend to choose more aggressive responses (Physical and Provocation) and are less likely to choose moderate responses (Seeking Aid) in confrontive situations. Based on the distribution of the data, the Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) values and their respective degrees of freedom, there is a statistically significant difference at the .05 level regarding the choices male and females make in gang-affiliated situations.

A relationship definitely exists between the frequency of response of males and females. As discussed earlier, males tend to be more aggressive and challenging in their responses and more likely to choose a Physical, Provocation or Verbally Challenging response than would females. Females, on the other hand, tend to choose responses in the Reasoning or Seeking Aid categories. On average, females choose Seeking Aid and Reasoning at a middle to high level frequency of response to situations whereas males tend to place these in the lowest frequency of response totals. The opposite is true of the Physical and Provocation categories which tend to be of low level frequency in females and middle to high level frequency in males.

Educators can make students, especially males, aware of this tendency to react in an aggressive manner and develop strategies to counteract the aggressive behaviors. Students can be exposed to some of the reasons they may choose a certain behavior. Once aware of the reasons a student may choose a particular behavior, the student, with help from parents, teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators can develop alternative responses to aggressive behavior.

Boards of Education can approve, institute, and support courses of instruction or other programs which help students develop good decision-making skills which may further aid them in seeking non-violent solutions to confrontational situations. Also, tolerance and self-esteem building activities may be funded to help eliminate the need to enter into confrontation for the purpose of "saving face."

Boards of Education and administrators also can institute programs that develop peer conflict resolution skills which can be of vital assistance to schools whose students exhibit a high degree of confrontive, aggressive behavior toward one another. A basis of good decision-making skills and routine exposure to conflict resolution skill development increases the likelihood that a non-violent resolution to conflict will be employed by students. In addition, most good peer conflict resolution programs include the training of students as mediators and active participants in the resolution process. With peers as mediators, combatants are less likely to perceive the solution as forced upon them by adults and are more likely to uphold the terms of the negotiated settlement. This ownership in the process increases the chances for a successful, long term solution. In addition, schools

which are perceived as "violent" have poor community relations and support. A focus on non-violent solutions will bring improved public relations and support from the community.

Is there a relationship that exists between a regular student's ethnic background and the type of coping strategies (s)he prefers in situations involving gang-affiliated students?

Based on a situation by situation review, there is only one situation where white and non-white responses were statistically different: Situation 1. For Situation 1 only, white students show a greater than expected frequency of observed response in the categories of Seeking Aid and Continuance and a less than expected frequency of response in Avoidance, Reasoning, Provocation, and Verbally Challenging. Non-white students show a greater frequency of observed response than expected in the categories of Avoidance, Reasoning, Provocation, and Verbally Challenging and a lesser frequency than expected in Seeking Aid and Continuance. However, taking the survey as a whole, based on the distribution of the data, the Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) values and their respective degrees of freedom, there is a no statistically significant difference at the .05 level regarding the choices made by students of differing ethnic backgrounds in gang-affiliated situations.

No consistent relationship exists when one considers the frequency of response and the ethnic background of the sample. As stated previously, there may be some small variations within a category of a situation: however, viewing the sample and situations as a whole indicates no statistical significance in the relationships.

This finding seems to be at odds with commonly held perceptions about gangs and gang membership. The literature suggests that many of the reasons youths enter the gang are ethnically based. Youths feel discriminated against because of their ethnic background, as much as early immigrants felt discriminated against as they looked for work and attempted to support their families who were new to this country. Also, some looked at the lifestyle and economic level of their parents and felt that, as a minority group, they had few positive life options available to them other than the gang. Others, engulfed by pride in their heritage, became gang members out of loyalty to others of their ethnicity who seemed to feel that gang membership was the key to respect and dignity.

However, while the literature cites reasons for gang membership, it does not address the focus of this study: coping strategies preferred by regular students. Care must be taken to understand that, while ethnic background may influence some to join a gang, ethnic background does not play a significant role in the choices regular students included in this study make, regardless of their ethnic background.

This distinction between ethnicity and potential gang membership and ethnicity and responses to gang situations is an important one for administrators and others to understand. If educators assume the two to be similar, they will make errors in judgement when addressing gang-related activity in their schools. The fact there may be a greater potential for gang membership among certain non-white groups does not mean regular students of the same non-white groups will respond in a manner different from white students. To assume the behaviors of gang

members and regular students will be similar because of their non-white status would be an injustice of monumental proportions. Educators should understand that the willingness or unwillingness of students to respond to gang-affiliated situations in a certain way is likely not the result of ethnic background but of some other factor.

Some of the tendency to react aggressively may stem from previous experience or a lack of understanding of the situation in which a student finds himself or herself. The situation described in Situation Eight did not indicate an overt hostility by the gang member who was knocked to the floor. However, several responders indicated to initiate an aggressive response, perhaps assuming the gang member would so likewise. This lack of understanding could come from (1) the previous experience regular students have had with gang-affiliated students, (2) fear of the reputation of the gang, (3) fear of the unknown potential response by the gang member, or perhaps, (4) if the gang member is of a different culture, from a lack of understanding of the other culture. Boards of Education can support programs which encourage tolerance (cultural and otherwise) which are be designed and implemented for staff and students alike, thereby fostering greater understand between persons and groups and lessening the possibility that confrontation will erupt due to the lack of understanding.

Is there a relationship between a regular student's grade in school and the type of coping strategy (s)he prefers in situations involving gang-affiliated students?

A situation by situation review of Grade 9, 10, 11, and 12 observed responses was undertaken. The only significant deviation from

the expected response can be found in Situation 1. A frequency of observed response greater than expected was found in the following categories: Avoidance (Grade 10), Continuance (Grades 9 and 12), Reasoning (Grade 11), and Verbally Challenging (Grade 10). A frequency less than expected was found in the following categories: Avoidance (Grade 11), Continuance (Grade 10), Reasoning (Grade 12), and Verbally Challenging (Grade 9). Other situations produced no statistically significant deviations. Based on the distribution of the data, the Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) values and their respective degrees of freedom, there is no statistically significant difference at the .05 level regarding the choices made by different grade levels in gang-affiliated situations.

No consistent relationship exists when one considers the frequency of response and grade in school of the sample. As stated previously, there may be some small variations within a category of a situation. However, viewing the sample and situations as a whole indicates no statistical significance in the relationships. Educators should understand that the willingness or unwillingness of students to respond to gang-affiliated situations in a certain way is likely not the result of grade in school, but of some other factor.

While the staff's behavioral expectations for older students may increase as the students become juniors and seniors, there is no indication that these increased expectations or possible increased maturity have any direct connection to the responses given by students. As indicated previously, programs which encourage rational, non-violent responses can be employed. These programs can be presented in an increasingly sophisticated manner as the students mature. Speakers and

other presentations which encourage moderation and acceptance can be engaged and become part of the regular curriculum and expectations of the school and staff. Advances in the affective domain while in school will have positive effects on the roles the student assume as they leave high school.

#### Further Considerations

The study attempted to determine if a relationship exists between choices students make in gang-affiliated situations and a set of key variables: gender, ethnic background, and grade in school. Having determined that, in this study, there exists a consistent relationship between choices made by females as contrasted with males, and that no relationship exists concerning the students' ethnic background or grade in school and the choices made, it is appropriate to consider the other implications of the findings.

1. Less than 20% of all responses (Physical, Provocation, Verbally Challenging) would be considered as "hostility" on the part of the regular student. This lack of hostility as a first response is interesting when one considers the tension created by gangs who operate in and around schools. Regular students appear to seek reasonable solutions first, resorting to violence in less than one out of five encounters.

When hostile responses are generated, however, it is the male who is more likely to be hostile, for reasons stated earlier. Administrators should take care not to over react and impose sanctions on the entire student body if only a few students are possible offenders. Treating non-hostile students similarly to hostile students

may generate negativism on the part of students and parents. Also, boards of education need not institute a "police state" which can become oppressive to regular students. As McEvoy noted, harsh measures have limited affect as reducers of gang activity.

2. An analysis of the written responses indicates a significant number of regular students would comply with the demands of gang members rather than face the "hassle" from the gang-affiliated students. As many stated, "It just isn't worth it." The \$1.50 for the lunch was insignificant compared to the possibility of the additional, continued harassment or injury which may have followed. As long as they were with their friends, it did not matter where they sat in the cafeteria and, while they may not wear the jacket to school, they would continue to wear it away from school: away from the gang's view. Apparently these regular students did not see their compliance as appeasement, nor did they understand that they were in fact encouraging the gang's activities by their compliance. The development of adequate decision-making skills on the part of students may increase their understanding of the effects of their decisions. This understanding can help regular students see how their actions may in fact encourage rather than discourage further gang activity.

3. When the regular student is responsible for the initiation of the interaction as in the hallway collision in Situation 8, manners and up-bringing appear to be the deciding factor in the regular student's response, not whether the other student is a gang member or not. Most of the written responses which carried an explanation indicate that to stop, say "sorry" and or assist the other student was just "good



manners." Educators can help students extend this concept of "good manners" into the concepts of tolerance and acceptance also, thereby lessening the reliance on physical responses in potentially hostile situations. The school can also encourage parents to instill similar concepts in the home.

4. Educators faced with a gang presence in their schools are also faced with the need to protect students and provide for a meaningful educational experience for all: gang-affiliated as well as regular students. This need for security and protection was strongly indicated in the responses of the sample. While most perceived the staffs of the schools as willing and able to assist in the preservation of security, order and a proper climate for learning, some responders felt staff ignored the gang's presence as long as the gang's activities were not overt and disruptive. If the staff is perceived as one which tolerates some gang activity, some students may feel the need to comply with the gang's demands since staff members may not consider the demand serious enough to intervene. This perceived attitude of indifference on the part of staff may also contribute to the decision of some students to fight the gang with a physical reaction.

To provide for the safety of students, maintain a proper learning atmosphere, and, at the same time attempt to counteract the gang presence, it is necessary for boards of education to provide staff in-service and training that will enable staff to better understand the role they can play in eliminating gang influence in school. In-service can be in the area of gang awareness, prevention techniques, tolerance and acceptance, cultural awareness, or other appropriate fields,

including conflict resolution skills which they can encourage in their students. Also, staff can be helped to understand that males and females tend to react differently to situations, especially ones that imply possible violence.

Also, students need to learn how to respond safely to negative situations which may involve a gang presence so they can resist the pressure to become involved in gang-related activities. As indicated previously, training and skill building workshops in the areas of gang awareness, acceptance and/or tolerance of individual or group differences, self-esteem building, cultural awareness and similar activities can be constructed and/or included in the curriculum. Also, a strong decision-making skills base developed in students will not only minimize the gang' influence on students but will also aid students in other areas of the school's curriculum. These programs must be supported by the board, administration, staff and community.

5. Generally speaking, students in the sample did not respond in a physically violent way in most situations. With the exception of Situation 7, seeing a friend being beaten by rival gang members, regular students tend to seek non-violent responses to gang-affiliated situations. Even though males are more apt to respond physically than females, fewer than 11% of the responses of the total sample to the eight situations were Physical. This tendency toward non-violence can be enhanced by positive administrative action which encourages reason, tolerance, and understanding in all staff-student relations and on the part of all students in their dealing with others.

6. The choice of Compliance appears to be somewhat situational.

A higher degree of willingness to comply with gang members' demands seems to occur in areas where the sample appears to place little importance on the dynamics of the situation. A greater degree of willingness to comply as measured by the greater frequency of observed responses is found to differing degrees in Situations 3, 4, and 5. The willingness to pay for a fallen lunch that was at most only half the responsibility of the regular student (Situation 3); the willingness to move from a cafeteria table one has occupied for weeks (Situation 4); or the willingness to refrain from wearing a special jacket to school (Situation 5) could suggest that the regular student sees these items or activities as essentially non-special, at least as far as school is concerned. Student written responses indicate such items "are not worth the hassle." Approximately 37% of the Compliance responses indicate that the \$1.50 for the lunch, or the relocation to another table are not worth the possible aggravation, intimidation, or physical confrontation that may follow. As far as the use of the jacket is concerned (Situation 5), a similar number of students indicated they would by-pass the problem by not wearing the jacket to school but would continue to wear the jacket outside of school or in non-gang situations.

It is interesting to note that, while the students may be by-passing an unpleasant experience under the guise of expediency, they may also be enabling the power needs of the gang by complying in even these less significant areas. Educators must help students understand when gang members or other persons appear to have power over a situation, they may tend to transfer that feeling of power to other situations,

requiring more and more compliance from the student in more and more areas of endeavor. What may be a choice of convenience today, may become more difficult to make in the future as the demands increase and the willingness to comply decreases. To foster better student responses, the improvement of student decision-making skills needs to be addressed and strengthened through curricular and non-curricular processes.

7. Friendship, human endangerment, and manners influence responses. The willingness to engage in a Physical response is strong in Situation 7 when a friend, who also happens to be in a gang, is in trouble. Apparently, students are willing to exist on differing planes in their friendships and relationships. What may not be personally palatable (gang membership) does not stand in the way of being a friend. This dual plain, however, could be misread by other students and educators alike. A certain "guilty by association" is frequently attached to those who associate with gang members on a regular basis. Some students and educators are quick to assume that the association means membership in the gang. This study suggests this assumption is not necessarily true.

Responses to Situation 8 indicate a person's upbringing may influence the responses made to situations, especially when the regular student can be considered "at fault." Many students indicated such in their written responses. This is the only situation presented in this study which places the responsibility for the offense squarely on the regular student. It is interesting to note that the overwhelming student written responses indicate the need to maintain manners and

upbringing, regardless of the victim's gang membership. As one member of the sample wrote, "Gang member or not, it was my fault. I'd help him up and hope he'd understand that it was an accident. If he didn't, I'd wait to see what happened and take care of it." This sentiment echoes the willingness of most regular students to offer proper apologies for wrongful acts committed by them.

#### Summary

Considerations based on the conclusions were presented and discussed from the view point of the educator who must cope with a gang presence in his or her building. Other implications can certainly be discussed which explore the in-service, safety, or decision-making needs of the staff and students as they relate to the gender, ethnic background or grade in school variables of the study. Such implications could include staff development opportunities for staff or leadership training for students.

Some findings based on the data emerged through the analysis of those data and led to the major conclusions of the study. Some findings raised new questions as they answered the old ones. These new questions will be identified in Chapter IV where recommendations for further study will be presented.

CHAPTER IV  
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS,  
AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This chapter reviews the purpose for which this study was undertaken and presents a review of the procedures used in conducting the study and of the various constraints and limitations contained therein. In addition, the major conclusions of this study derived from the data and recommendations based on the conclusions are presented.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the existence and nature of the relationships between the gender, ethnic background or grade in school of regular high school students and the type of coping strategies preferred by them in casual or confrontive associations with gang-affiliated students in a school setting. Since age, gender and ethnic background appear to be related to the way young people think and act, it seemed reasonable to suspect that a relationship between these variables could be studied in light of the coping strategies employed by regular high school students in their associations with gang-affiliated students. This study sought to ascertain the existence and nature of those relationships.

## Procedures

A survey citing eight situations which a regular student may encounter, describing a variety of typical gang-related incidents that might occur in any typical urban-suburban high school was developed and administered to a sample of 507 high school students housed in three high schools in a large urban-suburban district in northern Illinois. Members of the sample, which were a microcosm of the various ethnic and socio-economic groups one would find in most urban areas, provided written responses to the open-ended questions which followed the description of the scenarios. The responses to the eight questions from each individual survey were analyzed and sorted into categories which were developed as a result of the responses received. A cluster selection technique, selecting students from study halls, was used to provide a random sample base for the survey since students were clustered in these study halls without regard to their grade, ethnic background, or socio-economic status. Any student who did not wish to participate in the survey was excused from the process.

The written responses to the open-ended scenarios found in the survey were reviewed and, based on the type of response provided, were assigned to one of the response categories. Data were also collected to identify the student's gender, ethnic background and grade in school: these data being necessary to answer the three research question of the study.

After the responses were reviewed and assigned to response categories, the data were analyzed and were disaggregated according to the gender, ethnic background or grade in school of the sample. A Chi-

square ( $X^2$ ) test was used to analyze the significance of the number of observed responses as compared to the number of expected responses in each response category and for each classification of the disaggregation. In addition, a narrative analysis was provided which identified the similarities, differences, and unique responses of the sample.

#### Constraints and Limitations

The determination of the kinds of data which were collected served to place constraints on the scope of the study as did the selection of the population which contributed the data. Data collected were demographic or narrative in character. Of the demographic data collected, gender proved to be the least limiting since any heterosexual study could include only two categories: male and female. However, ethnicity and grade in school were more limiting, placing greater constraints on the study.

The non-white population (29.4%) was significantly smaller than the white population (70.6%), thereby preventing a further division of the non-white sample into the traditional ethnic categories used by educational institutions: Black, Asian, Hispanic, American Indian, and Pacific Islander. The ability to divide the student response data into these more specific ethnic categories, were the sample population significantly larger, may have provided more specific differences in observed and expected behaviors than did the homogenous non-white combination category. In addition, a larger non-white sample might have been divided not only by ethnicity, but by gender within each ethnic category. Since the findings did show some significant differences



between males and females in the total sample, such division might produce significant differences in the observed and expected behaviors within the ethnic sample, divided by gender.

Limiting the study to high school age students provided additional constraints. Junior high, middle school, or elementary school age students were not included in the sample. The collection of data from these populations might produce additional or alternative conclusions which might reflect differing attitudes or preferences.

In addition, this study focused on students in public high schools in a large urban-suburban setting. This focus excluded coping strategies which may have been preferred by rural students or students in smaller, more "suburban" school settings. Whether students from settings other than those which were studied would have preferred different coping strategies was not determined.

Finally, the situations presented in the survey were specific in nature, therefore, the responses identified cannot be used to predict the same population's coping strategy preference in alternative situations. Also, these data focused on the responses the population claimed they would employ in each situation and cannot be identified with the population's actual practice or experience. Similarly, the qualitative nature of the study prevents the findings from being generalized to elementary or middle school students or to students in other school districts. These limitations, while providing structure and framework for the study, also created opportunities for additional study.

### Conclusions Based on the Findings

Conclusions based on the findings of the study are as follows:

1. The gender of the regular student may make a difference in the student's response to gang activity.
2. Females are statistically more likely to choose a more moderate, non-aggressive response in confrontational situations than are males.
3. Males are statistically more likely to chose a more aggressive response in confrontational situations than are females.
4. Females are more likely to seek aid in confrontational situations then are males.
5. The ethnicity of the student does not affect the regular student's response to gang activity.
6. The student's grade in high school does not affect the regular student's response to gang activity.

### Recommendations Based on the Conclusions

The following recommendations are based on the above conclusions and the data which are contained in this study.

1. Administrators in school districts which are experiencing gang related problems should discuss with staff the role gender may play in the regular students' choices of response to gang activity.
2. Administrators should discuss with staff the role the student's ethnicity may play in the regular students'

- response to gang activity.
3. School districts should provide conflict resolution workshops for students, especially male students, to assist them in the development of non-violent conflict resolution skills.
  4. School Districts should provide information to students and others which identifies the encouragement appeasement responses give to gang members and provide regular students with alternative strategies for dealing with gang members' demands.
  5. An anti-gang curriculum should be developed to familiarize students and staff with techniques to combat gang activity.

#### Suggestions for Further Study

While the constraints placed on this study were beneficial in helping provide structure and definition for the study, they were also limiting. These limitations can facilitate the development of suggestions for further study. These suggestions are as follows:

1. A study similar to this one should be conducted in schools with a more significant ethnic population to determine if the responses among the differing ethnic groups differ significantly.
2. A study similar to this one should be conducted to include different grade levels in the student sample to determine if the conclusions regarding high school students are

applicable to elementary, junior high, or middle school students.

3. A study similar to this one should be conducted in public high schools in small suburban or rural communities to determine if the conclusions regarding high school students in large, urban-suburban settings are applicable to students in smaller settings.
4. Similar studies with similar purposes should be conducted in private schools to determine if the conclusions regarding public school students are applicable to private school students.
5. A study investigating school discipline records or observing regular high school students in gang-related confrontations should be conducted in the three high schools in this study to determine if the observed behavior of the general school population is similar to the preferred behavior of the population included in this study.
6. A study similar to this one should be designed to include different situations involving gang-affiliated students to determine if the conclusions regarding this population in these situations are applicable to other situations.

#### Closing Statement

This study sought to address the relationship between gender, ethnicity and grade in school and the preferred responses of regular students in gang-affiliated situations. As with most studies, some questions were answered while still others were raised. However, it is

the character of research to raise as many questions as it answers and, in the process, create understanding and additional knowledge. To that end, this study is a contribution to the process.

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Appendix A

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SURVEY

Check one in each column:

GENDER:                    \_\_\_ Male                    \_\_\_ Female

GRADE:                    \_\_\_ 09                    \_\_\_ 10                    \_\_\_ 11                    \_\_\_ 12

ETHNIC BACKGROUND:    \_\_\_ Black                    \_\_\_ White                    \_\_\_ Asian

\_\_\_ Amer. Indian                    \_\_\_ Hispanic                    \_\_\_ Pacific Islander

Read each of the following situations. Describe, with as much detail as possible, what you would do if you were in each situation.

-----

1. You are in a classroom which is involved in a heated debate on a particular subject led by the teacher. After you state your opinion, another student whom you believe to be a gang member strongly challenges your opinion in a threatening manner.

What would you do?

2. Each morning you arrive at your bus stop and wait for the bus to school. A friendly student whom you know to be a gang member, talks with you frequently about the gang. Lately, this student has become more aggressive about recruiting you for the gang. Today the student told you that you must agree to join the gang by next week or pay protection - or else!

What would you do?

3. As you leave the lunch line with your purchased food, you and a student you believe belongs to a gang collide and both lunches fall to the floor. It was clearly an accident with neither of you at fault. The gang member states that you are to blame and demands that you pay for the lost lunch. The gang member is then joined by other gang member who repeat the demand for payment.

What would you do?



4. Each day you and your friends sit at the same unassigned place in the cafeteria during your lunch period. After several weeks of school, several gang members approach your table and tell you they want your seat and you should move to another table.

What would you do?

5. For your birthday, your parents surprise you with a Chicago Bulls Team Starter Jacket. Since the Bulls are your favorite athletic team, you happily wear the jacket to school the next day. As you prepare to enter the school, you are greeted by several students who tell you that you cannot wear that particular jacket because it "represents" their gang and you are not a member.

What would you do?

6. Each day, as you pass from one class to another, you encounter a group of gang members congregating in front of your locker. Each day, as you try to get by them, they harass you by trying to block your way, push you aside, threaten you and/or call you unkind names.

What would you do?

7. Your very best friend belongs to a gang. In the past, you and your friend have discussed gang activity but no pressure has been placed on you to join the gang. Today, as you enter the school restroom, you find your friend being beaten up by another student you recognize as a member of a rival gang.

What would you do?

8. You are running through the near empty hall, hoping to get to your next class on time. As you round a corner near your classroom, you accidentally collide with another student and knock the student to the ground. While neither of you know each other personally, you know the other student is a gang member. There are no other students or teachers in the hall at the time.

What would you do?

## Appendix B

### Definition of Student Response Categories

| RESPONSE             | DEFINITION   |
|----------------------|--|
| Avoidance            | Respondent would cease interaction, walk away or otherwise avoid further contact which may lead to the continuance of the situation.   |
| Compliance           | Respondent would change activity or response, or otherwise agree with gang member's position or demand.  |
| Continuance          | Respondent would continue to speak or act as in the past. Gang member's actions/threats, etc. would not change response.   |
| No Response          | Respondent was unsure of response or made no response to the situation.  |
| Physical             | Respondent would intervene physically for the purpose of bringing the incident to cessation or respondent would exert physical force against the gang member as a reaction to the gang member's activity or demands. |
| Provocative          | Respondent would provoke further negative actions by the gang member or otherwise escalate the situation negatively without applying direct physical intervention.   |
| Reasoning            | Respondent would attempt to reason with, explain or apologize to the gang member.  |
| Refusal              | Respondent would not comply with gang member's demands.  |
| Seek aid             | Respondent would seek aid from friends, staff or other persons to attempt to solve the situation.  |
| Verbally Challenging | Respondent would verbally challenge the gang member's right to make demands, without making any direct verbal or physical response.  |

APPROVAL SHEET

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF EDUCATION.

April 19, 1993  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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