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**Ties in Gangs: Exploration of Perceived Group Processes in Gang  
Membership**

By

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Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Kent at  
Canterbury for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Supervised by: Dr. Jane Wood

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## **Conventions used in this thesis**

### **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

All abbreviations and acronyms are first described within the text before used.

### **Numbering studies**

Chapter numbers are not the same as study numbers – they are independent of each other.

### **Tables and Figures**

All tables and figures are in the following format: x.y. They are numbered in relation to the chapter they appear in and so ‘x’ refers to the chapter number and ‘y’ refers to the order in which the specific table or figure appears. For example, Figure 1.1 appears in the first chapter and is the first figure.

## **Abstract**

Gang membership is a global phenomenon and a problem affecting a multitude of official and unofficial agencies, often reported by the media and causing overwhelming financial strain, as well as increasing fear of crime in communities. Whilst research on gangs has enjoyed popularity for almost a century now, this was mostly based on a criminological perspective, which did not provide a holistic picture for practitioners. Specifically, little is known about the psychology of gang membership, as such research is still in its infancy. Moreover, calls for understanding the social psychological motives for gang membership - such as gang members' perceptions of group processes, and how these influence individuals - have been present for the last 50 years but development in the area has been limited.

The aim of this thesis was to address some of this crucial gap in our knowledge of gang membership, to help enrich theoretical understanding, as well as prevention and rehabilitation strategies, so that these can be appropriately developed. In order for this to happen, it is key to understand which group processes lie behind gang membership based on gang members' subjective experiences, in different types of gang members, and how these relate to members' decisions to join and remain with a gang. The core assumption of gangs – that they are groups – has been largely neglected by research. The studies in this thesis provide the first holistic picture of the relevance of group processes in gang membership. The first, qualitative study, identified that group processes regularly manifesting in groups do, indeed, also manifest in gangs. It was also found that such group processes are understood by gang members in a manner specific to them. Further, the perceived group processes manifested differently at different

stages of membership – when joining a gang and when remaining in a gang. The large quantitative studies that follow revealed that gangs differ from non-gang delinquent groups, and that different types of gang members differ in their perception of how group processes manifest. It was found that different types of groups and gangs were characterised by a specific set of perceived group processes. Further, these group process clusters differed, based on the stage of an individual's membership.

This thesis therefore uncovered that the area of social cognition based on group processes is important. The main conclusions drawn from the studies presented in this PhD are: **1)** Group processes manifest in gangs and are perceived in a specific manner. **2)** The perception of group processes differ in gangs and other delinquent groups, and between different types of gang members. **3)** There are specific clusters of perceived group processes which characterise specific types of groups and at different stages of membership – group processes should not be dealt with in isolation. **4)** The findings show that how gang members perceive group processes should be a key consideration in future research and any intervention strategies designed for gang members.



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## **Chapter 1 - Gang membership: Introduction**

Street gang membership has long been ignored by authorities in the UK, mostly due to officials not recognising that the problem did not mirror a stereotypical image of US gangs (Klein & Maxson, 2006). However, for two decades now, research and policies have reflected the issue of street gangs in the UK; research has been increasing and various interventions have been put into place. Whilst recognising the problem was a step forward, knowledge on street gangs in the UK is still limited and a more comprehensive approach is needed to tackle the issue. This chapter will provide key information with regards to the problem of gangs in the UK and will provide support for the need for further study.

### **1.1 The gang problem**

The Centre for Social Justice (2009) reported that around six per cent of UK teenagers can be classified as members of a gang. What is more, this six per cent is responsible for 21% of crime committed by the same age group (Sharp et al., 2006). Similarly, the violent nature of this crime is noted by media reports such as: ‘Vicious gang attacks’ (Worthing Herald, 2013) or victims being ‘Stabbed to Death by Hoodie Gang’ (Sherriff, 2013). The Metropolitan Police Service even reported “that gang members were responsible for 48% of all shootings and 22% of serious violence more generally in London” (Home Office, 2011, p. 18). More specifically, the London Metropolitan Police (2012) alone suggested that there are 259 violent youth gangs in London, consisting of 4800 gang members. London has the most identified gangs, though the issue is not limited to one city. For example, Manchester identified 886 gang members, comprising 66 gangs (Fearn, 2015). However, some charities provide figures

much larger, suggesting there are 15,000 individuals involved in gangs in London and 35,000 nationwide (Gangs Line, 2014). The Office for National Statistics (2014) provided a more specific image in terms of age, reporting that almost 1% of all youth aged 10-15 are gang members and almost 10% know a gang member; 0.7% of 16-24 year olds stated they were a gang member and 5.4% stated knowing a gang member. Whilst these statistics provide a hint at how serious the problem of gangs is, gang crime is under-reported (for example, due to gang members targeting each other) and we have no official statistics as to how many gangs there actually are in the UK and how many individuals are involved in, or affiliated with, them (House of Commons, 2015).

Whilst the many reported stories are sometimes more based on myths surrounding gangs than the truth (Esbensen & Tusinski, 2007; Howell, 2007), it has been continuously found that gang members are responsible for more violent and non-violent crime than non-gang groups, or even delinquent groups (Klein, Weerman & Thornberry, 2006). Parkinson (2005) concluded that gangs do not pose as big a problem as media and practitioners claim; however, gangs do commit a considerably large proportion of crimes (and violent crimes) and should therefore be further researched (Gilbertson, 2009; Klein & Maxson, 2006; Sullivan, 2005). It is unclear what the cost of gang membership to the UK economy is, especially due to not having a clear understanding of prevalence rates. However, it is suggested it could be approximately £40 billion a year (Davis, 2011) – more than the budget of the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice combined. However, such a figure is out of context, especially as the official estimates of all serious and organized crime are said to be between £20 and £40 billion a year (Home Office, 2009). On top of these crime-oriented figures, gangs are also a

public health concern. The NHS reported that the cost of violence amounts to £2.9 billion a year (Nunn & Sackville, 2014), though this figure includes incidents not committed by gang violence. It was also noted that some hospitals reported that 9% of all emergency admissions were due to knife incidents largely committed by gang affiliated youth (Nunn & Sackville, 2014). Despite statistics varying, 70% of hospitals consider gang and youth violence when producing future strategic plans (MHPC, 2011).

Beyond the financial costs of gang membership, it is important to note that gang membership has been at the centre of an increase in fear of crime in certain communities and blamed for a variety of issues. For example, the Guardian and the London School of Economics (2011) conducted an analysis which concluded that the infamous London Riots of 2011 were blamed on gangs operating in the city, sparking a moral panic around gangs and gang members. However, taking a closer look at the riots, many of the rioters appeared to be opportunists and not gang-affiliated. Typical crowd behaviour occurred and social media seemed to spark similar crowd behaviour to manifest across the country. Parents were blamed for youth going out to join the riots and lower levels of education and socio-economic status of rioters were noted. A 'blame game' also occurred between the public, politicians and the police but it is difficult to put blame on certain individuals purely based on data from courts where bias in terms of arrests could have already occurred (The Guardian and London School of Economics, 2011). An increase in fear of crime with regards to gangs has also been reported over the years. Individuals in communities started fearing youths gathering, fearing they carry weapons or fearing the general violence they are involved in (Cox, 2011).

Official statistics of crime indicate it is decreasing, which includes knife or sharp weapon offences (May, 2015). However, such statistics do not necessarily reflect a decrease in gang membership specifically. On the contrary, recent reports suggest a rise in violence, especially in London and the South-East, which was attributed to gang members seeking dominance over their territories (Morris, 2016). The rise in violence was particularly regarding murder, attempted murder, and also knife crime and generally, there seemed to be a 27% increase in violent offences (Morris, 2016). Whilst gang crime is seen as a contributing factor, much of the increase has also been attributed to better technology being used by the police, better recording techniques and greater willingness of victims to cooperate with the police (Morris, 2016). Whilst statistics, financial or criminal, provide a mixed message with regards to gang membership, it is undeniable that the UK has a gang problem, causing serious consequences affecting a number of official and unofficial agencies, such as the NHS, schools, local and national governments, job centres, social work or the Criminal Justice System (Klein, Weerman & Thornberry, 2006).

A multitude of interventions have been developed to tackle the gang problem. These include sport-based interventions (McMahon & Belur, 2013), Civil Gang Injunctions (Home Office, 2014), anti-social behaviour orders (Deuchar, 2010), or interventions developed for use in education, health, communities and prisons (London Criminal Justice Partnership, 2010). The first coordinated national strategy, the Ending Gang and Youth Violence program, was only developed recently and is a holistic, multi-agency initiative. Prison-based interventions specifically focused on gang membership are scarce and not consistent. To the author's knowledge, no evaluation of

these has been published within the UK system. Often, gang members entering the prison system are automatically assigned to Violence Intervention programs due to their violent offending (Home Office, 2011). As Cicerone et al. (2000) highlight, evidence-based practice is necessary when tackling any phenomenon. As will be shown in Chapter 3, there is currently vast research available on gangs from a criminological perspective. Only recently, the psychological study of gangs has emerged. For this reason, all of these different initiatives have one main flaw in common – they rarely consider the psychology of gang membership (Gravel, Bouchard, Descormiers, Wong & Morselli, 2013) and none currently appreciate the value that the study of group processes can provide. This might be why many strategies provide undesirable results and can even strengthen gang member ties (Goldman, Giles, & Hogg, 2014; Klein & Maxson, 2006; Ross, Lepper & Ward, 2010; Wood & Alleyne, 2010). Gaining further knowledge of group processes and gang membership is the aim of this thesis.

## **1.2 Defining a gang**

Despite the vast number of theories, predominantly based in the USA (and different States within the USA, Gilberson & Malinski, 2005), academics and practitioners still argue over what a gang is (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Klein, 1991, 2011). Being without a common definition of a gang causes multiple problems. For example, research on the same topic might not yield the same findings as it might be considering two or more different types of groups, all called ‘gang’ (Klein, 2011); youth might be misidentified as gang members which might lead to stigma (Klein & Maxson, 2006); gang youth may also be missed if a definition is too restricting (Klein & Maxson, 2006); policy makers might spend a considerable effort providing strategies to prevent

gang membership whilst targeting the wrong population, and more. This section will underline issues with the definition of a gang.

The problem of not having a unified definition has been debated for many years (e.g. Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Esbensen & Maxson, 2012; Esbensen, Winfree, He & Taylor, 2001; Klein, 2011; Klein & Maxson, 2006; Pitts, 2008; Wood & Alleyne, 2010). Without a unified definition, it is impossible to conduct comparative research which would provide academics and policy makers with evidence that can be seen as truly important (Junger-Tas, 1994). Comparing data across nations, different points in time, on different levels of membership or other levels of interest can only be achieved when using the same definition across studies (Klein, 2011; Wood & Alleyne, 2010). Further, without an agreed definition used by all agencies concerned with gangs, the public and, more importantly, the media, are free to interpret data at their own convenience (Esbensen & Weerman, 2005; Horowitz, 1990). This can cause the fuelling of moral panics around gang membership; politicians misinterpreting data to benefit their own campaigns, and more.

The earliest definition of the word ‘gang’ was proposed by one of the earliest researchers on the subject – Thrasher (1927). He described gangs as possessing specific behaviours, including face-to-face contact, action planning or hanging around streets. He also pointed out that gang members are aware of the fact that they belong to a specific group and that this group, like other groups, holds certain moral codes, behaviours, traditions and habits, solidarity and territoriality. He summarized this by defining a gang as “...an interstitial group originally formed spontaneously, and then integrated through conflict” (p. 46). This definition, however, is very vague.

Throughout decades of research, this definition has been changed drastically. Klein (1971, 1995) proposed two different definitions based on continuing research within the area. Klein's early definition had much in common with general definitions of groups. For example, he advocated that a gang should be perceived as such by outsiders and members should recognize themselves as part of a gang. He then distinguished gangs from general groups by underlining that delinquency occurs in gangs and that gangs have specific habits and traditions - another general characteristic of groups overall. Therefore, whilst this definition has since been revised, Klein recognized that gangs exist in the same manner as other groups do. This goes hand in hand with Hakkert, van Wijk, Ferweda and Eijken's (2001) definition. Klein then recognized the flaws within his early definition and rightly emphasised the importance of distinguishing between varieties of delinquent groups by stating that gangs have a street orientation (i.e. spend a lot of their time in public places, like parks or street corners).

After interviewing US professionals in the 1970s, Miller (1980) emphasized the role of leaders and a hierarchy in gangs. He also underlined the need for interdependency as gang members work toward a common goal. He maintained that illegal activity is central to defining a gang. However, the stress on organisational structure has long been disputed by scholars (Klein & Maxson, 2006). Short (1996) later proposed a different definition and criteria of durability and group rules or codes were introduced. These criteria set gangs apart from other types of groups. However, Short neglected to include a criminal orientation of gangs (similarly to a later definition by Bennett & Holloway [2004]). According to this definition, a scout team could equally

pass for a gang. Contrary to this, the USA's Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act 1993 (as cited in Klein & Maxson, 2006) mainly focused on the criminal aspect of gangs, leaving the public and practitioners perceiving gangs as forming purely for the purpose of committing crime.

On top of formal definitions, researchers and practitioners have also often used self-nomination as a measure (i.e. Are you currently a gang member?) which is a subjective measure and vulnerable to the way a participant interprets the word 'gang' (Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte, Smith & Tobin, 2003). Similarly, an approach asking participants to state whether their friends were gang members was used to identify gang members, but this suffers the same problem (Melde & Esbensen, 2011).

UK agencies considered the available research when putting together a definition to be used but different agencies continue to work with different definitions. The Metropolitan Police and the Home Office use a joined definition (though this is a recent development). They suggest that a gang is a group which is durable in nature and street-oriented. Individuals have to identify their group (and be identified by others) as a noticeable group. They have to engage in criminal activity and violence. Further, they can have both, or one of, the following two features: identify with, or lay claim to territory, or be in conflict with other, similar gangs (Home Office, 2011; Metropolitan Police Service, n.d.).

The Centre for Social Justice (2009) created their own definition, urging all researchers focusing on UK gangs to use it. This definition shares similarities with the above in terms of a gang being durable and street oriented. Individuals also have to self-identify and be identified by others as belonging to a specific gang and engage in



criminal activity and violence. Unlike the above definition, this one states that gangs have to identify with, or lay claim to territory, have some form of identifying structural feature and have to be in conflict with other, similar gangs. This definition is then stricter and inclusive of factors that not all gangs have (e.g. territory, structural features).

Sharp, Aldridge and Medina (2006, p.2) proposed a definition which includes the same characteristics but provides more of a specific outlook: “a group of three or more that spends a lot of time in public spaces, has existed for a minimum of three months, has engaged in delinquent activities in the past 12 months, and has at least one structural feature, i.e., a name, leader, or code/rules”. This definition captures a lot of defining features suggested by research but again includes structural features which are said to not always be present in gangs.

The definitions across the USA and the UK differ. The definitions used in the UK tend to be more similar. However, a unified definition is lacking. Chapter 3 will provide a more detailed explanation of the Eurogang Initiative and definition proposed, which is becoming more frequently used in research internationally. This definition is robust in terms of considering previous research on gangs from an international perspective. It is also in line with the definitions used in the UK, though it provides less restrictive criteria. For the purposes of this PhD, the Eurogang definition will be used:

*“a street gang (or troublesome youth group corresponding to a street gang elsewhere) is any durable, street-oriented youth group whose involvement in illegal activity is part of its group identity”* (Esbensen & Weerman, 2005, p.8)

### 1.3 The current PhD

It is undeniable that gang membership is problematic. A multitude of criminological theories are available to academics and practitioners. Psychological input is still in its infancy and the area of group processes has only recently emerged. This is despite the importance of group processes in gang membership being highlighted for over 50 years now (e.g. Short & Strodtbeck, 1965), and being more important than national or ethnic differences in gangs (Klein, 2002; Sanchez-Jankowski, 1991). As Klein (2014, p. 701) rightfully stated: “Remember that gangs are groups, not merely aggregations of individual gang members”. As will be seen through Chapters 2 and 3, the area of group processes can uncover important information regarding the pulls and pushes that groups, and therefore gangs, can have on individuals. The way gang members perceive group processes is important theoretically, as well as when developing intervention strategies.

Therefore, the central aim of this PhD is to establish whether group processes generally found in groups also manifest in gangs, how they are perceived, and at what stages of membership. More specifically, it aimed to **1)** establish the presence of group processes in gangs as perceived by gang members, **2)** see how gang members perceive group processes manifest in gangs, **3)** understand whether this perception of group processes differs for different types of gang members, and **4)** see how the perception of group processes manifests at different stages of group membership.

This thesis begins by outlining the study of group processes. Chapter 2 therefore considers how group processes may impact on individuals. Chapter 3 then intertwines this information with previous research into gang membership. While doing so, gaps in

research are identified. Chapter 4 presents a qualitative study aiming to establish whether gang members perceive that group processes manifest in gangs, when joining the gang and then whilst they were members of the gang. Chapters 5 and 6 present findings of a larger mixed method study exploring how gang members perceive the group processes found in gangs, and how their perception of group processes differs between different types of gang members. Chapter 5 considers the joining stage of group membership. Chapter 6 moves on to outline gang members' subjective experiences of group processes at the remaining stage of gang membership. Chapter 7 provides a general discussion of the findings and conclusions, focusing on the theoretical, empirical and practical implications of this research.

## **Chapter 2 – Social psychological explanations for how group processes influence individuals**

“Groups are a key element in human experience. Whether the group is a family, a street gang, a work group, an ethnic minority or a network of friends, group membership and influence represents one of the most powerful forces shaping our feelings, judgments and behaviours... Despite the ubiquity and importance of groups for human existence, scholarly research on group topics is a relatively recent *phenomenon*” – Baron & Kerr, 2003, xii.

Throughout a person’s life span, membership in at least one group is almost guaranteed and the interplay between individual and group has been considered in the work of social psychological research. As noted in Chapter 1, gangs are groups and so gang members are expected to be impacted by group processes. However, this has scarcely been explored before. Since this thesis is concerned with the social psychology of gang membership; this chapter provides background on the importance of the study of group processes. Firstly, this chapter will briefly outline the importance of social psychology and the study of groups. Further, a definition of a group will be analysed. Holistic models of groups will then be discussed, followed by a discussion of specific group processes, thus highlighting the importance of further research.

### **2.1 Social psychology and groups**

Social psychology can be seen as interdisciplinary in that it combines several disciplines, mainly psychology and sociology (Sewell, 1989). Whilst psychology’s unit of analysis is an individual (e.g. Allport, 1924; Kalat, 2010; Sewell, 1989; Zajonc, 1980), sociology’s is the group (society) itself (e.g. Durkheim, 2013; Farr, 1996;

Merton, 1942; Sewell, 1989). The necessary interplay of these two were made clear, for example, by the notorious conformity experiments (Asch, 1951) that showed a clear indication that individuals can be influenced by groups.

Within the umbrella of social psychology, the study of Group Dynamics formed. Lewin (1952) focused on this area and referred to the changes that individuals and groups go through. A formal definition was later formed by Cartwright and Zander (1968) who suggested that the study of group dynamics is “...dedicated to advancing knowledge about the nature of groups, the laws of their development and their interrelations with individuals, other groups, and larger institutions” (p. 7). Through one’s engagement with different groups, attitudes, skills, beliefs or behaviour change, forming one’s cognition (Cooley, 1909; Harris, 1995; Newcomb, 1943). Research in social psychology has been used for prevention or rehabilitation purposes, increasing group efficiency (Hogg & Vaughan, 2005), decreasing hostility and prejudice toward out-groups (Brown, 1995; Tajfel, Billig, Bundy & Flament, 1971) or development of group psychotherapy (Ettin, 1992). Social psychology is a necessary discipline when uncovering the processes behind groups, as it has been shown that even such an individualistic subject as ‘self’ is social in nature (Viki & Abrams, 2012).

## **2.2 What is a group?**

Since as early as 1857, theorists have distinguished between different types of groups (interpersonal/social organisation bonds; Tonnies, 1955; bond to group members vs. group itself; Prentice, Miller & Lightdale, 1994); however, regardless of the viewpoint, one either belongs to a certain group or not. It is safe to say that groups are categories that differ on a variety of factors (Brown, 2000). Theorists differ in opinion

when discussing whether aggregates (e.g. all people with blonde hair) are groups. From a collectivist perspective, there are certain underlying social, group and cognitive processes that influence groups that can only manifest in intentionally created groups, and not aggregates (Abrams & Hogg, 1988; Lewin, 1936; McDougall, 1920; Sherif, 1936). Individualistic theorists suggest that the processes occurring in groups do not differ from basic interpersonal processes between people (Allport, 1924; Allport, 1927; Durkheim, 2013; Latane, 1981). However, many, such as Sherif (1936) have disputed this. Due to much empirical evidence suggesting the large effects that intentionally formed groups ('true social groups'; Hare, 1976) have on individuals (and vice versa), this thesis takes a collectivistic, rather than an individualist, view.

The number of definitions of groups is almost as large as the number of theorists exploring this phenomenon (Forsyth, 2010). For example, a definition provided by Forsyth (1999, p.5) suggests that a group consists of "two or more interdependent individuals who influence each other through social interaction", highlighting the importance of interdependency and interaction (Lewin, 1948). Brown (2000) added another dimension – that one should define oneself as a member and also be identified by at least one other person as a member. Tajfel and Turner (1979) further emphasized the importance of emotional attachment and evaluation to the definition. Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher and Wetherell (1987) and Brown (2000) proposed the notion of groups existing in relation to other groups. Other characteristics put forward by theorists include group structure (though groups have different structural features, often none; Campbell, 1958; Forsyth, 2010; Hogg & Vaughan, 2005) or common goals, though not all groups work toward specific goals (Benson, 2001; Brown, 2000; Forsyth, 2010;

Johnson & Johnson, 1987). An important factor to consider is that of Bales' (1950) suggestion that groups can be distinguished based on their task interaction or relationship interaction.

It is a hard task to propose a universally applied definition. However, most theorists agree on several core definers/characteristics:

1. A set of individuals. A group can consist of as little as two people (Simmel, 1902; Forsyth, 2010; Johnson & Johnson, 1987). As Moreland (2010) and Williams (2010) stated, dyads are often studied in different contexts than larger groups and people experience different group processes in dyads and so the current thesis does not include the study of dyads.
2. Individuals who interact with each other. Members have to interact with each other and influence each other. This establishes members as interdependent (Arrow, McGrath & Berdahl, 2000; Bordens & Horowitz, 2009; Johnson & Johnson, 1987; Katz, Lazer, Arrow & Contractor, 2004).
3. Individuals who identify with each other. For one to be a part of a group, individuals need to categorize themselves as such (Abrams, Hogg & Marques, 2005; Benson, 2001; Brown, 2000; Johnson & Johnson, 1987; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).
4. Individuals defined by others as a group. There cannot be a group without an outgroup (Benson, 2001; Brown, 2000; Campbell, 1958; Turner et al., 1987). However, it has also been suggested that some groups might not be publically visible (e.g. internet groups) (Chang & Yeh, 2003) though these are not considered in this study.

5. Individuals who share certain norms, beliefs or values. Members of a group are said to develop and follow norms and/or hold beliefs and values which distinguishes them from other groups (Benson, 2001; Johnson & Johnson, 1987)

No definition so far has included all of these elements. Therefore, the following definition of a group is proposed and will be reflected in this thesis:

Three or more individuals who interact with and influence each other; who are aware of their membership, and others are also aware of their membership in the group, group members are interdependent on each other, collectively follow established norms and/or share specific beliefs and values.

### **2.3 Holistic models of groups**

A variety of models have been proposed concerning the development and socialization of groups. A common characteristic of such models is negative: they only tend to focus on a specific point in time (McGrath & Tschan, 2004; Nash & Heiss, 1967; Tuckman, 1965; Zander, 1976). A full list of theories of group development can be found in Smith (2001); this section will evaluate three of the most cited models: Tuckman's Stages Model (1965), with relevance to Wheelan's (1990) Integrated Model of Group Development, and Moreland and Levine's (1982) Model of Group Socialization.

#### **Tuckman's and Wheelan's models of group development**

Tuckman developed the model of group development in 1965 and suggested that groups go through four stages: forming, storming, norming and performing. A fifth stage was later added – adjourning (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977; see Figure 2.1).

Wheelan's (1990) integrated model of group development built on Tuckman's model,



calling the five stages: dependency and inclusion, counter dependency and fight, trust and structure, work/productivity and final.

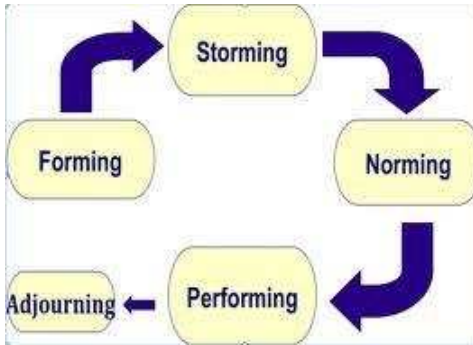


Figure 2.1: Tuckman's Stages Model

1. Tuckman's Forming: Testing occurs during this stage in a sense that boundaries are identified. Ties begin to form and members start developing relationships with each other and/or the leader(s). Members familiarize themselves with pre-existing norms of the group.

Wheelan 's Stage I: Dependency and Inclusion. Wheelan added dependency on the leaders, fear of safety and rejection to the model, underlining the uncertainty of individuals at this stage.

2. Tuckman's Storming: Having gone through group forming, members engage in conflict. Attitudes, behaviours, norms or values of each of the members become an interpersonal issue characterized by emotional responding. Common ground needs to be found.

Wheelan's Stage II: Counter dependency and Fight also underlines conflict as inevitable. She adds that conflict helps members trust each other by voicing their true opinions.

3. Tuckman's Norming: On reaching the third stage, resistance is usually overcome and a member once again feels a part of their group. Restructuring of the group occurs by new members accepting their new roles. Members become closer and share intimate and personal opinions.

Wheelan's Stage III: Trust and Structure further suggests that a group reaches maturity at this stage.

4. Tuckman's Performing: The previous stages were aimed at members becoming a cohesive group with a stable interpersonal structure. This enables the group to undertake tasks or activities specific for the group.

Wheelan's Stage IV: Work/Productivity suggests a similar process.

5. Adjourning: This stage reflects dissolution of a group. Roles are terminated, tasks are executed and members no longer feel dependent on each other to the same extent as before which can be planned or unplanned.

Wheelan's Final Stage also addresses dissolution of a group. Wheelan explains the consequences of this stage in more detail by suggesting that whilst conflict may arise, appreciation of each other (and the group) might also be demonstrated.

These models have enjoyed popularity with only minor adaptations when used by others (e.g. Moger & Rickards, 2000). However, groups are not homogenous and are expected to vary on a large number of characteristics. Forsyth (2010) rightfully suggested that development of cohesion is not as simple as proposed by the model. Importantly, these models do not uncover the specific group processes active in various stages. A cyclical model of the original is preferred by practitioners. For example, White (2008) simplified this model but added a much-needed Re-forming stage, which

would suggest a cyclical element as disengagement but also reengagement can occur. Bales (1965) also suggested an entry stage of forming and a cyclical interplay of storming, norming and performing. Perhaps a combination of Bales' and White's suggestions may best suit practitioners (Figure 2.2).

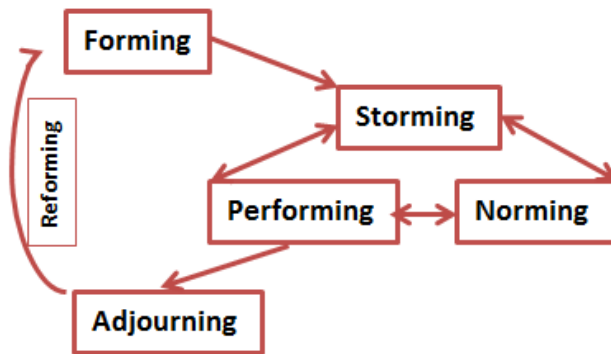


Figure 2.2: Adjusted Tuckman's developmental model

### **A Model of Group socialization (Moreland & Levine, 1982)**

Whilst the development of groups has been a largely explored phenomenon, the same cannot be said about group socialization. Even though specific stages of socialization were explored by previous researchers, a holistic model had not been proposed until Moreland and Levine's (1982) Model of Group Socialization.

Socialization as a concept has been defined in various terms. Stryker and Statham (1985) suggested that socialization happens as an individual successfully joins a group. Dion (1985) further added that socialization is complete when an individual gains a deep enough understanding to be a valuable contributor to the group. Anderson, Riddle and Martin (1999) saw communication as key for socialisation. Moreland and Levine (1982) stated that socialization occurs when there is a two-way process to meet the needs of the group and the individual. Rather than the developmental model, which did

not give the individual an important role (Levine & Moreland, 1994), this model is based on a social exchange relationship.

Levine and Moreland based their model on the assumption that there are three main processes behind group socialization – Evaluation, Commitment and Role Transition. Rewardingness plays a vital part in all three processes. Firstly, one assesses what the members (or the group) can offer to an individual and what the individual can offer the members (or the group). Feelings of commitment start to arise during this stage. Once commitment to the group and the balance of rewards are in place, a critical level is reached and an individual is labelled with a certain role. This process is cyclical and can repeat itself numerous times.

These three basic processes led the way to developing a framework in which an individual goes through five steps of socialization, separated by four role transitions. The premise behind the development of the model was the notion that individuals, as well as groups, do not retain unchanged evaluations and levels of commitment (see Figure 2.3).

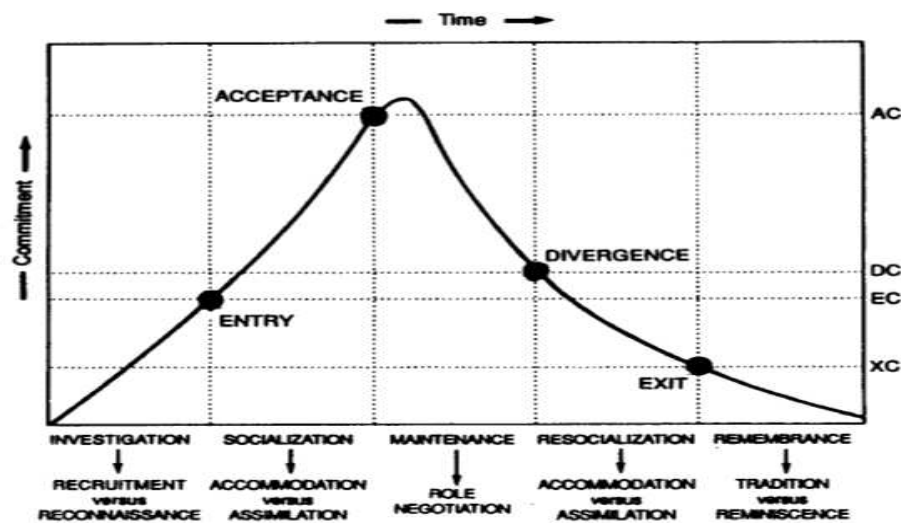


Figure 2.3: Model of Group Socialization

1. Investigation: when a prospective member becomes available, the group attempts to recruit them if these are perceived as valuable. Reconnaissance occurs from the individual by evaluating whether the group can satisfy their needs. Role transition of entry occurs when commitment from both sides reaches a sufficient level.
2. Socialization: A process of change occurs at this stage as the group tries to influence the individual so that they can contribute to the group. Assimilation occurs when this change is successful. This process also occurs in the individual and accommodation occurs. Commitment is said to increase even more at this point, resulting in the role transition of acceptance; an individual becomes a full member.
3. Maintenance: Negotiation is crucial at this stage as both individuals and group, look for a suitable role for the individual. This process can result either in satisfaction or in failure to reach a consensus, manifesting in a divergence role transition.
4. Resocialization: The group attempts to re-establish the role of the individual by looking for solutions that would benefit the group and satisfy the individual's needs. Assimilation and accommodation can reoccur, increasing commitment levels, allowing for the role transition of convergence to occur. However, if unsuccessful and commitment levels decrease further, role transition of exit is inevitable.
5. Remembrance: On-going evaluation might occur on both sides – individual and group. Each remembers the impact an individual/group had on the other.

Support for this model comes from studies later conducted by the authors themselves (e.g. Levine, Moreland, Choi, 2001; Moreland, Levine & Cini, 1993). Whilst other models have been developed, they are usually similar to this model (e.g. Anderson et al. 1999). Levine and Moreland (1994) stated that this model is a general

representation. For example, they acknowledge that the membership phase can be very long or very short. Further, exit might occur prior to the individual becoming a full member. Dramatic shifts are also to be expected. The model also seems theoretically sound, including information on self-categorization and prototypes (Turner et al., 1987), or social identity (Wells & Stryker, 1988). Its cyclical nature is also beneficial (Arrow, 1997). However, similarly to the Developmental model, it only talks about general processes. The specific processes guiding people to join a group, remain in it, or leave, have not been considered, except the premise of a rewards system.

### **What is missing?**

Poole and Van de Ven (2004) rightfully suggest that ‘process-oriented’ theories need to be focused on within the field of Social Psychology, which the aforementioned models did not achieve. For example, what are the rewards that individuals and groups seek from each other? How do individuals perceive the group’s influence? Whilst the above frameworks provide a general base, further understanding is crucial as each specific stage of group membership will likely be characterized by specific group processes. Further, it is important to understand that these models rely on an interaction between an individual and their group. Therefore, individuals’ perceptions of group processes at the different stages of group membership are important.

## **2.4 Group Processes**

The specific group processes related to why people join, remain in, and leave groups, as perceived by group members, are likely to be dynamic in nature and on a continuum. This is due to the aforementioned models where conflict inevitably occurs (in terms of one’s values, ideas, needs, etc.; Pruitt & Kim, 2004). So, when one is

joining a group, a specific set of group processes will be of importance to them. However, such conflict can then cause the perceived importance of group processes to change (some group processes might no longer be of importance whilst others might increase in importance). Bales and Hare (1965) even suggested that groups spend about one fifth of their time in a state of conflict. Regardless of the background of the conflict, it changes a group and is likely to modify the importance of associated group processes. It has been shown that conflict can make individuals strong in their opinion (Ross & Ward, 1995), evaluate each other (Thompson & Nadler, 2000) and engage in biases, such as the Fundamental attribution error – assumption that another member's behaviour is a result of their personality rather than the surrounding situation (Ross, 1997). Distrust can occur (Maki, Thorngate & McClintock, 1979), competition can rise (Sattler & Kerr, 1991) and harsher behaviour can be exhibited (Mikolic, Parker & Pruitt, 1997). Conflict can either change a group, or the individual (Ferguson & Rule, 1983; Lewicki, Saunders & Barry, 2006; Thomas, 1992; Thompson, 1991), or cause an individual to leave a group. Understanding group processes on a continuum, rather than as discrete phenomena, can better inform theoretical understanding of groups and interventions (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Wood & Gannon, 2012). Therefore, the following figure (Figure 2.4) shows what can be assumed about the perception of group processes. At the initial stage of contact with a new, prospective group, individuals will perceive certain group processes as important for them, making a group attractive to them. During membership, as individuals establish their membership, these group processes might change in their importance. Then, conflict may occur (which can be internal to the individual) based on whether individuals' needs are still satisfied by how

they perceive the group processes. If the group/individual undergo changes which will be satisfactory, the individual may remain a group member. However, if changes are not made, or if changes are not satisfactory enough, then an individual may choose to leave. As will be shown, this model can be applied to each of the group processes discussed.

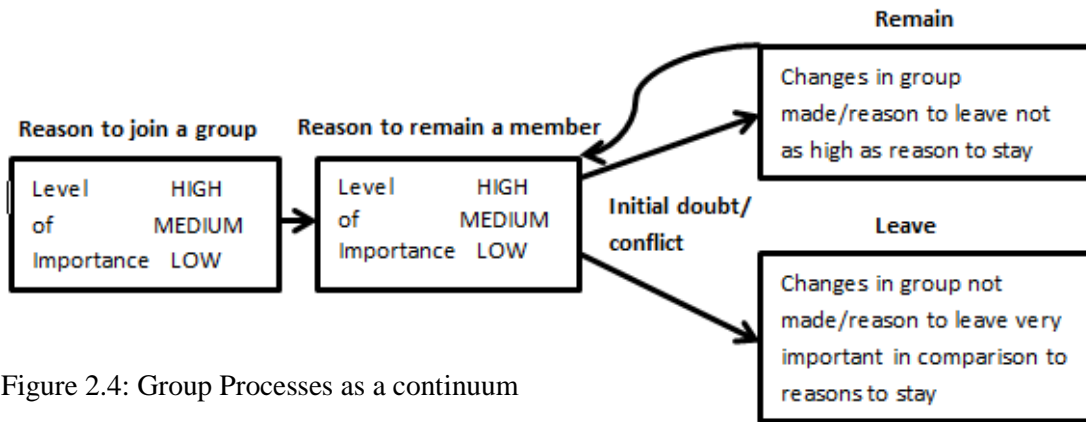


Figure 2.4: Group Processes as a continuum

The following section will consider how specific group processes may influence individuals and how individuals' perceptions of group processes can relate to their decisions of whether to join, remain in, or leave a group, as suggested in Figure 2.4. The presented group processes are not mutually exclusive and so a number are likely to emit influence on group members at the same time and in different stages. Further, this section does not provide an exhaustive range of group processes; rather, the most commonly cited group processes in group research are evaluated.

### 2.4.1 Group cohesion

Group cohesion is one of the most frequently discussed topics concerning groups (Forsyth, 2010). Hogg and Hardie (1992) suggest that a distinction needs to be made between interpersonal and social attraction. Whilst both are seen as important, it is social attraction that results in higher identification with a group and higher levels of



group cohesion. This feeds into social identity theory where individuals see fellow members with regards to how well they fit within the group's norms, values, beliefs or behaviours (Hogg, 2008). The multidimensional view of cohesion states that trust in groups can be visible vertically (to those higher in group hierarchy) and horizontally (to fellow members) (Cota, Evans, Dion, Kilik & Longman, 1995; Dion, 2000). Overall, cohesive groups have been found to work in a more effective and productive way, and demonstrate higher levels of loyalty, commitment, trust, drive, and sacrifice (Evans & Dion, 1991). Cohesive groups provide members with higher levels of self-esteem and even produce collective self-esteem (Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine & Broadnax, 1994). Such groups report good psychological well-being and overall life satisfaction (Long, Spears & Manstead, 1994). However, the topic of cohesiveness itself lacks cohesion (Casey-Campbell & Martens, 2008) due to its many underlying characteristics. Its lack of clarity appears to be due to differing definitions and measurements. For example, it is said to bind people together, make them interconnected and interdependent (Hogg & Vaughan, 2005), it refers to attraction to the group (Nixon, 1979), belonging (Bollen & Hoyle, 1990), sticking together (Chan, To & Chan, 1950), trust, morale and teamwork (Siebold, 2007). Lott and Lott (1965) suggested a number of factors responsible for increasing group cohesion: proximity, frequency or contact and interaction, similarity, complementarity, reciprocity and rewarding exchanges.

### **Group cohesion – continuum**

It has been suggested that when a group is cohesive, such cohesion is visible to other individuals (Forsyth, 2010). Research has shown that people join groups to achieve certain goals or to get other rewards (task oriented or psychological; e.g.

basking in reflected glory, Cialdini, Borden, Thorne, Walker, Freeman & Sloan, 1976); (Hogg, 1992; Kelley and Thibaut, 1959) and so people might prefer to join groups which they perceive as cohesive. Research also shows that during times of fear or stress, group cohesion increases and therefore the member's need to remain a member increases (Hogg, 1992; Lott & Lott, 1965). Working toward a common goal increases cohesion in groups (Hogg, 1992) which can be a strong pull for individuals to maintain membership – due to task cohesion (Carron, 1982) or emotional cohesion (Spoor & Kelly, 2004). Further, cohesive groups give rise to the notion of deindividuation – loss of individuality, which can make remaining in a group attractive (Darley & Latane, 1968; Zimbardo, 1969).

On the other side, Forsyth (2010) suggested that groups are bound to disintegrate when low levels of cohesion are present. Groups with high levels of cohesion also exhibit higher levels of member conformity, which individuals may not always appreciate (Schachter, 1951). Groups that are highly cohesive might become too demanding on an emotional level (Forsyth & Elliott, 1999). On the other hand, high levels of conflict and membership turnover also lead to lower cohesion and cause an unattractive environment (Darley, Gross & Martin, 1951). Deindividuation can also become overwhelming, as individuals still want to feel unique (Optimal Distinctiveness Theory; Brewer, 1991; Brewer & Gardner, 1996).

Whilst cohesion is an important group process relating to groups, it is not clear which are the specific processes that cause the group to develop into a more/less cohesive one. Group cohesion is directly linked to other group processes and it is likely that that cohesion is a product of these, rather than a discrete group process.

### **2.4.2 Social identity, biases and attribution errors**

One of the most frequently discussed subjects within social psychology is undoubtedly the concept of Social Identity. Originally introduced by Tajfel and Turner (1979) and aiming to explain intergroup conflicts, it has been adapted to a variety of areas within group process research (e.g. Viki & Abrams, 2012). The basic premise is that our self-image and self-esteem depend on the specific characteristics of groups one identifies with (Sherman, Hamilton & Lewis, 1999). Groups can help individuals understand who they are, understand their ‘self’. However, even artificially created groups show a preference for their own members and so it is not necessary for them to develop a social identity linked to their group (Kenworthy et al., 2008; Noel, Wann & Branscombe, 1995; Van Vugt & Hart, 2004). Social identity relies on two important processes – categorisation and identification (Abrams et al. 2005). Self-categorisation (Hogg, Turner & Davidson, 1990) holds that categories (or groups) need to be salient for members to develop a sense of social identity, giving rise to the development of prototypes and stereotypes (Abrams et al., 2005; Hogg, 2008; Reicher, Haslam & Hopkins, 2005). As Hogg (2008) notes, it is natural for people to belong to a variety of categories, many of which can be salient, but an individual also needs to self-identify – feel like they truly belong (Wright, Aron & Tropp, 2002). Gaining a social identity causes the shift from ‘I’ to ‘we’ (McGuire & McGuire, 1988). This occurrence is even stronger when members of an out-group are present (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). All of this gives rise to a multitude of biases (e.g. ingroup/outgroup biases).

### **Social identity, biases and attribution errors -continuum**

It has been shown that people tend to join groups that are viewed in a positive light (Long & Spears, 1997; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and where they can gain what they perceive to be a positive self-perception (Brown, 2000; Tajfel, 1974). Hogg, Siegel and Hohman (2011) theorized that individuals (adolescents in this case) suffer from high self-uncertainty (e.g. unstable families, need for positive self-image among peers, unknown future directions) and actively seek to correct this by gaining, what is for them, positive social identity.

Once social identity is gained, individuals report feelings of satisfaction with self and group and want to protect this (Brown & Lohr, 1987). Adding to Hogg et al.'s (2011) uncertainty principle, in the state of uncertainty, individuals seek to reinforce their social identity (Sherman, Hogg & Maitner, 2009). Therefore, social identity is associated with a variety of biases (Hogg & Abrams, 1999), fuelling intergroup conflict and group maintenance. People's emotional responses change rapidly in light of who belongs to what group (Halperin, 2008; Sternerg, 2003). Ingroup favouritism can develop, enhancing a collective self-esteem by favouring the actions, beliefs or behaviours of one's own group over any other (Noel et al., 1995). Outgroup homogeneity causes the perception of other groups as homogenous and simplistic and largely different from own group (Boldry, Gaertner & Quinn, 2007; Campbell, 1956; Linville & Fischer, 1998; Miller, Brewer & Edwards, 1985). The ingroup-outgroup bias suggests that people prefer their own group over any other group (Hewstone, Rubin & Willis, 2002; Van Vugt & Hart, 2004), causing ethnocentric implicit assumptions (Summer, 1906; Fiske, 2004; Hewstone, Rubin & Willis, 2002). The group attribution error suggests that a few people's behaviour shadows the behaviour of the whole group

(Quattrone & Jones, 1980). The ultimate attribution error states that any inappropriate behaviour of outgroup members will be explained by their personality (Hewstone, 1990; Pettigrew, 1979) where negative behaviour by ingroup members is attributed to situational factors (Lalonde, 1992). Such biases can further fuel conflict with outgroups and fuel the perceived importance of having a social identity (Rothbart & Hallmark, 1988). Further, in line with Social Identity Maintenance (Turner, Pratkanis, Probasco & Leve, 1992) group members are more likely to come to an extreme decision when they feel their collective identity is under attack.

Social identity can also cause deindividuation. The Social Identity View of Deindividuation Effects (the SIDE model) argues that anonymity goes hand in hand with having a social identity, causing higher conformity (Postmes, Spears, Sakhel & de Groot, 2001; Reicher Spears & Postmes, 1995; Spears, Lea & Lee, 1990). Therefore, social identity causes people to conform to higher levels than they would normally (Schachter, 1951). People in groups can also feel anonymous, as it is hard to know exactly who is doing what (Le Bon, 2008). This can give rise to diffusion of responsibility (Darley & Latane, 1968) where no one group member feels responsible for the group's actions.

The social identity approach can explain why members would want to leave their groups. For example, the notion of interpersonal rejection (i.e. conflict, Figure 2.4) notes that wrongdoing of a person will cause rejection, as they can no longer be seen as a prototypical member (Leary & Downs, 1995). Similarly, the 'Black sheep' effect suggests that when an ingroup member does not conform to norms or deviates in any way, again causing conflict in a group, their actions are seen in a worse light than if an

outgroup member behaved in the same way (Abrams et al., 2005), causing bullying or ridicule and discomfort to be aimed at the individual. Also, individuals have limits in terms of how much they can conform to norms (Steele & Aronson, 1995), how much prejudice they can tolerate (Abrams & Hogg, 1988), or how long they are prepared to remain anonymous (deindividuation; Brewer, 1991; Brewer & Gardner, 1996).

Individuals might also perceive personal, rather than collective, failure, as too hurtful (Gaertner & Sedikides, 2005) or might feel too pressured, and seek a group with a less stressful environment (individual mobility, Ellemers, Spears & Doosje, 1997). Overall, when a member of a group no longer feels that the group can provide him/her with a positive social identity then they will choose to leave (Tajfel, 1974). Social identity therefore can be seen as important when joining a group, where individuals might see gaining a social identity as attractive. During membership, social identity exerts a very strong pull to remain a member but when changes in a group happen, can also prompt members to leave a group.

### **2.4.3 Social comparison and social influence**

Festinger (1954) suggested that people feel pressured or even have a desire to accurately self-evaluate, and evaluate their environment. This is easily achieved by seeking membership in groups which individuals perceive to provide a comparative environment (Suls, Martin & Wheeler, 2000; Suls & Wheeler, 2000). Schachter (1959), through his statement ‘Misery loves company’, suggested that people, especially throughout times of ambiguity, anxiety or stress, seek affiliation to relieve these experiences by affiliating with those who share similar views. This supports theories of similarity and proximity when joining groups – people seek those in their close

surrounding and those who are similar to them, possibly due to social learning (Bandura, 1977; Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1954; Tyler & Sears, 1977). Even individuals scoring low on social factors (like extraversion) who tend to keep to themselves (Lucas & Diener, 2001) usually reach a stage where need for information and social comparison becomes too important (Davison, Pennebaker & Dickerson, 2000).

There are biases associated with social comparison. When an individual feels low and their self-esteem is negatively affected, they tend to engage in Downward Social comparison – comparing self to those who are worse off or on a lower level (Wills, 1991), to boost their self-esteem. The opposite happens when an individual compares self to someone more successful. Basking in Reflected Glory can occur where one identifies self with an individual who is better off (Zuckerman & Jost, 2001); one might, however, also feel worthless or a failure (Wheeler & Miyake, 1992).

Social comparison theory also plays a role with regards to social influence. Festinger (1964) suggested that groups can influence the way individuals think. Disagreement with a group tends to be perceived as disloyal. Whilst consensus in a group is important, innovation through social influence is also crucial (Harton & Bullock, 2007; Latane, 1996; Vallacher & Nowak, 2007). There are several ways in which influence can be exerted. It might be that the argument itself is important (information influence; Gladwell, 2000), the norms of the group are preferred (normative influence; Milgram, 1992), or the general vision of the group can be important (interpersonal influence; Schachter, 1951).

### **Social comparison and social influence – continuum**

It has been suggested that individuals join groups because they perceive they can engage in an information exchange process where social comparison information is shared (Suls & Wheeler, 2000). The similarity principle further suggests that people seek others who they feel share similar characteristics (Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1954). Rosenbaum (1986) even suggested that people are repulsed by others who do not share similarities with them. Lazarsfeld and Merton (1954) and Newcomb (1961) termed this principle 'homophily'. It has been suggested that proximity increases interaction between people, which makes it easier to get to know people and recognize similarities between them (Bornstein, 1989; Festinger, Schachter & Back, 1950). Individuals might also be influenced to join a certain group by their peers using peer pressure (i.e. trying to persuade an individual that joining a certain group is what this individual requires; Connor, 1994).

Social comparison and social influence theories are successful in explaining why individuals choose to remain in a group. For example, members can value the exchange of social comparison information (Emerson, 1976). Similarly, information influence, for example, suggests that people use their fellow members and the information they present as reference points and so evaluate their beliefs, opinions, behaviours, and their own self through comparison with, or influence of, others (Gladwell, 2000). Further, people conform more when the need for information from our 'social reality' becomes stronger (Suls et al., 2000; Goethals & Zanna, 1979; Myers, 1978). Links have also been made with competition (Seta, 1982) or social status (Burleigh & Meegan, 2013). In addition, those who are similar to each other are more likely to share similar ideas, which would generally heighten subjective member satisfaction within groups



(Festinger et al., 1950; Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1954). As consensus is a preferred outcome of group membership, continuous influence can achieve this (Asch, 1956; Deutsch & Gerard, 1955; MacNeil & Sherif, 1976). The interplay between the minority and the majority further enables the group to innovate whilst keeping a general consensus and such a tactic should increase perceived member satisfaction within a group (Latane & Bourgeois, 2001; Vallacher & Nowak, 2007).

These theories can also cause member exit. When the comparisons/influence available no longer satisfy the member, or when the member realizes that the exchange in terms of social comparison or influence would benefit them better in another group, they will be likely to leave (Kelley & Thibaut, 1959; Ross & Ward, 1995). Furthermore, there are limits as to the level of influence one accepts (Schachter, 1951; Van Lange, De Cremer, Van Dijk & Van Vugt, 2007). Further, when people start realizing that they are becoming dissimilar from the rest of the group (due to maturation, for example), they might choose to leave (Bornstein, 1989; Erikson, 1959, Tyler & Sears, 1977). This might also manifest in terms of a minority feeling which is dissimilar from the majority, refusing to conform and choosing to leave a group (Deutsch & Gerard, 1995; Moscovici, 1985) or being made to leave by the majority (Latane & Wolf, 1981; Moscovici & Nemeth, 1974).

Whilst this is hardly an exhaustive list of reasons supporting the importance of social comparison and social influence theories about a group's life, they provide important insight, in line with Figure 2.4, into why people join groups, remain in them, and leave them.

#### **2.4.4 Social facilitation, group performance and group decision making**

Cottrell (1972) suggested that through social learning, we learn to evaluate ourselves against others and see interactions in terms of competition (Guerin, 1999; Harkins & Szymanski, 1987). Being in groups can increase one's performance (Hogg & Vaughan, 2005), though inhibition of performance has also been noted (Allport, 1924). Various theories have explored the process of social facilitation. The drive theory (Zajonc, 1965) suggests that people have an innate predisposition to have an elevated drive level (i.e. perform their best) when in the presence of others. Cottrell (1972) supported the view of social learning in that people learned the power of evaluation, which in turn, facilitates performance. Baron (1986) added that cognitive processes are in play, where attention is divided between the task of interest and the onlookers, though this only works with simple tasks. Bond (1982) in his self-presentation theory stated that people increase their performance to portray a positive image to others. However, performance choking can also occur when people think that the expectations of others are too high (Cheryan & Bodenhausen, 2000).

Further, groups have also been shown to provide better results than individuals (Hill, 1982, Laughlin, 1980). This is because individuals can share ideas and information, evaluate their ideas and those of others, and match their productivity to those of others (Brown & Paulus, 1996; Osborn, 1957; Wegge & Haslam, 2005). Kohler (1926, 1927, as cited in Baron & Kerr, 2003), suggested that people work better in groups because they want to prove their abilities to other members. However, working in a group can also end in motivational losses (like social loafing or free-riding),

especially if individuals feel unappreciated (Harkins & Petty, 1982; Stroebe, Diehle & Abakoumkin, 1992; Williams, Ware & Donald, 1981).

It has also been shown that groups make better decisions than individuals (Hastie and Kameda, 2005; Hinsz, Tindale & Wollrath, 1997; Larson & Christensen, 1993; Propp, 1999) and several models of group decision practices have been suggested (e.g. Miller, Galanter & Pribram, 1960). However, group decisions (alike group performance) have their pitfalls. Two of the most often cited examples are Groupthink (members agree to decisions they normally would not, due to strong ties and wanted uniformity; Janis, 1972, 1982) and Group polarization (group discussions intensifying opinions of a group, also referred to as the Risky shift phenomenon; Lamm & Myers, 1978; Pruitt, 1971). These effects usually occur due to social comparison as people use reference points to make decisions (Goethals & Zanna, 1979) and social identity as people seek a unanimous decision, or one reflective of the prototypes of a group (Haslam, 2004).

### **Social facilitation, group performance and group decision making – continuum**

Group facilitation, group performance and decision making have mostly been studied as quite static concepts. However, people might want to join a specific group because they want to feel the support or help of a group, with regards to their performance (Hill, 1982; Sanna; 1992). Through social learning (Bandura, 1977), people realize that groups offer such benefits with regards to, for example, problem solving (e.g. parents working on homework with a child; Stasser & Dietz-Uhler, 2001). People then remain in a group that can sustain their self-esteem and feelings of self-worth (Crocker et al., 1994). By performing well individually and as a member of a

group, or making good decisions, people will gain such desirable feelings. Further, people generally do not like making decisions and try to avoid doing so (Janis & Mann, 1979; Spitzberg & Cupach, 2002) and so group membership can be helpful in removing the dilemma of decision-making.

These group processes can also be seen as reasons for leaving a group. A group might put too much pressure on an individual to perform and so the individual can choose to join a new group that would not cause such stress (Cheryan & Bodenhausen, 2000). Further, members who engage in group motivational losses such as social loafing and free-riding, might be asked to leave (Guerin, 1999; Karau & Hart, 1998; Miles & Greenberg, 1993). On the other hand, members who need to work extra to balance such losses, might feel that the exchange in the group is not balanced and leave (Kelley & Thibaut, 1987). Group decision pitfalls (Janis, 1982; Pruitt, 1971) might also be seen as reasons behind members exiting groups, especially if extreme decisions that transgress one's personal threshold, are made. These processes are relevant to the study of groups, though, as not all groups work toward goals; it is possible they are more relevant to some groups than others.

#### **2.4.5 Power: Roles, Status, Leadership, Territoriality and Social Dominance**

It has been suggested that humans are socially motivated to seek power. Belonging to a group may provide individuals with an opportunity to gain power over others (McAdams, 1982; Winter, 1973). Schutz (1958, 1992) considers the need for power to be one of the basic needs that individuals seek in a group. Along with the need for affiliation and intimacy, power is also said to be a dominant part of any group (FIRO model; McAdams, Healy & Krause, 1984; Schutz, 1992). There are different kinds of

power which can be achieved (based on rewards, coercion, legitimacy, expertise, information or personal character; French & Raven, 1959), using different tactics (Rational and Non-rational, Soft and Hard and Unilateral and Bilateral; Yukl & Micel, 2006).

The need for power is further supported by Social Dominance Theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) which suggests that it is a natural tendency for groups (and subgroups) to develop within societies, creating a hierarchical structure where gaining control, having power and dominating others, in regard to scarce resources, land or people, are directly relevant for group functioning (Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998). Social dominance orientation, then, is an associated individual trait, which determines the degree to which people agree and endorse that society is hierarchically organised (Cozzolino & Snyder, 2008; Duckitt, 2006; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Roles go hand in hand with power. Depending on the power associated with a role, individuals acquire certain status. Roles are based on certain expectations of the group regarding its members (Johnson & Johnson, 1987). Roles can be formal (e.g., class president) or informal (e.g., class clown) and not all groups have defined roles (Forsyth, 2010). Roles should fit a person's characteristics and abilities (Hare, 2003; Moxnes, 1999). Further, members might take on more roles than just one (Turner & Colomy, 1988). Different roles and status can give rise to leadership within groups. However, one group can have a few leaders or none at all (Forsyth, 2010; Klein & Maxson, 2006; Vroom & Mann 1960). Leadership creates a reciprocal process between a leader (leaders) and followers (Hollander, 2006). Leaders might employ different styles, which can vary from soft to hard tactics (Forsyth, 2010).

Another power tool often seen in groups is territoriality. Territories are specific areas that a group is attached to and claim to be its own and therefore defends against others (Altman, 1975; Hernandez, Carmen Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace, Hess, 2007). Territories give groups a sense of power over a certain space which needs to be protected and is often marked (e.g. by using graffiti; Clack, Dixon & Tredoux, 2005; Ley & Cybriwsky, 1974).

**Power: Roles, Status, Leadership, Territoriality and Social dominance – continuum**

Winter (1973) and Schutz (1992) suggested that those who have a high need for power are more likely to become members of groups. This is especially true for men (McAdams et al., 1984). Similarly, those with a high social dominance orientation are said to be more likely to join groups, and individuals can perceive that these groups strive to gain high status (Fischer, Hanke & Sibley, 2012). Some individuals might want to join groups and adopt roles attractive to them, with the vision of acquiring associated status/power which they perceive can be provided to them (Hare, 2003). There have been suggestions that people join groups who have charismatic leaders (Goethals, 2005; Moxnes, 1999). Research has also suggested that some people join groups specifically because of their territorial orientation (Maxson & Klein, 1995).

These power processes exert a strong pull to remain a member of a group. Those who have high social dominance orientation are more likely to stay in a group, perhaps not to lose their already acquired dominance or due to the dominance of the group over outgroups (Duckitt, 2006). It has been shown that with power comes increased self-evaluation (Fodor & Riordan, 1995). Due to having power, individuals can get more

resources than the rest of the group (Savitsky, 2007) and dominance over other groups brings advantages to the group as a whole (Kelley & Thibaut, 1987). People will be inclined to stay in a group where they are satisfied with the role, status and power the group provides (Milgram, 1974; Moxnes, 1999). Effective leaders will have the power to influence group members that it is beneficial for them to stay (Burns, 1978; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995; Parks, 2005; Yammarino & Dansereau, 2008). Territoriality can boost intergroup conflict, which can be seen as a reason for group members to maintain their membership as conflict with outgroups can strengthen intragroup ties (Sack, 1986).

Power can be seen as crucial when leaving a group. Teppner (2006) suggested that members of a group might become increasingly dissatisfied if inappropriate power tactics are used by individuals or the whole group, in the group, or toward outsiders (especially if low in social dominance; Fischer et al., 2012). Individuals can be dissatisfied if those in power are perceived as unfair (Keltner, Gruenfeld & Anderson, 2003), for example, by taking more resources, regardless of effort made (Savitsky, 2007). Moreover, those with a high social dominance orientation might want to join a different group that can provide them with more dominance and power (Fischer et al., 2012; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Role conflict (too much to do), intra-role conflict (conflict within one role) or role ambiguity (unsure what to do) can occur, causing one to leave (Brief, Schuler & Van Sell, 1981; Milgram, 1974). In addition, leadership styles employed by leaders can become unbearable, or unsatisfactory, for group members (Avolio & Bass, 1998; Lord, Foti & De Vader, 1984), especially if leaders deviate from the group's prototype (Hogg, 2008). Intergroup conflict with regards to territoriality might also become too intense, inclining members to leave the group (Sack, 1986). It

has been shown that power processes are the cornerstone of group membership and at different stages – however, how applicable they are to different types of groups is not clear.

#### **2.4.6 Social exchange and Reciprocity**

Social exchange theory suggests that people join groups that can provide them with the best benefits, whilst factoring in the costs and that people can only acquire certain rewards as part of a group – like approval, identity or social comparison (Emerson, 1976; Kelley & Thibaut, 1959; Kelley & Thibaut, 1987). Individuals calculate profit during their membership – they might do something that they do not enjoy, but the benefits make it worthwhile. Exchange can take two forms. One where an individual tries to maximize their own profits (Ratner & Miller, 2001) and one where individuals care about the profits of the whole group (Clark, Oulette, Powell & Milberg, 1987). There are different types of reciprocity present in groups – based on one's input, equal across all group members, or those in power gaining more to reciprocate. Reciprocity also has implications for intergroup relations. For example, if a group feels threatened by another, they will reciprocate (Reicher, 2001), leading to conflict (Youngs, 1986), though a positive reciprocal relationship can also occur between groups.

#### **Social exchange and Reciprocity – Continuum**

Research has suggested that individuals join groups after calculating the costs and benefits of their membership (Stafford, 2008) and so the way they perceive social exchange and reciprocity in their prospective group can help when making the decision of whether to join a specific group. Once in a group, individuals, having accepted a



social contract, then follow and expect certain social exchange relations (Kelley & Thibaut, 1959). If anything unpleasant happens from an outgroup, the subjective feeling of belonging to the ingroup could cause an individual to maintain membership (Reicher, 2001). Perceived injustice is a common contributing factor in group hostility (Smith & Kim, 2007), even engaging in selective group perception (Hastorf & Cantril, 1954), inclining one to choose to remain in their group. It might be that a group feels that they are more disadvantaged than another one and attribute this to illegal practices of other groups (Runciman, 1966; Vanneman & Pettigrew, 1972). Further, such incidents boost the ingroup-outgroup bias (Van Vugt & Hart, 2004).

Individuals constantly evaluate the costs and benefits within a group due to the Comparison Level of Alternatives, which suggests that every individual has a certain lowest level of outcomes before considering alternatives (Kelley & Thibaut, 1959). For example, individuals might start preferring different social exchange/reciprocal relationships. When such imbalance occurs, conflict can occur causing member exit (Triandis, 1995). Similarly, on an intergroup level, when actions of one group become too strong, individuals might not feel comfortable reciprocating any longer (Carson, 1969). The principles of exchange and reciprocity are therefore a crucial part of a group's existence at all stages of membership.

#### **2.4.7 Norms, Goals and Interdependence**

By engaging with a certain group, members tend to (informally or formally) accept certain group norms (Triandis, 1995). These norms affect the way individuals perceive their environment and how they behave, even affecting one's visual and auditory perception (Sheriff, 1936). Norms exist within groups in order to guarantee

groups with survival or success and to provide members with certain codes applicable to their social environment (Feldman, 1984; Whyte, 1955). Norms not only govern behaviours within the ingroup, but also toward outgroups (Baron & Kerr, 2003). Norms differ from group to group and are socially constructed (Berkos, Allen, Kearney & Plax, 2001).

Norms are often in place to reach certain goals, be it psychological rewards or specific tasks. Hogg (1992) suggested that norms, goals and interdependence guarantee one a reward and make the group highly cohesive as they are highly intertwined together. Whilst a group cannot exist without goals (Benson, 2001), they can be described as ideals (Johnson & Johnson, 1987), and so are not always task related. Following norms and sharing common goals requires and fuels interdependency as actions of every member matters (Barron & Kerr, 2003). As Sheriff (1966) suggested, people become interdependent to get things done. Interdependence means that individuals all depend on each other (Johnson & Johnson, 1987).

### **Norms, Goals and Interdependence – continuum**

People are said to join groups with norms that are beneficial for them and help them to reach certain goals (Markus, Kitayama & Heiman, 1996; Triandis, 1995; Zander, 1985). The interplay between feeling interdependent once in a group, the perception of shared norms and goals, is a strong pull to remain in a group. For example, the scapegoat theory suggests that groups sometimes behave aggressively towards other groups even when the source of their anger is not clear (Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer & Sears, 1939). Here, the norm would allow members to displace their aggression and a goal of working together would make retaliation successful.

As Brown and Dutton (1995) suggest, it is natural that there must be a winner and a loser in a conflict (Deutsch, 1949). Members of a losing group might retaliate and maintain the group, but they can also feel high levels of embarrassment or humiliation and decide to leave the group. Further, when norms are not adhered to, or when a person no longer perceived the norms in a group as beneficial, they might choose to leave or might be asked to leave (Leung, 1997). Similarly, if a member no longer feels that a group's goal concerns them, they will leave or be asked to leave (Benson, 2001). Members of certain groups will only remain members as long as they need others to achieve a certain goal (Sheriff, 1966). Further, those who are allocentric (see group's goals as their own and as important as their own) are more likely to stay in a group than those who are idiocentric (put their own goals ahead of the group's; Triandis, 1995; Markus et al. 1996). Personal antipathies might also emerge where members would be less likely to cooperate and would not follow a group's norms (Alicke et al., 1992). These processes are present in all groups, are easily connected to the life cycle of any group, and can change in importance based on stage of group membership.

#### **2.4.8 Need to belong and social support**

It has been suggested that people have an innate need to belong, to be accepted and included (Leary, 1995; Peplau & Perlman, 1982). Such belonging provides members with feelings of self-worth and self-esteem (Cobb, 1976; Leary, Tambor, Terdal & Downs, 1995). It has been shown that exclusion, even in the slightest form, can have disastrous effects on one's wellbeing (Leary, 1990). Belonging also provides people with a sense of intimacy – a basic human need (McAdams, 1982). In times of stress and fear, social support is especially sought after (Cohen & Syme, 1985; Janis,

1963). Terror management theory (Greenberg, Solomon & Pyszczynski, 1997) explains group belonging in terms of a fundamental human fear: the fear of death, explaining that belonging reduces stress and anxiety over such fears. Social support can take different dimensions: attachment, guidance, tangible assistance, embeddedness, nurturance or simple reassurance of worth (Weiss, 1974). Social support and belonging, overall, are said to give group members control and self-esteem (Cauce, Felner & Primavera et al., 1982; Cutrona & Troutman, 1986), and a chance for self-disclosure (Janis, 1963; Pennebaker, 1997). Cohen, Doyle, Turner, Alper and Skoner (2003) even found that people with low levels of social support are more likely to catch a common cold.

#### **Need to belong and social support – continuum**

It has been suggested that those who have a high need for intimacy (McAdams, 1995) and belonging (Leary, 1995) are more likely to join groups, and so perceiving a prospective group to provide such feelings can be a motivating factor for joining. Similarly, when people find themselves in high stress situations, they feel threatened or scared; they will be more likely to seek group membership (Baumeister & Leary 1995; Cohen et al., 2003), for the purpose of ensuring personal safety (Rivlin, 1982). Ostracism can also play a role (Williams, Shore & Grahe, 1998) as those ostracised can seek a group which can provide a perceived positive feeling of belonging and support (Leary, 1990; Leary, Twenge & Quinlivan, 2006; Williams et al., 1998).

Individuals tend to maintain membership of groups that give them desirable outcomes. However, if a group starts ostracising its own members, they will either attempt to correct their mistakes (Taylor et al., 2000), decide to leave the group and/or be banished from the group (Leary, 1990). Further, people also need their privacy

(Altman, 1975). Therefore, if a group becomes too intimate, members might start feeling uncomfortable (Hansen & Altman, 1976). Individuals might also feel that they are not getting enough support (Simons & Peterson, 2000). Whilst social support tends to be perceived as positive (Cobb, 1976; Weiss, 1974), people do not always see what the other person needs accurately (Melamed & Brenner, 1990; Rook, 1998; Vinkour & Van Ryn, 1993). An individual would then seek a different group. What is more, some groups simply never deliver what they promised in terms of social support (Newson, Mahan, Rook & Kruse, 2008). Belonging and social support are among basic human needs and so group membership and its cycle is highly dependent on such group processes.

## **2.6 Discussion and Conclusion**

This chapter aimed to highlight why the study of groups from a social psychology perspective is key when trying to understand why individuals join a group, remain in a group, and why they might leave it. It therefore underlined the importance of appreciating group processes as a continuum and not viewing them as static concepts. Individuals can perceive different aspects of these group processes as important during different stages of a group's existence, in line with Uggens and Piliavin's (1998) asymmetrical causation hypothesis. Further, individuals in different types of groups will value different group processes to a different extent. For example, it has been found that deindividuation is one of the most crucial processes within a successful football team (Moran, 2004). Further, individuals do not always simply leave; a group or the individual might make adjustments and stay in the group (e.g. Role Exit Hypothesis, Ebaugh, 1988) and one can choose to leave soon after joining (Moreland & Levine,

1982). Also, it is important to note that an interplay of group processes can be perceived as important at different stages of group membership. For example, as was shown here, goals, norms, and interdependency are all strongly linked.

Understanding that individuals perceive some group processes as more important than others in specific groups, and at different stages of membership, is crucial for further theoretical understanding of groups and informing intervention strategies. For over five decades, scholars have been wondering about what differentiates delinquent and non-delinquent youth, including gang youth (Klein & Masxon, 2006). The following chapter will discuss how the area of group processes, and how gang members perceive them, interacts with our knowledge on gang membership. This will result in the development of research questions which will guide the empirical studies of this thesis.

### **Chapter 3 - Gang membership and group processes**

Gangs are a widely studied phenomenon, dating back to traditional works of Thrasher (Chicago, 1927), or Asbury (New York, 1928 and Chicago, 1940). These descriptive publications provided needed background. Since then, due to the violent nature and high levels of offending by gangs, the study of gangs has enjoyed ever increasing attention. The UK, whilst deemed immune to the problem of gangs for a long time, can no longer deny their presence (Klein, Kerner, Maxson & Weitenkamp, 2001; Klein & Maxson, 2006; Wood & Alleyne, 2010; Alleyne & Wood, 2010).

Despite gang literature being vast, even fundamentals as what actually constitutes a gang or the nature of gangs as groups, are still not fully understood (Klein & Maxson, 2006). Considering the number of agencies concerned with controlling and preventing gang membership, a better understanding of gangs is crucial. This chapter will highlight why a social psychological understanding of gangs is needed. Previous research, theories and models will be summarised. A major gap in research - the perspective of social psychology and group processes - will be introduced with focus on the links between group processes and gang literature, and how these can shape gang members' perceptions. Suggested goals of further research in this area will be underlined last, concluding this chapter.

#### **3.1 What is a gang? – The Eurogang Initiative**

A brief outline of definitional issues was highlighted in Chapter 1. Perhaps due to the inconsistencies, the public receive a variety of misleading definitions. David Cameron, the former Prime Minister of the UK, stated that gangs are: “territorial, hierarchical and incredibly violent, they are mostly composed of young boys, mainly

*from dysfunctional homes*” (Newburn, Taylor & Ferguson, 2011, para. 4). A message of gangs being evil and needing to be tackled is often portrayed by officials and in the media, neglecting that they are still groups and their criminal/violent nature might not define all individuals in the group.

Europe long ignored the existence of gangs and this started the Eurogang network (Klein et al., 2001). This international network works toward enriching our understanding of gangs (Esbensen & Maxson, 2012) by allowing for comparative, multi-method, cross-national research to take place, and inform intervention strategies. In order to do so, a unified definition was needed (see Klein, 2011, for more). Klein et al. (2006) appreciated that gangs are in fact groups and therefore need to be clearly distinguished from other criminal and non-criminal groups. Discussion around the word ‘gang’ was held, as it was hard to translate to other languages (Esbensen & Weerman, 2005). For example, Slovak people understand the word gang as a slang synonym for a group. Further, the use of the word could stir negative stereotypes (Esbensen & Weerman, 2005). So, the word ‘gang’ was replaced by the phrase ‘troublesome youth group’. Based on previous literature, two sets of elements were put together: gang definers are those needed to label a group a gang; gang descriptor can provide useful descriptions but are not essential for a gang to be considered as such (see Eurogang manual for in-depth information).

### **3.1.1 Gang Definition/ Gang Definers**

The Eurogang network proposed the following definition of a gang:



"a street gang (or troublesome youth group corresponding to a street gang elsewhere) is any durable, street-oriented youth group whose involvement in illegal activity is part of its group identity" (Esbensen & Weerman, 2005, p. 8)

This thesis will follow this definition to allow for consistency with other gang research (Esbensen et al., 2001). Whilst different bodies apply different definitions, the current definition by the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice uses all of the main definers of the Eurogang definition. Therefore, the findings of this thesis will also be useful for practical purposes in the UK. Further, the Eurogang definition is compatible with that of a group generally, as discussed in Chapter 2, and so allows for perceiving gangs as groups.

Durability is one of the five necessary criteria, suggesting a three-month minimum. This eliminates groups coming together for one occasion or a short time to fulfil a certain task (contradicting Thrasher's (1927) early definition of gangs forming spontaneously).

Street orientation is another necessary gang definer. Seemingly restrictive, it refers to public places more generally, including parks, school yards or cars. This is because gangs are a public concern (Weerman et al., 2009).

The third definer is concerned with youthfulness of members. Whilst deviations can occur, members should be between 12 and 25 years of age which is a noted trend (Alleyne & Wood, 2010; Esbensen & Winfree, 1998; Weerman et al., 2009).

Directly contrasting with Short's (1996) definition, the network agreed that illegal activity is a crucial gang definer and should include acts more serious than simply bothersome behaviour. This definer is continuously supported in literature (e.g. Bullok

& Tilley, 2002; Fagan, 1989; Hales, Lewis & Silverstone, 2006; Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte & Chard – Wierschem, 1993).

Likely the most basic definer is group identity which highlights that gangs are in fact groups. The network agreed on a gang containing at least three members (Weerman et al., 2009). This supports theorists who believe that dyads should not be considered as groups (Moreland, 2010, see Chapter 2).

Whilst the network appreciates that their definition is not yet final and in order to comprise a unified definition, sacrifices had to be made, critique surrounds all parts of the definition. Aldridge, Medina-Ariz and Ralphs (2012) claim that the way in which the network explains street orientation is too strict – gang members might pull away from such street orientation due to social media/online age, police pressure or simply the unpleasant British weather. Further, restricting the minimum age to 12 might cause researchers to wrongly capture the joining stage of gang members. Also, illegal activity which is ‘more than troublesome behaviour’ is very ambiguous (Aldridge et al., 2012). The Eurogang definition has not yet reached its final form and it is unclear whether official bodies or others will adapt it.

### **3.1.2 Gang and gang member typology**

The aim of this thesis is not to study the typology of gangs; however, it is important to appreciate that not all gangs are the same and not all gang members are equally committed to their gang. The Eurogang network adapted Maxson and Klein’s (1995) typology of gangs which Klein & Maxson (2006) state is also applicable to European gangs. Gangs were differentiated based on a number of descriptive characteristics, such as ethnic composition, age range or activities.

Whilst a unified definition of a gang leads the way to a unified definition of who a gang member is, it should not be assumed that all gang members are the same (Curry, Decker & Egley, 2002). Klein and Maxson (1989) suggested one of the most basic typologies, differentiating between core (high commitment to the gang) and peripheral members (low commitment to the gang). Curry et al. (2002) call these gang members and gang associates; James (2015) refers to them as core and fringe gang members. Research consistently shows that different types of gang members exist. Alleyne and Wood (2010) found age and criminal activity differences between core and peripheral gang members. Esbensen et al. (2001) found differences in terms of attitudes and behaviours. Gatti et al.'s (2005) research showed that one's gang status can be predicted by the level of delinquency prior to joining a gang. James (2015) also found important differences between core and fringe gang members, such as differing ties with friends, school attainment or family background. As Hagedorn (1998, p. 90, cited in Curry et al., 2002, p. 279) said, "... *'wannabe' this week may be in the 'main group' next week*". Further, whilst self-identification has been shown to be a very subjective tool for distinguishing between gang members and non-gang group members (Thornberry, et al., 2003), perhaps when used in conjunction with a definition (such as the Eurogang definition), those individuals who self-identify might be the most prone to group influences (e.g. due to social identity processes; Abrams, et al., 2005). Therefore, it is likely that group processes will impact an individual to different degrees, based on their level of involvement.

## **3.2 Study of gangs**

The study of gangs is vast and so this section only provides a brief overview (see James, 2015 and Wood & Alleyne, 2010 for a thorough summary). Its purpose is to highlight gaps in research.

### **3.2.1 Traditional (Criminological) Theories**

A vast amount of literature on the topic of gangs lies in sociological and criminological theories, predominantly from the USA, and provides a sound basis for examining gangs. Sociological theories paved the way we understood delinquency and were applied to gangs. Durkheim (1983)'s theory of anomie (state of normlessness) formed the basis of Merton's (1938) Strain Theory which suggests that the goals and aspirations that society requires individuals to achieve are not achievable by all. Those unable to reach these goals (youth in this case) then feel strain, and as one of a variety of adaptations to such strain, can decide to group together and form a delinquent subculture. Cohen (1955) supported the notion and explained that when institutions (e.g. school) do not provide adequate resources to youth, they will lose faith in the system (or misunderstand it) and seek out an alternative one. However, Cohen adds it is not only illegitimate means gang members adopt, they also accept goals different from those of society. This theory has been supported since, for example, by observing gang members citing common goals behind membership (Sullivan, 1989; Venkatsh, 1997; Webster, MacDonald & Simpson, 2006).

Along these lines, the theory of Differential Opportunities proposed by Cloward and Ohlin (1960) explains there are differences in opportunities for people in different social classes. Rather than like previous theories, they suggest criminality is not only

about access to legitimate opportunities, but that illegitimate opportunities are also important. Agnew (1992) later questioned how important social class actually is as anyone can feel strain. People respond to strain with anger which, in turn, can manifest in criminal behaviour. Whilst not enough work has tested this theory (Tsunokai & Kposowa, 2009) there is research supporting strain theories more generally (e.g. failure in school; Esbensen, Huzinga & Weiner, 1993; Klein & Maxson, 2006; Klemp – North, 2007; Hill et al., 1999; Sharp et al., 2006).

Thrasher (1927) was among the first to consider theories directly based on researching gangs - his period of study became known as the Chicago School. His argument stemmed from economic conditions at the time, causing breakdown of social norms. Failure of social institutions and breakdown of communities were seen as responsible for youth engaging in conflict with others or with the legal social order. This notion has since been supported by empirical findings (Esbensen, & Weerman, 2005; Sampson, Raudenbush & Earls, 1997; Shaw & McKay, 1942). However, the level of disorganization necessary for gangs to emerge (Katz & Schnebly, 2011) and the applicability of typically homogeneous Chicago gangs to other countries (UK gangs show varied racial composition; Mares, 2001; Wood, Alleyne, Mozova & James, 2014) have been questioned. Shaw and McKay (1942) argued that criminal traditions can be culturally transmitted in disorganized neighbourhoods – just like any other cultural convention. The fact that most gang members tend to come from families with criminal backgrounds or gang affiliation (Bullock & Tilley, 2002; Sirpal, 2002; Spergel, 1995) supports this notion. Sutherland's (1937) theory of Differential Association adds by considering how people come to hold certain attitudes and beliefs through association

with others, an idea that has enjoyed much support (Bullock & Tilley, 2002; Esbensen & Weerman, 2005; Hill, Howell, Hawkins & Battin-Pearson, 1999; Sharp et al., 2006). Sutherland's (1937) theory also considers it is not only socially disorganised areas where gang members can come from, though environment and exposure to it are still of high importance (Sutherland, 1937; Brownfield, 2003).

So far, theorists have focused their attention on trying to understand why people choose to offend. Control Theory is concerned with the opposite, why do people not offend? Hirschi (1969) built on the theory of strain suggesting that if neighbourhoods are falling apart, a rise in delinquent behaviour will occur. However, as Gottfredson and Hirshi (1990) explain, people are naturally inclined towards offending. As one grows up, certain social bonds develop. If these break during childhood, youth are likely to act on their initial inclination towards crime. The idea of punishment plays a large role as both formal and informal social controls will prevent offending. Social control and self-control are of importance. This theory has a lot of support, coming from research with regards to educational systems (Hill, et al., 1999) or parental supervision (Klemp-North, 2007). However, the type of control used with a child is important, as it cannot be too lenient, strict, or overwhelming (Wells & Rankin, 1988). Support for Control Theory stems from findings showing how gangs attempt to bring organisation back to communities, by protecting them or acting as a kind of law enforcement (Patillo, 1998; Venkatesh, 1997). However, the picture that Control Theory provides is absolute and it fails to account for the fact that people leave criminal lifestyles.

In summary, each of the above theories added something new to our understanding of gangs. A common critique of these theories is the focus on deprived,

socially disorganized areas, even though gang members come from any area and two children from the same house often take different paths in life (Spergel, 1995). Strain theories are still unable to explain why almost a third of youth from a deprived background do not offend (Webster et al., 2006) or why gang members envision their future life very positively – e.g. living a law abiding life (Hughes & Short, 2005; Sikes, 1997). Relative deprivation, or an individual's own perception of how deprived one is, might explain such findings (Park & Mason, 1986; Klein, 1995) and so the importance of psychology manifests here. Further, the theories do not take into account the much supported Age-Crime Curve (McVie, 2004; Shulman, Steinberg & Piquero, 2013). A large-scale study by Short and Strodtbeck (1965) found mixed results with regards to the assumptions of these theories, and the authors highlighted the importance of individuals and, importantly, group processes.

### **3.2.2 Place for psychology**

Glimpses of psychology can be traced through these theories although psychological input is limited to date. The Interactional Theory proposed by Thornberry et al. (1993) suggests that there is a relationship between youth, their peers, social structures and bonds, and environment (all aspects described by traditional theories). This interaction then creates different ways for youth to become a gang member – gangs might select an individual already involved in offending, facilitate offending of a non-delinquent individuals or enhance one's offending whilst in a gang. In support, it has been found that different gang members join a gang for different reasons (Gatti, Tremblay, Vitaro & McDuff, 2005). This theory highlighted the need to appreciate individual differences.

In recent years, psychological research into gang membership has advanced. Esbensen and Weerman (2005) found that youth involved in gangs are more likely to succumb to peer pressure and conform to delinquent group norms; Valdez, Kaplan and Codina (2000) found that hyperactivity and other psychopathic traits are good predictors of gang membership; Dukes, Martinez and Stein (1997) and Yablonsky (1962) suggested that sociopathic traits (including low self-esteem or being socially inept) are also good predictors. Alleyne and Wood (2010) found that gang members tend to display higher anti-authority attitudes and show higher value for social status, hyper-masculine ideas and pro-aggression attitudes. Other researchers have found similar results (Flexon, Lurigio & Greenleaf, 2009; Khoo & Oakes, 2000; Ralphs, Medina & Aldridge, 2009). It has also been suggested that gang members view themselves and their environment differently – their social cognitive traits might be different (e.g. moral disengagement; Alleyne & Wood, 2010; Alleyne, Fernandez & Pritchard, 2014; Esbensen & Weerman, 2005). Esbensen and Weerman (2005) further found that gang members, compared to non-gang members, tend to have higher impulsivity and need for risk seeking, low school commitment, and lower attachment to parents. Haddock (2011) also observed ‘machismo’ attitudes in gang members.

These findings cannot provide causal explanations of whether attitudes predict gang membership or gang membership facilitates attitudes. Simply having certain attitudes does not automatically mean that one will join a gang. For example, individuals with sociopathic traits often reach highly paid and respected positions (Pech & Slade, 2007). Therefore, an interaction between traditional and psychological



theories is necessary. Such interaction can be seen in the study of Social Psychology (see Chapter 2).

### **3.2.3 Models of gang membership and the Unified Model of Gang**

#### **Membership**

The overwhelming amount of research on gangs has contributed to several models so far. For example, The Path Model of the Origins of Gang membership developed by Thornberry, Lizotte, Krohn, Smith and Porter (2003) assumes an interactional standpoint where neighbourhood and family variables can fuel an individual's attenuation of pro-social bonds which, in turn, makes individuals more prone to antisocial influences, their internalisation and further gang membership. Whilst it speaks of social bonds, it is not specific to how these manifest.

To make it more applicable to youth gang membership, Howell and Eagley (2005) elaborated on it in their Developmental Model of Gang Involvement which considers the route to gang membership through five developmental stages: preschool, school entry, later childhood, early adolescence, and mid-adolescence where youth may become involved in gangs. It must be said that this model focuses solely on joining a gang (i.e. does not consider gang formation, functioning or desistance). Each of these developmental stages is characterised by the interplay of external and internal risk factors which can interdependently predict gang membership. Whilst this model proposes solid, empirically based information about researched gang predictors, it does not provide enough on an individual's psychology or an individual's perception of the benefits of joining a gang. Further, despite risk factors being able to predict gang membership, not all individuals actually join a gang.

Models have, separately, also looked into gang desistance. Decker and Lauristen (2002) found that two main pathways are usually taken by gang members in terms of desistance – abrupt and gradual. A third path is also possible where ex-members may keep ties with their former gang or drift in and out of it (Pyrooz, Decker & Webb, 2014). This model ties in with previous research. For example, as Shover (1985) showed, offenders in their 20's start to gain a deeper understanding of the true costs of their behaviour. Gaining good employment can also be a deciding factor (e.g. Ouimet & Le Blanc, 1996). However, as Farral and Bowling (1999) state, even such life events may not result in desistance, as crime within an individual's workplace may occur. Therefore, other forces must be in place. This ties in with what Pyrooz et al. (2014) later stated – gang desistance is a process. This further highlights the importance of understanding what psychological pulls and pushes individuals perceive as important.

Despite continuous efforts to expand knowledge within the area, little has been done to piece all available information together until The Unified Theory of Gang Involvement was designed by Wood and Alleyne (2010). This model was constructed using Theory Knitting (Ward & Hudson, 1998) by taking the best of existing theories to develop a model which would allow for comparative research (seen Figure 3.1).

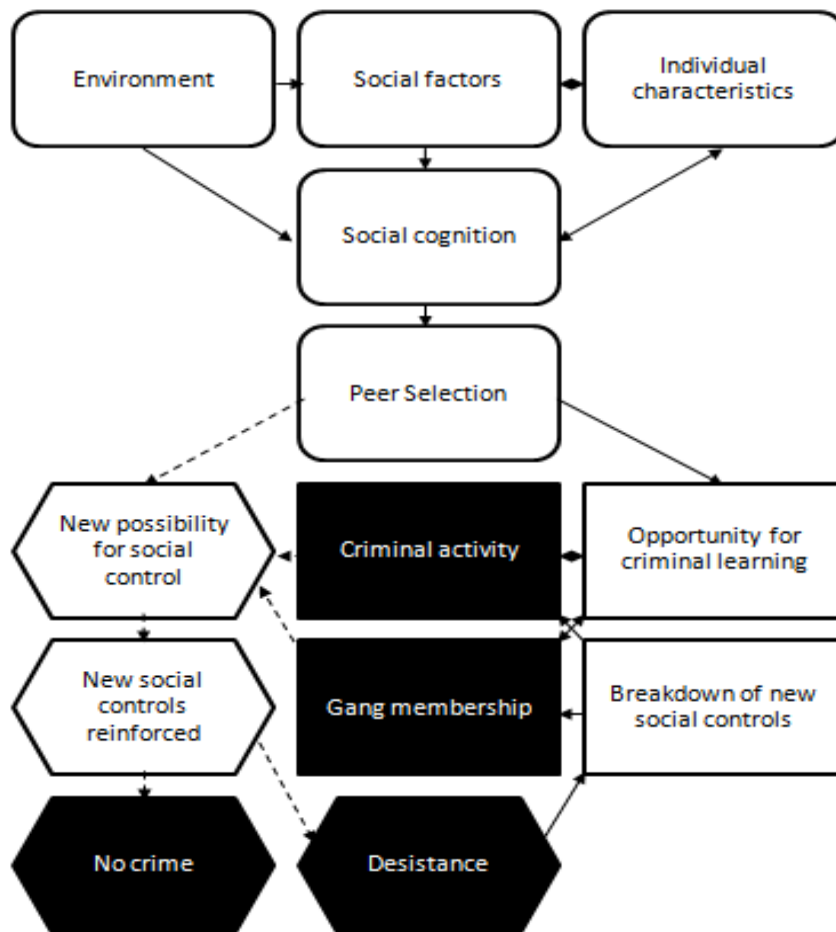


Figure 3.1. Unified Model of Gang Membership (Wood & Alleyne, 2010)

This model explains several, criminal or non-criminal, pathways that an individual can choose in life. It starts by mentioning normal social processes which may, but also may not, be risk factors for a path of delinquency – these are in round boxes. The square boxes on the right suggest factors that are risk factors into a deviant pathway. The hexagonal boxes on the left suggest the opposite – factors for a non-criminal pathway. The clear boxes indicate processes; the dark boxes indicate criminal outcomes. Lastly, the solid lines indicate pathways to delinquency; the dotted lines indicate pathways to non-delinquency.

The beginning of the model is concerned with the interplay between individual characteristics (e.g. intelligence and mental health), social factors (e.g. relationships and education) and wider environment (e.g. community structure). These form one's cognitions. Peer selection then takes place; individuals tend to choose others with similar characteristics and make their peer selection based on the way they perceive their circumstances. This part is likely to determine whether one will take a legitimate or an illegitimate pathway. Reinforcement can take place and depending on the type of peers one associates with, attitudes will be reinforced. This can lead to an individual taking a non-criminal pathway or a criminal pathway / becoming a gang member (not mutually exclusive). Wood and Alleyne (2010) suggest that gang membership, on top of having delinquent friends, provides additional benefits to a person, including: protection, social support, status, power, opportunities for excitement, social control (that is suitable for the gang) and opportunities for further criminal learning. As well as these being potential benefits, some young people may perceive gang membership and its 'benefits' as a downside. In order for desistance to take place, individuals need to recognize a non-criminal path exists. Therefore, an individual needs to recognize legitimate opportunities (e.g. when becoming a parent or when an opportunity for legal employment arises) and leave criminal opportunities behind. Depending on whether this new found pro-social thinking is reinforced or not, one can continue on the legitimate pathway but can also fall back into a criminal one.

This model highlights the importance of looking at gang membership as continuously developing and changing, in line with the principle of asymmetrical causality (Uggen & Piliavin, 1998). This model is also in line with holistic models of

groups generally as it underlines some sort of an internal ‘conflict’ where a person might change paths. This model is more detailed than general models as it focuses on delinquency, non-delinquency, as well as gang membership and considers joining, remaining in, and leaving a group. This framework has since been elaborated by Haddock (2011) who added that a Rejection of peers may precede Selection of peers. The model is lacking in detailed psychological processes, and more importantly, lacks the potential influence of group processes, and how they contribute to specific pathways. Due to the fact that gang interventions have been found to often backfire – i.e. they actually strengthened the group (Decker, Melde & Pyrooz., 2013; Klein & Maxson, 2006), it is crucial that we understand the specific group processes responsible for gang members’ decisions.

### **3.3 Group Process and Gang Membership**

Short and Strodbeck’s (1965) research noted the importance of group processes in gangs but their analysis of Chicago gang literature failed to examine any specific group processes. Short (2006, p.4) later stated that their research “*reflected this* realisation [to study group processes] but did not fully either appreciate or implement it.” Klein & Maxson (2006) even stated that differences between gangs, such as ethnicity, are trumped by the similarities that group processes create, but again, no group processes were examined. So, there remains a paucity of research that examines how gang members perceive specific group processes in gang research. We need more clarity and insight into their importance as subjectively perceived by gang members (Wood, 2014). Klein (2014) also recently highlighted that research in this area is vital. It is also important to highlight that intervention programs deal with prevention (i.e. why

would one join or form a gang), and rehabilitation (i.e. why would one choose to remain in a gang or leave a gang) and so it is not sufficient to know whether a group process manifests in a gang but also how gang members perceive the importance of a group process and at what stage of membership it is more pronounced. For further information on individual group processes, see Chapter 2.

### **3.4 The relevance of specific group processes in gangs**

#### **3.4.1 Group cohesion**

One of the group processes in gang membership that has had research attention is group cohesion. It has been proposed that gang members feel a lack of cohesion in their lives – in their ties with their family or neighbourhood overall (Forsyth, 2010), and so youth who feel this lack of cohesion may be more likely to seek membership in groups that they perceive demonstrate high cohesion and gangs tend to be portrayed as highly cohesive (e.g. defending one another, being as a family; Hughes and Short, 2005; Przemieniecki, 2005). This idea seems to be supported by the finding that neighbourhoods with high collective efficacy generally have lower crime levels and gang presence (Sampson et al., 1997). Further, it has been shown that in times of threat (e.g. conflict with other gangs), cohesion of a gang increases (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996) – this may suggest that when individuals feel there is a lot of threat in their environment, they will seek what they perceive as cohesive groups.

Klein (2004) summarized findings from much of his research by underlining that one of the strategies that needs to be used in gang prevention but also dissolution is decreasing gang cohesion and forming cohesive communities. A similar argument was proposed by Bolden (2010) in his Charismatic Role Theory. Francese, Covey, and

Menard (2006), Klein (1995), McGloin (2005) and others found that criminal behaviour, a basic definer of gangs for many, heightens cohesion in groups – therefore forming a cycle where criminality and cohesion interact. On the other hand, Klein (2009) and Maxson (1999) suggest that gangs often do not exhibit very high cohesion. However, there are numerous, unexplored reasons for such findings – for example, the turnover of peripheral members who join for a short time (Vigil, 1988; Hughes, 2013) or the fact that many members do not actually engage in violent activities (thus not strengthening cohesion).

In turn, for youth who seek group cohesion, low cohesion (possibly due to a break in trust or respect) may disappoint and might be responsible for a gang member deciding to leave the gang (Decker & Curry, 2002). Hughes (2013), revisiting Chicago gangs, found similar results suggesting that gangs with low perceived cohesion have, on top of high levels of conflict with other gangs, high levels of conflict within. No previous research explained what exactly it is for gangs that causes this cohesion (e.g. Hirschi, 1969; Klein & Maxson, 2006).

Cohesion can be linked to gang membership at any point of their existence. However, the specific group processes responsible for gang members' subjective experiences of cohesion are not understood and so the measurement of cohesion has been methodologically erratic, as previously highlighted in Chapter 2. For example, Klein (2009) suggested that cohesion seems to build in response to rival gangs or adult authorities. In his earlier research, Klein (1971) relied on frequency of contact among members; Haynie (2001) relied on density (i.e. number of ties in a gang); Hughes (2013) more recently focused on 'average degree' of friendships (how often would one

member get nominated by other members). Such differing perspectives might explain finding different levels of cohesion in gangs, and why some highly violent gangs still manifest low cohesion (Hughes, 2013). Further, cohesion may well be perceived distinctly and manifest in a unique manner in different types of gangs and types of gang members (Papachristos, 2013). Hennigan and Sloane (2013) showed the importance of the interplay between group cohesion, violence, and crime, whilst appreciating the differing properties of gangs. So, cohesion can then be seen as a 'state of being', or a final product, rather than an initiating process and so group processes feeding into it need to be more systematically examined using rigorous methodologies.

### **3.4.2 Social identity, biases, and attribution errors**

These concepts have been looked at in terms of gang membership but only in isolation from other group processes. Whilst social identity theory has not yet provided answers as to why one would join a gang (Wood & Alleyne, 2010), it has been shown that having a social identity (and also self-categorising in terms of social comparison) is of importance especially in times of uncertainty (Suls, Martin & Wheeler, 2000; 2002). Whilst growing up, a lot about individuals and their environment is changing, membership in groups and gaining a social identity which individuals perceive as beneficial may be required (Vigil, 1988; Vigil & Long, 1990). Hogg et al. (2011) suggested that adolescents are motivated to decrease their own self-uncertainty (e.g. uncertainty about the future) by joining groups which can provide them with what they perceive as a beneficial social identity. The combination of this desire for social identity and high exposure to crime and delinquency may result in one choosing a gang over another group and a social identity they can acquire in this type of a group (Viki &



Abrams, 2012). It has been observed that some individuals feel that social identity acquired in pro-social institutions or their own environment is not the right 'fit' for them and so a gang might provide them with a more suitable one (Moule, Decker & Pyrooz, 2013). Recently, Goldman et al.'s (2014) theoretical analysis uncovered that some youth believe that joining a gang is something they 'have to' do and is the 'normal' path to take. However, these ideas have yet to be empirically examined in detail.

Social identity tends to be an often cited reason for various types of gang behaviours during membership. Having a social identity can give purpose to one's life and clarify their view on the world (Hogg & Abrams, 1999; Viki & Abrams, 2012). Perceiving outgroups as worse (conflict with outgroups is frequent in gangs) and as a threat increases emotional responses – hatred or envy towards others and admiration for the ingroup all heighten - making staying in groups appealing and perceiving the acquired social identity as important (Halperin, 2008; Sternberg, 2003). Moral disengagement also increases, justifying 'sticking up' for their gang and remaining a member (Alleyne, 2010). Such forces can then be seen as preventing gang members from seeking their social identity elsewhere (Moule et al., 2013). Members of gangs have also been observed to conform to behaviours exhibited by others, following certain prototypes and accepting them as their own (Haynie, 2001). They can become deindividualized and anonymous in the gang which is often exhibited by wearing hoodies or bandanas – though this is truer in the USA than in the UK (Lindner, 2014). Such deindividualisation was also noted to facilitate higher levels of offending (Skarin, Skorinko, Saeed, Pavlov, 2009). Hennigan and Spanovic (2012) provided intriguing research on social identity and gang membership by using social identity to explain

gang violence which supported the notion that as biases and errors come to place in a gang, one's subjective experience of social identity within a group strengthens.

As individuals grow older, their need for a distinctive self may increase as they are exposed to new opportunities and changes in their personal life. This can result in a need to seek an alternative social identity resulting in desistance from gang-related activity (Tajfel, 1974). Parenthood has been found to be one reason (e.g. Fraser, 2013; Hagedorn & Devitt, 1999; Rodgers, 2006). It must be said that desistance due to parenthood is only possible when an individual starts spending less time on the streets and is capable of supporting themselves financially (Moloney, MacKenzie, Hunt & Joe-Laidler, 2009). In line with the optimal distinctiveness theory (individual need to feel unique; Brewer, 2003), Hennigan and Sloane (2013) argue that for gang interventions to be successful, they should focus on supporting the individual's identity and his/her attachment. It could also be argued that as individuals gain more responsibilities in their personal life (maturational processes) they no longer want to be subject to the stereotypes that gang membership imposes (i.e. Stereotype threat; Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002). They might simply 'knife off', or grow up, and gang life and gang identity lose their attraction (e.g. Bjorgo, 2002; Bushway, Piquero, Broidy, Cauffman, & Mazerolle, 2001; Elder, 1998, Pyrooz & Decker, 2011). In line with self-determination theory (i.e. determination for an activity that comes from the 'self', as an individual), it has been suggested that gang members benefit from activities where they can balance their social and personal identities during interventions (Dawes & Larson, 2011).

### **3.4.3 Social comparison and social influence**

Gang members have been observed to seek what they perceive as beneficial social comparison when in a state of uncertainty which is natural in their early teens (Vigil, 1988). By comparing oneself to others, categorisation (as in Social Identity Theory) can occur, allowing one to find their place, as suggested by Boduszek and Hyland (2011) though not directly in relation to gangs. In support, Pyrooz (2014) found that gang members were 30% less likely than non-gang youth to even reach high school graduation; this trend is even stronger for core members (James, 2015) and truancy is common in gang members (e.g. Craig, Vitaro, Gagnon & Tremblay; 2002). One may also seek gang membership via social comparison and influence in places with a tradition of these as it is easy to compare self and be influenced by others who are close by – proximity plays a part in why we chose certain groups (Bornstein, 1989; Klein & Maxson, 2006). Further, gang members are usually perceived and portrayed as trustworthy (or loyal to other gang members) and so if one sees self as such or wants to be perceived as such, they might seek gang membership (Schaefer, Rodriguez & Decker, 2014). Male gender role beliefs might play a role as youth seek to compare themselves against those who represent such stereotypical images as gangs often do (Lopez & Emmer, 2002).

Emerson (1976) suggested that groups exist in part to exchange social comparison information. As gang members tend to have similar experiences or common enemies, they need each other in order to gather information for their survival (Thrasher, 1963; Vigil, 1988). The value of social comparison is also seen in work by James (2015) where gang members seem to employ social comparison strategies (upward for fringe

members and downward for core members) when discussing status. Members are also known to conform to the gang's norms, values, and beliefs (as in Social Identity) due to comparison and influence effects (Rosenfeld, Bray & Egley, 1999).

It has also been observed that once a gang no longer satisfies the individual for comparison purposes, the individual will seek alternatives (e.g. due to parenthood, tying in with the developmental approach to desistance; Decker & Lauritsen, 2002). Also, the level of influence institutions/groups can have on a person are age-dependent and so might become less effective as one grows up and so their perception of social influence might change (Cairns & Cairns, 1991; Lahey, Gordon, Loeber, Stouthamer-Loeber, & Farrington, 1999). Whilst conformity is to be expected in any kind of a group, every individual has a level of acceptance. Once breached, an individual can choose to exit. Disillusionment (realisation that it is not the 'gang image' that makes a 'real man'; Lopez & Emmer, 2002), unacceptable levels of violence or desire for a calmer environment are an often cited reason by gang members for exit (e.g. Bjorgo, 2002; Decker & van Winkle, 1996; Pyrooz & Decker, 2011; Vigil, 1988). Cooper et al. (2004) also found that as a person starts to lose interest in a gang (for whatever reason), they are less likely to accept their social influence. However, comparison or influence effects can be strong pulls and might even block complete desistance (Pyrooz et al., 2014).

#### **3.4.4 Social facilitation, group performance, and group decision making**

These three phenomena have not been studied in detail with regards to gangs from the gang members' perceptions. We only know these group processes occur but their connection to a gang life-cycle remains hypothetical. More research is necessary to examine their links to gang membership and the potential effects they may have in

various stages of membership. For example, Thornberry et al. (1993) looked at the role of facilitation with regards to delinquency executed by gangs and Rosenfeld et al. (1999) found that gangs often facilitate, even promote, violence. Bendixen, Endresen, and Olweus (2006) used facilitation to examine antisocial behaviour.

It has been shown that many individuals join gangs because of harm done to their families, friends or due to being victimised personally (Vigil, 1998). Retaliation with a group's support can be easier (Fagan, 1990), thus showing a facilitation effect which can be perceived as attractive. This ties in with cited reasons for joining – protection or revenge (Klein & Maxson, 2006). Warr's (2002) research noted that burglars realized that when they perform in groups, they get better results. Individuals may therefore feel that they can perform better with a gang particularly if they want to become involved in a certain illegal activity (e.g. drug trafficking).

It has been shown that during their membership, people often rely on groups to make decisions (Stasser & Dietz-Uhler, 2001) which is supported by findings that an intervention promoting individual decision making showed promising reductions in gang related activities (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Further, people always want to perform well. Facilitation enables individuals to feel like they do well in their given domain (Crocker et al., 1994). Whilst facilitation has been researched as an effect that occurs in gangs (e.g. levels of violence or offending; e.g. Rosenfeld et al., 1999), to the author's knowledge, no research has looked at the importance of this group process to an individual. It has been observed, however, that gang members evaluate their 'group performance' (i.e. their behaviours or actions) in a positive light (Vigil, 1988) and members are often 'satisfied' when retaliation takes place (e.g. Vasquez, Lickel &

Hennigan, 2010). This suggests that gang members think about their performance or decision making.

These concepts nicely tie in with gang desistance as when one no longer perceives the gang's group performance as suitable for them, (e.g. reaching their upper limit for tolerating gang violence; Decker & Van Winkle, 1996), a group makes an extreme decision, or facilitates extreme performance by a member, the individual may decide to leave (Decker & Lauritsen, 2002; Janis, 1982; Pruitt, 1971).

#### **3.4.5 Power: roles, status, leadership, territoriality, and social dominance**

Some individuals join gangs to gain power (Lahey et al., 1999). It has been said that young people have an idea (coming from media or experience) that purely by belonging to a gang, one becomes more powerful (Anderson, 1999; Hughes & Short, 2005; Przemieniecki, 2005). Rizzo (2003) classed this as the power of intimidation. Since, contrary to popular belief, leadership (or a proper structure) is not present in all gangs, it is unlikely that individuals seek gangs to satisfy their desire for leadership (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996; Klein & Maxson, 2006). However, whilst leadership is often not present in gangs, hierarchies do exist in the majority of gangs (Curry et al., 2002; Esbensen et al., 2001). According to James (2015), status is of high importance for gang members and gang members engage in social comparison strategies when discussing status. Further, it has been shown that individuals high in social dominance orientation may be more prone to joining or forming gangs (Wood et al., 2014). Territoriality is another possible reason for joining (Decker & Curry, 2000). For example, in the UK, James (2015) found that territoriality can be seen in terms of categorization (hence tying in with one's group identity, in conjunction with power

relations) where regardless of what defines ‘territories’ or ‘territorial conflicts’ for gang members, it can be used to categorize self. Whilst not all gangs are territorial, most are said to be (Klein & Maxson, 2006).

The importance of group processes relating to power has been demonstrated in research examining existing gang membership. It has been shown members strive to achieve different positions (statuses and roles) (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996; Winfree, Fuller, Vigil & Mays, 1992) and can do so via their behaviour (e.g. by being violent; Anderson, 1999; Decker & Van Winkle, 1996; Matsuda, Esbensen, & Carson, 2012; Short & Strodbeck, 1965). This suggests that they perceive power-oriented group processes as important. Similarly, those who appreciate the ideology behind social dominance are likely to retain their membership in the gang, as they strive for dominance within the gang and also in relation to other gangs (Densley, Cai & Hilal, 2014; Wood et al., 2014). Territoriality, as with any other form of conflict (i.e. gangs attacking, disrespecting or taking over each other’s territories), can increase group cohesion and one’s social identity and thus, encourage members to remain with the gang (Brantingham, Tita, Short & Reid, 2012; Kintrea, Bannister, Pickering, Reid & Suzuki, 2008). Also, due to negative prospects with regards to the potential futures gang members face, the need to maintain territory increases (Fraser, 2013). Further, concepts tied in with power relations are often fuelled by conflict, not only with rival gangs but also other agencies of authority. The need for positive distinctiveness for the gang with regards to other gangs and formal agencies, promotes efforts to enhance their social status via territorial gang disputes, especially for core gang members (James, 2015).

However, an individual might choose to leave if the gang pushes their personal limit (Decker & Lauritsen, 2002). Along the lines of developmental and maturational theories, once an individual welcomes parenthood or becomes employed, one may not need their territory as a substitute for positive prospects with regards to the future (Fraser, 2013; Moloney et al., 2009). However, as gang members tend to live in close proximity to their territory, even after leaving the gang, this proximity might cause them to still retain ties as they might still perceive it as important (Pyrooz et al., 2014). Power related processes can also drift off or decrease in importance, due to developmental changes in individuals (Bushway et al., 2001; Decker & Lauritsen, 2002).

#### **3.4.6 Social exchange and reciprocity**

Social exchange and reciprocity might take on a special form in gangs where different rewards and inputs are expected, on top of 'regular' friendship values (Vigil, 1988). Weerman (2003), in his study of co-offending generally, suggested that the premise of social exchange can make a group stronger. Further, youth may feel relatively deprived in a sense that gang members may be considered wealthier (e.g. due to wearing designer clothes), prompting youth to perceive this as attractive and join such groups (Vanneman & Pettigrew, 1972).

Weerman's (2003) research not only explains why people might want to join gangs, but it also helps explain why they may remain in them. As long as members feel that the group and the individual are both putting enough effort in, they are likely to remain members. The previously discussed topic of power can be a strong pull for maintaining membership as this is also an exchange relationship (Anderson, 1999; Matsuda et al., 2013). Further, reciprocity can also be an integral gang norm



(Papachristos, 2013). Whilst there are a lot of stories on supportive and affective relationships in gangs (e.g. Lucchini, 1993), research also showed that reciprocity takes on a different form in gangs – the need to act autonomously whilst still adhering to gang norms (Heinonen, 2013). Putnam (2000) also found that social exchange is of high perceived importance in gangs, and that it provides a sense of loyalty to members.

On the other hand, when perceived social exchange is not successful, members of groups may consider the Comparison Level of Alternatives (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) and choose to leave (Bushway et al., 2001). It is possible that adjusting to a completely new social exchange relationship can be difficult, causing an individual to retain certain ties with their ex-gang (Pyrooz et al., 2014). Individuals might also feel that the exchange expected of them is more than they are comfortable with (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996) and, hence, leave the group.

### **3.4.7 Norms, goals, and interdependence**

Factors such as protection, excitement, money, and other similar cited reasons for joining gangs have been identified in prototypical gang members and in goals that a gang wants to achieve (Klein & Maxson, 2006; Vigil, 1998; Wood & Alleyne, 2010), making a gang an attractive group choice. An individual can also join a gang rather than a non-criminal group because prosocial groups cannot provide goals desired by the individual (Emler & Reicher, 1995).

Once a member of a gang, individuals tend to conform to certain norms, pursue the gang's goals, and work interdependently to achieve them, much as they would do in any other group. Research has not yet examined, to the author's knowledge, whether this is perceived as important to gang members. Norms and associated sanctions are

often observed in gangs (Rimal & Real, 2003). In addition, adherence to certain norms is usually helpful for group success which can be attractive to gang members (Whyte, 1955). Also, norms surrounding violent conduct in gangs (protecting other members, for example), have been documented (Vigil, 2003). Further, even if one is not entirely satisfied in a gang, the drive to achieve goals can be perceived as overwhelming, therefore promoting continued membership (Short, Rivera & Tennyson, 1965). Further, research shows that the interplay between norms, goals, and interdependence may result in members wanting to remain in their gang. This was shown by the observation that they often engage in displacing their aggression towards non-deserving others and so individuals depend on each other, due to the group's norms, to achieve a goal of releasing built up aggression (e.g.; Dollard et al., 1939; Vasquez, Osman & Wood, 2012). Other research showed that some gangs exist, and members are a part of them, simply because of the perceived importance of goals (e.g. drug dealing network; Williams & Van Dorn, 1999)

The negative effects of group norms, goals or interdependence are that members can feel too overwhelmed (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996), they can cause intragroup conflict (Adams, 2009) or individuals may no longer feel they identify with them (Bushway et al., 2001). For example, Maruna (2000) found that individuals who can fulfil their goals, no longer need their group. These might be possible reasons for exiting a gang.

#### **3.4.8 Need to belong and social support**

Need to belong and social support are often cited in gang literature. As most gang members come from dysfunctional/ incomplete/ incompatible families, individuals may

have a need to belong and feel supported and might perceive they can gain this in a gang (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Decker, 1996; Maxson, Whitlock & Klein, 1998). As with most gang research, these findings do not explain why individuals would not choose a different type of group. However, negative experiences from other groups (e.g. school), feeling of rejection (e.g. by family), and other negative belonging/ social support experiences might explain why they select gang membership (Dyson, 1990; Howell & Egley, 2005). As Pyrooz (2014) found, gang members are less likely than non-gang members to perform well in school or graduate high school and so they may not have felt that they received support from school and did not feel like they belonged, which has recently been observed by James (2015). Further, Beier (2014) found that peer delinquency relates to peer similarity – peers who would, for example, steal at home would associate with peers engaged in similar behaviour. Also, Schaefer et al. (2014) found that trust is most easily built within one's community and so via the similarity principle, gang presence might mean that individuals perceive they are an attractive type of group.

As long as a gang provides feelings of social support, inclusion, and a sense of belonging, an individual is likely to remain a member. This is supported by research noting how gang members perceive their gang as their family (Decker, 1996; Vigil, 1988; Walker-Barnes & Mason, 2001). Further, as some gangs include family members, this can increase individuals' sense of belonging to the whole group (e.g. Sanchez – Jankowski, 1991). It has also been shown that gangs provide their members with perceived social support (Williams & Van Dorn, 1999).

If a gang stops providing social support or a sense of belonging, the individual's basic human needs may no longer be satisfied and a member might choose to leave. The developmental notion of desistance suggests that members may start to feel the need to belong to a different type of a group, namely a pro-social one (Bushway et al., 2001; Klein & Maxson, 2006). This could also explain why people leave after finding a job or becoming a parent (Fraser, 2013; Moloney et al., 2009).

#### **3.4.9 What is missing?**

Even though each of the discussed group processes can be linked to gang membership and its life-cycle theoretically, such links have rarely been tested directly. Further, when they have been examined, they have been explored in isolation. However, as can be seen above, several group processes often interact and overlap. So, it is unclear how these group processes manifest in gangs and how such manifestation compares to other groups, different stages of membership, or different types of gang members. Only by exploring this, and understanding how perceived group processes interact to fuel one's desire to join, remain in, or leave a gang, we can truly understand the role of group processes in gangs.

#### **3.5 Gangs are groups – why should they be special?**

Gangs are, indeed, groups. However, groups can be differentiated on several factors. We know that one of the main distinguishing characteristics of street gangs is their offending and violent nature, along with their outdoor orientation (Klein & Maxson, 2006). Even though gangs are groups, the way group processes are perceived in them is likely to be different than in other groups, due to previous research showing that different groups can be characterised by different group processes. However, we do

not know this certainly unless research is conducted to examine group processes together in gangs.

Research uncovered the importance of the study of group processes in various types of groups. For example, a task-oriented group, like a football team, relies on group cohesion to increase group performance (Carron, Colman, Wheeler & Stevens, 2002). Further, group facilitation (Janssen, 2002), the need for deindividuation (Moran, 2004) or trust (which is why bonding exercises are key; Pannaccio, 2006; as cited in Kornspan, 2009) are all perceived as key for a successful football team. A different type of a group, a short-lived anti-social gathering, like a riot, is often characterised by crowd behaviour and related group processes. Deindividuation (Zimbardo, 1969), or emergence of alternative norms (Reicher, 1987) are of specific importance in this type of a group. Group processes are also pronounced in terrorism research and interestingly, links between terrorism and gangs have been observed (Decker & Pyrooz, 2015). Group processes of norms, roles (even more widely organisational structures) and social identity were highlighted when studying terrorist groups (Kruglanski & Golec, 2004; Sageman, 2004).

We know what differentiates gangs from other groups on a definitional level (e.g. street and criminal orientation). However, we do not know what specific group processes, as subjectively experienced by gang members, feed into gangs. An individual's cognition is always affected by their environment and we need to understand how group processes help shape a gang-affected individual's cognition.

### 3.6 Discussion and Conclusion

To summarize, this chapter discussed gangs from a group perspective. Previous literature was examined, identifying the lack of emphasis on perceived group processes in gang research. A review of group processes and gang membership highlighted that theoretical links can easily be made, but so far, insufficient empirical information is available to be able to tell us which perceived group processes are particularly relevant to gang membership.

The study of group processes ties in with a newly studied factor of gang embeddedness. It can be said that all of the above group processes contribute to gang embeddedness, quite similarly as with cohesion which was discussed earlier in this chapter. According to Pyrooz et al. (2012, p.4), gang embeddedness is concerned with *“relational and structural components for actors and their social networks”*.

Embeddedness, whilst encompassing a large amount of areas (network ties, involvement in crime, structure, leadership...), has not yet been characterized in terms of perceived group processes, similarly to gang cohesion. As McCarthy and Hagan (1995) and Pyrooz, Sweeten and Piquero (2012) observed, gang embeddedness relates to all stages of membership and can be linked to higher exposure to the gang; so, individuals embedded in gangs might be more exposed to the group processes behind gang membership, and perceive them as more important, which mirrors research on gang cohesion. Understanding the group processes behind gang embeddedness and cohesion is of importance with regards to intervention strategies.

The implications of further research into group processes in gangs are vast and crucial (Melde, 2013). As Decker and Pyrooz (2015) rightly state, there has been a

neglect of studying gangs as groups and so studying perceived group processes is of great importance. This has been noted by many (e.g. Klein, 2014; Klein & Maxson, 2006; Ross, Lepper & Ward, 2010; Wood & Alleyne, 2010). Considering that the importance of studying group processes has been highlighted for over 50 years now (Short & Strodbeck, 1965), and yet research has not examined this phenomenon in any detail, there is a vital need to rectify this neglect.

Further research into individuals' subjective experiences of group processes in gang membership can uncover invaluable information to academics, as well as practitioners. Academia will benefit by being provided with a backbone to the study of group processes in gangs. This work will also provide a unique perspective of gang membership that has, until now, been neglected. This research will enrich existing models of gang membership and provide a foundation for developing future models. It has been a solid finding that education is an important factor across multiple domains of one's life (Hout, 2012) and so understanding group processes in gang membership can be utilised in early prevention strategies. Practitioners in all areas dealing with gang membership (social work, prisons, probation, etc.) will gain a better understanding of the interplay between the gang and individuals within.

The following research questions can be posed based on the current literature review; specific hypotheses are presented in the appropriate empirical chapters:

- 1) Do group processes manifest in gangs, how do gang members perceive group processes in gangs, and does such perception change over time?
- 2) What group processes do gang members and non-gang offenders perceive as important when deciding whether to join a gang/group?

- 3) Is there a difference, at the stage of joining, regarding gang members' perception of group processes, between different kinds of gang members?
- 4) What group processes do gang members, rather than non-gang offenders, perceive as important when deciding whether to remain in a gang?
- 5) Is there a difference, at the stage of remaining in a gang, regarding gang members' perceptions of group processes, between different kinds of gang members?
- 6) Are there differences between how these clusters of group processes manifest at the stage of joining and then at the stage of remaining, across the three comparison groups?

In conclusion, this chapter underlined the need to study gangs as dynamic groups. It was shown that an individual's perception of the importance of group processes most frequently explored in group research can be linked to gang membership and its different stages. Only by understanding how they manifest and when they are considered to be important to gang members can we begin to tailor intervention strategies appropriately. The above research questions and hypotheses will be explored throughout the following empirical chapters.



## **Chapter 4 – Establishing the importance of perceived group processes to gang membership**

Previous research surrounding gang membership has been largely dependent on a criminological perspective, focusing on deprived neighbourhoods, broken families and social relationships (Gottfredson & Hirshi, 1990; Hill et al., 1999; Sharp et al., 2006), social learning within culture (Shaw & McKay, 1942) and lack of legitimate (or illegitimate) opportunities (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960). Psychological research (Alleyne & Wood, 2010; Valdez et al., 2000) is still in its infancy and so, although individuals join and remain in a gang for different reasons, these remain unclear (Gatti, et al., 2005).

Social psychological explanations of gang membership, focusing on the area of group processes, have rarely been explored in relation to gangs (Wood & Alleyne, 2010), and group processes have been examined only in isolation from each other. The following provides a brief overview of possible links between gang membership and group processes. These group processes represent those frequently discussed in group research but are not an exhaustive list. They are also not mutually exclusive. Research has linked the concept of group cohesion to gangs through a possible lack of cohesion in gang members' lives (Forsyth, 2010) and gangs have been seen as portrayed by outsiders as highly cohesive (Przemieniecki, 2005). It was also found that violence toward outgroups and generally criminal behaviour can increase gang cohesion (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996; Francese, et al., 2006; Klein, 1995). However, findings relating to cohesion in gangs are inconsistent (Hughes, 2013) and research into what causes gang cohesion has relied on a multitude of perspectives (e.g. frequency of contact, Klein, 1971; number of ties in a gang, Haynie, 2001). It is likely that cohesion can therefore be

seen as a product of other, more specific group processes and it is important to explore which group processes feed into cohesion.

Research has uncovered that social identity can be linked to a variety of biases and behaviours (e.g. ingroup favouritism, ultimate attribution error, conformity; Hogg & Abrams, 1999) and this has been observed in gangs. For example, Alleyne (2010) found higher levels of moral disengagement in gang members, whilst Haynie (2010) found gang members' frequently conform to others. Typical gang behaviours, such as violence and crime, have also been found to heighten social identity in gang members (Hennigan & Spanovic, 2012). Gang members have further been found to compare self to other gang members, in order to decrease their own self-uncertainty (Vigil, 1998), due to prototypical perceptions of other gang members (Lopez & Emmer, 2002; Schaefer, et al., 2014), to increase their self-worth, or to better their perception of self (James, 2015). Gang members have also been shown to conform to gang norms which means that they often accept social influence by the gang (Rosenfeld, et al., 1999). Along these lines, facilitation has been a continuously observed trend in gangs where it has been shown that gang membership increases levels of crime and violence by gang members (Rosenfeld et al., 1999; Thornberry, et al. 1993). This ties in with findings that gang members sometimes evaluate their performance (Vigil, 1998), might find decision making within a group setting easier (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) or undertake tasks which might be easier to do in a group setting (Klein & Maxson, 2006).

Power-related group processes are often tied to gang membership. Some individuals want power (Lahey et al., 1999), gangs are perceived as powerful (Przemieniecki, 2005), and it seems that those who are more appreciative of social

hierarchies (i.e., social dominance orientation) are more likely to be gang members (Wood et al., 2014). Findings relating to leadership show that not all gangs have leaders (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996), but hierarchies usually exist and so status is of importance (Curry, et al., 2002). Further, gangs have been shown to be territorial, though to varying degrees (Klein & Maxson, 2006).

Gang membership has frequently been linked to social exchange, likely because even such concepts as status can be seen as an exchange relationship (Anderson, 1999) and because fair social exchange has been shown to promote a sense of loyalty in gangs (Putnam, 2000). Social exchange might also be embedded in the notion of norms, and norms, along with associated sanctions, have been observed in gangs (Rimal & Real, 2003). Norms can also facilitate reaching common goals and goals have been shown to be an overwhelming pull to remain as a gang member (Short et al., 1965). Having common goals and following norms can then make individuals highly interdependent on each other (Vigil, 1998). Gang members have also been shown to create close bonds with their gang and perceive them as their ‘family’, enhancing their sense of belonging (Decker, 1996; Walker-Barnes & Mason, 2001). Similarly, gangs have been observed to provide social support to gang members (Williams & Van Dorn, 1999).

There is some literature which directly explores group processes in gangs, but this is rare and group processes are observed in isolation and as static concepts (i.e. not appreciating that gangs, as any other group, go through a life cycle; Wood & Alleyne, 2010). Hypothetical links can be drawn between the above group processes and gang membership. However, how gang members uniquely perceive group processes in gangs is lacking in literature, for example, what is their own understanding of social

exchange? Is it important to them and what shape does it take? It is not sufficient to know whether a group process manifests, it is also important to know how it is perceived.

Three main research aims underpinned this research: **1)** to establish the presence of the previously discussed group processes in gangs, **2)** to see whether participants were aware of these processes and, if so, how they perceived them, and **3)** to understand how these processes and the way participants viewed them, had changed over their gang membership.

## **4.1 Method**

### **4.1.1 Design**

An exploratory qualitative design was employed, since no previous research has examined, together, the variety of group processes within gangs considered in this thesis. Further, no research has examined how these group processes manifest at different stages of membership. We also do not know how gang members perceive and understand the group processes that are present in their gang. A qualitative design allowed for greater understanding of the participants' meanings, experiences and views (Mays & Pope, 1995). It also allowed for an in-depth probing of issues, where no hypotheses could be drawn from existing research (Creswell, 2007) and for issues to be refined for a more systematic investigation and formulation of new research questions. Further, this study used a phenomenological approach as it was the researcher's aim to understand the uniqueness of participants' lived reality whilst allowing the researcher to examine experiences beyond what they could easily communicate (Creswell, 2007; Langdrige, 2007).

### **4.1.2 Research aims and hypotheses**

The key research aims of the current study are to establish gang members' perceptions of the presence of group processes in gangs and whether this perception changes based on their stage of membership.

- a. It is hypothesized that group processes regularly manifesting in groups also manifest in gangs.
- b. It is hypothesized that gang members will have a unique perception of how the above discussed group processes manifest in gangs.
- c. It is hypothesized that gang members' perceptions of group processes will be different at the time they were joining a gang, and at the time they were members of a gang.

### **4.1.3 Participants**

Twenty-one males were recruited from a Young Offenders Institution (YOI) in the UK. No individuals refused to take part in this study. Participants were aged between 16 and 18 years ( $M_{age} = 16.81$ ,  $SD_{age} = 0.60$ ). All were classed as gang members using the core questions of the Youth Survey developed by the Eurogang network (see 'Measures' below). The majority of the sample was White British ( $n=11$ , 52.4%), followed by an equal number of Black African and Black Caribbean respondents ( $n=4$ , 19%), an Asian Bangladeshi respondent and a White/Black Caribbean respondent (each  $n=1$ , 4.8%). This composition resembles the ethnic composition of youth offenders in the UK (59% White offenders, 41% Ethnic minority offenders; Ministry of Justice, 2014a). Offenders' index offences included Burglary ( $n=6$ , 28.6%), Robbery and GBH/ABH ( $n=3$ , 14.3%), Possession and Intent to supply class A drugs, Recall and

Breach of probation (n=2, 9.5%), Kidnapping, Firearms and Murder (n=1, 4.8%).

Although these do not correspond to general trends in convictions of youth aged 10 to 17, the variety and offence types are consistent with the range of offences usually observed in this age group (Ministry of Justice, 2014a).

Opportunity sampling was employed for this study. The researcher did not recruit participants who were unable to provide informed consent or were considered by prison staff to pose a threat to the researcher, staff or themselves. The researcher could only recruit participants who, at the time of the interview, had no prior engagements (e.g. education) and no rewards were offered.

#### **4.1.4 Ethics**

This study obtained University of Kent Psychology Ethics Committee approval (Code: 20143522) and Kent and Sussex Regional Forensic Psychology Service approval (Ref: 2014-194). Participants were given an information sheet outlining the aims of the study and ethical considerations (see Appendix 1) and this was read out loud to participants to offset any literacy difficulties. Participants were assured of their anonymity and the confidentiality of their responses. They were told that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without their rights and privileges being affected. Participants had the right to ask questions throughout. They were also informed that the data provided would be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Participants were treated in accordance with the BPS ethical guidelines. They were also informed of the use of an audio recorder (cleared by the establishment's security department) for the purposes of the study. Whilst the study was confidential, participants were told that caveats were included according to NOMS'

guidelines. That is, if information about a breach of security was revealed, as stated in the information sheet and consent form, the researcher was obliged to pass such information on to prison staff. This was not the case with any of the interviews. The researcher also informed participants that any information disclosed which may be of concern (e.g. previously undisclosed abuse) would be communicated to the relevant psychologist so that appropriate aftercare could be provided (as stated in the consent form). This also did not occur.

Participants were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix 2) to ensure their full understanding of the research. This form repeated information with regards to: having an understanding of the research, having a chance to ask questions, data protection, anonymity and confidentiality, the use of an audio recorder, and what information the researcher was obliged to pass on to the prison (as per NOMS requirements). All steps were taken to ensure that participants fully understood the issues surrounding consent and what they were agreeing to. The participants were also told that this consent form would be kept in a lockable case by the researcher and kept separate from questionnaires and audio recordings so identities could not be accessed. Participants were debriefed verbally and in writing. The researcher's contact information was provided in case of further questions, or requests to withdraw for up to two months after the interview (see Appendix 3). This form also included a contact number for the Samaritans in case they felt affected by any topics and wished to talk to someone outside the prison.

Personal data were held in a lockable cabinet at the University accessible only by the researcher and her supervisor. Interviews were transcribed and saved on a

University computer in an encrypted file, secured via the University's IT department. Recordings were deleted. Only general trends were reported, names of cities, streets, friends and similar identifiable information were not transcribed and not used in analysis. The University's data protection notification number is Z6847902.

#### **4.1.5 Materials**

Participants answered questions relating to their age, ethnicity and conviction (Appendix 4). Then, they answered the core items of the Eurogang Youth Survey to assess their group affiliation before incarceration (Appendix 4). These questions dealt with the basic characteristics of a gang as established by the Eurogang network: whether they had been a member of an informal peer group, the age range of members, whether the group was street-oriented, how long the group had been in existence and whether illegal activity was accepted and committed by the group. Only those agreeing to each of these items were classed as belonging to a street gang. Using this measure did not require participants to self-identify as belonging to a gang and so ensured that a member's self-identification did not contradict a definition proposed by statutory agencies.

A structured interview (Appendix 5) was carried out which centred on group processes regularly manifesting in groups (as discussed in Chapter 3) and how gang members perceived them. The key seven areas of group processes presented in Chapters 2 and 3 were used as core questions in the interview where gang members were asked about their perceived presence, manifestation, and influence. Where more group processes fell under one cluster, these were asked in separate questions. This is



summarised in Table 4.1. Specific characteristics of group processes were used as prompts.

Table 4. 1 Rationale behind structured interview

<b>Group process clusters discussed in Chapter 3</b>	<b>Structured interview questions</b>
Social identity	Q1a Perceived group identity Q1b Individuation
Social comparison and social influence	Q2a Perceived social comparison Q2b Perceived Social influence
Social facilitation, group performance and group decision making	Q3 Perceived social facilitation, group performance and group decision making
Power related processes	Q4a Perception of power/status Q4b Social dominance orientation
Social exchange	Q5 Perceived social exchange
Norms, goals, and interdependence	Q6a Norms Q6b Goals Q6c Interdependence
Need to belong and social support	Q7a Belonging Q7b Perceived social support

Participants were asked to discuss their perceptions of each group process at the stage of joining their group (i.e. what their expectations were) and remaining in their group (i.e. what was important whilst a member). The interview included prompts in relation to each of the group processes and were used to explain specific aspects of group processes (based on the core aspects of the group processes as shown in Chapter 2). In cases where an individual did not ‘join’ a group but rather formed it with their friends, further questions clarified how the group became criminally-oriented. Questions were worded so that participants’ real experiences, knowledge and opinions were captured.

#### **4.1.6 Procedure**

The researcher approached participants to ask if they would be willing to participate in this research. To make this easier, prison staff helped target individuals known to have an alliance with a gang. Participants were informed about the aims of the study and the time participation would take (30 minutes). Following verbal agreement, a time was agreed to conduct the interview. In most cases, the interview took place immediately. Interviews were conducted in a private room or other quiet area to maintain confidentiality. Participants were then fully informed about the purposes of the study (Appendix 1) and had the chance to ask questions. They were also informed of the ethical issues surrounding their participation (see Ethics), asked to sign a consent form (Appendix 2, see Ethics) and informed of the use of an audio-recorder.

First, demographic information was collected, followed by the core questions of the Youth Survey (Appendix 4) and then questions about their perceptions of group processes (Appendix 5). All questions were asked in the same order though the researcher was flexible as participants often jumped from one topic to another. Upon completing the interview, participants were given a debrief form (Appendix 3, see Ethics). Interviews were transcribed verbatim (using Express Scribe software) by the researcher and recordings were deleted.

#### **4.1.7 Analysis**

An explanatory framework was used, as analysis was guided by research questions. Thematic Analysis was used to understand how the pre-set themes were understood by participants and how many held a certain view, by considering the data from statistical or descriptive (i.e. frequency; how data are organized) and interpretative

(i.e. perceptions of participants; what do responses mean in wider context and in relation to previous literature) perspectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Patton, 1990). Thematic Analysis allows for such considerations as its main aim is to identify, analyse, and report patterns within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Group processes were used as pre-defined master themes of interest and so a-priori coding of these was employed (e.g. social identity; Weber, 1990). Considering the vast number of approaches to analysing qualitative data (Holloway & Todres, 2003), it is critical to identify the correct analysis in light of the aims of research. The search for themes in data is a connecting factor among all types of diverse qualitative analyses (Holloway & Todres, 2003) and Thematic Analysis offered flexibility which is useful when no clear theoretical underpinning is available (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Other types of qualitative analyses often look for patterns (or themes) across all qualitative data; however, these often neglect to appreciate information within data (e.g. Murray, 2003) and so at times not every respondent's experience (or interpretation) is noted. Thematic Analysis allows for each emergent theme to be noted, even if only experienced by one participant. Whilst Thematic Analysis (along with multiple other qualitative methods) is often criticized as an 'anything goes' approach, by clearly explaining the process of analysis (i.e. steps of analysis), it can be a rigorous method (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Quantifying responses enabled identification of the number of participants who were aware of certain group processes occurring at stages of joining and remaining in a gang. For example, when discussing group identity, it was noted whether individuals thought this concept was relevant to them wanting to join their group and then whether

they thought they gained an identity whilst in their group. Then, the participants' unique perspectives and understanding of these processes were analysed, still within the pre-defined master themes, by qualitatively interpreting their views (Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003). This was carried out by exploring each participants' view on certain group processes and coding each explanation/perception within the pre-set group process master themes. It was important that such coding was conducted so that context was not lost (Bryman, 2001). The themes in this study were strongly linked to the data (Patton, 1990) and so an inductive, or bottom-up, approach was used (Frith & Gleeson, 2004). For example, returning to the example of social identity, each participant's understanding of how they thought social identity manifested following membership was noted. Contextually similar responses were grouped into themes where possible. Different perceptions were systematically noted and, so, where only one participant held a certain view (which was assigned a code), this view became a theme in its own right.

Thus, thematic analysis presented a rich description of the dataset and not a detailed account of one particular aspect (Braun & Clarke, 2006), as all themes, regarding all group processes, by all participants, were presented. A semantic approach was applied where it was not the aim to identify underlying ideas but to consider surface meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This current analysis fell under the essentialist (or realist) paradigm, where the aim was to understand individuals' views and not hypothesise about the socio-cultural contexts (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, it must be stated that when researching gang members' views, it is often the case that these tie in with their views of their surroundings. The researcher carefully considered numerous

guidelines to make analysis rigorous (e.g. Braun & Clarke, 2006; Parker, 2004; Yardley, 2000).

Whilst the precise aims and steps of Thematic Analysis are numerous and not fully agreed on, the above provides an explanation of this individual analysis, including how codes and themes were created and the underlying assumptions. Considering the research questions and hypotheses presented earlier, and the very limited theoretical underpinnings within this area, this analysis was deemed suitable as it considered a basic (frequencies), as well as a higher, level of analysis (interpretative).

## **4.2. Findings**

The results of this study are structured with regards to the master themes (i.e. the specific group processes). First, background into the participants' membership is provided – i.e. how they formed their friendship group. Then, participants' unique perceptions of the group processes, and therefore themes which arose (which will be underlined) arising within the master theme of group processes are presented to show the participants' own understanding of the group processes and which specific aspects were seen as manifesting in their own view point. It must be stated that the categories presented are not mutually exclusive.

### **4.2.1 Group formation**

Three participants stated that they joined an existing group. For example, participant (#) 23 stated: “yeah like they knew each other for a few years before that innit.” Seventeen participants stated that they formed their group. This was mostly due to getting to know individuals through living in the same neighbourhood or attending the same school. For example, #21 stated: “nah like we're all mates innit like, same

neighbourhood like grew up together innit.” Group formation information was not obtained from one participant.

It is also important to underline that the influence of ‘olders’, or an older group of individuals in the group’s proximity, was expressed by eight participants. For one participant (#14), this meant forming ideas around friendship, by his previous gang membership in a gang with older youth. Two more participants suggested that they were briefly youngers of a group where this was seen as a transitional period before finding their own friendship group. Another participant suggested that olders use their youngers but that at a certain point they become separate groups. However, the rest of the participants were adamant that, whilst they spent time around the olders, they did not see them as part of their group. For example, #20 stated: “the older like they do their own thing innit like we're young like we do our own thing as well.” The influence of olders was more significant when discussing engagement in crime, rather than joining a friendship group. This was observed by ten participants, who claimed that olders were instrumental in their criminal careers (in terms of learning) but were not part of their friendship group, e.g. # 12 stated: “bit of both really first like you hear about it, people [olders] show you how to do it *and then you start doing it yourself...*”

Olders were also often mentioned when discussing how individuals became involved in crime, with 12 participants stating that olders either showed them how to do things, helped them, or engaged in crime all together, for example voiced by #14: “no... we used to be around older boys when I was younger so you would like see stuff... and then I would be like oh, yeah this is something I can do.” This information is interesting in terms of understanding the pulls and pushes that gang membership poses on

individuals. Rather than assuming that individuals join gangs, it is useful to know that many form a friendship group which can evolve into a gang. One participant also suggested that, due to observing the olders, he wanted to gain a similar type of identity, whilst another saw himself as similar to the olders due to 'naughtiness' when young. Another spoke about olders in terms of wanting status at the stage of joining/forming, whilst four others gained their territory when young, due to olders spending time there previously. Five also spoke about social comparison to olders at the stage of joining. Participants also made sporadic references to olders in terms of norms at the stage of joining/forming a group. Olders were also seen as not being entirely fair to younger individuals which supported participants' views of needing reciprocity, in other words, needing fairness in their group. Goal formation was also influenced by olders in terms of leading a fun, free and good life.

#### **4.2.2. Social Identity**

##### **Social Identity - Joining**

All 21 participants showed a subjective appreciation of social identity at the stage of joining a group. The most prevalent view of social identity at the stage of forming was seen in terms of Similarity. Seventeen participants spoke about seeing themselves as similar to other individuals, which is a commonly cited element of social identity; # 4 stated: "yeah like we all thought you know, we thought the same so that was there." Eleven suggested that they already knew about the individuals prior to becoming friends with them. This was because of their Proximity (e.g. same neighbourhood, parties, and friends of friends). For example, # 9 stated: "ehm yeah cuz like you know people around and you know what you're getting into." This suggests that individuals were aware of

who they were becoming friends with. Six participants stated that they Actively Chose these individuals to form a group with; # 21 noted: “I guess in a way yeah cuz like I was chatting to other people as well but like I like spent most of my time with this lot.” Four highlighted that they Wanted to Gain Social Identity with these individuals, with # 17 stating: “yeah yeah cuz like you just like feel that innit you want that from them.”

These responses are all in line with seeing social identity as an outcome of their newly formed friendships. Participants showed an appreciation of knowing something about these individuals and in some cases making a conscious decision to form a group with them. On the other hand, four participants stated that they saw social identity in Loose terms. They felt that they were purely hanging out/ having fun together and only later got to know each other better; # 13 stated: “eh like I don't think that at the beginning like I think with some of them yeah and that's why we were like hanging out *and then it just happened later on ...*”

Most individuals felt that they were Outspoken in front of their friends, from the onset. This was voiced by 15 participants and suggests that participants were keen to remain individuals: “yeah yeah always I was always good talking to them, it was easy” (# 11). Five, however, felt that they were Quiet when they first starting forming their friendships. This is indicative of finding their identity within the group, as voiced by # 1: “when I first started hanging around with them I was quite young innit so quite quiet like I wouldn't be as comfortable around them as I would be now.” Interestingly, already at this stage, seven participants stated that they would Not Share Personal Information about themselves with the rest of the group. This mistrust of others was discussed by # 9: “... *yeah cuz you don't* really like, I don't want everyone knowing my business like...”.



One participant stated that he would only share personal information with one Close Friend. The reasons for such distrust were not explored further at the time, though two stated it was because of the stakes (e.g. early anti-social behaviour) and one reflected on previous experiences: “*I wouldn't cuz like I saw like people grassing on my cousin and that so no...*” (# 16).

### **Social Identity – Remaining**

At this stage, the involvement in criminal activities was visible through participants' views. Social identity was most commonly perceived in terms of Time Spent Together, including being involved in common activities. This was perceived as important by 13 participants. For example, # 20 stated: “yeah like we're there for each other all the time like definitely always like we do it all together.” Ten explained that they felt their social identity fully developed later as they progressed with their group membership due to Knowing More about each other. For example, # 4 stated: “I think... in a way it is now with my mates yeah because we all like know so much about each other and like we know what to do and stuff.”

Whilst these participants felt a sense of social identity as they continued with their membership they also implied that, as they maintained membership, they noticed negatives. Six individuals noticed a Change in Individuals from their group which saw the group being refined; # 4 stated: “the group was bigger...but then ... it got to that part *to where we all wanted different things like...*” It might be due to this reason that seven participants highlighted that only felt a sense of Identity with Some Members; # 18 stated: “no no like I didn't care that much like... only ones I care for are my close friends that's it.”

Twelve participants felt that they could be Outspoken in front of the rest of the group, similarly to the joining/forming stage. This was, for example, stated by # 21: “I don't know like if I didn't like something I would just tell them straight.” Three participants voiced that they became More Comfortable as they progressed with their membership. Only four participants suggested that they Could Share Personal Information with their friends; # 10 stated: “they know what happens to me and I know what happens to them.” Twelve participants discussed only disclosing Personal Information to Their Close Friends. This was voiced by # 21: “yea I would like I wouldn't tell all of them I would tell like one of my best mates.” Eight stated that they Would not Share Personal Information with anyone. For two, this was due to a previous break in trust: “like I've seen things like some of them know someone like their whole life and they just stab them in the back” (# 6). The other six did not provide reasons but voiced they Cannot/Do Not Expect to Fully Trust anyone. For example, # 20 suggested: “me I was born alone, I'll die alone everything will happen alone no one is there 100% innit like that's what I'm saying innit.” It is possible this is due to previous traumatic experiences within their neighbourhoods/families, observing the breaking of trust in other groups, and more.

Table 4.2 summarizes themes which arose at the two time-points and the number in brackets presents the number of participants perceiving that theme.

Figure 4.2 Perception of Social Identity at the stages of Joining and Remaining in a gang

<b>Social Identity</b>	
<b>Joining</b>	<b>Remaining</b>
Based on similarity (n=17)	Gained identity due to time spent together (n=13)
Based on proximity (n=11)	Gained identity due to knowing more about each other (n=10)
Actively chose group (n=6)	Noted a negative change in individuals (n=6)
Wanted to gain social identity (n=4)	Gained identity with some members (n=7)
Perceived identity in loose terms (n=4)	
Felt outspoken (n=15)	Felt outspoken (n=12)
Was quiet in front of group (n=5)	Became more comfortable in front of others (n=3)
Would not share personal information (n=7)	Felt they would only share personal information with close friends (n=12)
Would share personal information with close friends (n=1)	Would not share personal information with anyone in group (n=8)
	Cannot/Do not expect to fully trust anyone (n=6)
	Felt they could share personal information with others (n=4)

### 4.2.3 Social Comparison

#### Social Comparison – Joining

The most cited manifestation of social comparison was in terms of Banter. Twelve individuals stated that they would not actively compare each other’s skills or abilities, but they would joke around. As # 4 suggested: “boys will be boys.” This comparison was not perceived in terms of criminality or money. It was explained in terms of popularity, girls and other similar things; # 19 summarized: “yeah yeah like at the beginning it was the same like we would always like look at how many like girls you talk *to and like how popular you are...*” Eight suggested that this comparison was possibly due based on Similarity of the group members. Due to the principle of similarity,

individuals were engaged in similar activities and enjoyed similar things; # 11 stated: “we were all similar in a way like so you could do that with them like the same stuff that you would be doing.” Four participants stated that they compared themselves to others in order to Understand Others better. As # 16 suggested: “like my friends like you know who's doing what and that.” These participants engaged in social comparison in order to understand the skills, abilities or qualities of other individuals who were becoming their friends. Only two participants saw Money as the reason for their social comparison, as they saw that the individuals they were becoming friends with were involved in making money already; # eight stated: “I guess because like they were making money, I was making money and like when I like started hanging out with them like I saw what they were doing.”

Whilst most individuals stated they were engaged in some form of social comparison, three felt there was No Social Comparison manifesting at the stage of joining; # 5 stated: “no never cuz we are all doing the same thing at the same time so no.” Six participants stated that at the beginning of membership, they would try to Act Right meaning they would behave in a way they thought was expected by the group. However, this was only to some extent. This was voiced by # 12, for example: “like at the start like when you would like do more maybe, be more brave and that...” The majority of participants stated that they would be Always Myself. This was stated by 13 participants. For five of these, this was because the friends would know if they were not being themselves.

## **Social Comparison – Remaining**

Banter continued to be the most cited mechanism of social comparison at this stage. Fifteen participants discussed that they would compare each other's success in terms of 'silly' things (e.g. popularity or girls), where comparison stayed friendly; # 9 stated: "like we may joke around like that sometimes but it would only be a joke." At this stage, however, the importance of money became increasingly significant. Thirteen stated they would compare each other in terms of money or crime, Antisocial Activity more generally, as # 23 stated: "like it wants you *get better innit like if you're lazy a day or something then you'll be like oh he's just got new stuff I'll go make some.*" It might be that this relates to competing for status (its importance will be discussed later) as this competitiveness seems to fuel criminality in terms of wanting to outperform each other.

There were only three individuals who felt that No Social Comparison was made. These were the same individuals as at the stage of joining. At this stage, similar to social identity, two individuals highlighted that they would only compare themselves with Specific People in the group; # 16 stated: "I didn't care that much when we were older like we would still do it but like not with everyone really." This suggested a better understanding of individuals' preference for specific individuals in their group.

At this stage, all participants rejected the notion that they changed their behaviour in front of other group members, they would Remain Themselves. The various reasons for this included that that one should not behave in any other way than being themselves in front of their friends, as stated by five participants. Four suggested that such impostor behaviour would make them look stupid and 12 explained that one should be "always myself". For example, # 13 stated: "like when I was like actually with my friends it

like... I didn't like I could just be myself innit.” This information suggests that individuals are actively avoiding group influences and want to be accepted for themselves (belonging will be analysed later in this chapter).

Table 4.3 provides a summary of themes from the stage of joining and remaining in a gang. The number in brackets presents the number of participant perceiving that theme.

Table 4.3 Perception of Social Comparison at the stages of Joining and Remaining in a gang

<b>Social comparison</b>	
<b>Joining</b>	<b>Remaining</b>
Comparison regarding banter between members (n=12)	Comparison regarding banter between members (n=15)
Comparison regarding similarity of members (n=8)	Comparison regarding antisocial activities (n=13)
Comparison in order to understand others (n=4)	No social comparison perceived (n=3)
Comparison regarding money (n=2)	Social comparison with only specific group members (n=2)
No social comparison perceived (n=3)	Would not change behaviour due to social comparison (n=21)
Attempting to "act right" in front of others (n=6)	
Would not change behaviour due to social comparison (n=13)	

#### **4.2.4 Social Influence**

##### **Social Influence - Joining**

Nine participants identified that they were expecting Positive social influence when forming/joining their friendship group. This could be in terms of feeling that there were individuals who: would back them up; they could have fun with: would in engage pro-social activities together; or would simply be a good friend. For example, # 11 suggested: “like I knew, well I thought like were were gonna like back each other up like

so yeah but no like bad stuff no...” These participants could not clearly define how this would influence an individual but stated that the influence would be positive.

Eight participants, on the other hand, stated that they were aware of the group possibly having a Negative influence. This could be due to money having some importance from the start, recognising others as ‘naughty’ from early on, egging each other on, or recognising it was easier to engage in some behaviour in a group environment. For example, # 19 stated: “we were all like doing like crime already innit so yeah I guess like I knew that” whilst # 12 stated: “...*it's not like they pushed me into it like but it was easier to do it all with them and that...*” For the majority of these participants, knowing about this negative influence was not specific and participants implied that this was not something they consciously thought about.

Six participants stated that at the time of joining, they were Not Aware of Influences taking place. These individuals appreciated their friendship group for the friendship itself and did not give thought to how their membership can be affected by them; # 9 stated: “no I didn't really care like I thought it was you know gonna be exciting really.” Whilst these participants did not feel the effect of their group at this stage, two individuals discussed that They Influenced their friends in a negative manner. As # 8 suggested: “yeah pretty much like I would be like come on guys like why not like and that, yeah definitely I was probably the bad breed.”

### **Social influence – Remaining**

Eleven participants were able to identify Both Negative and Positive social influences whilst belonging to their group. Four discussed (without prompting) these different influences. For example, # 6 stated: “we'd influence each other like maybe with

stuff like money like we'd influence each other; there's some good things like, like sometimes it's good things..." At this stage, 15 identified Positive influences; four cited confidence, one cited motivation, four discussed being supportive and seven stated the group influenced them to make better decisions. At this stage of membership, participants found it easier to identify how specifically their group influenced them positively. For example, # 8 suggested: "like I get too confident sometimes innit like and I think I can do anything and I can conquer the world innit so they would sort of be like: no you can't do this and all that."

On the other hand, eleven participants identified Negative influences. Two simply stated they would do bad stuff together, two more identified that individuals were more concerned with money and would influence each other to make more of it, while the remaining seven stated they would commit more crime together; # 14 stated: "I was fearless I guess because everyone was doing it." There were four participants who did not feel the group had any influence on them. This was mainly because they felt that they would all do everything regardless of whether the group supported such thinking. This was explained by # 5: "you know they wanna misbehave, I wanna misbehave, we were all doing the same thing." As discussed previously, two participants suggested They Were the Bad Influence and felt so also at the stage of remaining in a gang.

Below (Table 4.4), a summary of themes from the stage of joining and remaining in a gang is provided, where the number in brackets presents the number of participant perceiving that theme.



Table 4.4 Perception of Social Comparison at the stages of Joining and Remaining in a gang

<b>Social influence</b>	
<b>Joining</b>	<b>Remaining</b>
Identified positive social influence (n=9)	Identified a mix of positive and negative social influence (n=11)
Identified negative social influence (n=8)	Identified positive social influence (n=15)
Not aware of social influence in group (n=6)	Identified negative social influence (n=11)
Individuals saw self as those influencing group (n=2)	Individuals saw self as those influencing group (n=2)

#### **4.2.5 Group decision making and cooperation**

##### **Group decision making and cooperation – Joining**

A majority of participants recalled that they were aware of making Bad Decisions from the start. This was not necessarily in terms of crime but more generally being naughty. Fifteen felt this way, # 14 stated: “it just... we just chilled at first...but like I was in all sorts of mischief like.” As mentioned before, most participants did not commit crime with their friends from the outset, though this suggests they were aware of anti-social orientation from early on. Two suggested cooperation with regards to ‘Business’ right from the start, with # 4 stating: “yeah cuz you have your friendship but everyone has their own like business side.” However, eight also suggested engaging in Pro-social Cooperation. For example, # 13 suggested: “yeah cuz like that's why you hang with people to do things together innit like we like helped out when you need something and that.” Only two suggested that they Did not Perceive decision making or cooperation at this stage. Further, five participants stated that, whilst they were aware of not always making good decisions, these decisions Worked Out in terms of what individuals wanted to achieve; # 4 stated: “well I see now we haven't but yea all decisions like have a purpose innit.”

When considering decision making itself, 13 participants explained that they acted of their own Free Will. Three suggested that members could engage in Informal Talks together but the final decision would always depend on the individual. None suggested that someone pushed them into a decision; # 14 summarized this by saying: “the same... like then you would just do whatever you want like but like you have a chat and that.” One participant stated that at the beginning of membership the group members would all want to be Heard. Whilst free will has been portrayed as an important element of decision making by participants, seven noted making Rushed Decisions when with their group. This can be seen as a side-effect of not engaging in thorough decision making processes as # 21 explained: “not much has changed like haha we never like thought about stuff much we just like went along with things innit.”

#### **Group decision making and cooperation– Remaining**

Six participants stated that they were aware that their decisions were Bad, as voiced by # 22: “oh no no I knew what I was doing was wrong like like you know you causing trouble and that's it really I knew it was wrong.” Only four discussed helping each other in a Pro-social manner. Eleven suggested that they evaluated their decisions based on how beneficial they were to them – whether they Worked out; # 20 explained this by saying: “good for money haha like not really good for you like you wouldn't think it's good but good for us yeah.” Only one person stated they made Better Decisions because of their group environment.

The sentiment of engaging in Informal Talks was voiced by 11 participants and 14 suggested that they would make their decisions using their Free Will. This was similar to information provided by participants when they were forming/joining their friendship

group; # 14 stated: “you're just chatting to them and see like...just do whatever you like *then...*” Seven participants also suggested that, due to being in a group setting, they would make Rushed decisions, similarly to the first stage of membership, as # 13 explained: “when it came to like the crime it was just rushed.” Six stated that they only engaged in a decision making process when a decision was needed with regards to illegal activities – their Business. This was, for example, voiced by # 16: “only time like we had to make a decision, sometimes like if we all plan to do something.” Four participants suggested that there would be a Strong Voice in the group who would often take charge, as # 17 observed: “there would like be someone like in the lead I guess *like...*” A similar shift occurred here as with the previous group processes, where three participants suggested that they would only consult their Close friends when making a decision, though the same participants stated they would still make their own decisions. This was, for example, noted by # 16: “I never have, I would talk to my cousin, maybe my close friends but you don't need to do that you do what you wanna do.”

The following table (Table 4.5) presents a summary of themes at the two stages of membership where the number in brackets corresponds to the number of participants who perceived group decision making and cooperation as such.

Table 4.5 Perception of Social Comparison at the stages of Joining and Remaining in a gang

<b>Group decision making and cooperation</b>	
<b>Joining</b>	<b>Remaining</b>
Awareness of bad decisions (n=15)	Awareness of bad decisions (n=6)
Pro-social cooperation (n=8)	Pro-social cooperation (n=4)
Evaluation of decisions based on whether they 'worked out' (n=5)	Evaluation of decisions based on whether they 'worked out' (n=11)
Business' oriented cooperation (n=2)	Better decisions made due to gang (n=1)
No cooperation perceived (n=2)	
Decision-making based on free will (n=13)	Decision-making based on free will (n=14)
Decision-making included informal talks (n=3)	Decision-making included informal talks (n=11)
All members wanted to be heard in decision-making (n=1)	Decision-making process perceived only in relation to 'business' (n= 6)
Decisions made were rushed (n=7)	Decisions made were rushed (n=7)
	Perception of a strong voice during decision making (n=4)
	Interested in others' opinions during decision-making only with a few close friends (n=3)

#### 4.2.6 Status

##### Status - Joining

Fourteen participants highlighted the Importance of Status when forming or joining their friendship group. This was due to wanting to stand out amongst others, seeing others with status or even wanting to become a 'gangster'. This was, for example, stated by # 19: "yeah like you know like growing up like I wanted to like be like popular and like have girls and all that innit so yeah". One stated that he always had status because of a Family member who was already known in the area. Three stated that they felt they Just Have status, without consciously doing anything to get it; # 18 explained: "like we always did though like just because of how we are like..." Two participants stated that they gained status through Positive Behaviour, by being good,

cool people. Two other individuals, however, stated that they gained status through Negative Behaviour, due to being involved with crime or fighting. Only five discussed that, whilst they felt they were perceived as ‘something’, they Did Not Perceive Status as Important. They would not consider this status and did not care about it, explained by # 11: “like we were I guess always naughty but like I didn't care about it.”

Ten individuals explained that they felt they had a Place to Hang Out from the start. This would not be termed territory by them but identified as their place. Often, the effect of olders would be seen here, as younger groups would hang out in the same places the olders would. This was summarized by # 12: “yeah cuz that's where like we would all start hanging out and like the older lot as well.”

### **Status – Remaining**

Only four participants suggested that status was of Importance to them at this stage of membership. Eight individuals stated they Just Have it, and were not able to identify its roots, as suggested by # 9: “When I was younger I did... like when I was young but not anymore, I just have it like it just happens“. Seven showed awareness that they had a Mixed Status. This was well summarized by # 12: “yeah it depends like certain people, bad reputation, certain people, good... like in front of like other people like in like adults... it was like a bad reputation but like mates it would be good.” Six identified reasons for having a Positive Status based on the way girls see them, being popular, good at sports or a good friend. Eight identified reasons for having a Negative Status because of their involvement in crime and fighting. This was explained by # 8, for example: “obviously cuz we used to sell drugs and that innit so...”. Only two participants stated they Did Not Care about status. One participant suggested a struggle

between wanting status and then having it; # 6 explained: “ehm sometimes you want it but then after, like sometimes like I wanted but then I didn't want it like, like I want it but then you start doing stuff and everyone knows you innit from instagram or whatever.”

Fifteen participants showed awareness of having some type of Territory. This was mostly in terms of the area they lived in, the specific street or area of business. The participants did not suggest any strict borders as to who could walk where, though business rules needed to be abided by. This was explained by # 11: “nah like everyone can go anywhere but like we did have our place where we sell drugs like obviously no one else can sell there. “

Table 4.6 below provides a summary of the way individuals perceived status at the stages of joining and remaining in a gang. The numbers in brackets present the number of participants perceiving the group processes in such way.

Table 4.6 Perception of Status at the stages of Joining and Remaining in a gang

<b>Status</b>	<b>Joining</b>	<b>Remaining</b>
	Perceived status as important (n=14)	Perceived status as important (n=4)
	Perceived 'simply having' status (n=3)	Perceived 'simply having' status (n= 8)
	Had status through a family member (n=1)	Perceived they had a 'mixed' status (n=7)
	Gained status through positive behaviour (n=2)	Perceived having a positive status (n=6)
	Gained status through negative behaviour (n=2)	Perceived having a negative status (n=8)
	Did not perceive status as important (n=5)	Did not perceive status as important (n=2)
	Perceived they had a place to 'hang out' (n=10)	Showed awareness of having a territory (n=15)

#### **4.2.7 Social Dominance**

##### **Social Dominance – Joining**

Most participants could not appropriately discuss this process without frequent and specific prompts from the researcher. Therefore, only a small number of participants' answers were taken into consideration for this section (i.e. yes/no answers were discarded as being too uninformative). Six individuals stated they felt they were more Idealistic when they were starting to spend time with their friends, as voiced by # 17: *“I guess like I just thought like why am I not getting like the same chance... like everyone should have the same chance like like obviously I know it doesn't work like that now.”* Three individuals stated that people should be perceived as Equal But only when deserving. Another participant stated that he believed individuals should be treated Equally as he had previously observed unequal behaviour. Two individuals, however, stated that in this world they need to Know What To Do, as voiced by # 6: *“...knew like you know if you wanna get to the top you have to do something about it like you know.”*

##### **Social Dominance– Remaining**

Five individuals suggested that in an Ideal world, individuals should be treated equally. Eleven noted that whilst not everyone can be equal, everyone should be given an Equal Opportunity in this world. This was explained by # 18: *“everyone should be able to have the same chances in life innit like that's just how it needs to be“*. Five discussed that, whilst it is not ideal, Equality Would Not Work in this world, as noted by # 20: *“someone will always wanna be on top like that's just how it is like it's not really right but like it wouldn't work in another way like.”* At this stage, 10 individuals

stated that individuals should be treated Equally in Certain Conditions only. This may be because they do not deserve it, some people are happier at a certain position, or because there needs to be certain order. This was nicely summarized by # 17: “like to some extent innit like not everyone can like be like the same and like you know not everyone wants to I guess but like there must be like rules, like order innit so like ...uhm... *but you should get a chance...*” At this stage of membership, 13 individuals stated that it is sometimes necessary to Step On Others, to make personal social dominance orientation stronger. However, such sentiment would usually be limited to their immediate surroundings, as explained by # 13: “yeah we do... but like I was saying like that's us [stepping on other groups], like it's different from people who like work it *shouldn't happen to them like.*“

The below table (Table 4.7) provides a short summary of themes which emerged at the stage of joining, and then at the stage of remaining in a gang. The numbers in brackets present the number of gang members who help such views.

Table 4.7 Perception of Social Dominance at the stages of Joining and Remaining in a gang

<b>Social dominance</b>	
<b>Joining</b>	<b>Remaining</b>
View of the world perceived as more idealistic (n=6)	Importance of being provided with equal opportunities (n=11)
Perception of equality but only to those deserving of it (n=3)	Perception of equality but only to those deserving of it (n=10)
Awareness of knowing 'what to do' in this world (n=2)	Equality only possible in an 'ideal' world (n=5)
Perceived equality as important (n=1)	Equality in the world would not work (n=5) Perception that at times it is necessary to 'step on others' (n=13)



#### **4.2.8 Social Exchange**

##### **Social Exchange – Joining**

The most common perception of social exchange by participants was that their group Felt Fair from the start. Eleven stated that they felt all members treated each other in a fair manner, as explained by # 10: “yeah definitely like we wouldn't hang out if we didn't like treat each other fair innit.” Seven perceived that social exchange was more important at the Start of Membership. Participants explained that this was due to not knowing each other well and the relationship being new, as voiced by # 8: “I guess like it mattered more cuz we didn't know each other that well yet so like we were like careful about it innit”. Only one participant felt that this exchange relationship was only in place because of Money.

##### **Social exchange – Remaining**

Similar to the stage of joining, a large number of participants perceived the relationships in their groups as Fair. Thirteen participants shared this view as, for example, stated by # 14: “yeah like if someone ain't like fair like why would I do something then innit like they treat me good I treat them good.” Three stated that their social exchange was fair in terms of Money. This was voiced by # 23: “yeah always like that was really important like I was telling you with money and all that as well like yeah like we were like equal definitely”. Only two participants admitted that the relationships were always Not Fully Fair. Along similar lines, nine stated that they only felt fair social exchange with Some People. For example, # 16 explained: “yeah like with some people innit with my close friends and like with everyone as well but it wouldn't be so much you wouldn't like care that much really”.

Table 4.8 provides a summary of themes as perceived by gang members at the stages of joining and remaining in a gang where the number in brackets corresponds to the number of gang members who held such views.

Table 4.8 Perception of Social Exchange at the stages of Joining and Remaining in a gang

<b>Social exchange</b>	
<b>Joining</b>	<b>Remaining</b>
Social exchange felt as fair (n=11)	Social exchange felt fair (n=11)
Social exchange more important at start of membership (n=7)	Social exchange perceived in relation to money (n=3)
Social exchange perceived in relation to money (n=1)	Social exchange not fully fair (n=2)
	Social exchange felt fair only with some friends (n=9)

#### 4.2.9 Norms

##### Norms – Joining

Only one individual stated there were No Norms present at the time when he was becoming a member of a group. Another three suggested that whilst there were some norms present, these were Not Serious, as explained by # 4: “well... it was like boy stuff like about girls like you have them but it's different, it became more serious...”

The remaining 17 participants stated that they were aware of some norms in their friendship group from the beginning. Eight stated that norms are something an individual Gathers. This was asserted, for example, by # 13: “yeah yeah definitely like you see what like happens to other people so you know like what to do and then like you learn later on as well innit.” Eight stated that they Just Knew what norms should be present in a group, voiced by # 9: “yeah like that's how it goes like innit you have to act like in some way right like you know what to do.” Six stated that they were Told about

norms throughout their life or from older people, as # 19 explained: “... *as you're* growing up like you can see from the older lot how they handle stuff.” One participant explained this by stating that these occurred because individuals were Similar to each other and so behaving in a similar manner was expected. Two saw norms in their group in terms of Morality, as # 5 explained: “like normal behaviour like you have to have like morality like”. Six saw norms in terms of gaining Trust, as discussed by # 23: “*yeah yeah because of what we do like like you gotta have each other's back that's what it is.*”

### **Norms – Remaining**

All 21 participants showed Awareness of the existence of norms in their group. Ten perceived them in terms of Morality, as discussed by # 20: “yeah like rules like norms?... like would be like yeah like it's not even a rule that you make it's our principle like you can't like do shit like you can't rob off women and like that.” Ten saw norms in relation to Loyalty, or supporting each other when needed, as voiced by # 14: “like no snitching... of course no snitching that's like cheating.” Five suggested that the Stakes that are in their group formed the basis for the need to have norms. An example was provided by # 12: “yeah it is important like if I go to the shop and then it's on the news that it had happened like if I told one of my mates, like the whole gang, the whole lot has to have my back.” Seven saw norms specifically in terms of Business: “yeah yeah cuz it's important that you don't get too hungry cuz if you get too hungry you get caught innit” (# 11). Eighteen were able to identify Serious Consequences for not following rules. The participants were not willing to share specifics. However, all except one stated that if an important norm was broken, that individual would be out of the group with no prospects of talking it out or returning, as # 16 explained: “like it depends but

*like I could take it to extremes definitely... I would definitely not [talk it out]... I don't just see it that's just not right..."*

The below table (Table 4.9) presents a summary of themes which arose at the stages of joining and remaining in a gang as relating to the concept of norms. The numbers in the brackets correspond to the number of gang members who help such views.

Table 4.9 Perception of Norms at the stages of Joining and Remaining in a gang

Norms	
Joining	Remaining
No awareness of norms (n=1)	Aware of norms in the group (n=21)
Some 'not serious' norms (n=3)	Norms seen in terms of morality (n=10)
Aware of norms in group (n=17)	Norms seen in terms of loyalty (n=10)
Knowledge of norms is 'gathered' (n=8)	Stakes of group membership caused the need for norms (n=5)
Knowledge of norms 'simply known' (n=8)	Norms seen in terms of 'business' (n=7)
Knowledge of norms was told to them (n=6)	Identifiable serious consequences to breaking norms (n=18)
Following same norms due to similarity of members (n=1)	
Norms seen in terms of morality (n=2)	
Norms seen in terms of trust (n=6)	

#### 4.2.10 Goals

##### Goals – Joining

Only one participant stated that he was Not Aware of any goals or aims when he started his friendship with his group. One participant stated that their aim at the beginning was simply to be Seen As Cool in front of other individuals which could be linked to status seeking. Seven discussed goals in terms of getting rid of Boredom/Having Fun. This was explained by # 14: “I think... no but we were all like doing naughty things so that we're not bored and like school and that.” The majority

(13) perceived goals in terms of living a Good Life, which included having money. This was nicely summarized by # 16: “when I was young, when all of us was young, the only goal was *I wanna have a nice car I wanna have the nice things and the nice watch...*”

### **Goals – Remaining**

The majority (14) of participants at this stage of membership stated that the primary goal or aim was seen in terms of obtaining Money. This is a significant change from the goals or aims that were proposed at the start of membership. This was, for example, voiced by # 3: “ehm... yeah... make money; yeah yeah let's... we all wanted money.” Two participants further suggested that the money was too powerful and they were Unable to Move On, which was explained by # 6: “I was going college before I come and getting qualifications and all of that ... obviously there is the money like cuz for people, they'll be making like hundred bags a year and then you would get a job and *maybe making half that and then just...*”. Four explained that they aimed for the Freedom to do what they wanted, rather than a specific goal. This was noted by # 14: “no... it was all about just like doing whatever we wanted like... I guess that was a goal to just do what you want.” An interesting shift at this stage of membership occurred where eight participants discussed the development of Own Goals which would not necessarily be in line with what other members aimed for. This was mostly described as a developmental shift, as proposed by # 20: “yeah yeah like my brothers go college *some go college some don't like when you're older you wanna do your own stuff innit.*”

Table 4.10 provides a summary of themes which arose as gang members' perceptions of the concept of goals, at the stages of joining, and remaining in a gang. The numbers in brackets present the number of gang members holding such views.

Table 4.10 Perception of Goals at the stages of Joining and Remaining in a gang

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Joining</b>	<b>Remaining</b>
No awareness of goals (n=1)		Goals as relating to money (n=14)
Goal to be seen as 'cool' (n=1)		Goal of money too powerful to move on from gang (n=2)
Goal to get rid of boredom/have fun (n=7)		Goal to gain freedom (n=4)
Goal to be living a 'good life' (n=13)		Development of personal goals (n=8)

#### 4.2.11 Interdependence

##### Interdependence – Joining

Eight individuals stated that it was important for them that individuals in the group are All Catered For. In other words, they would not do something for the benefit of the group if it would hurt an individual member. This was, for example, explained by # 8: “yeah cuz like if you don't pay attention to everyone then they don't wanna be in the group innit.” Only two stated that they would be willing to make small Adjustments for their group if necessary, as explained by # 19: “ehm... you could maybe do like small compromises innit but nothing big.” Three participants suggested that they felt Higher Interdependency at the start of their membership, as voiced by # 10: “yeah like definitely like when we started hanging out you would like discuss all your ideas like you would tell them everything really....” However, five stated that they Cared Less At The Beginning about the rest of the group, as noted by # 4: “I don't think so no I think that I like cared so that everyone's doing good but it wasn't the same.” Further, four participants stated that they would Never Change and so felt that group membership should not affect the way one behaves or thinks: “I never thought like that like I would *not like change anything...*” (# 6).

### **Interdependence – Remaining**

The sentiment of individuals all being Catered For remained at this stage of membership, as stated by twelve participants and voiced by # 20: “no no no no no like you're not gonna do bad to no one you're not like of course not why like you don't care about him if you do something to him innit you care for everyone, every person always.” Four also suggested that they would make small Adjustments when necessary, similar to the forming/joining stage. Four showed an awareness of how One Person's Actions affect the rest of the group. An example was provided by # 11: “you want everyone to be happy innit so sometimes if it means one of them moans about it it gets sorted later.” Similar to when individuals started their membership, nine participants stated that they would Never Change and individuals started thinking in more individualistic terms. This was, for example, explained by # 16: “no definitely no like I was saying everyone is thinking of themselves at the end of the day.” Two participants also explained interdependence simply in terms of Money. As with previous group processes, three individuals stated that they would be more interdependent with only Some Friends and not the whole group. This was discussed by # 19: “like not everyone is your close mate so like you don't like just care about everyone who you hang out with innit.”

Table 4.11 aims to provide a summary of themes relating to the group process of interdependence, as understood by gang members, at the stages of joining and remaining in a gang where the numbers in brackets correspond to the number of participants holding such view.

Table 4.11 Perception of Interdependence at the stages of Joining and Remaining in a gang

<b>Interdependence</b>	
<b>Joining</b>	<b>Remaining</b>
Perception that all individuals within gang should be catered for (n=8)	Perception that all individuals within gang should be catered for (n=12)
Willing to make small adjustments to self for the group (n=2)	Willing to make small adjustments to self for the group (n=4)
Higher interdependency perceived at the beginning (n=3)	Awareness that one person's actions can affect the whole gang (n=1)
Cared less about interdependency at the beginning (n=5)	Participant would never change for the sake of the group (n=9)
Participant would never change for the sake of the group (n=4)	Interdependency as based in money (n=2)
	Felt higher interdependency with some friends (n=3)

#### **4.2.12 Belongingness**

##### **Belongingness – Joining**

The vast majority of participants (18) stated that at the beginning of their membership they Wanted to have friends. This was either due to wanting friends actively or remembering that they always had friends: “yeah I guess like what else would I do like I'm really chatty I wanna have like people to hang out with.” (# 8). Only three participants stated that they did Not Care about having friends, as voiced by # 9: “no I never cared I wasn't bothered.”

Eleven stated that they had the feeling of belonging from their new group From the Start. As stated by # 11: “in a way...yeah I would say so cuz we just really clicked like from the beginning innit.” Six stated that this was due to spending most of their free time together from the beginning. This was explained by # 21: “like yeah cuz like when like we just met or whatever like we would like... you would hang out all the time like from the start innit.” Three voiced that they noticed that, whilst the feeling of belonging



was there, it was Not as Strong at the start (e.g. # 6: “from the start and like you know at the beginning like yeah but it's all like not so serious so it's just like whatever but yeah you feel that you're like treating each other well”). On the other hand, two voiced that they noticed a Negative Change. In other words, they felt they belonged more at the start than later in membership. This was explained by # 4: “I think at the very beginning yes but then when the group was bigger it was a problem cuz they weren't all like what I wanted.” Only one participant did Not Feel they belonged.

### **Belongingness – Remaining**

Nine individuals at this stage voiced that they still Wanted to have friends and they perceived this as important. This was discussed by # 10: “yeah like it's better when you can like call someone up and like you know be friends with people like.” However, six showed a shift to only caring about maintaining ties with their Close Friends, as explained by # 9: “like I have my close mates obviously I would be bothered with them but not like everyone.” Only four participants at this stage stated they Did Not Care about having friends: “yeah I didn't like being alone like... but like as I grew older like I didn't care about that anymore like it was when I was young” (# 25).

Four stated that they Felt like the group made them feel like they belonged. This was explained by # 14: “oh yeah yeah of course why would I hang out with people who I don't like!” Three even stated that they made an active Choice to maintain membership with this specific group, as explained by # 16: “actually yeah like because I did ... yeah like I talked to a lot of people and yeah I guess I got that feeling from them ...” Nine explained that they felt like they belonged due to their Time Spent together. This was explained by # 20: “like yeah yeah always cuz we all the same we all do the same thing

like we all hanging out together innit.” Two participants discussed that this feeling was just Good Enough. Similar to other group processes discussed previously, six individuals at this stage suggested they felt like they belonged only with a few of their Close Friends, as voiced by # 25: “yeah yeah they did like obviously like my three mates like more.”

The below is a summary of themes which emerged at the stages of joining and remaining in a gang (Table 4.12) where the number in brackets corresponds to the number of gang members who perceived the group processes relating to belonging in relation to the themes.

Table 4.12 Perception of Belongingness at the stages of Joining and Remaining in a gang

<b>Belongingness</b>	
<b>Joining</b>	<b>Remaining</b>
Wanted to have friends (n=18)	Wanted to have friends (n=9)
Did not care about having friends (n=3)	Want to maintain ties only with close friends (n=6)
Had a feeling of belonging from the start (n=11)	Did not care about having friends (n=4)
Feeling of belonging not as strong at the beginning (n=3)	Had a feeling of belonging (n=4)
Feeling of belonging stronger at the beginning (n=2)	Made an active choice to remain member (n=3)
No feeling of belonging at the beginning (n=1)	Increased sense of belonging due to time spent together (n=9)
	Feeling of belonging 'good enough' (n=2)
	Feeling of belonging with only close friends (n=6)

#### **4.2.13 Social support**

##### **Social support - Joining**

Three participants stated that they Did Not Think about whether their group was going to be supportive of them. This was voiced by # 4: “... *I never thought of it like*

*that like if they'll be there for me I don't know.*" Six, however, stated that they Expected their group to provide support to them prior to starting membership and very early on. This was discussed by # 21: "yeah like cuz obviously like you want that [back up] in friends innit." The majority (11) suggested that they Felt support from the very beginning. This was explained by # 6: "yeah definitely like it was different when we were boys like it was about silly things but yea ..."

### **Social support – Remaining**

Only one participant stated that he Did Not Feel support from his group of friends. Eleven stated that they felt the group Supported for them, as explained by # 21: "yeah definitely like I knew like they had my back when I needed something." Eight participants, along the lines of what was discussed previously, suggested that they only felt social support with Some Individuals in their group. For example, # 6 said: "it's like more close and more important with them as well and you wanna feel all that."

At this stage of membership, only one individual stated he would be Comfortable sharing his feelings with the rest of the group, the rest did not share this sentiment. Seven stated they would Not Share their feelings at all, as voiced by # 1: "yeah... ehm you wouldn't share your feeling no no, why you don't do that man." Eleven participants stated that they would only Share with Close friends, as explained by # 21: "well not everyone like obviously... like I would like talk to a few in the group about that yea but like it's not like I can't but it's personal innit."

Table 4.13 below presents a summary of themes relating to the group process of social support, as perceived by gang members at the stages of joining and remaining in a

gang. The numbers in the brackets present the number of gang members holding such views.

Table 4.13 Perception of Social Support at the stages of Joining and Remaining in a gang

<b>Social support</b>	
<b>Joining</b>	<b>Remaining</b>
Did not think about social support (n=3)	Did not feel social support (n=1)
Had an expectation of social support (n=6)	Felt social support (n=11)
Felt social support from the beginning (n=11)	Felt social support from some individuals (n=8)
	Felt comfortable sharing feelings (n=1)
	Did not feel comfortable sharing feelings (n=7)
	Felt comfortable sharing feelings with close friends (n=11)

### 4.3 Discussion

This preliminary study aimed to consider whether the group processes considered in this thesis manifest in gangs, and also to understand how participants perceive these processes.

#### 4.3.1 Joining/Forming and Olders

The majority of participants did not actively join a gang, rather, they formed a friendship group, mostly due to processes of similarity and proximity. Whilst crime was not a core characteristic at the stage of joining/forming, the majority of participants stated they were aware that engagement in anti-social behaviour would be a part of the group's activity. This is an important finding as most literature currently deals with the area of gang membership as joining a gang and often neglects the notion that individuals come together as friends, not planning crime to be a part of their membership (Klein & Maxson, 2006; James, 2015).

Further, a theme of olders emerged from the data which is not in line with previous research. The effect of olders was not discussed by all participants, but it was not a part of the interview schedule. It was beyond the scope of this study to discuss the influence of olders on gang members in any real depth. However, this theme emerged strongly and through several different group processes. Only two participants joined a group of olders, the rest quite clearly voiced that they were their own separate group even though they might hang out together. They would also not refer to themselves as youngers, simply a group of friends. This information should be utilized as it is often hypothesized that youngers and olders are part of the same group (Klein & Maxson, 2006). Rather, research and practice should consider the role of olders more specifically.

#### **4.3.2 Group processes in gangs**

The current study's findings are in line with the study's hypotheses. 1) It was found that group processes regularly manifesting in groups do, indeed, also manifest in gangs. 2) It was found that gang members showed a unique way of perceiving group processes. 3) It was found that such perception varied from the stage of joining a gang, and then remaining in a gang.

Individuals perceived the process of **social identity** as important during the joining, as well as when remaining in a gang. Overall, it seems that most individuals were motivated to decrease the uncertainty of their lives by gaining a social identity either through associating with individuals who were similar to themselves, lived nearby, or through individuals that they knew something about. Hogg et al. (2011) suggested that individuals are motivated to decrease their own self-uncertainty, though

it was never clear why one would choose a gang over a different type of a group. The present data adds to this by suggesting that individuals would choose a specific group because of similarity, proximity, having information on individuals and actively choosing them. However, this data conflicts with recent thoughts that individuals feel that they 'have to' join a gang (Goldman, Giles, & Hogg, 2014), as the vast majority of these participants formed a pro-social group which later developed into a gang. Therefore, it is important that prevention strategies should not only look into changing youths' perspective on gangs, as social identity seems to develop in gangs similarly to how it develops in pro-social groups. This study's findings suggest that individuals were eager to retain their own individuality whilst already showing distrust of others. This possibly makes gaining a satisfying social identity difficult, as trust is one of its key components (Hogg & Hardie, 1992). Further work should explore where distrust comes from in a gang. It could be from previous experiences, possibly elders discussing instances where trust was broken or home life, disruption via divorce, etc. Perhaps, distrust is an aspect of social identity specific to gangs and not pro-social groups.

**Social identity**, at the stage of remaining in a gang, seems to be a strong pull for individuals. Time spent together was an important factor contributing to the feeling of identity whilst remaining in a gang. Similarly, getting to know more about each other was perceived as a building block for social identity. However, individuals also noticed a negative change in members upon getting to know them better. The pull of social identity is even more visible as individuals who start noticing differences with some members, still maintain an identity with selected other individuals. This means that even as individuals start disagreeing with certain individuals, the pull of the remaining

friends remains strong and they do not want to seek an alternative social identity (Tajfel, 1974). Whilst the importance of highlighting one's own identity has been noted before (Hennigan & Sloan, 2013), identity gained from only a close group of friends within their group, rather than with the whole group, has not been considered before. Similarly, the areas of trust and stakes surrounding gang membership have not been evaluated with regards to social identity, despite most research on group processes in gang is focused on it (Hogg & Hardie, 1992; Tanis, 2005).

With regards to **social comparison**, at the stage of joining, most gang members recognised the manifestation of social comparison. Only a minority did not feel any social comparison. This was mostly perceived in terms of 'banter' or 'boys being boys'. Trying to understand how other people are in comparison to the self has been observed in gangs previously (Vigil, 1988, 2010). The way social comparison was perceived by participants (i.e. being similar, understanding others better, and comparing self in activities that are similar across members) has not been directly observed in literature in relation to gangs. However, it has been suggested that individuals in gangs often play truant from school (Craig et al., 2002) and so comparison in terms of common activities outside of the school environment can be expected. The fact that such a small proportion of individuals cited money as a reason for social comparison further highlights the pro-social nature of groups which only later turn into gangs. The majority also stated that they would always be themselves and not modify their behaviour. Only a small number stated that they would act a certain way at this stage of membership

**Social comparison** was shown to be an important perceived group process at the stage of remaining in a gang. 'Banter' continued to be the most discussed element of

social comparison. As opposed to the joining stage, individuals were more concerned with crime and money as this is now what makes them similar (as opposed to similarity discussed under Joining; Vigil, 1988). Only a minority did not note the presence of social comparison. Individuals are, again, noting that not all members are worth comparing themselves to and so close-knit ties are forming with specific members. Therefore, rather than seeking a new group to compare themselves with (Fleisher, 2001), these individuals retain membership but only compare themselves with certain individuals, unless a change in priorities takes place. This might also explain retention of ties even beyond desistance from the gang (Pyrooz et al., 2010). The information that individuals do not engage in impostor behaviour and actively refute such claims might be indicative of a lack of social comparison toward the whole group.

**Social influence** was viewed by participants as being present throughout both stages of membership. At the stage of joining, it was shown that engaging with a group which might later turn into a gang included positive and negative influences. Only a minority of respondents did not feel any influence at this stage. In terms of negative influences, this could be seen in terms of majority influence (Festinger, 1954), as well as minority influence from the participant himself (Wood et al., 1994). At the same time, some gang members identified both positive and negative influences– this balance usually means that a group can function well having both of these influences present (Latané & Bourgeois, 2001). Whilst this was proposed in terms of a balance between minority and majority influences, it can be applied to positive and negative influences. This might explain why this type of a group has such a strong pull. It seems that participants were struggling to identify specific positive influences and this could be



important for potential intervention programs. As has been shown previously, most participants saw themselves as similar to the other group members, which can make social influence easier (Higging, 1987).

At the stage of remaining in a gang, participants more clearly explained what constituted positive and negative **social influences**. Fewer individuals felt that there was no influence in their group. This is contrary to the developmental approach to social influence where as one grows older, they become less prone to social influence (Lahey et al., 1999). As individuals could better identify negative influences, these could be used to highlight their impact to encourage individuals to no longer see them as acceptable and leave the group (Bjorgo, 2002; Pyrooz & Decker, 2011).

Respondents showed an appreciation of **decision making practices** at the stage of joining. Interestingly, whilst most formed a pro-social group where crime was not an element, the majority showed an awareness of their proneness to anti-social behaviour. Participants at this stage suggested mostly pro-social cooperation, but also stated that their decisions were not always “good”. The majority of participants showed appreciation of free will in the group - this might be due to the lack of social controls placed on these individuals and them trying to find their own individuality. Whilst informal chats within the group would often take place, participants had the freedom to make any decision they wanted. It seems that they did not rely on their group to make decisions together, which contrasts with previous finding regarding this group process (Stasser & Dietz-Uler, 2001).

The group process of **decision making** was quite similar at the stage of remaining in a gang as at the joining stage. Individuals still considered pro-social cooperation.

However, more now discussed the appropriateness of a decision by its outcome – Vigil (1998) found that gang members tend to evaluate their decisions in a positive light. Participants still appreciated having a free will and informal talks, however, several now recognised that they would often rush into decisions. The only true decision making process was observed when the group’s business was discussed and only a few would perceive someone to lead on decisions in their group. Further, similar to a shift mentioned previously, some would choose to discuss decisions only with close friends. Lack of a decision-making process and a lack of understanding of consequences of decisions was visible at this stage (as opposed to Strasser & Dietz-Uler, 2001).

Data from the stage of joining is in line with previous research suggesting **power** as an often-cited reason for individuals wanting to join gangs (Lahey et al., 1999). This is interesting with regards to the present study as most of these individuals formed a pro-social group before it developed into a gang. The majority found status to be important at the stage of joining, whilst some participants stated that they simply had status. Individuals distinguished between positive (status gained by engagement in positive activities/behaviours, e.g. good football player) and negative status (status gained by engagement in negative or antisocial activities/behaviours, e.g. fighting) and only a minority did not consider status to be of importance. The identification of positive status by gang members is important as this has not been explored in previous research – individuals noted that negative status is easier to gain but equally as attractive as positive status. Territoriality has previously been suggested as a reason for joining gangs (Decker & Curry, 2000). This is a possible reason for a pro-social group

developing into a gang – due to hanging around known territories, especially when these were occupied by elders.

The area of social dominance was discussed at the stage of Joining. Participants felt that they were more idealistic concerning how the world works and wanted to treat everybody fairly and equally. However, already at this stage, some participants stated that equal treatment should only be for those who deserve it. Further, a couple of participants pointed out that they knew what needed to be done to ‘climb the hierarchy ladder’. This information suggests that individuals do not have a fixed mind set at the beginning stage of membership. However, at this stage, the knowledge of knowing what needs to be done and not everyone deserving to be treated equally can be seen as supporting of previous literature (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). This suggests that those higher in social dominance orientation might be more prone to joining a gang (Wood et al., 2014).

Not surprisingly, **power** and status achievement were perceived as important group processes by participants also as membership progressed. However, a smaller number of participants were actively seeking status or saw it as important. Again, participants identified positive, as well as negative status. Several participants felt they possessed a positive status despite their involvement in crime, and so status should not be discussed with individuals as a negative concept. Others appreciated having a mixed status. Interestingly, participants did not discuss status in terms of group hierarchy, which is an often-cited aspect of gangs (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996). The territoriality that most participants showed awareness of can be seen as an important pull. Previous literature stated territoriality and related conflicts can increase the social identity of

a group, increasing the need for members to remain members (Brantingham et al., 2012).

At this stage of remaining in a gang, social dominance orientation seemed to increase in strength. Whilst this dominance was not observed in terms of wanting to better themselves within the gang, it was observed between gangs (Densley et al., 2014; Wood et al., 2014). However, the way participants spoke about equality and dominance suggested that their social dominance orientation is limited to their 'own world' and their surrounding peer groups, for example. Whilst participants showed an appreciation of an ideal world where everyone is equal not being possible, they highlighted the need for equal opportunities. This is an important finding as such perception of social dominance differs from traditional views on the topic where individuals higher in social dominance usually appreciate hierarchical structure everywhere in the world, not only in their 'own world' (Sidanius et al., 2007).

The present study uncovered the manifestation of **social exchange** at both stages of membership. Most individuals at the stage of joining suggested that fair social exchange was expected or felt, which has been previously suggested by Vigil (1988). Money was a theme only for one participant and so it is possible that they were expecting the same social exchange as in any other group – supportive of the finding that most did not join a gang.

At the stage of remaining in a gang, most participants still felt a fair **social exchange** relationship with other members. However, more participants hinted at money as motivating social exchange. Several participants at this stage also showed a shift of only engaging in fair social exchange with some individuals from the group.

Maintaining fairness has previously been observed as an important characteristic of a gang (Anderson, 1999; Matsuda et al., 2013) and engaging in such behaviour, either with the whole group or with specific members, should be considered a strong pull.

Only one individual showed no awareness of **norms** at the stage of joining. Most participants stated that they were aware of norms from the start because they either ‘just knew’ how to behave, or were told by others. This is interesting as such cognition developed prior to engagement in criminal activity. Gaining trust and ensuring morality were also discussed as key factors. Existence of norms is not specific to gangs (Viki & Abrams, 2013) but such high awareness of norms is interesting.

Whilst remaining in a gang, participants saw **norms** in terms of morality, loyalty, or the stakes group membership carries. Participants were more aware of specifics in relation to norms present in their group. Several perceived norms in terms of the group’s business. Participants were also quickly able to identify consequences of breaking norms (Rimal & Real, 2003), with the vast majority stating that there is no ‘talking it out’ process. Break in trust was taken very seriously, in line with what was discussed under Social Identity. It has been suggested that certain pushes from a group on individuals can become too overwhelming (though these have not yet been identified in terms of group processes) and often act against one’s developing identity (Bushway et al., 2001; Decker & Van Winkle, 1996) which might be the case with being highly aware of norms and consequences of breaking them.

All participants in this study (except one) were aware of the existence of some group **goals** at the stage of joining. These were mostly in relation to living a good life, not being bored, and having fun. Having goals in groups is natural (Viki & Abrams,

2013) though, for gang members, these goals were quite specific, short-term and not wide-ranging. They mostly centred around having little social control imposed on these individuals (Klein & Maxson, 2006; Vigil, 1998). This might be due to spending a lot of time outside of formal institutions, such as school, where some order would be established (Craig et al., 2002).

At the later stage of remaining in a gang, money was an overwhelmingly common aim, with individuals ranking it at the top of the goal list. **Goals** can be a very strong pull in group membership and goals perceived in terms of money might be even stronger (Short et al., 1965; Williams and Van Dorn, 1999). Having the feeling of freedom was still perceived as a goal. At this stage, however, individuals also started observing their own goals as separate from other group members, and this may be a factor that leads to members leaving a gang.

Considering **interdependence** of members, most participants actively voiced, at the stage of joining, that all members should be cared for. Interdependence was not perceived highly in terms of the group in general, rather, interdependency of all members was perceived as important. Participants also suggested that they would not change because of their friendship group, instead, would retain their individual identity. Due to having shared goals and engaging in mostly the same activities, interdependency usually increases (Sherif, 1966; Hogg, 1992) though this has not yet been explored in gang membership specifically.

The shift which occurred in terms of **interdependency** is an interesting one. Whilst participants showed higher appreciation of interdependency in some cases, more individuals also showed a higher appreciation of being their own person and engaging

in interdependency with only some friends. This may be due to the change in goals toward more individual ones (the pull of money was more present at this stage) and a closer identity with certain individuals in the group (Sherif, 1966; Hogg, 1992). Participants were still adamant that they would not change for their group. It might be that being too interdependent is perceived by participants as losing their own individuality, which is often undesirable (Brewer, 2003), even overwhelming (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996).

Most individuals at the stage of joining voiced that they wanted to have friends and felt (or expected) that this new group would make them feel like they **belong**, often due to a lot of time spent together right from the start. This is one of the most basic group processes and human needs previously also observed in gang literature (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Maxson et al., 1998). Interestingly, it might be this need to belong and perceived belongingness that keeps individuals in their group even after crime becomes an accepted activity.

As participants remained in a gang, they continued to voice the need to **belong**. However, several suggested that they now had this need only with close friends. Participants still felt like they belonged and suggested others gave them this feeling. However, the shift to only having this feeling with a few close friends was visible here, as well, which can form a strong pull to remain a member, unless an alternative becomes available (Bushway et al., 1991).

Lastly, individuals voiced that, at the stage of joining, they mostly felt **support** from the other group members. The notion that most of the individuals felt support from the very beginning could suggest the expectation these participants had of friendship

based on their environment and based on the activities they would be engaged in (Williams & Van Dorn, 1999). It needs to be highlighted, again, that crime was not usually a part of the equation at this point, however, antisocial behaviour or general mischief was and so it can be that it was this kind of support that was expected.

At the stage of remaining in a gang, participants still felt **support** from their group. The concept of close friends is visible here and ties, in terms of support and sharing of personal information, grow stronger for a selected few individuals. Social support is generally an important pull in groups (Williams & Van Dorn, 1999) and such ties with close friends seem to be very strong (especially shown by the willingness to share personal information).

#### **4.3.3 Summary**

In relation to the a priori hypotheses, this study's key findings are that the group processes of interest in this thesis manifest in gangs, are perceived uniquely by gang members, and differ in their perceived influence based on the stage of membership. This supports the notion that gangs, just like any other group, go through a specific life cycle (Moreland & Levine, 1982; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Therefore, gangs need to be seen as dynamic entities that evolve and develop, as do their members.

Overall, it is important to appreciate that most of the interviewed individuals did not join a gang, they formed a pro-social group. The effects of olders were present throughout the exploration of group processes; however, these olders were not perceived as a part of the individual's group. One common shift was present throughout the majority of the discussed group processes – development of close bonds with selected group members. Another common observation was in terms of the need for



individuality expressed by the participants. Lastly, the fact that individuals were prone to show an appreciation of norms, goals, or social exchange from very early on, despite joining a group where crime was not yet accepted, might mean that these individuals developed such cognition in their environment. This could also explain the early distrust of others shown by participants which has not been explored before.

In the current study, it was shown that group processes regularly manifesting in groups also manifest in gangs and that they are recognised uniquely by gang members, which differed based on the stage of membership they were in. As the study of group processes has been highlighted as crucial for half a century now (Short & Strodtbeck, 1965), these results provide basis for future study in the area. Gang members' specific views with regards to the explored group processes provide valuable insight that can be used by scholars and practitioners. Findings also show that the group processes changed in their manifestation depending on stage of membership (Uggen & Piliavin, 1998). However, what is not clear within this study is which group processes are most salient at the joining/forming and remaining stages. The following chapters explore these issues in more depth.

## **Chapter 5 – Exploration of perceived group processes in gang members at the stage of joining/forming a gang.**

Chapter 4 provided some insight into the area of group processes in gang membership by showing that group processes were, indeed, understood by gang members as manifesting in their gangs, that the gang members had specific ideas about each of these group processes, and that they perceived the group processes differently when getting to know their new group and when remaining in their gang. Whilst this information provided much needed background into further investigation of group processes in gang membership, we need to better understand which group processes might be more important when individuals make the decision to join a gang.

Theoretically, links can be seen between different group processes and how individuals' perceptions of these can effect gang members' decisions to join a gang. Individuals might choose a gang because they are often perceived as cohesive (Hughes and Short, 2005; Przemieniecki, 2005) and because they might feel low levels of cohesion (Sampson et al., 1997), or high levels of threat (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996) in their surroundings. However, as it is unclear what exactly it is that causes cohesion (e.g. Haynie, 2001; Hughes, 2013), it is important to explore group processes which feed into cohesion. The area of social identity has not provided many answers regarding why one would choose a gang over a different type of group (Wood & Alleyne, 2010). However, it is possible that a desire for social identity, which can be especially strong during teenage years which is surrounded by a lot of uncertainty (Suls et al., 2000), individuals can strive for what they perceive as a beneficial social identity which is more of a right 'fit' for them (Moule et al., 2013). The same can be assumed about

social comparison, which individuals often seek in times of uncertainty and gang membership can provide opportunities with what they perceive as beneficial social comparison and social influence (Vigil, 1998). Further, in places with a tradition of gangs, seeking social comparison or social influence in gangs, specifically, might be an easy option (Bornstein, 1989; Klein & Maxson, 2006). Youth can also seek to compare the self with, and are more likely to accept being influenced by, gang members, rather than non-gang individuals, as gang members are portrayed as stereotypically strong males (Lopez & Emmer, 2002) which can be attractive to those seeking group membership. They might also simply seek the gang member image itself (Schaefer et al., 2014).

Regarding social facilitation, group performance or group decision making, we know that all of these phenomena occur in gangs (e.g. Thornberry, et al., 1993). However, why one would choose a gang over another type of group is again only theoretical. It might be as individuals seek retaliation against others who harmed them previously (Vigil, 1998) which can be easier within a group setting (Fagan, 1990). This might also be due to the fact that gangs are often portrayed as powerful and so capable of such action (Anderson, 1999; Hughes & Short, 2005; Przemieniecki, 2005). Power-oriented group processes can therefore also be seen as attractive group processes for potential gang members as they might seek such power (Lahey et al., 1999). Whilst leadership is likely not an attractive pull to become gang members (as many gangs do not have a clear structure; Decker & Van Winkle, 1996; Klein & Maxson, 2006), hierarchies do exist in gangs and so a desire for status might also exist (Curry et al., 2002; James, 2015). It has also been found that individuals high in social dominance

orientation might be more prone to joining gangs (Wood et al., 2014) and that having the potential for a territory can be seen as part of gaining a perceived beneficial social identity for gang members (James, 2015).

The group processes of social exchange and reciprocity can also be at play when individuals are choosing group membership which can take a special form of specific rewards and inputs (Vigil, 1998). For example, individuals might perceive the ‘wealth’ of gang members and would want to engage in a relationship when one of the gains would be monetary (Vanneman & Pettigrew, 1972). Such social exchange might be based on specific norms where individuals might choose a group whose norms they find desirable (e.g. loyalty, protection; Vigil, 1998; Wood & Alleyne, 2010). These norms can then further be helpful when reaching gang-specific goals which pro-social groups cannot provide (Emler & Reicher, 1995), making them an attractive choice. Rather than such restrictive group processes, it is also likely that individuals simply want to feel like they belong and are supported. Negative experiences from their surroundings (e.g. family, institutions, friendship groups; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Decker, 1996; Maxson, et al., 1998) might prompt individuals to choose a gang, rather than a pro-social group (Dyson, 1990; Howell & Egley, 2005) which can be inferred from the findings that gang members generally share negative experiences of pro-social institutions (James, 2015; Pyrooz, 2014) and such peer similarity can be a strong pull (Beier, 2014). It might also be that individuals living in a community with a high gang presence find it easiest to connect to such a group (Schaefer et al., 2014).

Links between why individuals would choose to join a gang from a group processes perspective can be made. However, a very small number of these group

processes were directly examined in gang membership (e.g. social identity), and only in isolation from other group processes and as static concepts. However, group processes interact with each other. For example, social exchange easily influences group processes of status or norms. For example, gaining higher status within a group due to completing a specific task can be seen as a social exchange relationship and this might be a norm which is accepted by a group. Further, it is unclear whether these group processes are perceived differently by different types of gang members. For example, differences between core and peripheral gang members have been noted in much research (e.g. James, 2015). This chapter is concerned with exploring said group processes, as perceived by gang members, in regards to the joining stage of membership. The following key questions underpin this chapter: 1) What group processes do gang members and non-gang offenders perceive as important when deciding whether to join a group/gang? 2) Is there a difference, at the stage of joining, regarding gang members' perception of group processes, between different kinds of gang members?

## **5.1 Method**

This section provides information regarding the method of studies two and three together (chapters 6 and 7), as it was the same. Information which is specific to either study (Participants and Measures) is further elaborated on in the respective chapters.

### **5.1.1 Design**

A mixed methods design was used to identify differences between types of groups of participants, and which factors are the most pronounced in discriminating between them. The aim of using this research design was that, in such an unexplored area as the

study of group processes in gangs, it will help us to understand why differences occur (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Driscoll, Appiah-Yeboah, Salib, & Rupert, 2007).

#### **5.1.1.1 Quantitative**

Between subjects ANOVA and Regression analyses were used for this study. The independent variables (ANOVA) and dependent variables (regression) were the different types of groups: gang members, non-gang offenders, core and peripheral gang members, self-identified and non-self-identified gang members. The dependent variables (ANOVA) and predictors (regression) were the means on the group processes questionnaires, (i.e. Need for Social Approval, Interdependency, Group Identity, Impostorism, Individuation, Need to Belong, Reciprocity/Social Exchange, Social Dominance Orientation, Perceived Belongingness, Perceived Social Support, Social Comparison, Social Influence, Group Facilitation/Decision Making/ Performance, Power/Status, Norms, Goals).

#### **5.1.1.2 Qualitative**

Qualitative data were used to further illustrate why differences between groups arose and to understand participants' perspectives; their meanings and understanding (Mays & Pope, 1995). Thus by using a mixed, quantitative and qualitative design, where the qualitative portion elaborated on why quantitative differences occurred, was helpful to gain a holistic picture of the issues important to group members (Driscoll et al., 2007).

### 5.1.2 Research aims and hypotheses

The key aim of the current chapter is to explore how gang members perceive group processes in their new gang at the stage of joining a gang. Aims and hypotheses for the stage of remaining in a gang are presented in Chapter 6.

1) It is likely that both gang members and non-gang offenders will join groups for what they perceive to be benefits. However, we do not know if gang members perceive specific benefits via group processes in gangs that differ from those of non-gang offenders. The findings related to this question may have important implications for how we treat gang and non-gang offenders. And so, what group processes do gang members, as compared to non-gang offenders, perceive as important when deciding whether to join a gang/group?

a. It is hypothesized, based on the literature suggesting that youth join gangs for a need to belong and for material benefits that gang members, more than non-gang offenders, at the stage of joining, will be characterised by their perceptions of the importance of group processes such as social comparison, social facilitation, power-related group processes, need to belong and social support.

2) Core and peripheral gang members have been shown to have different levels of commitment to their gang and so be influenced by group processes differently. Similarly, those who can be classed as gang members (based on the Eurogang criteria) and self-identify as gang members might be most prone to the influence of perceived group processes. And so, is there a difference, at the stage of joining,

regarding gang members' perception of group processes, between different kind of gang members?

a. Due to lack of literature on perceived group processes based on level of membership, at the level of joining, no directional hypotheses can be drawn regarding different group processes. However, due to the differential levels of commitment that cores and peripherals have to their gangs, it is hypothesized that different clusters of group processes will characterise cores', and peripherals', motivations to become gang members.

b. As above, no directional hypotheses can be drawn regarding self-identified and non-self-identified gang members. However, it is hypothesized that self-identified, rather than non-self-identified, gang members' motivations to become gang members will be characterised by different clusters of perceived group processes.

### **5.1.3 Participants**

#### **Overall sample – joining and remaining stages of membership**

Two hundred and one male participants were recruited from four prisons and youth offending institutions in the south of England. Participants were approached individually and asked to participate. Of those approached, only eight did not want to participate. After removing responses which were considered outliers (due to extreme responses), 190 responses were retained. Eligibility criteria set out that participants had to be at least 16 years of age and up to a maximum of 28 years of age ( $M_{age}=21.22$ ,  $SD_{age} = 2.94$ ). This was so that participants could have a clear recollection of a youth group that they were (or still are) a member of. This was assessed at the beginning of



the interview – participants had to be able to recall belonging to a group whilst growing up in the UK, to avoid the possibility of observing cultural differences. This was because gangs in different countries have numerous similarities but also important differences (e.g. Klein & Maxson, 2006).

The Eurogang Youth Survey (explained below) was used to identify gang members in the sample; 137 participants were identified as gang members and 53 were identified as non-gang offenders. The sample was one of convenience and consisted of White (n=99; 50.10%), Black (n=64; 33.68%), Asian (n=13; 5.26%), and Mixed race (n=17; 8.54%) participants. Whilst understanding the composition of this age-group in custody in England is difficult due to available statistics for youth offenders (until the age of 18 or 21) and adult offenders (above the age of 18), the trends suggest that younger offenders are more ethnically diverse, and ethnic minorities are over-represented (with this trend less pronounced as the population becomes older). Therefore, the present ethnic composition seems to be representative of general trends observed in England (Ministry of Justice, 2014a). Participants were imprisoned for a wide-range of offences which correspond to offences commonly observed in the system (Ministry of Justice, 2014a). Index offences included: Robbery, Burglary, Stolen Goods and Theft (n=61; 32.11%); Drug offences (n=40; 21.05%); Violent offences (GBH, ABH, Kidnapping, Manslaughter, Murder, Attempted murder, False Imprisonment, Vandalism; n=53; 27.89%); Firearm offences (n=11; 5.79%); Sexual offences (n=11; 5.79%); Fraud (n=6; 3.16%); Breaches of court orders (n=4; 2.1%); Blackmail (n=2; 1.1%); Dangerous driving (n=1; 0.5%); and Arson (n=1; 0.5%).

### **Sample at the stage of joining**

Participants took part in either the ‘joining’ or the ‘remaining’ condition, not both. Ninety-six participants completed the ‘Joining’ questionnaire pack; this condition was assigned to participants randomly, using a randomization sheet created in Excel. Of these participants, 66 were identified as gang members, using the Eurogang criteria (see Measures) and 30 were non-gang offenders.

#### **5.1.4 Measures**

Each participant’s gender, age, ethnicity, and index offence (for the offender sample only) were collected. Gender and age were collected to see whether a participant met eligibility criteria. Ethnicity and index offence were collected to understand how representative the samples were (Appendix 6). Then, context was provided to trigger a response to think about the time in their life they were just starting to interact with their future group. Participants were asked to write down their age at joining/forming a group and to describe how this time in their life affected them (e.g. what emotions they were feeling and any crucial events). This was because emotions are a successful primer for triggering memories (Buchanan, 2007) and to ensure participants understood what stage of their life to focus on for responses (Appendix 7). The Eurogang Youth Survey was then used to distinguish between those who belonged to a gang and those who did not and to gain further understanding of the group’s characteristics (Appendix 6). This survey includes questions relating to the Eurogang definition of a gang and so assesses durability, street orientation, youthfulness, and acceptance and engagement in illegal activities. These are key gang definer questions and were used to classify individuals as belonging to a gang or not. It also includes further questions which can better describe a specific group – for example, their level of involvement in illegal activity. Further

questionnaires assessed their views on the specific group processes (see section 5.1.4 for information on the specific scales).

For the current study (study two) which is concerned with the joining/forming stage of group membership, all questions assessed the participants' views relating to this time of their life. For example, a question in the 'Joining' condition asked: 'When I was joining (forming) my group, I thought I would prefer to be in a different group'. The group process measures included those outlined in Chapter 5 (i.e. Need for Social Approval, Interdependency, Group Identity, Impostorism, Individuation, Need to Belong and Reciprocity/Social Exchange, Social Dominance Orientation, Perceived Belongingness, Perceived Social Support, Social Comparison, Social Influence, Group Facilitation/Decision Making/Performance, Power/Status, Norms, Goals). These can be seen in Appendices 8 and 9. Whilst most of the questionnaires were quantitative in nature, open-ended questions ensured that data would capture a more thorough understanding of reasons for differences.

### **5.1.5 Development and piloting of group process scales**

Group processes are usually explored as static concepts and most research is concerned with whether specific group processes occur in groups or how specific group processes manifest (see Chapters 2 and 3). However, the importance and manifestation of group processes, as perceived by group members (i.e. not simply whether they manifest or not, but whether they are attractive for group members) and what group processes are attractive at different stages of membership, has rarely been researched at all and never, to the current author's knowledge, specifically with gang members.

To achieve the above objectives, studies 2 and 3 relied on, where possible, established group process measures. However, considering the young age of some participants in this body of research along with the unpredictable literacy levels of participants, several scales needed to be reworded so that items could be easily understood (checked using Microsoft Word's readability score based on Flesh Reading Ease test; using 70 as a minimum score, referring to 'fairly easy to read'). Further, several group processes have not yet been tested from the perspective of the participant. Therefore, scales necessary for this thesis were either modified to be better suited to the population, or had to be newly constructed.

#### **5.1.4 .1 Design**

A factorial design was employed. Seventeen scales comprising a total of 128 items (precise number of items per scale can be viewed under 'Measures & Results') were pre-tested.

#### **5.1.4.2 Participants**

Pre-testing on an offender sample was not possible due to restrictions regarding participant numbers recruited in prisons/youth offending institutions. Therefore, 200 participants were recruited using Amazon's Mechanical Turk (mTurk) crowdsourcing platform, an online platform distributing paid work to mTurk workers. This platform has been shown to offer advantages to researchers, as access to a demographically diverse population (Behrend, Sharek, Meade, & Wiebe, 2011). Using mTurk has also been shown to provide reliable and valid data and, at times, better quality than using traditional data collection methods (Behrend et al., 2011; Berinsky, Huber, & Lenz, 2012; Mason & Suri, 2012; Rand, 2012). In order to match the participant criteria of the

main study and to ensure that participants had a good recollection of a group they were a part of when growing up, participants taking part in the pre-testing of scales had to be male, and over 18 years of age and under the age of 28 ( $M_{\text{age}} = 22.94$ ;  $SD_{\text{age}} = 1.41$ ). After cleaning the data from unfinished responses and outliers, 176 participant responses were analysed. Other demographic characteristics were of no interest when pre-testing the scales. All participants were paid for taking part in this study (\$1 per survey). This research was concerned with understanding the underlying group processes at the stage of joining/forming a group, as well as at the stage of remaining in a group. Two sets of questionnaires, comprised of the same questions but phrased with regards to these two different group membership periods, were developed. Therefore, 91 of the original participants completed the set of questionnaires with regards to Joining/Forming a group and 85 completed the questionnaires examining Remaining in a group.

#### **5.1.4.3 Procedure**

The questionnaires were uploaded online using Qualtrics, an online software dedicated to creating surveys. This software allowed for random distribution of the two types of questionnaires to an equal number of participants. Participants had to answer all questions (using forced response type questions), otherwise they could not continue with the survey. They were paid when they supplied a code to the researcher which was presented at the end of the study. The study was advertised on mTurk and participants could take part in the study only if they satisfied the above eligibility criteria.

The questionnaire started with an information sheet (Appendix 10), followed by a consent form. Only after participants indicated they understood the aims and their rights

could they continue with the survey (Appendix 11). Participants were then presented with the battery of questionnaires. Last, a debrief form was presented (Appendix 12).

#### **5.1.4.4 Ethics**

Participants were treated in accordance with BPS guidelines. This study gained ethical approval from the University of Kent Ethics Committee (number: 20133249). The information sheet outlined the aims of the study, criteria for participation, potential risks, withdrawal procedures, voluntary and anonymous participation, data protection, ethical approval, and contact details of the researcher (Appendix 10). A consent form was also provided which reiterated these points. The Qualtrics software would not allow participants who did not indicate their understanding of these points to continue (Appendix 11). A debrief form, further reiterating the stated issues, was provided to participants at the end of the study (Appendix 12).

#### **5.1.4.5 Analysis**

Responses were analysed using SPSS 22 for Windows. Scales were analysed separately for the Joining and Remaining sets of questionnaires due to their differing context. Factor analysis was performed first which aimed to establish whether all items related to one concept and how well each item contributed to the scale. Solutions with a different number of factors were considered, though only scales with solutions of one or two (in case of reverse worded items) were accepted for the final scale. No rotations were used when seeking a factor solution, though these were explored. Factor loadings of over .6 were accepted as sufficiently contributing to a scale (Field, 2005; Guafagnoli & Velicer, 1988; MacCallum, Widaman, Preacher & Hong, 2001). Items with low loadings were reviewed in terms of their theoretical relation to the scale. Items were

either deleted or reworded if contextually important. In instances where loadings differed among the two conditions and retaining an item became ambiguous, Tabachnick and Fidell's (2007) classification was considered (0.32 - poor, 0.45 - fair, 0.55 - good, 0.63 - very good and 0.71 - excellent). Reliability analysis (using Cronbach's alpha) was performed with the remaining items. This analysis allowed for a further look at how well items were contributing to a scale. If reliability of the scale could be improved by removing an item, it was considered how this item contextually fit with the scale. Inter-item correlations were considered where low correlations prompted the researcher to consider how these items related to the scale on a contextual level and how reliability could be improved by deleting these items. Reliability scores were evaluated as follows:  $\alpha \geq 0.9$  = Excellent,  $0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$  = Good,  $0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$  = Acceptable,  $0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$  = Questionable,  $0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$  = Poor and  $0.5 > \alpha$  = Unacceptable (George & Mallery, 2007).

#### **5.1.4.6 Measures, reliabilities and changes to scales**

All questionnaires used were either adapted from existing measures or created by the researcher. Where possible, existing scales were used to examine group processes. However, since existing research does not consider how participants view group processes, for example, whether participants viewed a group's decision making as attractive when thinking of joining/forming and during group membership, existing scales had to be either adapted or scales had to be newly constructed so that they test this perspective. Table 5.1 below provides the rationale for how the adapted/developed scales relate to the group processes discussed in Chapter 3. Final scales can be seen in Appendices 8 and 9.

Table 5. 1 Relation of scales to group process clusters

Group process clusters discussed in Chapter 3	Structured interview questions
Social identity	1. Group Identity
Social comparison and social influence	2. Individuation
Social facilitation, group performance and group decision making	3. Social comparison
Power related processes	4. Need for social approval (Brief fear of negative evaluation scale)
Social exchange	5. Impostorism
Norms, goals, and interdependence	6. Social influence
Need to belong and social support	7. Social facilitation, group performance and group decision making
	8. Power/status
	9. Social dominance orientation
	10. Social exchange/reciprocity
	11. Norms
	12. Goals
	13. Interdependency
	14. Need to belong
	15. Perceived belongingness
	16. Perceived social support

### Need for Social Approval

This scale was adapted from the 12-item Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (Leary, 1983). This scale is concerned with the perceived importance of others' opinions and approval. For example, one question asked: 'I am usually worried about what kind of *impression I make*'. The language of the original items was simplified and items were corrected to fit a group setting. For example, one item originally stated: 'I worry about what other people will think of me...' and was reworded to: 'I worried about what other *group members would think of me*...'. A five-point Likert scale was used to capture participants' responses (1=not at all characteristic, 5= extremely characteristic). Four



items were deleted as these were reverse-worded and were already captured under different questions and such repetition was not necessary. Factor analysis revealed that the remaining eight items all loaded sufficiently and on one factor, and inter-item analysis confirmed that these items should all be retained. Reliability analysis of the final eight item scale resulted in  $\alpha_{\text{joining}} = .943$  and  $\alpha_{\text{remaining}} = .900$  which are both excellent scores.  $M_{\text{joining}} = 27.18$ , (SD = 8.02);  $M_{\text{remaining}} = 26.12$ , (SD = 7.79).

### **Interdependency**

This scale was adapted from Lu and Gilmour's (2007) scale exploring independency and interdependency. Only the 21-item interdependency scale was used. The wording of the items was changed so that it encompassed a group setting if this was not already included. For example, one original item stated: 'I believe that people *should perform their social roles well*'. The item was changed to: 'I believe that people *should perform their group roles well*'. Items were also simplified in terms of the language used. For example, one item stated: 'I believe it is important to maintain group harmony' and was changed to 'I believe it is important for the group members not to argue'. Six items were not used as these were not applicable to a group setting directly or were repetitive once applied to a group setting. A seven-point Likert scale was used to capture participants' responses (1=very strongly disagree, 7= very strongly agree). Factor analysis revealed that all remaining items could be retained and all showed sufficient factor loadings for condition one. In the Remaining condition, items 13 (factor loading = .522) and 14 (factor loading = .487) showed low loadings and were further investigated. Due to sufficient loadings in the first condition and their theoretical relevance to this research, these items were retained. The resulting reliability analysis of

the 13 item scale showed  $\alpha_{\text{joining}} = .946$  and  $\alpha_{\text{remaining}} = .900$  which are both excellent scores;  $M_{\text{joining}} = 74.20$ , (SD = 14.55);  $M_{\text{remaining}} = 74.44$ , (SD = 12.70).

### **Group Identity**

This scale was adapted from Henry, Arrow, and Carini's (1999) model of group identification. Again, items were reworded so that they read in a simpler manner and were clearly about participants' groups (e.g. original item read: 'I enjoy interacting with the members of this group' and was changed to: 'I enjoy hanging out with the members of *this group*'). An item was added to further capture the dimension of biases, as this is often pivotal in members who truly identify with their group: 'I thought that this group was much better in their activities than any other *group*'. Items relating to purely behavioural characteristics (three items) were not included in the final scale as these referred to cooperation which were tested under a different concept. Repetitive items were also deleted and substituted by other concepts relating to Group Identity as identified in Chapter 2. A five point Likert scale was used to capture participants' responses (1=strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree). Factor analysis revealed two factors (Factor 1 – negative group identity where reverse-wording was used, variance explained = 38.33% and 30.70% for the two conditions respectively; Factor 2 – positive group identity, variance explained = 21.35% and 18.80% for the two conditions respectively; cumulative variance of scale = 58.70% and 49.50% for the two conditions respectively). Reliability of the modified 13-item scale was  $\alpha_{\text{joining}} = .79$  and  $\alpha_{\text{remaining}} = .72$  which are both acceptable scores;  $M_{\text{joining}} = 46.98$ , (SD = 6.50);  $M_{\text{remaining}} = 49.32$ ; (SD = 6.53).

### **Impostorism**

This scale was adapted from Leary, Patton, Orlando, and Funk (2000). This seven-item scale considered how individuals felt about their behaviour in their group and can be used to better understand how individuals perceive they are viewed by others, based on social comparison processes (Leary et al., 2000). Language was simplified and terms explained. One item was deleted (item 7) as it seemed almost identical to item four, conceptually. A five-point Likert scale was used to capture participants' responses (1=not at all characteristic, 5= extremely characteristic). All remaining items had sufficient factor loadings on one factor and inter-item correlations. Reliability of the modified six-item scale was  $\alpha_{\text{joining}}=.945$  and  $\alpha_{\text{remaining}} = .948$  which are both excellent scores;  $M_{\text{joining}} = 19.16$ , (SD = 7.05);  $M_{\text{remaining}} = 18.79$ ; (SD= 7.32).

### **Individuation**

This scale was adapted from Maslach, Stapp, and Santee's (1985) 12-item scale and deals with the need for individuality, a concept discussed under social identity. Language was simplified and items were adapted to be relevant to a group environment. For example, one item stated: '*Give a lecture to a large audience*'. The adapted item stated: '*Speak out in front of the rest of the group*'. Several items (four, eight, nine and 11) were deleted as they were not applicable to a group environment (e.g. 'Tell a person that you like him/her'). A five-point Likert scale was used to capture participants' responses (1=Not at all willing to do this, 5= Very much willing to do this). Factor analysis showed that the remaining eight items all loaded sufficiently in both conditions on one factor and showed good inter-item correlations. Reliability of the modified eight-item scale was  $\alpha_{\text{joining}}=.940$  and  $\alpha_{\text{remaining}} = .903$  which are both excellent scores;  $M_{\text{joining}} = 27.76$ , (SD = 7.71);  $M_{\text{remaining}} = 29.19$ ; (SD = 6.89).

### **Need to Belong**

This 10-item scale was adapted from Leary, Kelly, Cottrell, and Schreindorfer (2005). Items one, three, four, six, and seven showed low factor loadings in both conditions and were deleted from the scale as inter-item correlations supported such a decision. Upon reviewing these items, these were very similar to other items in the scale and so were deleted as the variety of questions in the scale was not compromised by their absence. These items were further enriched by making a group context clear. For example, the original item stated: 'I wanted other people to accept me' and was changed to: '*I wanted other people in the group to accept me*'. A five-point Likert scale was used to capture participants' responses (1=strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree). The reliability analysis of the final five-item scale was  $\alpha_{\text{joining}} = .817$  and  $\alpha_{\text{remaining}} = .715$  which are good and acceptable scores respectively;  $M_{\text{joining}} = 19.12$ , (SD = 12.57);  $M_{\text{remaining}} = 18.91$ ; (SD = 10.30).

### **Reciprocity/Social Exchange**

This scale was loosely based on those developed by Wu, Hom, Tetrick, Shore, Jia, Li, and Song (2006, which included 16 items) and Shore, Terick, Lynch, and Barksdale (2006, which included 14 items). These scales were used to test reciprocity and social exchange in the workplace and so were adapted to a group setting. Further, the first scale concerned the behaviours of the organisation rather than the individual, and so this was adjusted as well. Language was also simplified and some items were elaborated. For example, one item read: 'As long as I show concern for the welfare of the organisation, the organisation will be concerned for my welfare in return' and changed to: '*There will be a lot of give and take in my relationship with this group's members*'.

The generated items, due to such differing focuses of the studies, were loosely based on the items of these two scales which resulted in a 9-item scale. A five-point Likert scale was used to capture participants' responses (1=strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree). The items all showed appropriate factor loadings and inter-item correlations. The reliability analysis of the final nine-item scale showed  $\alpha_{\text{joining}}=.86$  and  $\alpha_{\text{remaining}} = .81$  which are both good scores;  $M_{\text{joining}} = 34.32$ , (SD= 5.46);  $M_{\text{remaining}} =35.35$ ; (SD= 4.95).

### **Social Dominance Orientation**

This scale was developed by Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, and Malle (1994). Items which considered the society were slightly changed to reflect a group setting. Items were worded in a simpler manner (e.g. the term 'inferior' was further explained or changed). For example, an item read: 'Some people are inferior to others' and was changed to 'Some groups of people are just less worthy than others'. A five-point Likert scale was used to capture participants' responses (1=strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree). Two factors were identified which related to how items were worded. Factor One contained the first eight items, which were reverse coded, and was termed Equality Orientation (38.70% and 33.32% of variance explained in the two conditions respectively) and Factor Two contained the latter eight items and was termed Dominance Orientation (29.02% and 23.36% of variance explained in the two conditions respectively; 67.72% and 59.69% of total variance explained by the two factors in the two conditions respectively). All items showed sufficient factor loadings and inter-item correlations. The reliability analysis of the 16-item scale showed  $\alpha_{\text{joining}}=.84$  and  $\alpha_{\text{remaining}} = .80$ , which are both good scores;  $M_{\text{joining}} = 43.80$ , (SD = 9.53);  $M_{\text{remaining}} =43.57$ ; (SD = 8.59).

### **Perceived Belongingness**

This scale was developed by Allen (2006) to assess perceived belongingness in sports and so was adapted to a group setting. For example, item 1 read: 'I feel like a part of my team' and was changed to 'I feel like a part of this group'. One item of the original scale was not used as it was concerned with the coach of the sport team and not all groups have a coach/leader (item 10). Three items of scale were reverse-worded and were deleted as were repetitive to positively-worded items. A five-point Likert scale was used to capture participants' responses (1=strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree). Item five showed a low factor loading only in the second condition (.523). Due to reaching an acceptable loading in the first condition, and its theoretical connection to the scale, the item was retained. Inter-item correlations of the remaining seven items were appropriate. The reliability analysis showed  $\alpha_{\text{joining}}=.85$  and  $\alpha_{\text{remaining}}=.86$  which are both good scores;  $M_{\text{joining}} = 27.99$ , (SD = 3.90);  $M_{\text{remaining}} = 28.59$ ; (SD = 4.26).

### **Perceived Social Support**

This 12-item scale, originally encompassing perceived social support from a 'special someone', 'family', and 'friends', was developed by Zimet, Powell, Farley, Werkman, and Berkoff (1990). Only four items considered a group setting, for example: 'I can talk about my problems with my friends'. A five-point Likert scale was used to capture participants' responses (1=strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree). Factor loadings and inter-item correlations were sufficient and so all items were retained for the final scale. The reliability analysis of the final four item scale showed  $\alpha_{\text{joining}}=.86$  and  $\alpha_{\text{remaining}} = .74$ , which are good and acceptable scores respectively;  $M_{\text{joining}} = 22.18$ , (SD= 3.87);  $M_{\text{remaining}} = 22.18$ ; (SD= 3.65).

### **Social Comparison**

The original 11-item scale was developed by Gibbons and Buunk (1999). Items two, four, six, eight, and 10 of the original scale were not used as these items did not capture concepts in the manner that would capture individuals' views of this concept. Two additional items were added to capture other dimensions of this concept, such as worthiness of others for comparing the self. For example, one item read: 'You felt that the members of the group were people you would like to compare yourself to'. The resulting scale was comprised of eight items. All of the items were worded so that it is clear comparison is about the other group members and language of some items was simplified. A five-point Likert scale was used to capture participants' responses (1=strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree). All items loaded sufficiently on one factor and showed good inter-item correlations. The reliability analysis of the final scale showed  $\alpha_{\text{joining}}=.85$  and  $\alpha_{\text{remaining}} = .85$ , which are both good scores;  $M_{\text{joining}} = 29.48$ , (SD = 5.56);  $M_{\text{remaining}} =30.06$ ; (SD = 5.76).

### **Social Influence**

This scale was developed by the researcher to see how social influence is perceived in a group context. Previous studies considered social influence as a product of interactions of members, not as a trait of a group as observed by members. Based on the theoretical information discussed in Chapter 2, an eight-item scale was developed. Items included: 'I felt the group had a good influence on me', and: 'I thought the group members would have a good affect on my feelings'. A five-point Likert scale was used to capture participants' responses (1=strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree). All items loaded sufficiently and had good inter-item correlations. Item three, which read: 'I

believed that the group and its members influenced my beliefs' was later deleted, as further discussions identified that this item could easily be misinterpreted (e.g. as religious beliefs). Subsequently, all remaining items loaded on one factor. The final seven-item scale showed  $\alpha_{\text{joining}}=.84$  and  $\alpha_{\text{remaining}} = .80$ , which are both good scores;  $M_{\text{joining}} = 26.27$ , (SD = 4.71);  $M_{\text{remaining}} = 27.35$ ; (SD = 4.27).

### **Group facilitation, decision making and performance**

This scale was also developed by the researcher. Usually, research examines how groups make decisions or whether facilitation takes place. The aim of this research was to see whether individuals find that these processes occur and whether they are an attractive trait. Based on theoretical information presented in Chapter 2, a five-item scale was developed to examine facilitation (e.g. '*My own abilities could be improved*'), decision making (e.g. 'Members cooperated together to do things'), and performance (e.g. 'Members made each other perform better'). A five-point Likert scale was used to capture participants' responses (1=strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree). The items all loaded sufficiently and had good inter-item correlations. The reliability analysis showed  $\alpha_{\text{joining}}=.84$  and  $\alpha_{\text{remaining}} = .80$ , which are both good scores;  $M_{\text{joining}} = 19.69$ , (SD = 3.31);  $M_{\text{remaining}} = 20.45$ ; (SD = 3.05).

### **Power/Status**

This scale was also developed by the researcher and sought to understand whether individuals perceived status and power as important, positive, and as a function of their new or existing group membership. Previous research did not consider these group processes from this perspective. An eight-item scale was developed considering issues of power (e.g. 'I felt that this group made me look more powerful in front of people



outside of the group'), status (e.g. 'I felt that this group gave me a respected social status'), and territoriality (e.g. 'I felt that the group gave me a territory of my own that I could protect as my own'). A five-point Likert scale was used to capture participants' responses (1=strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree). All items loaded sufficiently in both conditions. Item five's loading in the second condition of .545 was just outside of the set out range. The item was retained as it loaded sufficiently in the first condition and reliability was not improved by deleting this item. Inter-item correlations were appropriate for all items. The reliability analysis showed  $\alpha_{\text{joining}}=.87$  and  $\alpha_{\text{remaining}} = .83$ , which are both good scores;  $M_{\text{joining}} = 30.21$ , (SD = 5.38);  $M_{\text{remaining}} =30.80$ ; (SD = 5.10).

### **Norms**

Previous studies have mostly investigated the range of norms usually present in groups and/or how these affect individuals. The current study aimed to assess group members' awareness of norms in new/existing group and whether these are a welcome part of group membership. A five-item scale was developed to consider awareness (e.g. 'I knew that this group had certain rules that members had to follow') and perception of rules/norms (e.g. '*I thought that the rules of the group were reasonable*'). A five-point Likert scale was used to capture participants' responses (1=strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree). All items loaded sufficiently and had good inter-item correlations. Wording was later slightly changed to make language simpler (e.g. 'I thought that deviation from norms should be punished...' was changed to: 'I thought that any *member who broke the group's rules...*'). The reliability analysis showed  $\alpha_{\text{joining}}=.83$  and  $\alpha_{\text{remaining}} = .85$ , which are both good scores;  $M_{\text{joining}} = 19.07$ , (SD = 3.47);  $M_{\text{remaining}} =18.46$ ; (SD = 4.03).

## Goals

Most literature examining goals in groups has been concerned with the types of goals individuals in groups have, how individuals reach these, and similar issues. The scale developed for this thesis was concerned with whether group's goals were attractive for potential or existing members. It tested awareness (e.g. 'I knew the group *members had certain goals for the group's members*') and perception of goals (e.g. 'I thought that this group was the best one to help me get what I *wanted, reach my goals*'). A five-point Likert scale was used to capture participants' responses (1=strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree). All items loaded well and had good inter-item correlations. Language was slightly simplified to make the content of the items clearer. The reliability analysis of the final four-item scale showed  $\alpha_{\text{joining}}=.85$  and  $\alpha_{\text{remaining}} = .77$ , which are good and acceptable scores respectively;  $M_{\text{joining}} = 15.52$ , (SD= 2.71);  $M_{\text{remaining}} =15.54$ ; (SD = 2.69).

### 5.1.6 Procedure

The researcher gained access to HMP and YOI establishments via their governors or security personnel. The researcher was vetted for the purposes and key trained in all establishments. The researcher approached participants personally and explained the purpose of the study. They were told that the research examines their current or past group membership. The word 'gang' was not used as it could possibly shape responses. Verbal consent was required in order to book a time for the interview. The participant then met the interviewer at an agreed time, usually immediately after the initial approach. Participants were not approached if they had been identified by prison staff as posing a danger to themselves, staff, or the researcher, or if they were not physically or

mentally fit. Participants were only approached when not engaged in any other activity (e.g. education, work). Upon meeting with the researcher in a quiet area the aims of the study were explained again. Ethical issues (explained below) were also explained, including anonymity and confidentiality, withdrawal, researcher information, NOMS caveats, and other participant rights (see Appendix 13 for Information sheet). When they agreed that they fully understood this information, they signed a consent form (see Appendix 14). Then, the interview started. Participants were first asked about demographic information and the Youth Survey followed to identify them as gang or non-gang members. Group process questionnaires were then presented. Upon completing the questionnaires, a debrief (see Appendix 15) was read aloud and given as a hard copy to the participant which again reiterated the aims of the study, ethical concerns, and researcher contact information.

### **5.1.7 Ethics**

Participants were given a full information sheet where the aims of the study and ethical considerations were explained (Appendix 13). Participants were assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. They were also informed that if they disclosed information which could affect the prison regime or breach security, such information would need to be forwarded to appropriate persons (as per NOMS requirements, this included the disclosure of new offences, information with regards to harming self or others, or escape). Participants were told that they had the right to withdraw at any time up to two months post-data collection without their rights and privileges being affected. Participants had the right to ask questions throughout. They were informed that the data provided would be handled in accordance with the Data

Protection Act 1998. Further, participants were treated in accordance with BPS guidelines. Participants had to sign a consent form prior to starting the study after ensuring they understood all information provided to them. This form repeated information with regards to: having an understanding of the research; having a chance to ask questions; data protection; anonymity and confidentiality; and what information is the researcher obliged to pass on upon disclosure as per NOMS caveats (Appendix 14). The consent form was kept separate from questionnaires which only included participant numbers. A debrief was also given to the participants with the researcher's contact information in case of further questions or a request for withdrawal (Appendix 15). This form also included Samaritan's helpline in case they felt affected by any issues discussed and wished to speak to someone confidentially and outside the establishment.

The researcher did not recruit participants who were unable to give consent for whatever reason. Participants were only excluded if considered unfit by prison staff or if they posed danger to the researcher, staff, or themselves. The study gained ethical approval from the University of Kent Ethics Committee (20133249) and NOMS (2014-144).

### **5.1.8 Treatment of data and analyses**

Quantitative and Qualitative analyses were employed.

#### **Quantitative**

Responses were entered into SPSS 22 for Windows software. Preliminary analyses of frequencies and outliers were conducted first to uncover missing data or outliers which were determined using the difference between the first and third quartiles

and using the tuning parameter ( $g$ ) of 2.2. The value of 2.2, rather than 1.5, was chosen due to non-normally distributed data and suggestions that this value provides more accurate results (Hoaglin & Iglewicz, 1987). Based on this, 27 participants were excluded from analyses. Due to the skewness of the data and unequal sample sizes in certain analyses, non-parametric tests were employed to understand differences. Mann-Whitney U was employed as two groups were compared at a time. This test was used as it does not rely on a population characterized by a certain set of parameters (e.g. normal distribution; Corder & Foreman, 2014). Violation of one of the core assumptions of parametric tests was expected. For example, it was expected that individuals in any group would score to a higher end of the scale in terms of cooperation as this is likely in any group. The data were, however, from independent samples which meant that the tests were appropriate (Corder & Foreman, 2014). Bonferroni correction for significance levels was employed. Whilst any results with a significance value of less than .05 are reported, these results should be taken with caution considering that 16 different scales were used. Results with a significance value of less than .003 (.05 divided by 16) provide a stronger result. Effect sizes are also reported, using Cohen's effect size as a guide where  $d=.2$  is considered small,  $d=.5$  is considered medium and  $d=.8$  is considered large.

Further analyses identified which factors (group processes) best discriminated between different comparison groups. Discriminant function analysis was used for this purpose as it was deemed to be the most suitable form of analysis, due to the sample size of the studies and the properties of the collected data. This analysis allowed understanding of which factors were important for differentiating between groups of

participants. Whilst multivariate normality was not achieved for the present data, as discriminant function analysis is based on correlations, violating this assumption does not cause a problem. Further, as this was caused by skewness of data and not outliers, results are argued to be reliable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Homoscedasticity was tested using Box's M. As this test is highly sensitive, only results where  $p < .001$  were considered as not achieving this assumption (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). In such cases, analyses were based upon separate covariance matrices, rather than a pooled covariance matrix, which provided results identical to Quadratic Discriminant Analysis where this assumption is not needed (Bokeoglu, Cokluk & Buyukozturk, 2008). Multicollinearity was not observed in the present data (i.e. no correlation coefficients larger than .8) which was tested by analysing Pooled Within Groups Correlation Matrices. The minimum number of cases necessary to perform this analysis was reached (i.e. smallest group has at least as many cases as there are predictors); however, only some of the analyses achieved the recommended minimum of 4-5 times as many cases in each group as predictors. Lastly, it has been suggested that violating the above assumptions still produces relatively reliable findings when using Discriminant function analysis (Klecka, 1980). This is most important due to the violation of normal distribution of data. Considering the above information, Discriminant Function Analysis was selected as it is likely to provide the most reliable results. Only predictors which were shown to be significant, with at least a small effect size, with regards to the Mann Whitney U analysis were input into the discriminant function model. Only predictors with loadings of above .3 were included in the final result.

## **Qualitative responses**

Open-ended questions, with such a high number of respondents, provided a challenge. Thematic analysis was used, where the different view-points of participants were analysed to understand why differences in data did or did not occur. Thematic analysis offered flexibility, which was useful when no clear theoretical underpinning was available (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Participant responses to questions regarding a specific group process were grouped together based on what groups were being compared. Responses of these participants were then coded and differences between the groups in terms of such codes were analysed to help understand why quantitative differences occurred. This analysis does not provide an exhaustive list of perceptions as provided by participants but summarizes the most common themes which arose through data. In order to be succinct and for clarity, qualitative analyses are presented in a table format.

## **5.2 Results**

First, results of reliability analyses of the scales were analysed. Then, Mann-Whitney U and Discriminant Function Analysis, along with qualitative analyses were conducted. The findings are structured with regards to the specific groups being compared. Significance level of .05 was used throughout this thesis. Bonferroni correction (.003 for the current data) is also reported.

### **5.2.1 Reliability**

As can be seen in Table 5.2, all scales showed at least an acceptable reliability score as a results of running Cronbach's alpha internal consistency analysis.

Table 5.2 Reliability analysis of scales at the stage of joining

Scale	$\alpha$
Group Identity	.74*
Individuation	.95
Need for Social Approval	.95
Social Comparison	.90
Impostorism	.85*
Social Influence	.81*
Group Decision Making, Facilitation and Performance	.76*
Power/Status	.93
Social Dominance Orientation	.95
Social Exchange	.93
Norms	.88
Goals	.89
Interdependency	.84*
Need to Belong	.89
Perceived Belongingness	.90
Perceived Social Support from the group	.90

\*some inter-items correlations fell below .3 and so results should be viewed with caution

### 5.2.2 Gang members vs non-gang offenders at the joining stage

Of the prison sample, 71 individuals were identified as belonging to a gang and 23 were identified as non-gang offenders, based on the Eurogang criteria at the stage of joining. The Mann Whitney analysis showed these two groups did not differ from each other on eight group processes: **1)** Group Identity, **2)** Individuation, **3)** Need for Social Approval, **4)** Social Comparison, **5)** Group Decision Making, Facilitation and Performance, **6)** Social Exchange, **7)** Goals and **8)** Need to belong. This was due to low significance levels and/or low effect sizes. Gang members differed from non-gang offenders on eight different group processes as presented in Table 5.3.



Table 5.3 Difference in means between gang members and non-gang offenders at the joining stage

Group Process	Mean Rank Gang member	Mean Rank Non-gang offender	U	Z	Effect Size (r)	Direction and meaning
Impostorism	52.70	39.25	712.50*	-2.27	-0.23	Gang members were more likely to change their behaviour in front of their new group
Social Influence	43.98	58.43	692.00*	-2.37	-0.24	Gang members perceived social influence as less present
Power/Status	62.57	17.55	61.50**	-7.36	-0.75	Gang members valued power and status more
Social Dominance Orientation	60.39	22.35	205.50**	-6.21	-0.63	Gang members perceived the importance of social dominance more highly
Norms	61.98	18.85	100.50**	-7.05	-0.72	Norms were perceived as more important by gang members
Interdependency	58.96	29.85	430.50**	-4.43	-0.45	Gang members felt the importance of interdependency with their new group more
Perceived Belongingness	43.77	58.92	677.50*	-2.54	-0.26	Gang members felt lower belongingness with their new group
Perceived Social Support from the group	39.73	67.80	411.00**	-4.61	-0.47	Gang members felt less support from their new group

Note: \* refers to significance level of below .05

\*\* refers to a significance level of below .003 (Bonferroni correction)

Discriminant function analysis identified which of these best discriminates between gang members and non-gang offenders. Whilst Box's M showed a highly significant result (i.e.  $p < .000$ ), the Log Determinants were not largely different and separate covariance matrices were used to run this analysis. The overall Chi-Square test was significant: Chi-Square = 115.482,  $df = 8$ ,  $p < .000$ , canonical correlation = .850, only 27.7% of total variability was not explained by the function (Wilk's  $\lambda = .227$ ). The classification results revealed that 97.9% of original grouped cases were correctly

classified. Three of the predictors were identified as important predictors, using the cut off of .3 (Table 5.4). So, higher need and appreciation of status/power, norms and social dominance orientation best discriminated between gang and non-gang offenders.

Table 5.4 Correlations (factor loadings) for gang member vs non-gang offenders at the joining stage

Predictor	Function
<b>Status/Power</b>	<b>.796</b>
<b>Norms</b>	<b>.656</b>
<b>Social Dominance Orientation</b>	<b>.536</b>
Interdependency	.256
Perceived Social Support from the group	-.255
Social Influence	-.158
Impostorism	.115
Perceived Belongingness	-.109

### Qualitative differences between gang members and non-gang offenders at the

#### joining stage

Table 5.5 Gang members' and non-gang offenders' perceptions relating to Group Processes at the joining stage

Power	
Gang members	Non-gang offenders
1) Status perceived as something 'normal' and a part of growing up e.g. #106: <i>"You look better in front of your peers, it's a normal thing growing up"</i>	1) Status as directly relating to crime e.g. #125: <i>"Status and money go hand in hand"</i>
2) Individuals directly seeking status e.g. #127: <i>"You need to be on top – ... - you need to be getting the respect you deserve"</i>	2) Individuals not directly seeking status e.g. #343: <i>"...cared a little but wouldn't do anything for it."</i>
3) individuals perceived they 'simply had' status, with or without group e.g. #128: <i>"Just somehow had it, not something I fully thought about but I liked knowing I had it"</i>	3) Individuals perceived they 'simply had' status e.g. #149: <i>"...generally we were always quite known..."</i>

4) Perception of status as an activity to avoid boredom or something to work toward  
 e.g. #162: “...you get bored and this is something that you can work toward.”

4) Perception of having pro-social, rather than anti-social status  
 e.g. #138: “...nice to have positive status but not negative – I’m hard working and willing to help everyone”

5) Status perceived as means for protection  
 e.g. #162: “...because I need to belong with them, for protection”

6) Possibility of gaining status through pro-social activities perceived as harder than from anti-social activities  
 e.g. #132: “Popularity is important growing up but you can achieve it in positive ways – this was easier”

<b>Norms</b>	
<b>Gang members</b>	<b>Non-gang offenders</b>
<p>1) Norms perceived in terms of morals (towards outgroup, vulnerable people in society, ingroup, or 'norms' within the area)            e.g. #325 “You’d get beaten up because it means you f***** my pride, broke trust, have no morals”</p> <p>2) Norms perceived as relating to 'business' or anti-social activities            e.g. #163: “It’s like business – need to know costs and benefits, etc.”</p> <p>3) Norms perceived as substitute for low levels of trust among members            e.g. #173: “Because you don’t really trust each other, there is stuff going on, it needs to be controlled”</p> <p>4) Perception of consequences in relation to norms to guarantee members have 'each other's back'            e.g. 410: “Yes, you don’t want a friend who doesn’t have your back”</p>	<p>1) Perception of norms as general rules, like following the 'bro code'            e.g. #301: “We had rules like bro code and similar stuff but you wouldn’t want to punish them or anything”</p> <p>2) Perception of norms in relation to being a good friend/person            e.g. 415: “like we have them but it’s not like super important like you should just know how to behave”</p> <p>3) Did not perceive rules as important            e.g. #318: “No need for rules in this group”</p> <p>4) Lower identification of serious consequences than gang member            e.g. 234: “We’d have a falling out but wouldn’t get beaten up...you don’t need friends who don’t have common sense”</p>
<b>Social Dominance Orientation*</b>	
<b>Gang members</b>	<b>Non-gang offenders</b>

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1) Appreciation of seeking equal opportunities in the world  
e.g. 410: “ *I wanted more like everyone to be equal... like I should be able to do whatever I wanna do* ”

2) World perceived as not completely equal but less likely to 'do something about it' than gang members  
e.g. 425: “ *the problem that sometimes like ... if you're poor, you don't have the, like, chance to not be poor... I would be more likely to like maybe like be mean to other people but not like too much* ”

2) Understanding of what 'needs to be done' in this world  
e.g. 423: “ *...you know like I wanted more and more 'cause I knew that's the way to get more* ”

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\*Individuals had a limited recollection of Social Dominance at the stage of joining and so only a limited number of answers were considered

### 5.2.3 Core vs peripheral gang members at the joining stage

Out of the sample, at the stage of joining, from the offending population, 36 individuals were identified as core members of a gang and 30 were identified as peripheral members of a gang. This classification was based on the Eurogang criteria which classified them as belonging to a gang. Further, participants were asked to place themselves on a continuum of being very central to a group or not (from 1 to 5). This was used to classify them into core or peripheral gang members, using median split (1, 2, 3 = peripheral; 4, 5 = core). It should be noted that many individuals did not perceive such a thing as a peripheral gang member – many saw all the group members as equal which suggested that a traditional hierarchical gang structure did not fit the gangs interviewed individuals belonged to.

At the joining stage, the Mann Whitney analysis showed that core and peripheral gang members did not differ on 13 group processes: **1) Group Identity, 2) Individuation, 3) Need for Social Approval, 4) Social Comparison, 5) Impostorism, 6) Group Decision Making, Facilitation and Performance, 7) Status, 8) Social Dominance Orientation, 9)**

Social Exchange, **10**) Goals, **11**) Interdependency, **12**) Need to Belong and **13**)

Perceived Belongingness. This was due to low significance levels and/or low effect sizes. Core and peripheral gang members differed on three group processes (see Table 5.6).

Table 5.6 Difference in means between core and peripheral gang members at the stage of joining

<b>Group Process</b>	<b>Mean Rank Core</b>	<b>Mean Rank Peripheral</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>Effect Size (r)</b>	<b>Direction and meaning</b>
Social Influence	37.92	28.20	381.00*	-2.06	-0.25	Social influence was perceived more by core gang members
Norms	38.10	27.98	374.50*	-2.14	-0.26	Core gang members felt norms were more important
Perceived Social Support from the group	38.54	27.45	358.50*	2.35	-0.29	Core gang members felt higher levels of support from their new group

Note: \* refers to significance level of below .05

\*\* refers to a significance level of below .003 (Bonferroni correction)

The above variables, which provided significant results, were used as predictor variables in a discriminant function analysis to understand which best discriminated core and peripheral gang members. Box's M showed a non-significant result ( $p = .075$ ) and the Log Determinants were similar. The overall Chi-Square test was significant: Chi-Square = 10.163,  $df = 3$ ,  $p < .017$ , canonical correlation = .387; however, 85% of total variability was not explained by the function (Wilk's  $\lambda = .85$ ). Whilst such percentage is high, 59.1% of original grouped cases were correctly classified by this function. All three predictor variables were identified as important predictors, using the cut off of .3 (see Table 5.7). Feeling higher levels of social support from the group,

having a higher need and appreciation of norms, and feeling more social influence were predictive of core gang membership, rather than peripheral gang membership.

Table 5.7 Correlations (factor loadings) for core vs peripheral gang members at the joining stage

Predictor	Function
Perceived Social Support from the group	.672
Norms	.611
Social Influence	.590

### Qualitative differences between core and peripheral gang members at the joining stage

Table 5.8 Core and Peripheral gang members' perceptions relating to Group Processes at the joining stage

Perceived Social Support*	
Core	Peripheral
1) Perceived social support from gang e.g. #148: "...to support each of our individual dreams and be supporting..."	1) Perceived social support from the gang e.g. #121: "make me happy, support, they were there to get away from my problems"
* responses surrounding social support related to increased confidence, rushed decisions or a feeling of protecting each other. The qualitative responses did not reveal why a difference between core and peripheral gang members occurred	
Norms	
Core	Peripheral
1) Norms perceived as making group stronger in order to engage in illegal activity e.g. #101: "yes, makes group stronger – protects group's interests"	1) Norms perceived as normal but not very serious e.g. #121: "you have common sense rules, there may be some consequences but not massive. No need for that"
2) Norms perceived relating to violent conduct and protection of self and other group members e.g. #119: "...it can get really violent, if you don't follow, your own group can turn on you"	2) Norms perceived as relating to criminal activity but not very serious e.g. #150: "it was just about the drugs for us and it was never anything serious ... so we never felt like rules were needed to be very strong"

3) Norms perceived as relating to trust among members  
 e.g. #134: *“so you can rely on the group, keeps the group strong, mostly about snaking and others”*

4) Norms perceived as binding gang together so that criminal activity does not damage the gang  
 e.g. #210: *“ you need it because trust goes away with money, drugs...”*

5) Norms perceived as important due to stakes of gang membership  
 e.g. #155: *“should be common-sense, it’s about the fact that there’s more at stake”*

6) Serious consequences for breaking norms identified (beatings or exclusion, not being able to 'talk things out')  
 e.g. # 217: *“you’d get a beating if you don’t know the rule”*

3) Norms perceived as relating to trust among members  
 e.g. #128: *“because it increases trust but we sort of knew how to act when we got together...”*

4) Consequences for breaking norms identified (beatings, exclusion but also being able to 'talk things out')  
 e.g. #224: *“we could talk everything out with each other, no need for anything set really”*

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**Social Influence**

<b>Core</b>	<b>Peripheral</b>
1) Perceived social influence as positive (relating to mutual respect, support, sense of belonging) e.g. #108: <i>“ people can give you advice if they’ve gone through something similar”</i>	1) Perceived social influence as positive more often than cores (confidence, popularity, belonging) e.g. #172: <i>“ ...friendship and support”</i>
2) Perceived influence as relating to anti-social activity e.g. #141: <i>“ told me ways to make money...”</i>	2) Perceived influence as relating to anti-social activity e.g. #139: <i>“started committing crime with them and then continued...”</i>
3) Perceived pro-social social influence e.g. #148: e.g. <i>“ in terms of football, grades... someone in my group would pick me up”</i>	3) Perceived pro-social influences more often than cores (some noted no negative influences) e.g. #211: <i>“...could play football together”</i> #137: <i>“no because I wouldn’t do what I didn’t want”</i>
4) Social influence resulted in more daring actions e.g. #101: <i>“ doing bad things like violence and stupid crimes”</i>	

5) Neglected strong social influence and perceived self as key decision-makers  
e.g. #119: *“I knew what they were doing, but I was stubborn so I just wanted everything”*

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#### **5.2.4 Self-identified (SI) vs non-self-identified (NSI) gang members at the joining stage**

Additional analyses were conducted to examine core and peripheral gang members via using the method of self-identification (see Esbensen, et al., 2001), on top of being formally identified as gang members. It is possible that purely by self-identifying, individuals feel very close to their gang and so those who can be classed as gang members and self-identify might be most prone to the influences of group processes. Self-identified gang members were identified as those who satisfied the Eurogang criteria (same as above) and also self-identified (SI) as a gang member. Non-self-identified gang members were identified as those who satisfied the Eurogang criteria but did not self-identify as gang member. Out of the offending sample, at the stage of joining, 16 self-identified as gang members and 50 did not. The Mann Whitney analysis showed that SI and NSI gang members did not differ on 10 of the measures: **1)** Individuation, **2)** Need for Social Approval, **3)** Impostorism, **4)** Social Influence, **5)** Group Decision Making, Facilitation and Performance, **6)** Social Exchange, **7)** Goals, **8)** Need to belong, **9)** Perceived Belongingness, and **10)** Perceived Social Support from the group. However, they did differ on six of the remaining measures (see Table 5.9).



Table 5.9 Difference in means between SI and NSI gang members at the stage of joining

Group Process	Mean Rank SI gang member	Mean Rank NSI gang member	U	Z	Effect Size (r)	Direction and meaning
Group Identity	42.31	30.68	259.00*	-2.12	-0.26	SI gang members felt more strongly about their group identity
Social Comparison	41.84	30.83	266.50*	-2.01	-0.25	SI gang members compared self to new group members more often
Power/Status	48.75	28.62	156.00**	-3.68	-0.45	Power and status were perceived as more important by SI gang members
Social Dominance Orientation	45.56	29.64	207.00*	-2.89	-0.36	SI gang members showed a higher levels of social dominance orientation
Norms	44.50	29.98	225.00*	-2.65	-0.33	SI gang members perceived norms as more important
Interdependency	41.97	30.79	264.50*	-2.03	-0.25	SI gang members perceived interdependency with the new group members as more important

Note: \* refers to significance level of below .05

\*\* refers to a significance level of below .003 (Bonferroni correction)

The six variables with a significant difference were used in a discriminant function analysis to understand which best discriminated between the two groups. Box's M showed a non-significant result (based on  $p > .001$ ;  $p = .017$ ) and the Log Determinants were not very largely different. The overall Chi-Square test was significant: Chi-Square = 13.924,  $df = 6$ ,  $p = .030$ , canonical correlation = .452. A large proportion of total variability was not explained by the function (79.6%; Wilk's  $\lambda = .796$ ). However, 77.3% of the original grouped cases were correctly classified by this function. All of the input predictors made a sufficient contribution to the function (see Table 5.10). And so, higher appreciation of power/status, social dominance orientation, norms, perception of social comparison, appreciation of interdependency, and

appreciation of group identity, were predictive of SI gang members, rather than NSI gang members.

Table 5.10 Correlations (factor loadings) for SI vs NSI gang members at the joining stage

Predictor	Function
Power/Status	.880
Social Dominance Orientation	.624
Norms	.623
Social Comparison	.553
Interdependency	.514
Group Identity	.497

### Qualitative differences between SI and NSI gang members at the joining

#### stage

Table 5.11: SI and NSI gang members' perceptions relating to Group Processes at the joining stage

Power	
SI gang members	NSI gang members
1) Status seen as normal whilst growing up, needed and necessary e.g. #132: "to be popular at school and support criminal behaviour, so that you also get protection..."	1) Status perceived in not serious terms e.g. 410: "not too important for me, just a little at the start"
2) Status as relating to anti-social/criminal behaviour e.g. #151: "status comes with it [crime], it's life"	2) Status seen as normal whilst growing up e.g. #106: "you look better in front of your peers, it's a normal thing growing up..."
3) Status perceived as something to work toward and to avoid boredom e.g. #163: "you get bored and this is something that you can work toward"	3) Status gained through pro-social activities perceived as important e.g. #155: "if feels good sometimes, you tell stories to each other... status is feeling you're doing something really well"
	4) Status as relating to anti-social/criminal behaviour e.g. #160: "we were the rebels of the neighbourhood – it gives you a certain feeling"

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**Social Dominance Orientation\***

<b>SI</b>	<b>NSI</b>
1) Perception that all should be given an equal change in life but frequent willingness to 'step over others' e.g. #420: <i>"someone will always wanna be on top like that's just how it is..."</i>	1) Perception that all should be given an equal chance in life but less frequent willingness to 'step over others' e.g. #423: <i>"you know like I wanted more and more 'cause I knew that's the way to get more"</i>

\*Individuals had a limited recollection of Social Dominance at the stage of joining and so only a limited number of answers were considered. The present data does not uncover why differences occurred

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**Norms**

<b>SI</b>	<b>NSI</b>
1) Norms seen in terms of trust e.g. #173: <i>"because you don't really trust each other. There is stuff going on, it needs to be controlled"</i>	1) Norms seen in terms of trust e.g. 143: <i>"you need to be able to trust people and keep it going"</i>
2) Norms perceived as a normal part of life individuals should be aware of e.g. #139: <i>"you grow up with it, very aware of it..."</i>	2) Norms perceived as relating to antisocial/criminal activity e.g. #101: <i>"...protect group's interests"</i>
3) Norms perceived as relating to antisocial/criminal activity e.g. #162: <i>"because things can get out and get you and your business in trouble"</i>	3) Norms as relating to morality e.g. #172: <i>"you have to have morals so you'd be aware of some 'code'"</i>
4) Perception of the need for consequences if norms are broken (which can range from very serious consequences to rarely 'talking it out') e.g. #214: <i>"you can talk it out if you're smart but often you make a spur of moment decision as to how to deal with rules breaking. Every group has rules, how what you know how to act"</i>	4) Norms perceived in loose terms, as normal in every group e.g. #155: <i>"it should be common sense"</i>
	5) Perception of the need for consequences if norms are broken (which can range from very serious consequences to 'talking it out') e.g. #239: <i>"anything from talking it out to beating them up if rules are broken. People need boundaries in their life, that's why you'd have rules"</i>

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### **5.3.Discussion**

The overarching aims of this chapter were to consider the joining/forming stage of gang membership and to explore how different group processes manifest in different types of groups, and different types of gang members. It was found that gang members, rather than non-gang offenders differ in what they perceive to be beneficial group processes. However, the specific group processes which best differentiated between gang and non-gang offenders are not in line with the stated hypothesis; rather, gang members were best differentiated from non-gang offenders due to their higher need and appreciation of status/power, norms and social dominance orientation. Further, the current research findings are in line with the further two hypotheses, where it was found that different clusters of group processes best characterised core, peripheral, SI and NSI gang members' decisions to join a group.

First, it must be noted that many gang members did not join a gang. Rather, they often formed a group at a young age which later evolved into a gang. It was specifically these groups where a hierarchical structure was not clearly present, though individuals still perceived different levels of involvement with their group, as observed in previous research (Alleyne & Wood, 2010; James, 2015). This is important in terms of our theoretical understanding of typologies of gangs (specifically Maxson & Klein's 1995 typology; see Chapter 3) as it has often been highlighted that this typology is not always applicable (Decker et al., 2008; Pitts, 2008).

#### **5.3.1 Gang members**

Gang members, generally, seem to want to progress in life and feel special, whilst still having certain boundaries, which was shown by their high appreciation of

power/status and norms. It seems that the need for power/status reported by gang members is not because they wanted to be perceived as gangsters (e.g. Hughes & Short, 2005) but rather they saw power and status in terms of popularity or antisocial activities (Anderson, 1999; Short & Strodbeck, 1965). Further, gang members not only showed a high appreciation of norms (due to their activities or distrust), but they also had expectations of norms (their existence, shape and consequences). Possibly due to experiencing social disorganisation, norms can be intriguing and also comforting, though this has not been examined before. However, the usefulness of norms to the successful functioning of a group has been noted (Rimal & Rimal, 2003; Viki & Abrams, 2013; Whyte, 1995) and as aspiring gang members seemed to be very distrustful of others, norms may have been seen as substitutes for trust. Gang members were also keen on retaining their own version of morality and highlighted having moral boundaries regardless of the activities they were involved in. Gang members also showed a higher inclination to social dominance, as previously found (Wood et al., 2013) It seemed that gang members would be more willing to engage in dominant behaviour within the 'gang world' (e.g. by engaging in violent behaviour; Anderson, 1999; Decker & Van Winkle, 1996; Matsuda et al., 2012). And so, it seems that at risk youth are less concerned with power-related and restrictive (normative) group processes. Future gang members seemed to care about having their own place in their environment and seemed primed to appreciate norms, even though many did not join a gang, rather formed a social group.

### 5.3.2 Core gang members

Core gang members, at the stage of joining/forming a gang seemed to expect from the outset to be closely tied with their gang. They expected to gain social support from their group and showed a high appreciation of norms that they would encounter as well as expecting more social influence. Whilst social support, to date, has only been discussed in regards to gangs generally (e.g. Decker, 1996), it seems from the current findings that it is cores who most wanted to feel supported by their gang, as gang members, generally, were not characterised by this group process. James (2015) recently considered that peripheral gang members might still hold ties with pro-social individuals which may mean they are not as dependent on support from the gang. It is also likely that cores might experience higher levels of rejection by institutions (such as school), feel more disconnected from pro-social groups or might have more negative experiences of friendship, all of which has been previously noted in gang members generally, (Dyson, 1990; Howell & Egley, 2005).

Appreciating norms might be closely linked to feeling social support. Norms might be of importance regarding expected social support and so social support might be normative in nature. Maybe cores were more criminally active from the onset of their gang membership, as stakes and consequences of breaking norms were often discussed (Rimal & Real, 2003). It might be precisely due to these norms that cores perceived more social influence than peripherals, though previous literature suggested the opposite (Esbensen et al., 2001). However, it is possible that core gang members are more similar to each other (e.g. not achieving in school is stronger for cores than peripherals; James, 2015) and so influence each other more (Boduszek & Hyland, 2011; Higging, 1987).

Previous work has also noted how peripheral gang members have more pro-social influences than do cores (James, 2015) and so it is likely that cores are influenced primarily by other gang members.

### **5.3.3 Self-identified gang members**

Those gang members who self-identified as gang members seemed to expect to be very closely intertwined with their gang, even more so than core gang members. It is possible that cores can be characterised by different group processes than SI gang members as SI gang members might be the ones who feel the most strongly about their gang which would explain why they self-identified. SI gang members not only appreciated power-oriented group processes and norms, but also expected to compare self with the other members, be interdependent and gain a group identity.

SI gang members might be those who glamorise gang life (Hughes & Short, 2005), are more exposed to it or do not have any other alternatives, and so they value power/status greatly. SI gang members might also be more likely to learn the importance of status from previous experiences or their environment more generally as part of social learning (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996; Matsuda et al., 2012). Along these lines, their social dominance orientation is interlinked with power/status, as SI gang members were more oriented towards social dominance for their group against outgroups in their environment (Densley et al., 2014). In order to be dominant and to gain power, norms are useful, which SI gang members might appreciate possibly by observing prototypical individuals who already possess power (Klein & Maxson, 2006; Vigil, 1998).

On top of such power-oriented and normative group processes, SI gang members also expected to be interlinked to their gang on a personal level. It is possible that SI gang members are more likely to underperform at school or are more socially rejected, which, in turn, boosts their need for favourable social comparison (Craig et al., 2002; Higgings, 1987). Alternatively, they might see other gang members as prototypical of a 'gangster' and as more willing to engage in social comparison (Rizzo, 2003). SI gang members also expected to become interdependent with the group. Following the same norms may provide a background for interdependency to develop. The need for interdependency might be higher for SI gang members due to similar troubled backgrounds, higher levels of delinquency or general distrust of institutions or authorities (Alleyne & Wood, 2010; Beier, 2014; Pyrooz, 2014). SI gang members further expected to develop a group identity with their gang. It is possible that SI gang members were more likely to be less successful in school or have a more traumatic backgrounds and therefore had more need to develop a social identity (Hogg et al., 2011; Vigil, 1998, 2010), but the current findings cannot address this. They might also be completely disconnected from pro-social groups/institutions (James, 2015). It might be that previous experiences motivated these individuals, in particular, join a gang rather than another type of a group (Viki & Abrams, 2013), but this needs to be explored in future work.

#### **5.3.4 Group Processes in context, at the joining stage**

When researchers discuss group processes in relation to gang membership, they often discuss Group Cohesion, as well as Embeddedness. Whilst cohesion can be seen in terms of the feelings of togetherness (Klein, 2014), embeddedness further refers to



structural, relational and environmental factors tying individuals together (Pyrooz et al., 2012). Both of these are said to increase by spending more time with a group. However, understanding them at the stage of joining is equally as important (Pyrooz, 2012) and previous research, along with the current study, shows gang members might actively choose to join a seemingly cohesive group, due to coming from a disorganised environment (Forsyth, 2006; Decker and van Winkle, 1996).

As was argued in Chapter 3, it is the interplay of group processes, which can result in heightened cohesion or embeddedness. Further, as this study shows, these can be perceived differently according to different levels of gang membership. This might be why previous findings are disparate on issues such as cohesion (Klein, 2009; Klein & Maxson, 1987) – it might simply be that they perceive cohesion differently. One suggested reason for such differences is the possible high turnover of peripheral members (Vigil, 1988) which the current findings support. Core and peripheral members did, indeed, differ on specific group processes and it seems that core members are more likely to feel support from their fellow gang members, employ and value norms, but also feel more influence from other gang members. It is necessary that both concepts, embeddedness and cohesion, are explored in regard to which group processes feed into them.

### **5.3.5 Conclusion**

This study showed that understanding group processes at the stage of joining a group is important in enriching our understanding of gang members' perceptions at this stage of membership. This study showed how intertwined the processes are and, therefore, showed how key it is that group processes are not perceived in isolation. Each

type of group and each type of gang member can be characterised by a different web of group processes, and identifying these leads to useful information with regards to their perceptions of what a gang provides. These findings highlight that gang membership does not have a 'one size fits all' solution. These issues will next be investigated at the stage of remaining in a group.

## **Chapter 6 – Exploration of perceived group processes in gang membership at the stage of remaining in a group**

The importance of studying group processes in regard to gangs has been examined throughout this thesis. In Chapter 4, it was established that group processes are perceived by gang members as manifesting in gangs and are perceived uniquely. Chapter 5 further uncovered that specific group processes are of importance when gang members make decisions to join a gang and these differ based on the type of gang member one is. Based on the principle of asymmetrical causality (Uggen & Piliavin, 1998) and theoretical models of groups (Moreland & Levine, 1982; Tuckman & Wheelan, 1965), it is likely that different group processes will be more pronounced as gang members make a decision to remain members of a group.

The concept of influence of group processes on gang members can be theoretically linked. Group cohesion has been found to increase due to criminality and violence which usually occurs in gangs (Francese et al., 2006; Klein, 1995), making the feeling of ‘togetherness’ a strong pull to remain a member. Klein (2005) and Bolden (2010) further argue that diffusing gang cohesion and increasing cohesion in communities is a needed strategy for gang desistance. However, research has also found that gangs do not always show high cohesion (Vigil, 1988; Hughes, 2013). The problem is that we do not know which group processes result in such heightened perceptions of cohesion and it is likely that different types of gang members perceive them differently (Papachristos, 2013). Gang members have been found to conform to behaviours of other gang members (Haynie, 2001), become deindividuated and engage in more violence (Skarin, et al., 2009), or perceive outgroups as inferior (Halperin, 2008; Sternerg, 2003),

all possibly increasing social identity felt with the group, which can be a strong motivator to maintain membership. Alleyne (2010) also found that gang members engage in moral disengagement strategies more than non-gang members. As gang members tend to live similar lives, it is likely that a basic characteristic of groups – that they exist to exchange social comparison information – is a strong motivator to remain in a gang where a specific type of social exchange is possible (Thrasher, 1963; Vigil, 1988) and James (2015) found that gang members engage in social comparison strategies when discussing status. Further, social comparison, as well as social influence, have been linked to gang members' accepting gang-related norms, values and beliefs (Rosenfeld, et al., 1999).

Facilitation, regarding criminality or violence, has been one of the most researched group processes within gang membership. However, we only know that facilitation occurs (Rosenfeld et al., 1999) and we do not know how gang members perceive it. However, it has been observed that gang members rely on fellow members when making decisions (Stasser & Dietz-Uhler, 2001), they evaluate their performance in a positive light (Vigil, 1988) and facilitation does allow individuals to do well in their given domain (Crocker et al., 1994). Such feelings of satisfaction are likely to be attractive motivators to retain membership. It might be that these group processes further help individuals gain a certain status within a gang which gang members often strive to do (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996; Winfree, Fuller, Vigil & Mays, 1992). Further, those who are highly socially dominant are likely to enjoy being members of a group where such hierarchies exist within and between gangs (Densley, Cai & Hilal, 2014; Wood et al., 2014). Territoriality is also closely tied with these concepts because

maintaining a territory (Fraser, 2013), and the need for a positive distinctiveness which can be maintained through having a territory (James, 2015), can make leaving a gang very difficult.

Power-related group processes have also been defined as social exchange processes (Anderson, 1999; Matsuda et al., 2013) and it has been shown that as long as individuals feel that the group and the individual are putting enough effort into a delinquent group, then maintaining membership should be attractive (Weerman, 2003). Putnam (2000) found that gang members perceive social exchange as important. Research has also noted that whilst reciprocity is expected in any kind of a group, it might take a specific shape in gangs (Heinonen, 2013). This might be due to having to follow norms where reciprocity itself can actually be a gang norm (Papachristos, 2013). The presence of norms and associated sanctions have been observed in gangs previously (Rimal & Real, 2003), and following norms can facilitate group success (e.g. gaining money; Whyte, 1955) or make issues surrounding violence more prescribed (Vigil, 2003). Goals have also been perceived as highly important in gangs (Short et al., 1965) whereby some gangs simply exist because of their goals (Williams & Van Dorn, 1999). The interplay between norms, goals, and subsequent interdependence of members can be a very strong pull to stay in the gang, as shown by the findings that gang members together engage in displaced aggression (e.g.; Dollard et al., 1939; Vasquez et al., 2012).

On top of such prescriptive group processes, the area of belongingness can also be linked to gang membership. Research has noted that gang members perceive their fellow gang members as their family (Decker, 1996; Vigil, 1988; Walker-Barnes &

Mason, 2001) and some gangs even include one's family members (e.g. Sanchez – Jankowski, 1991) and so individuals likely feel a high sense of belonging with these individuals and also a sense of social support (Williams & Van Dorn, 1999).

Unfortunately, whilst theoretical links can be made between the study of group processes and gang membership, only very few group processes have been directly examined in gang members and this was usually done in isolation from other group processes. However, as was shown here, group processes interact together and only focusing on one in interventions can fuel a heightened perception of another one, which is possibly a reason why some interventions have shown to backfire (Wood et al., 2016). We also do not know whether these group processes are actually attractive to gang members and whether they perceive them as important when making the decision to remain members of a gang. For example, we know that facilitation occurs (Rosenfeld et al., 1999), but is this something that gang members actually enjoy, or is it perhaps an unwanted side product of membership? Further, we do not know how importantly these group processes are perceived among different types of gang members, where differences have recently been noted by James (2015). Therefore, the following are key overarching research questions of the current study: 1) What group processes do gang members, rather than non-gang offenders, perceive as important when deciding whether to remain in a gang? 2) Is there a difference, at the stage of remaining in a gang, regarding gang members' perceptions of group processes, between different types of gang members?

## **6.1 Method**

Design, Procedure, Ethics, and Treatment of data and analyses, are the same as of study two and are described in the Method section of Chapter 5. The current section provides further information regarding Participants and Measures, which is specific to the current study.

### **6.1.1 Research aims and hypotheses**

- 1) What group processes do gang members, rather than non-gang offenders, perceive as important when deciding whether to remain in a gang?
  - a. It is hypothesized that gang members, at the stage of remaining, will perceive a cluster of group processes characterising their need to remain members and that these will differ from group processes perceived by non-gang offenders' as important in their group memberships.
  - b. It is hypothesized, based on the limited available literature specifically considering the perceived importance of group processes in gangs, that gang members, rather than non-gang offenders, at the stage of remaining, will be best characterised by their perceptions of the importance of social identity, social comparison, social facilitation, power-related group processes, social exchange, norms, goals, need to belong and social support.
- 2) Cores and peripherals have differential levels of commitment to their gang and so are likely to be influenced by group processes in a specific manner. Further, it might be self-identified gang members (those classed as gang members by the Eurogang criteria and self-identify as gang members) are most prone to group influences. So,

is there a difference, at the stage of remaining in a gang, regarding gang members' perception of group processes, between different types of gang members?

- a. There is very limited literature differentiating different types of gang members at the stage of remaining in a gang and so no directional hypotheses can be drawn. However, it is hypothesized that different clusters of group processes will characterise cores', and peripherals', motivations to remain gang members.
- b. There is no literature specifically examining self-identified and non-self-identified gang members, and so a directional, specific hypothesis cannot be drawn. However, it is expected that different clusters of group processes will be at play between self-identified and non-self-identified gang members.

### **6.1.2 Participants**

The overall participant characteristics for studies two and three were described in Chapter 5. Different participants completed the 'joining' (study two) and 'remaining' (the current study) questionnaires. This section provides information specific to the current study.

Ninety-four participants who were incarcerated offenders completed the 'Remaining' questionnaire pack; this condition was assigned to participants randomly, using a randomization sheet created in Excel. Of these participants, 71 were identified as gang members (using the Eurogang criteria, see Measures in Chapter 5) and 23 as non-gang offenders.



### **6.1.3 Measures**

Further information regarding measures is provided in Chapter 5. However, study three was concerned solely with the remaining stage of group membership. Therefore, the context provided was different to that in study two. Context was provided by asking participants to think about the time in their life they were already members of a certain group. Participants were asked to write down what ages they were whilst a group member and to describe how this time in their life affected them (e.g. what emotions they were feeling and any crucial events that took place). For this study, participants answered questions relating to the time they were members of a group, for example: ‘When I was a part of my group, I thought I would prefer to be in a different group’.

## **6.2 Results**

First, results of reliability analyses of the scales were analysed. Then, Mann-Whitney U (to identify differences between different types of groups and gang members) and Discriminant Function Analysis (to identify which group processes best discriminate between different types of groups and gang members), along with qualitative analysis, were conducted. The findings are structured with regards to the specific groups being compared. Significance level of .05 was used. Bonferroni correction (.003 for the current data) is also reported.

### **6.2.1 Reliability results**

Table 6.1 presents the results of a Cronbach’s alpha internal consistency analysis of the scales used in this study. All scales showed at least good reliability and many showed excellent reliability.

Table 6.1 Reliability analysis of scales at the stage of remaining

Scale	$\alpha$
Group Identity	.76*
Individuation	.89
Need for Social Approval	.94
Social Comparison	.89
Impostorism	.74*
Social Influence	.77*
Group Decision Making, Facilitation and Performance	.73*
Power/Status	.93
Social Dominance Orientation	.95
Social Exchange	.90
Norms	.89
Goals	.89
Interdependency	.83*
Need to Belong	.85
Perceived Belongingness	.85*
Perceived Social Support from the group	.91

\*some inter-items correlations fell below .3 and so results should be viewed with caution

### 6.2.2 Gang members vs. non-gang offenders

From the offender sample, 71 participants were classed as gang members, using the Eurogang criteria, and 23 as non-gang offenders. The Mann Whitney analysis showed that gang members did not differ from non-gang offenders on eight of the scales due to low significance levels or effect sizes: **1)** Group Identity, **2)** Individuation, **3)** Social Comparison, **4)** Social Influence, **5)** Decision Making, Facilitation and Performance, **6)** Goals, **7)** Need to Belong and **8)** Perceived Belongingness. They differed on the remaining eight (see Table 6.2).

Table 6.2 Difference in means between gang members and non-gang offenders at the stage of remaining

Group Process	Mean Rank Gang member	Mean Rank Non-gang offender	U	Z	Effect Size (r)	Direction
Need for Social Approval	50.63	37.85	594.50*	-2.42	-0.25	Gang members were more worried about what group members thought of them
Impostorism	52.27	32.76	477.50**	-3.16	-0.33	Gang members were more likely to change their behaviour in front of their group
Power/Status	57.77	15.78	87.00**	-6.45	-0.67	Gang members valued power/status more
Social Dominance Orientation	58.01	15.07	423.50**	-6.57	-0.68	Gang members were more oriented toward social dominance
Social Exchange	43.72	59.17	548.00*	-2.39	-0.25	Gang members valued social exchange between members less
Norms	56.87	18.57	151.00**	-5.88	-0.61	Gang members valued norms more
Interdependency	53.04	30.39	423.00**	-3.46	-0.36	Gang members valued interdependency more
Perceived Support from the group	41.51	65.98	391.50**	-3.76	-0.39	Gang members perceived less support from their group

Note: \* refers to significance level of below .05

\*\* refers to a significance level of below .003 (Bonferroni correction)

The eight group processes were used in a discriminant function analysis to see which best discriminated between gang members and non-gang offenders. Whilst Box's M showed a highly significant result (i.e.,  $p < .000$ ), the Log Determinants were not largely different and separate covariance matrices were used to run this analysis. The overall Chi-Square test was significant: Chi-Square = 97.97,  $df = 8$ ,  $p < .000$ , canonical correlation = .819, 32.8% of total variability was not explained by the function (Wilk's  $\lambda = .328$ ). The classification results revealed that 92.6% of original grouped cases were correctly classified. Three predictors were identified as important predictors, using the

cut off of .3 (see Table 6.3). Scoring higher in social dominance orientation, and perceiving the value of status/power and norms more importantly, was predictive of gang membership, rather than non-gang offenders.

Table 6.3 Correlations (factor loadings) for Gang members vs. non gang offenders at the remaining stage

Predictor	Function
<b>Social Dominance Orientation</b>	<b>.737</b>
<b>Power/Status</b>	<b>.698</b>
<b>Norms</b>	<b>.609</b>
Interdependency	.253
Impostorism	.224
Perceived Social Support from the group	-.213
Need for Social Approval	.112
Social Exchange	-.105

### Qualitative differences between gang members and non-gang offenders at the remaining stage

Table 6.4 Gang members' and non-gang offenders' perceptions relating to Group Processes at the remaining stage

Social Dominance Orientation*	
Gang members	Non-gang offenders
1) Perceived need for equal opportunity for those who deserve it e.g. : #401: "but like some people... like people who are beating women or something <i>then no...</i> "	1) Perceived need for equal opportunity for those who deserve it e.g. #407: "everybody should have that opportunity to work for it I don't like it that some people get like stuff from the government that don't really <i>deserve it...</i> "
2) Perceived complete equality is not possible in the world e.g. #404: "... <i>yeah like you can't have everyone like in the same position but everyone should have the chance you know</i> "	2) Perceived complete equality is not possible in the world e.g. #402: " <i>how can I say like yea we should be equal with people but that's not how it works</i> "
3) Perceived it is often necessary to 'step on others' e.g. #423 " <i>it's not right but sometimes you do it innit like it's not right... but it happens...</i> "	

\* Participants found it hard to explain their thoughts and so only a limited number of responses were considered

<b>Power/status</b>	
<b>Gang members</b>	<b>Non-gang offenders</b>
<p>1) Status perceived as useful to retain a position within 'the gang world' and to gain money e.g. #109: <i>"you don't wanna be inferior, more trouble will go around you"</i></p> <p>2) Status gained through crime e.g. #149: <i>"...dealing a little cannabis, that's how I became known and generally we were always quite known around – just who we were"</i></p> <p>3) Status perceived as needed/necessary e.g. #235: <i>"...you need to show yourself, otherwise people use you"</i></p> <p>4) Perceived 'simply having' status e.g. #114: <i>"I didn't really care, I didn't need to gain status ... always sort of had status"</i></p> <p>5) Individuals did not perceive status as important, only cared about monetary gain e.g. <i>"...did not care about status... was only about the money"</i></p>	<p>1) Status not perceived as important/needed e.g. #105: <i>"no, it wasn't about status"</i></p> <p>2) Perceived gaining status through pro-social activities e.g. #154: <i>"we had positive status and we liked it. We were a funny bunch, makes you feel good about yourself"</i></p> <p>3) Status perceived as gained through anti-social activities/area e.g. #208: <i>"known for being from an area like that and that..."</i></p>

<b>Norms</b>	
<b>Gang members</b>	<b>Non-gang offenders</b>
<p>1) Norms perceived in terms of 'road rules' where everyone 'should know' e.g. #104: <i>"road rules are important – it's disloyal to break the code, makes you a better person to follow these rules"</i> e.g. #147: <i>"rules of the street – you have them automatically so you follow them"</i></p> <p>2) Norms perceived as important due to criminal activity e.g. #114: <i>"supports criminality, in terms of getting caught, you have to trust people"</i></p> <p>3) Norms perceived as facilitating trust/loyalty/morality among members e.g. #129 <i>"to make the group stronger and show your loyalty, people can easily forget..."</i></p>	<p>1) Did not perceive norms as important e.g. #105: <i>"no, because we are friends, no need for rules. We cared for each other"</i></p> <p>2) Perceived norms as present and as 'common sense' e.g. #112: <i>"keeps relationships in group safe, bounds friendship together, you don't punish, it's not rules, but we all know"</i></p> <p>3) Did not perceive norms as related to serious consequences e.g. #208: <i>"stuff like bro-code but you can talk it out among each other"</i></p>

4) Norms perceived as important due to the stakes of gang membership

e.g. #135: *“because it involves trust and for criminality – there’s more at stake”*

5) Norms perceived as important for successful group functioning

e.g. #147: *“because it keeps order and peace in the group, that’s why they’d exist”*

6) Importance of norms heightened due to previous experiences

e.g. #177: *“you can’t trust people and then you’re worried about your every move, there must be rules”*

7) Consequences of breaking norms can be easily identified (in the form of beating or being excluded)

e.g. #217: *“you’d get a beating if you don’t know the rules. Rules are for everything, brings order”*

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### **6.2.3 Core vs. peripheral gang members at the remaining stage**

At the stage of remaining in the group, out of the offender sample, 45 core gang members and 26 peripheral gang members were identified using Eurogang criteria. Further, participants were asked to place themselves on a continuum of being very central to a group or not (from 1 to 5). This was used to classify them into core or peripheral gang members, using median split (1, 2, 3 = peripheral; 4, 5 = core). As discussed in Chapter 6, individuals rarely perceived a hierarchical structure to their group, but did perceive different levels of involvement. The Mann Whitney analysis showed that core and peripheral members did not score differently on eight of the group processes: **1) Individuation, 2) Need for Social Approval, 3) Social Comparison, 4) Impostorism, 5) Social Exchange, 6) Need to Belong, 7) Perceived Belongingness and 8) Perceived Social Support from the group** due to low significance levels/effect sizes. They differed on the remaining eight (see Table 6.5).

Table 6.5 Difference in means between core and peripheral gang members at the stage of remaining

<b>Group Process</b>	<b>Mean Rank Core</b>	<b>Mean Rank Peripheral</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>Effect Size (r)</b>	<b>Direction and meaning</b>
Group Identity	41.26	26.90	348.50*	-2.84	-0.34	Core gang members felt a higher level of group identity
Social Influence	41.91	25.77	319.00**	-3.19	-0.38	Core gang members felt higher levels of social influence
Decision Making, Facilitation and Performance	42.56	24.65	290.00**	-3.54	-0.42	Core gang members reported more common decision making, facilitation and performance
Power/Status	41.41	26.63	341.50*	-2.94	-0.35	Core gang members valued power/status more
Social Dominance Orientation	41.70	26.13	328.50**	-3.07	-0.36	Core gang members were more oriented toward social dominance
Norms	40.10	28.90	400.50*	-2.22	-0.26	Core gang members showed a higher appreciation of norms
Goals	40.44	28.31	385.00*	-2.47	-0.29	Core gang members valued common goals more
Interdependency	41.66	26.21	330.50**	-3.04	-0.36	Core gang members valued interdependency more

Note: \* refers to significance level of below .05

\*\* refers to a significance level of below .003 (Bonferroni correction)

The eight variables were used in a discriminant function analysis to understand which best discriminated between core and peripheral gang members. Box's M showed a non-significant result ( $p = .027$ ) and the Log Determinants were not largely different. The overall Chi-Square test was significant: Chi-Square = 24.602,  $df = 8$ ,  $p < .002$ , canonical correlation = .561; 68.5% of total variability was not explained by the function (Wilk's  $\lambda = .685$ ). However, of the original grouped cases, 80.3% were correctly classified by this function. All eight of the predictor variables were seen as important predictors, using the cut off of .3 (see Table 6.6). Reporting more common

decision making, facilitation and performance, social influence, higher social dominance, more group identity, higher interdependency, more appreciation of power/status, common goals, and norms was predictive of core, rather than peripheral, gang members.

Table 6.6 Correlations (factor loadings) for core vs peripheral gang members at the remaining stage

Predictor	Function
Decision Making, Facilitation and Performance	.704
Social Influence	.632
Social Dominance Orientation	.617
Group Identity	.599
Interdependency	.569
Power/Status	.564
Goals	.444
Norms	.418

**Qualitative differences between core and peripheral gang members at the remaining stage**

Table 6.7 Core and peripheral gang members’ perceptions relating to Group Processes at the remaining stage

Group decision making, facilitation and group performance	
Core	Peripheral
1) Group environment seen as facilitating illegal activity e.g.#102 : “ <i>sometimes – because group – went along with it even though I wouldn’t even think of it</i> ”	1) Group environment seen as facilitating illegal activity e.g. #104: “ <i>...sometimes because other people want to do it</i> ”
2) Perception of decision-making in a rushed manner, often resulting in extreme decisions e.g. #118: “ <i>do it for the bro...in a group... stuff just goes</i> ”	2) Perception that sometimes individuals 'have to' go along certain decisions e.g. #111: “ <i>...would sometimes pick stuff up that was uncomfortable... I had to do...</i> ”



3) Perception that sometimes individuals 'have to' go along certain decisions  
 e.g. #116: "...sometimes give into their decisions. It's not who I am but group expects to have each other's back"

3) Perception that individuals are strong enough to avoid influences  
 e.g. #420: "you do what you wanna do"

4) Perception that individuals are strong enough to avoid influences, or have a certain limit of acceptability  
 e.g.#122 : "I was strong-minded...did not need to do what they told me"

4) Perception that group did not impact on their own decisions  
 e.g. #142: "no, I was offending for myself"

5) Identification of pro-social decision making  
 e.g. #112: "yes, in a positive way, set up a football team for example"

6) Individuals perceived self as instigators  
 e.g. #242: "no, but I would often plant ideas in them..."

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**Social Influence**

<b>Core</b>	<b>Peripheral</b>
1) Perceived pro-social influences (confidence, becoming more grounded, calmer, providing stability, support, belonging) e.g. #123: "made me more tolerable of certain thing, I am quite rushed, they sometimes calm me down" e.g. #223: "some kept me out of trouble"	1) Perceived pro-social influences (support, motivation, boosting confidence) e.g. #328: "support in anything I need"
2) Perceived influence relating to crime as a positive e.g. #120: "pushed me further to make more money..."	2) No group influences identified, core of belonging was to make money e.g. #135: "no ... influence...making a lot of money"
3) Perceived influence relating to an increase in criminal activity e.g. #177: "...kept me motivated with crime"	3) Perceived influence relating to an increase in criminal activity e.g. #104: "yes – higher criminality"
4) No perception of social influence e.g. #332: "I'm my own person...my own choices"	4) No perception of social influence e.g. #142: "nothing... I make my own decisions"

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**Social dominance orientation\***

<b>Core</b>	<b>Peripheral</b>
1) Perception that equal opportunity should be provided to all deserving of it e.g. #412: "and you know like the people like get money for nothing sometimes like or like people coming in like to work and that"	1) Perception that equality would be ideal e.g. #414: "everyone should be equal...why not"

2) Showed an understanding of how to better their position  
 e.g. #404: *“yea it was like that and you just needed to do what you needed to do”*

2) Showed an understanding of how to better their position  
 e.g. #423: *“it’s not right...but sometimes you do it, innit”*

\* Participants found it hard to explain their thoughts and so only a limited number of responses were considered

<b>Power/status</b>	
<b>Core</b>	<b>Peripheral</b>
1) Status perceived as necessary (to gain money, for protection, to stand own ground) e.g. #164: <i>“you need status to keep the business going”</i>	1) Status perceived as necessary (to gain money, for protection) e.g. #147: <i>“status is means of getting money, buzz from money...”</i>
2) Individuals actively wanted status e.g. #169: <i>“family thing, always had an area...money, power, respect”</i>	2) Status perceived as important but not highly valuable e.g. #104: <i>“good to have status but wouldn’t go out of my way to gain it”</i>
3) Status perceived as caused by illegal activity e.g. #217: <i>“status just came with the crime”</i>	3) Status perceived as relating to popularity or being attractive to females e.g. #137: <i>“want to attract girls and be in the best clothes”</i>
4) Did not perceive status as important e.g. #102: <i>“did not care about status...was only about the money”</i>	4) Did not perceive status as important (more frequently than cores) e.g. #342: <i>“didn’t care about status at all but we got a negative one selling drugs...”</i>
	5) Individuals actively wanted status e.g. #341: <i>“I grew up wanting it”</i>

<b>Goals</b>	
<b>Core</b>	<b>Peripheral</b>
1) Goals perceived as relating to acquiring money and living a comfortable life e.g. #322: <i>“make money...not long terms plans, wanted money”</i>	1) Goals perceived as relating to acquiring money and living a comfortable life e.g. #310: <i>“...just to make money”</i>
2) Goals understood in group terms but also in individual terms e.g. #144: <i>“we all wanted money and success, we’d support each other to be successful in the future”</i>	2) Goals understood in terms of individual gain rather than group gain e.g. #111: <i>“make loads of money, not anything friendship related, money over love...”</i>
	3) Goals understood in group terms but also individual terms e.g. #135: <i>“main friends helped each other with individual success”</i>

Norms	
Core	Peripheral
1) Norms perceived as important in order for successful group functioning e.g. #112: "keeps relationships in group safe, <i>bounds friendship together</i> "	1) Perceived the manifestation of norms but did not give them very high importance e.g. #111: " <i>it's a pact more so, people shouldn't be strictly punished</i> "
2) Norms perceived as important relating to 'business'/illegal activity e.g. #131: "because it would unbalance the <i>order and releases trust, it's important for business</i> "	2) Norms perceived as important relating to 'business'/illegal activity e.g. #135: "because it involves trust and more criminality – <i>more at stake</i> "
3) Norms understood as a substitute for trust among members e.g. #177: " <i>you can't trust people and then you're worried about your every move</i> "	3) Norms understand as a substitute for trust among members e.g. #129: "to make group stronger and show your loyalty, people can easily forget"
4) Strict consequences identified for breaking norms (beating, exclusion) e.g. #215: : "people get beaten up. Everyone hurts you sooner or later so you need to have <i>insurance</i> "	4) A variety of consequences identified for breaking norms e.g. #328: "depends on how bad thing is, you get punishment"

#### 6.2.4 Self-identified (SI) vs. non-self-identified (NSI) gang members at the remaining stage

Self-identification has also been used as a way of identifying different types of gang members (see Esbensen, et al., 2001). Self-identified gang members were identified as those who satisfied the Eurogang criteria and also self-identified as gang members. Non-self-identified gang members were identified as all those who satisfied the Eurogang criteria but did not self-identify as a gang member. From the offender sample, 15 were identified as SI gang members and 56 as NSI gang members. The Mann Whitney analysis showed that they did not differ in answers on 11 of the scales due to low significance levels or effect sizes: **1) Group Identity, 2) Individuation, 3) Need for Social Approval, 4) Social Comparison, 5) Impostorism, 6) Social Influence,**

7) Decision Making, Facilitation and Performance, 8) Social Exchange, 9) Need to Belong, 10) Perceived Belongingness, and 11) Perceived Social Support from the group due to low significance levels/effect sizes. They differed on the remaining five (see Table 6.8).

Table 6.8 Difference in means between SI and NSI gang members at the stage of remaining

<b>Group Process</b>	<b>Mean Rank SI</b>	<b>Mean Rank NSI</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>Effect Size (r)</b>	<b>Direction and meaning</b>
Power/Status	55.30	30.83	130.50**	-4.12	-0.49	SI gang members valued power/status more
Social Dominance Orientation	50.73	32.05	199.00**	-3.12	-0.37	SI gang members were more oriented toward social dominance
Norms	51.70	31.79	184.50**	-3.34	-0.40	SI gang members showed a higher appreciation of norms
Goals	45.73	33.39	274.00*	-2.12	-0.25	SI gang members valued common goals more
Interdependency	53.67	31.27	155.00**	-3.74	-0.44	SI gang members valued interdependency more

Note: \* refers to significance level of below .05

\*\* refers to a significance level of below .003 (Bonferroni correction)

These were used in a discriminant function analysis to understand which best discriminates between SI and NSI gang members. Box's M showed a non-significant result ( $p = .0012$ ) and the Log Determinants were not very largely different. The overall Chi-Square test was significant: Chi-Square = 18.855,  $df = 5$ ,  $p = .002$ , canonical correlation = .497. A large proportion of total variability was not explained by the function (75.2%; Wilk's  $\lambda = .753$ ). However, 87.3% of the original grouped cases were correctly classified by this function. All predictors were identified as important predictors, using the cut off of .3 (see Table 6.9). And so, valuing interdependency more, having a higher appreciation of power/status and norms, scoring higher on social

dominance and more appreciating common goals, is predictive of SI, rather than NSI gang membership.

Table 6.9 Correlations (factor loadings) for SI vs. NSI gang members at the remaining stage

Predictor	Function
Interdependency	0.922
Power/Status	0.793
Norms	0.705
Social Dominance Orientation	0.545
Goals	0.382

### Qualitative differences between SI and NSI gang members at the remaining stage

Table 6.10 SI and NSI gang members' perceptions relating to Group Processes at the remaining stage

Power/status	
SI	NSI
1) Perceived status as something they wanted and important (more than NSI) e.g. #131: "you want respect from your peers, you don't wanna look weak..."	1) Perceived status as something they wanted e.g. #116: "you want to be someone"
2) Perceived status in relation to other gangs e.g. #135: "status helps with other gangs, it has to do with competition with other groups"	2) Perceived status in relation to other gangs e.g. 229: "I needed to have status because you would otherwise just constantly get robbed"
3) Perceived status as important as relating to illegal activity e.g. #164: "you need status to get the business going"	3) Perceived status as important as relating to illegal activity e.g. #322: "the more you do, it comes. I didn't do stuff to get reputation"
	4) Did not perceive status as important e.g. #102: "I did not care about status, it was only about the money..."
	5) Perceived status as something they 'simply had' e.g. #104: "...good to have status but wouldn't go out of my way to gain it"

6) Perceived status as possibly originating in pro-social activities  
 e.g. #202: *“you can be respected for being smart...generally being good people”*

<b>Norms</b>	
<b>SI</b>	<b>NSI</b>
1) Norms perceived as a substitute to trust (and to ensure morality) e.g. #131: <i>“because it would unbalance the order and releases trust...”</i>	1) Norms perceived as a substitute to trust e.g. #222: <i>“you’d get beaten for breaking trust, you need to ensure the trust”</i>
2) Norms perceived as important for successful illegal activity e.g. #164: <i>“because it’s good for the business”</i>	2) Norms perceived as important for successful illegal activity e.g. #338: <i>“it’s business...you’re making money”</i>
3) Norms understood as something normal as part of such group, which everyone needs to be aware of e.g. #214: <i>“Every group has rules, how what you know how to act, you just know”</i>	3) Norms understood a wider variety of views, including 'common sense' e.g. #214: <i>“you have basic street rules – people would talk about it in conversation”</i>
4) Strict consequences identified e.g. #344: <i>“you’d be out of the circle, could maybe just get a warning...excluded...turn against him”</i>	4) A variety of consequences identified e.g. #175: <i>“breaking the rules would result in little fights with us but nothing past that”</i>

**Social Dominance Orientation\***

\*SI and NSI gang members did not differ in their responses. They both spoke about wanting equality for deserving individuals but also appreciated that stepping over others is at times necessary.

<b>Goals</b>	
<b>SI</b>	<b>NSI</b>
1) Goals perceived in terms of gaining money and leading a rich lifestyle e.g. #177: <i>“we wanted money and success”</i>	1) Goals perceived in terms of gaining money and leading a rich lifestyle e.g. #322: <i>“make money – not long term plans, all wanted money...”</i>
2) Showed support of individual, as well as group, goals e.g. #169: <i>“...you support your individual goals as people get older”</i>	2) Showed support of individual, as well as group, goals e.g. #331: <i>“would be supportive of each other’s personal goals”</i>
	3) No perception of group goals e.g. #160: <i>“...hang out and to kill time...”</i>
	4) Perception of the importance of own monetary gain through gang e.g. #129: <i>“to make money...not true friendship because everyone became money-oriented”</i>

## **6.3 Discussion**

The key aims of this chapter were to consider how group processes manifest in gangs, rather than non-gang offending groups, and in different types of gangs, at the stage of remaining in a gang. Whilst in line with the first hypothesis in that gang members, rather than non-gang offenders, were characterized by a certain cluster of group processes, these were not social identity, social comparison, social facilitation power-related group processes, social exchange, norms, goals, need to belong, and social support. Rather, gang members were best discriminated from non-gang offenders by their higher perceived social dominance orientation, higher perceived appreciation of power/status, and norms. The research findings of this study support the further two hypotheses, where it was found that there were specific clusters of group processes which differentiated between core and peripheral, and SI and NSI gang members' decisions to remain gang members.

### **6.3.1 Gang members**

Findings showed that gang members can be characterised by their appreciation of power-related group processes, such as social dominance and power/status. Previous literature suggests that gang members hold higher levels of social dominance (Densley, et al., 2014; Wood et al., 2013) and it is possible that being a gang member, as opposed to aspiring to become a gang member, can further facilitate this, as gang members became more aware of what 'needs to be done' to maintain their dominance, regarding their 'business' or regarding status maintenance. Social dominance, interestingly, did not characterise gang members, at the stage of joining, when compared to non-offenders, but did when compared to non-gang offenders. However, this dominance was

usually associated with outgroups, rather than within their own gang and so a hierarchy within the gang does not seem to be important. Power/status were discussed in a similar manner and gang members again did not discuss hierarchies within a gang (unlike e.g. Decker & van Winkle, 1996), noting status only as relating to outgroups. Gang members seemed to understand the importance of status – regardless of whether they wanted it (e.g. in order to pursue criminality, be known, etc.) or simply had it (e.g. from crime or others). Perhaps, this is due to the principle of a reward system, where heightened criminal behaviour can be rewarded by status or more power (Anderson, 1999; Decker & van Winkle 1996; Matsuda et al., 2012). Feelings of having status and being distinct from others (i.e. optimal distinctiveness theory), can also be a reason for gang members valuing status more (James, 2015).

Gang members, in addition to social dominance and power/status, also showed a higher appreciation of norms. Whilst norms are generally present in any group (Viki & Abrams, 2013), they are not usually so pronounced that they invite severe sanctions if violated, as they would be in a gang (Rimal & Real, 2003). As norms were described largely in terms of criminality (and including violence) and associated attributes of trust, loyalty, and morality, is it likely that they are fundamental to individuals who remain in their gang (Whyte, 1995; Vigil, 2003). It further seemed that gang members' understanding of morality, which they were previously found to put aside (Alleyne & Wood, 2010; Wood et al., 2009), is centred on being loyal to each other and not in terms of wider morality. It generally seems that gang members are tied together by group processes which can make it hard to leave, especially due to the potential consequences,



whereas ‘at risk youth’ seems less concerned with seeking dominance/having power and are not inclined to give strict norms high value.

### **6.3.2 Core gang members**

Core gang members hold strong ties with their gang, which is reflected by them valuing cooperation of members, noting social influence, having a group identity, feeling interdependent, valuing common goals, and also being socially dominant, appreciating power/status, and norms. It might be that cores are more likely to cooperate with each other as they are more engaged with each other and their gang, than peripherals (James, 2015). It is possible that as cores are more similar to each other/spend less time with outsiders (James, 2015), and so are more likely to agree with decisions made by others (Stasser & Dietz-Uhler, 2001). This is also reflected in cores noting the influence of other gang members. Maybe cores see each other as prototypical gang members which can facilitate the social influence observed in this study (Boduszek & Hyland, 2011; Higgings, 1987; Lopez & Emmer, 2002).

This is in line with social identity theory – cores might see their fellow gang members as prototypical gang members and this fuels their levels of social identity (Haynie, 2001). The finding that they gained a group identity with their gang adds to previous research noting its importance in gangs (e.g. Halperin, 2008; Sternerg, 2003; Viki & Abrams, 2013). Cores might feel they are similar to each other and spend a lot of time together, and so having a group identity provides cores with a better sense of who they are (Viki & Abrams, 2013). Interdependency was also high in cores – the shape of this interdependency is unclear – they may be dependent on supporting each other, committing crime together, or being socially interdependent on each other (Hogg,

1992). This interdependency may help cores reach common offence-related goals. It is noted in previous work that gang members who feel very close to their group, are more likely to work toward common goals, especially if the group has been successful in their activities (Short et al., 1965).

Adding to these interpersonal group processes, power and normative processes are also important. Core members showed high social dominance orientation. It might be that they feel dominant over peripherals or that they are more concerned with their standing in their 'gang-related world'. As core members usually feel central to a gang (James, 2015; Klein & Maxson, 2006), it is possible that their orientation toward social dominance fuels their need to remain in their gang to prevent it losing its position in the gang hierarchy (Densley et al., 2014; Wood et al., 2013). Cores also showed a high appreciation of power/status. It is likely that as cores are more reliant on their group, they consciously wanted the gang life-style more long-term and so understood that status and its retention are necessary (Anderson, 1999; Decker & Van Winkle, 1996; Matsuda et al., 2012; Short & Strodbeck, 1965). Cores also showed a high appreciation of norms. Possibly due to having common goals, their criminal orientation, or a normative form of interdependency, norms can be crucial for a successful functioning of a group and so cores might be more likely to conform to norms due to the stakes attached to gang activities and possible sanctions from their own group (Rimal & Real, 2003). Such ties are strong, making leaving the gang unlikely as each of the group processes exerts a strong pull, particularly for cores to remain a gang member.

### **6.3.3 Self-identified gang members**

It is possible that those gang members who self-categorise might be the most prone to group process influences from their gang. Cores and self-identified gang members are characterised by similar group processes. However, group processes seem to be even more focused for self-identified gang members. They mostly valued interdependency of members, appreciated power/status and norms, were high in social dominance and pursued common goals. Whilst it is unclear what the interdependency of SI gang members stems from (possibly common activities or social support; Hogg, 1992), it is clearly important to them and may make their remaining in a gang very attractive. This interdependency seems to interlink, if not underpin, all other group processes. Power/status can perhaps be more easily gained and maintained when gang members are interdependent on each other and gang members valuing and understanding the value of power/status, has previously been observed (Anderson, 1999; Decker & Van Winkle, 1996; Matsuda et al., 2012; Rizzo, 2003; Short & Strodbeck, 1965). In addition, being socially dominant goes hand in hand with wanting and appreciating status and so it is possible that SI gang members are those, especially due to their self-categorization, who work to gain a certain status or are socially dominant.

Along those lines, norms and goals, as well as interdependence, are said to collectively work toward higher social cohesion (Hogg, 1992). SI gang members often spoke about money as a clear goal of the group and norms were often perceived as necessary to achieve their criminality. Norms were also perceived as essential to trust and loyalty – and this further feeds in with the interdependency. The cited reasons for

goals, norms, and even power/status, have been observed in gangs before (Klein & Maxson, 2006; Vigil, 1998; Wood & Alleyne, 2010). Interdependency of SI gang members and the other strongly related group processes, seem to tie SI gang members closely together – this is due to power and normative group processes, but also interpersonal ones. This can make NSI gang members easier to work with as their ties are not as strong as of SI gang members who might be less receptive of interventions.

#### **6.3.4 Group Processes in context, at the remaining stage**

The results of this study provide interesting findings in terms of gang cohesion and gang embeddedness. Whilst group cohesion is a multi-faceted topic usually best understood in terms of togetherness (Klein, 2014), embeddedness also refers to structural, relational and environmental factors (Pyrooz et al., 2012). As argued in Chapter 3, cohesion has been widely discussed with regards to gangs even though results are not consistent and some gangs do not seem to exhibit high levels of cohesion at all (Klein, 2009; Klein & Maxson, 1987). However, the current study indicates that it is important who the research examines. For example, the possibility of cohesion being reduced due to high turnover of peripheral members (Vigil, 1998) was partially supported in this study, as core members differed from peripherals on several important group processes. Cohesion may fluctuate based on other properties, and the current study provides evidence that different types of gang members exhibit different types of cohesion. Generally, gangs did not seem to be cohesive groups as per our conventional understanding. What differentiated them from non-gang offenders were power-related group processes and gang members did not perceive to be more supportive of each other or more interdependent which contrasts with many previous assumptions in the gang

literature (Hughes and Short, 2005; Przemieniecki, 2005). However, when it comes to embeddedness, a different picture emerges. It might be that groups characterised by normative processes and therefore high embeddedness – for example, gang members might not be seen as very cohesive on a personal level, but they still seem to be embedded in their gang – it is just the motivation for that embeddedness that differs. It might also be that those individuals who are best characterised by power/normative processes, as well as more interpersonal group processes might be the ones who feel embedded, as well as cohesive, and might be the hardest to work with (e.g. core and SI gang members).

### **6.3.5 Conclusion**

This research provided findings which make it clear that it is key to understand the interplay of group processes at the stage of remaining a gang member. It was shown that group processes should no longer be examined in isolation and need to be studied as interconnected. It was also shown that different types of gang members can be characterised by the importance they attach to specific group processes, which has not been explored before.

## **Chapter 7 – General Discussion and Conclusions**

### **7.1 Overview of the thesis**

Despite gang membership being viewed as an important issue world-wide, there are still numerous key issues that have not been explored, but which are crucial to successfully tackling the problem. A century of criminological research on gangs has provided crucial information regarding environmental, socio-economical or geographical issues. However, the wealth of criminological theories fails to account for the fact that not all individuals from such backgrounds offend (Webster et al., 2006). In fact, gang members come from a variety of backgrounds and have varying reasons for wanting to be a part of a gang (Wood & Alleyne, 2013). Generally, psychological input was lacking and the interplay of these two perspectives – the area of social psychology and group processes - has not, so far, been examined in any detail. This thesis therefore aimed to fill four key gaps present in gang literature.

First, for over 50 years, calls have been made to study how the area of group processes relates to gang membership (Short & Strodbeck, 1965). We know that members of different types of groups perceive group processes (i.e. how they manifest) differently. For example, football players see the importance of cohesion in terms of reaching a common goal (Carron et al., 2002). Whilst some group processes have been studied in gangs (e.g. social identity; Hennigan & Sloane, 2013), these have only been studied in isolation. Therefore, the first aim of this thesis was to explore whether gang members perceive group processes, regularly studied in groups, also manifest in gangs, and how they are uniquely understood by gang members.

Second, research has continuously shown that different groups, due to their differing descriptive properties, need different group processes for appropriate functioning. For example, social identity, norms or roles have been highlighted in the study of terrorism (Kruglanski & Golec, 2004; Sageman, 2004). So, the second aim of this thesis was to understand whether different group processes are perceived as more important in gangs, when compared to pro-social groups.

Third, it has been shown that there are different types of gang members. Researchers have differentiated between gang members mostly based on their level of involvement, or 'togetherness' (Curry et al., 2002; James, 2015; Klein & Maxson, 1989). Differences between different kinds of gang members have been found, in terms of age and criminal activity (Alleyne & Wood, 2010), attitudes and behaviours (Esbensen et al., 2001) or levels of delinquency (Gatti et al., 2005). And so, the third aim of this thesis was to establish how the perception of group processes differs in importance to different types of gang members.

Lastly, whilst gangs are groups, they have rarely been look at as such. Research on group processes has so far only uncovered the effects that group processes can have (e.g. facilitation processes are well documented; e.g. Rosenfeld et al., 1999). However, gangs, just like any other type of a group, go through a cycle – from forming/joining to remaining, and to leaving (as suggested by the Unified model of gang membership; Wood & Alleyne, 2010). Models of group cycles have been presented before (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977; Moreland & Levine, 1982) and suggest that there are different aspects of a group that an individual considers when they are joining a group, whilst in a group and when deciding to leave a group. This is in line with the idea of asymmetrical

causality (Uggen & Piliavin, 1998). Therefore, the fourth aim of this thesis was to establish how the perception of group processes differs at two of these stages – i.e. joining a gang and remaining in a gang.

## **7.2 Summary of results**

### **7.2.1 Study 1 – Establishing the importance of group processes to gang membership**

The first study explored whether, and how, gang members perceived group processes regularly manifesting in groups also manifest in gangs. Further, it examined whether, and how, gang members perceived they manifest at both stages of membership.

Firstly, two interesting trends, separate from the anticipated analyses, were observed. Rather than actively seeking a gang, as often assumed in literature, the majority of the interviewed individuals formed a friendship group which later evolved into a gang. Also, whilst ‘olders’ and ‘younger’ are often discussed as part of the same gang this was not the experience reported by the participants interviewed in the current thesis. That is, although the influence of olders was acknowledged, the individuals interviewed within this thesis saw themselves as a distinct group.

The main finding of this initial study was that participants perceived the presence of all the discussed group process. So, it was established that group processes which regularly manifest in groups, are also perceived as manifesting in gangs. The way these processes were discussed was specific to gangs and gang members seemed to have specific ideas about how certain group processes manifest. Further, the way the importance of group processes was perceived and how they were understood differed



from the stage of joining to the stage of remaining, thus justifying further examination of these issues.

Generally, there seemed to be a shift in how group processes were perceived at the two stages – at the stage of remaining, the influence of group processes on individuals was usually only felt from a small number of close friends, rather than the whole group. Further, individuals often had pre-conceived ideas in terms of group processes like norms, goals or social support, suggesting that their social cognition was shaped prior to joining a group. This is also interesting as individuals who had such ideas mostly joined/formed groups which were not criminally active. Participants also expressed a need for individuality throughout, rejecting the notion of deindividuation – again, something that is often assumed takes place in gangs (Skarin, 2009). Lastly, a common theme which emerged centred on early distrust expressed by the participants. From an early stage, individuals felt that they could never fully trust their group or at least their whole group. This again signifies how the environment shapes a young person's cognition about group membership and social bonds and perhaps undermines the concept that cohesion is central to gang membership.

### **7.2.2 Study 2 – Exploration of group processes in gang members at the stage of joining**

The second study aimed to test whether the perception of group processes manifests differently in gangs, rather than non-gang offending groups, at the stage of joining. Further, it examined how group processes are viewed by different types of gang members. Differences between the following groups were observed: Gang members, non-gang offenders, core and peripheral gang members, and SI and NSI gang members.

It was found that the way group processes cluster together characterizes the views of individuals within specific groups – differences between gang and non-gang offending youth were found, as well as between different types of gang members. For example, cores, rather than peripherals, can be distinguished based on their perception of group processes as experiencing more social support, appreciating the need for norms more and experiencing more social influence. On the other hand, peripherals were not expecting close bonds or influences from their gang. These findings, if placed into context of group embeddedness and group cohesion more widely, suggest that different types of gang members might be cohesive and embedded to different extents and, in turn, indicate that there is a different interplay of group processes depending on the level of each member's embeddedness.

### **7.2.3 Study 3 – Exploration of group processes in gang membership at the stage of remaining**

The third study tested whether group processes are perceived differently in gangs, than in non-gang offending groups, at the stage of remaining a group member. Further, it was examined how group processes are perceived in different types of gang members. Differences were observed between the same groups as in Study 2.

Based on the reports from offenders, findings showed that specific clusters of perceived group processes differed according to type of group. For example, core gang members can be characterised, based on their views surrounding group processes, by a complex network of group processes, showing that they have more appreciation for group decision making, facilitation and performance, experience more social influence, are higher in social dominance, feel more group identity, perceive higher

interdependency, appreciate power/status more, have more common goals, and appreciate norms more. And so, whilst peripherals seemed to hold quite loose ties with their gang, cores were embedded in their gang and felt interlinked with the other gang members. Clusters like this differed according to the type of group and differed from the stage of joining, which will be summarised later. Placing these findings within wider topics of group embeddedness and cohesion, they suggest that different types of gang members hold different levels of embeddedness and cohesion and that this relates to different clusters of group processes.

### **7.3 Key findings of this thesis**

#### **7.3.1 Individual characteristics observed in gangs**

There were several individual characteristics of gangs which arose throughout this thesis which were not anticipated and need further study. Whilst the topic of olders was not prevalent throughout this thesis, the way some gang members discussed olders differed from our previous understanding. Firstly, previous literature often referred to olders and youngers as being a part of the same group (Klein & Maxson, 2006). However, the majority of participants were adamant that olders were their own groups, separate from the gang members' own group. Whilst olders still seemed to influence participants' perceptions of group processes, interventions placing them in the same friendship group might only increase an individual's identification with their own group.

Through decades of research, scholars have mainly focused on why or how individuals join gangs. The current studies highlighted that many individuals form a social group which can then evolve into a gang. And so, why friendship groups that

later evolved into a gang is unclear. The current findings suggest that individuals recognised their anti-social tendencies from an early age (e.g. playing truant, engaging in fights), usually at the stage of forming a group. Such tendencies translated to their views around friendship. The fact that individuals forming a social group already felt norms were important, showed early distrust, and appreciated goals surrounding individual freedom, are revealing in that the individual's environment seems to shape views surrounding group membership from a very early age. Therefore, youth in social groups can still be at risk of gang membership and a possible group-level intervention approach is needed to prevent groups becoming gangs.

As stated, gang members, from an early age, showed distrust of others, including their fellow gang members. Break in trust is usually associated with individuals not wanting to remain members of a group (Maki et al., 1979) and so early distrust, which is also visible during membership, is an important characteristic which mirrors itself through a variety of group processes. It is important to explore where this distrust comes from in the future. Possible reasons noted through the current studies included hearing about others' betrayal or being betrayed personally. Trust is normally a key feature of successful and cohesive groups (Evans & Dion, 2000). The findings in this thesis suggest that participants' views were formed at an early age possibly from familial experiences and these in the increased need for norms or interdependency through gang membership. Gang membership seemed to only exaggerate this mistrust as individuals often concluded, at the stage of remaining, that they only felt close to very few individuals in their gang.

Gang members, throughout the studies, seemed to connect strongly to a select few individuals and this may be a strong influence for them to remain in their gang (Pyrooz et al., 2014). In other words, even though an individual might no longer enjoy the group's activities or influences, the group processes that they experience with the close friendships that they have developed, might be strong enough for an individual to want to, or feel obliged to, stay. This has not been previously observed in the gang literature, but is very important, potentially for the development of interventions.

### **7.3.2 Gangs have a life-cycle**

A common critique presented throughout this thesis is that previous research often identified the presence of group processes but did not consider which group processes are perceived as of key importance and whether they differ at the stage of joining and the stage of remaining with a gang. Previous social psychology literature suggests that all groups go through a life cycle and the current findings support the notion that gang members perceive group processes, and their importance, at different stages differently. The findings of this thesis supports the presence of a life-cycle in line with previous models, like Tuckman's Stages Model of Group Development (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) and Moreland and Levine's (1982) Model of Group Socialisation which are both in line with Uggem and Piliavin's (1998) idea of asymmetrical causality. These models suggest that a sort of internal conflict and re-evaluation take place during membership and so expectations upon forming/entering are different from the group's functioning.

The current findings show that gang members had certain ideas and expectations when forming (or joining) a group. Gang members then discussed a change in ideas about the group and discussed that the way the group functioned was different to

individuals' expectations and so gangs also fit into the aforementioned models.

Throughout the studies, as further discussed in other sections, it was shown that the perceived group process clusters which can distinguish between different gang members differ based on the stage of gang membership. This ties in with the cyclical version of Tuckman's model, in that a reforming of ties can take place, and is also in line with the remembrance stage of Moreland and Levine's model.

### **7.3.3 How group processes manifest in gangs**

Throughout this thesis, it was established that gang members have a specific way of understanding group processes. Whilst they held a unique view of all the group processes discussed in this thesis, it was found that the interplay of specific clusters of group processes can characterise the perceptions of the different types of gang members and that not all perceived group processes are characteristic of specific types of groups and gang members. These clusters differ based on the stage of membership an individual is in. This is crucial as these results highlight further need for theoretical understanding of group processes in gang membership (Wood & Alleyne, 2010) and the inclusion of group processes in intervention programs (Gravel et al., 2013).

That group processes are perceived as manifesting in gangs means that they may act to motivate gang membership and implies that they may also act to encourage desistance from gang membership. In this respect, it can be said that young people's views may be shaped by their environment in that they may develop certain expectations of what group membership of specific groups have to offer them. Actually belonging to a group can then either reinforce or change these views. This information may be used to inform both prevention and rehabilitation strategies.

For example, whilst social identity is often cited in gang research and generally observed in groups (Brown, 2000), individuals joining a gang seemed to show distrust of others at the stage of joining and this makes this view on social identity unique to gang members and is perhaps influenced by how they viewed other groups/people (e.g. family, school pupils, etc.) before becoming gang members. Interestingly, gang members did not perceive social identity as important; however, perhaps the value they gave to power-related group processes and norms shape how they viewed their identity – wanting to feel individual in a prescribed environment. However, SI gang members expected to gain a group identity. Perhaps it is the self-identification and a higher expected involvement in the group's activities that are motivating for youth to become a gang member and gain a group identity with other gang members.

The more time individuals then spent together and the better they got to know each other, the more they seemed to identify with the group. However, individuals tended to only feel social identity with a select few individuals, whilst their distrust of others in the gang was maintained. This was reflected in the findings that only core gang members perceived group identity as something that was of high importance to them. It might be that as they felt central to their gang, they gained a group identity which was a very strong push to remain members of a gang. It is, however, interesting that this was not found in SI gang member.

It is also important, however, to not only appreciate that gang members hold specific views regarding group processes. It is also crucial that these group processes are perceived as interlinked with others, which then characterise different types of groups and gang members. Following on from the example of social identity, for SI

gang members, at the stage of joining, it seems that striving for power, being socially dominant and appreciating norms makes them interdependent and prone to social comparison with other gang members, which can fuel their perception of the importance of social identity.

## **7.4 Implications**

### **Theory**

Firstly, group processes like group cohesion and embeddedness can be seen as a ‘final products’ of different group processes. It might be that individuals who perceive normative or power-oriented group processes would feel highly embedded and those who would perceive interpersonal group processes (e.g. interdependency, social support) would feel like they are a member of a cohesive group. It was beyond the scope of this thesis to explore these concepts in depth. However, there are some implications to these concepts within the current findings. It seems that gang cohesion is perceived differently by gang members than by other types of group members.

Generally, only core gang members and SI gang members seem to display cohesive group processes in that individuals feel a certain togetherness with their gang. This is in line with the notion that, as individuals feel more threat (possibly due to gang wars, higher stakes of membership, etc.), they display higher cohesion and dependency on each other (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996). However, that does not mean that other individuals do not feel they are a part of a cohesive group. It is possible that cohesion takes a different shape in gangs. For example, it might be that the need for individuality takes precedence for gang members, whilst still being able to feel close to other gang members.



This might be why there are such conflicting findings as to cohesion in gangs (Klein, 2009; Maxson, 1999). For example, cores seemed to feel more social identity with their group, than did peripherals and so did SI gang members. Therefore, due to the varying and contrasting definitions of gang cohesion, and the different measurements of gang cohesion, researchers have been finding contrasting results in terms of how cohesive gangs actually are. This thesis showed that it is important to appreciate that different gang members exist and that these might show different levels of cohesion.

On the other hand, the idea of gang embeddedness seems to fit in with the area of gangs better. Whilst individuals might not always have a feeling of togetherness, they are reliant on each other. This can be seen in terms of all comparisons in this thesis. The highly salient group processes of norms, power/status, interdependency or goals signify that individuals need each other – but this does not necessarily mean they are connected by friendship ties. It is possible that individuals feel cohesion with a select few friends but feel embedded within the gang as a whole due to shared goals or similar commonalities – such structural ties are a dominant feature of embeddedness (Pyrooz et al., 2012).

Whilst both of these concepts tie in with the area of gang membership, it is possible that their combined presence is the largest cause for concern. For example, core gang members, at the stage of remaining, seemed highly embedded due to the appreciation of common decision making/cooperation, seeking of power, being socially dominant, and following common norms and goals. However, on an interpersonal level, they also felt the impact of social influence, group identity and interdependency. It might be that when a gang member belongs to a group where they experience both high

cohesion and embeddedness, the group processes from the group acting on an individual are strongest.

Secondly, these concepts tie in with theories on gang desistance. As Decker and Lauristen (2002) found, there are two core pathways which can lead to gang desistance. Both pathways can be supported by the current findings. For example, it is possible that abrupt desistance may happen with peripheral gang members, as soon as alternative and legitimate means to achieving goals (e.g. gaining employment) become possible, as they seemed less intertwined with the gang. The second pathway, gradual, might be more likely with, for example, core gang members. They were characterised by a complex network of group processes and so, it is likely that simply gaining employment (or other researched desistance factors, such as parenthood) might not be sufficient to fuel abrupt desistance. This is because core gang members are not only reliant on each other due to personal reasons, but seemed to feel a personal connection to their gang (e.g. higher feelings of group identity, or perceived interdependency). Lastly, a third pathway is possible which suggests that some gang members, even after leaving their gang, still keep ties to their former gang (Pyrooz et al., 2014). In the present study, it seems that both core and SI gang members seem to be tied with a complex web of group processes. Further, they seem to not only be embedded, but also cohesive and so it is possible that even after an individual leaves a gang, they still feel (due to normative group processes like norms, but also due to friendship-oriented processes, like social comparison) like they should support their former gang (e.g. when a fight occurs).

Thirdly, the current findings also provide useful information in regard to models of gang membership. Thornberry et al.'s (2003) model, concerned with joining a gang,

is based on the premise that environmental and family variables interact to form an individual's cognition which can influence attenuation of pro-social bonds. Similarly, Howell and Eagley's (2005) model, also concerned with joining a gang, takes an interactional standpoint, through different stages of one's development. However, neither model considers the role of group processes when discussing the bonds and views that one develops. The current findings are useful in two ways. First, it is important to understand that the path to gang membership is not always individualistic – in other words, not all individuals 'join' a gang. They can also form a social group which later evolves into a gang. Second, appreciation of specific group processes can make the models stronger. It seems that for youth already offending, at the stage of joining, the group processes that need to be appreciated relate to higher need for power/status, higher appreciation of norms and higher social dominance orientation.

The current findings are also useful to the Unified Model of Gang membership (Wood & Alleyne, 2010). Their model, by combining available information on gangs, did not consider the specific group processes which might be at play at the different stages of this model. Specifically, knowledge on group processes is useful in regard to several stages of this model. Regarding the stage of 'Social Cognition', it seems that individuals formed their opinions surrounding what they expect from group membership before joining a group – for example, it seems that they already had a high appreciation of power/status, and perceived following norms as important. Gang members also spoke about not trusting others and wanting to feel like an individual. Then, after 'Opportunity for criminal learning' occurs, it is possible that some start offending ('Criminal activity'), either as individuals or as a whole group. Thus 'at risk' youth can then join a

gang, or as a whole group, evolve into a gang. Therefore, a solid line should be added from 'Criminal activity' to 'Gang membership'. Group processes of importance here are those discriminating between gang members and non-gang offenders at the stage of joining (power/status, norms, social dominance orientation).

The different pathways that an individual can take throughout this model are highly dependent on the type of gang members of interest. Whilst this model accounts for gangs as developing (i.e. in line with asymmetrical causality and general models of groups), it does not account for the current findings, that different gang members have different needs and that the different group process clusters influence the pathways gang members can take. For example, Wood and Alleyne state that gang membership provides a variety of benefits to members, including status, power, social control or social support. However, individuals have certain expectations. For example, core gang members expected and subsequently observed social support from their new group, they also learned group norms (i.e. social controls), and they perceived the influence on them from their peers. However, these expectations seem to evolve as membership is maintained. For cores, the group process cluster became much more complex. Individuals were more likely to perceive the importance of cooperation, they influenced each other, exhibited high social dominance orientation, perceived a common group identity and interdependency, and they showed a higher appreciation of power/status, goals, and norms. Therefore, when using the model to explain gang membership or when using it for practical purposes, it is key to know what stage of membership a gang member is in. The below figure highlights possible improvements to the model where information presented in **bold** are the changes (Figure 7.1)

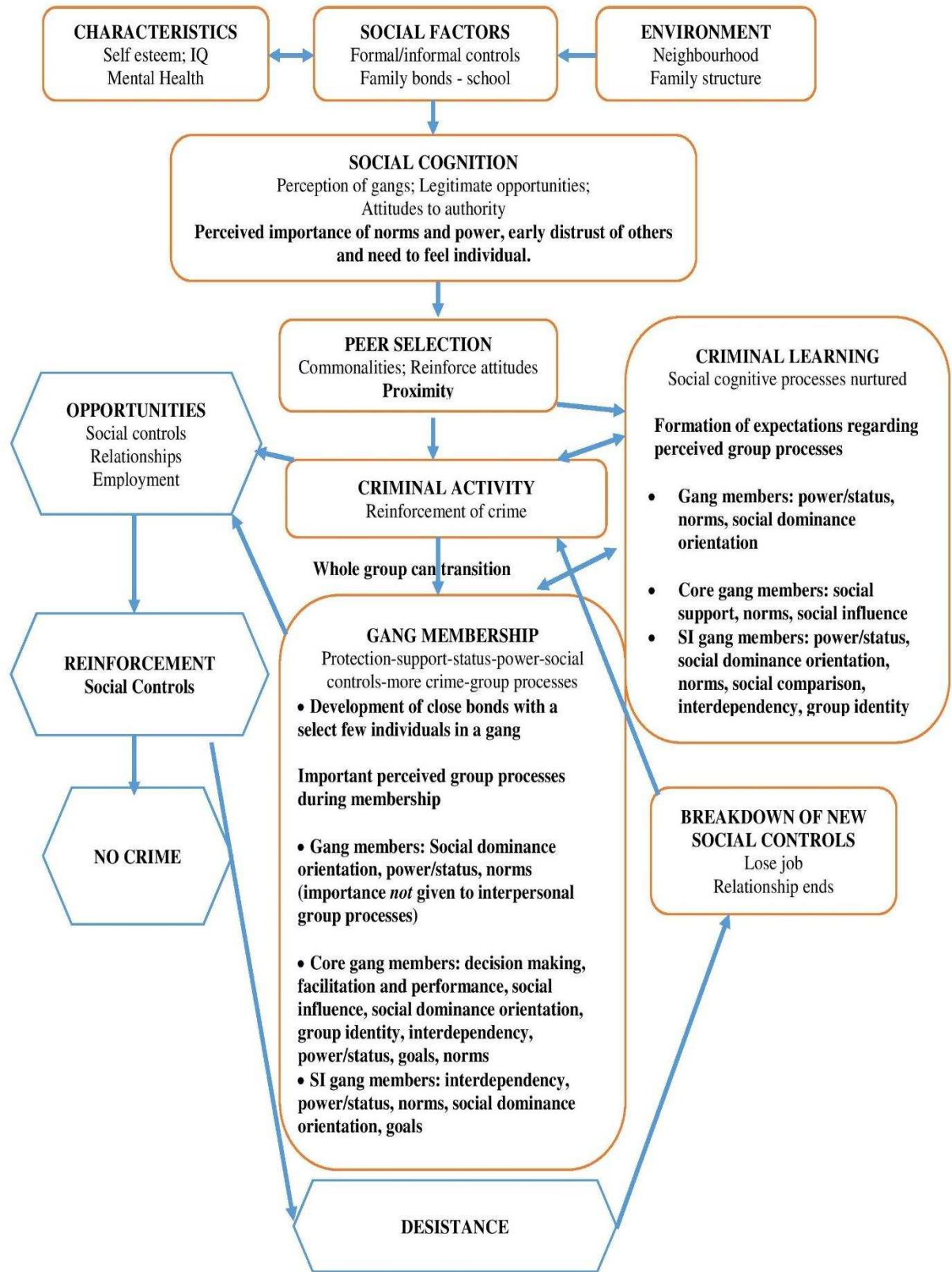


Figure 7.1. Adjusted Unified Model of Gang membership

## **Practice**

The findings of this thesis provide important information for possible intervention strategies. First, as noted before, several individual characteristics of gangs arose throughout the studies. Whilst older seemed to influence participants' perceptions of group processes, placing them in the same friendship group might only increase an individual's identification with their own group. Further, early prevention strategies need to better target social groups where individuals show anti-social tendencies, as a whole group can transition into a gang. The fact that individuals forming a pro-social group already felt norms were important, showed early distrust and appreciated goals surrounding freedom are telling in that the individual's environment shapes cognition surrounding group membership from a very early age. Therefore, early intervention strategies need to consider that those in pro-social groups can still be at risk of gang membership. Further, shaping individuals' social cognition with regards to what positive and pro-social group membership looks like is important from an early age (possibly primary school), as gang members seemed to have existing ideas about what group membership looks like already at the stage of joining.

Second, it is key that professionals appreciate that young people have different needs with regards to group processes at the stage of joining and then at the stage of remaining in a group. Interventions need to, therefore, be shaped based on the stage an individual finds self in: otherwise, practitioners can be targeting an inappropriate group process or can even make an individual more appreciative of their group. Further, it is important to recognise that all these group processes relate to each other and so working

on one, in isolation, might only increase the presence of another one, possibly explaining why certain interventions can backfire (Wood et al., 2016).

Third, trust is normally a key feature of successful and cohesive groups (Evans & Dion, 2000). The current findings suggest that individuals' cognition was influenced from an early age. Gang membership seemed to only exaggerate this mistrust. Therefore, early intervention strategies need to target how individuals perceive relationships more generally and possibly explore what events led to the feelings of distrust. Further research, as well as interventions, should examine the bonds that gang members hold with their close friends in more detail, as trying to break their bonds might only make them stronger and counteract intervention aims (Klein & Maxson, 2006).

Fourth, it is important to appreciate that different gang members have different needs that should be addressed. In order to provide intervention strategies for youth who can be seen as 'at risk' (i.e. offending but not yet in a gang), it is important to understand how group processes differ between gang members and non-gang offenders. Gang members showed a higher appreciation of social dominance, power/status and norms – these all go hand in hand. It is possible this is due to environments where these processes are expected and embedded into one's cognition. It is also possible that this is due to a lack of opportunities for positive status being available to individuals. Prevention strategies should therefore be focused on giving individuals the chance to gain status or acknowledgement in a positive manner, in a structured environment where dominance can still be established but by following pro-social norms (Dawes & Larson, 2011; McMahon & Belur, 2013).

The same three group processes discriminated between these groups at the stage of remaining in a group. It might be that these processes subside for friendship variables which might still be present in non-gang offenders' groups. Therefore, it is key that rehabilitation programs target gang members' cognition so that they do not value dominance and power in the essence of criminality but shift their efforts in a pro-social manner. It is also important to work on issues surrounding what norms should look like as it seems that rather than having common-sense rules, they are there for the specific purpose of what the gang activities are (e.g. retaliation, 'business') and are associated with sanctions. Civil Gang Injunctions which prohibit one's movement, activities or associations (Home Office, 2014) therefore seem to be an appropriate method of deterring gang members (and even deterring at risk youth from joining) as by not being able to gain status through criminal activity might decrease one's need for social dominance and strict norms. However, this can only be achieved if further programs are available so individuals can work on changing their perceptions and such change will endure following the lifting of civil injunction constraints.

Further, a better process of imposing and lifting injunctions should be put in place so that labelling does not occur which could only support an individual's need for status or dominance in relation to an outgroup (e.g. the police; Huff & McBride, 1993). Further, individuals should also be provided with alternative, pro-social activities in place of their normal activities so that they can slowly start accepting a new identity, associated with different power processes or norms. This needs to be achieved as there is a lot of doubt as to the effectiveness of injunctions alone (e.g. Grogger, 2005; Hennigan & Sloane, 2013). Other wider-reaching interventions, alike the Ending Gang



and Youth Violence, seem appropriate in this respect also as these aim to provide more opportunities and a more inclusive and supportive environment (Tackling Crime Unit, 2015). However, none of these interventions are directly targeting these group processes – they can only be seen as by-products and better emphasis needs to be placed on how group processes influence individuals' perceptions.

Dividing gang members into core and peripheral is useful as such division reflects the involvement (also expectations) of individuals in their gang. Therefore, those who are more involved (i.e. cores) would experience a stronger pull of group processes and will therefore be harder to work with. The interplay of three group processes created a cluster best discriminating between core and peripheral gang members at the stage of joining. These were a higher perceived social support from the group, increased appreciation of norms, and increased awareness of social influence. This suggests that already at the stage of joining, these individuals expected a lot of support from their group which can possibly be because they perceived such occurrence as a norm or because they felt that norms would guarantee such support. Possibly due to spending more time together due to their increased involvement with the gang, individuals also felt more social influence from their group. This could, again, be fueled by their appreciation of norms as it is possible that certain things 'had to be done' or individuals felt they had to think/act a certain way due to consequences of breaking norms.

It can be suggested that individuals who are at the periphery can be worked with in regard to strengthening ties and appreciating all the pro-social influences around them and also the pro-social support they can gain. Peripherals usually retain pro-social ties,

on top of their anti-social ties (James, 2015) and this could be utilised. It would also be important to work on understanding that whilst norms exist in this world, they do not have to intuitively accept a group where norms are of a high importance and carrying consequences. On the other hand, core members should be included in work surrounding finding alternative individuals who can provide them with social support and influence, where norms would also feature. Taking the criminal element away should automatically help with the area of norms as this seems to only heighten in importance due to the stakes. Work also needs to be conducted on previous experiences of individuals as these seem to negatively affect the cognition of gang members, especially cores. These issues seem to again tie in with sport interventions where individuals have to be supportive of each other, have influence on each other and follow norms of a certain sport (McMahon & Belur, 2013). However, psychological interventions should also be included to further facilitate a change in cognition.

The cluster of group processes at the stage of remaining is very different and much more complex. Cores' perceptions can be defined by an interplay of decision making, facilitation and performance, social influence, social dominance, group identity, interdependency, power/status, goals, and norms. Such a complex cluster signifies the magnitude of influence group processes have on individuals who are highly involved with their group. However, it is interesting to see that social support is no longer a discriminating group process. Cores seem to rely on their group more in terms of their activities, they seem to be more in line with their group in that they have common goals, feel a group identity and interdependency, but they still show an appreciation of power-related processes.

When trying to work with peripheral or core members, it needs to be appreciated that links become much stronger and more intertwined for cores and no one process can be seen as isolated from the others. Previous intervention focusing on decision making in gang members showed promising results (Cocker et al., 1994) which should be further explored as it was this group process which was the best discriminant. No further investigation of this intervention was conducted since. However, further work in terms of being able to achieve certain things (like goals or status) needs to be done alongside, for example employing sport-based interventions (McMahon & Belur, 2013). Further wide-reaching interventions involving education and cognitive psychological work are also needed (Home Office, 2014; Wood, Alleyne & Beresford, 2016). This is because cores seem to be highly influenced by group processes which can make it difficult to break the developed bonds, as well as other (e.g. monetary) benefits of membership.

Using self-identification as a measure of classifying gang members, on top of a formal classification, is useful as those who self-identify might be more influenced by group processes. A group process cluster of power/status, social dominance, norms, social comparison, interdependency and group identity best defines SI gang members' perceptions. These individuals seemed to have quite complex expectations of their new group. They show an appreciation of power processes, along with norms. However, they also feel like they will be able to compare self with others, will be interdependent and gain a social identity.

SI gang members should be involved in interventions which would consider being able to develop the self in a structured manner and being able to prove the self in

front of others, like some sport interventions allow (McMahon & Belur, 2013), as well as being provided with wider opportunities regarding employment or building stronger family relationships (Tackling Crime Unit, 2015). This would help them gain a positive perception of group processes in regard to power and norms whilst including social comparison, gaining an identity and being interdependent on each other. Further, such interventions should include the formation of new friendships so that individuals can feel a similar level of involvement with a new group of individuals.

At the stage of remaining, this cluster changed and included interdependency, power/status, norms, social dominance and goals. Whilst these overlap with the stage of joining, individuals no longer felt a heightened presence of group identity or social comparison. Rather, they felt a higher appreciation of common goals which is possibly due to SI gang members more involved in offending.

Interdependency was the core element and the other group processes seem to be directly associated to it. This interdependency can be based on the norms of the group which can help with gaining power and dominance, and reaching common goals. Sports interventions where interdependency is key would seem to be the most suitable (McMahon & Belur, 2013), though only with associated psychological work aiming to change SI gang members' cognitions. Understandably, this would need to be a part of larger effort as the Ending Gang and Youth Violence attempts (Tackling Crime Unit, 2015) so individuals can also gain new goals which are not criminally-related.

Without addressing group processes which are specific to gang members, and different types of gang members, interventions will not be successful. In fact, the current thesis provided some explanation as to why interventions often backfire.

Further, without appreciating that group processes relate to each other, focusing on one group process might only make the influence of other group processes stronger. The above intervention efforts are mostly community-based (though the Ending Gang and Youth Violence program does work within prisons, as well). This is because there is a lack of established programs specifically related to gang membership within the prison system and many focus on ‘prison gang’ violence (e.g. HMP Thameside Gang Service; Catch 22, n.d.).

It seems that most gang members are placed on violence intervention programs due to gang members often perceived as highly violent (though not all gang members engage in a lot of violent conduct; Klein & Maxson, 2006), alike the Resolve (aimed at medium risk male offenders; Ministry of Justice, n.d.) or Self Change Program (SCP; aimed at repetitively violent offenders; Ministry of Justice, 2014). These generic violence interventions might not be best suited for gang members; however, if information surrounding group processes is implemented, they might be better placed at changing gang members’ cognitions specifically. It must, however, be stated that both of these are aimed at offenders over the age of 18. There is a lack of established interventions for under 18s.

First, as these two programmes are based on levels of violence exhibited by individuals, it might be that core and SI gang members are best placed to attend SCP and peripheral and NSI gang members are best placed to attend Resolve – this is because core and SI gang members are more intertwined with their gang and are more likely to engage in the violent conduct for their gangs. However, recently, those attending SCP no longer need to satisfy having at least four convictions for violence and

so the program became more generic (Ministry of Justice, 2014b). Speaking specifically about Resolve, this programme is structured into seven group sessions and one individual session, first uncovering the foundations, then moving on to understanding aggression, then considering one's thinking and identity, then considering one's emotions and dealing with conflict, further discussing one's lifestyle and finally considering relapse prevention. If no specific information is known about the gang member, then during the 'foundations' stage, especially during the one individual session, it would be useful to uncover their level of involvement with a gang as this impacts on their perceptions of what benefits gang membership is giving them (which further impacts on their willingness to engage in violent conduct). Throughout future sessions, specifically when 'thinking and identity', and 'lifestyle' are considered, the intervention should consider discussing group processes perceived as specific to gang membership (i.e. power/status, norms and social dominance), as a baseline. Whilst the programme is group-based, these are small groups and individual work is also undertaken. It is specifically these sessions where individuals, based on their level of involvement, can explore cognition specific to them. For example, core gang members should, on top of group processes relating to power/status, norms and social dominance, explore their views as relating to decision making and cooperation, social influence, interdependency and goals, to see how these influenced their decision to remain gang members and consequently their engagement in illegal and violent activity.

### **Future Research**

Whilst the present findings provide the first holistic process on group processes in gangs, this thesis should be seen as a much needed foundation for future research to take

place. First, whilst qualitative interviews took place with gang members, more qualitative research is needed to truly understand how group processes manifest. Interviews conducted for this thesis were time-limited and aimed to gain an overview of the perceived group processes in gangs. Ideally, longer interviews better exploring each of the group processes in more detail are needed. Further, a better idea of what fuelled a change in the perception of each specific group processes should be examined. It is also necessary to explore the dimensions of each of the group processes in this study as each of the group processes can be seen as encompassing a range of characteristics. It is also needed to better understand whether there are differences between those who 'joined' a gang and those who 'formed' a gang. It is possible that group processes between these two groups differ. It would be useful to find what group processes fuel the change from a social friendship group to a gang. Also, whilst the most commonly discussed group processes regularly manifesting in groups were considered in this study, these were not exhaustive.

Second, whilst a relatively large sample of gang members was utilised in this thesis, it would be useful to employ a larger sample which could further explore different dimensions of gang membership. For example, a larger sample could also test for any effects which might be due to differing ages of individuals joining/forming a gang and then remaining in a gang. It could also account for possible differences in gang members based on the length of time spent with a gang. Moreover, it would be useful to work on international comparisons with regards to group processes in gangs. It has been shown that gangs are similar, but also different, across countries and across continents. Whilst it was suggested that group processes might be the most connecting

factor among gangs, triumphing any other characteristics, no such research has been done, yet.

Third, as suggested previously, the area of group processes is key when understanding the concepts of gang cohesion, as well as gang embeddedness, both concepts often cited in literature. The current findings provide useful information in regard to how group processes feed into the concepts and how different gang members can likely be distinguished based on their perceptions of different levels of cohesion and embeddedness. However, a more thorough investigation of these issues is needed.

Lastly, this thesis aimed to not only add to our academic understanding of gangs, but also to suggest the importance of group processes for developing appropriate prevention and intervention strategies. The current thesis provided the backbone to the study of group processes which has been at the frontline of calls by academics for a long time. The possibilities of future research are almost limitless and are key in order to provide a holistic picture for practitioners.

## **7.5 Limitations**

There are several limitations regarding this thesis. In regard to the qualitative study, the interviews were conducted in very restricting conditions. Participants had a hard time focusing and, due to the variety of group processes that needed to be considered, great depth of discussion could not be gained. The regime of the establishment and their treatment of young people caused strain on the researcher in terms of availability of participants and the time available to spend with them.

Regarding the quantitative studies, due to the tests used, whilst minimum criteria were achieved, a larger sample size (i.e., especially for SI gang members) would have



provided stronger results. Generalisability of the findings should be approached with care due to the samples of this study. However, whilst the offender sample was from prisons in the South of England, these were not local prisons and so offenders came from anywhere in the country. Further, the demographic characteristics of all the samples used in this study was characteristic of the general demographic characteristics expected in prison, as well as community, samples. Due to the skewness of data (i.e., which was expected for most of the group processes), non-parametric tests had to be used. Whilst this might not be possible to prevent in the future, a different approach could be considered. Some of the scales could also be improved to reach better psychometric dimensions. Further, all of the scales should have included open-ended questions so that better understanding can be gained of all of them.

There are several limitations which accompany this whole thesis which need to be acknowledged. The first limitation lies in the fact that the group processes explored do not provide an exhaustive account of all possible group processes. Literature review in Chapter 2 provided an account of group processes most frequently associated with groups. This information was then used throughout the thesis. However, it was beyond this PhD to explore all the possible group processes existing in literature.

Second, all findings from this thesis are based on self-reported data and so participant bias could have occurred. However, the current research did not ask sensitive questions. Further, the interviewer conducted interviews one-on-one in a confidential setting to make participants feel comfortable to speak honestly. This, however, could also be associated with researcher bias. This study could have employed measures like the impression management scale to control for participant bias. However, the main

aims of the study were only discussed in terms of general group membership and the word 'gang' was not used.

Third, participants who posed a danger to themselves, the researcher or prison staff were excluded from this research. Whilst this was a necessary step, it is possible that these participants might comprise a specific group of offenders whose views were then not included in this study. Lastly, whilst every effort was taken to create appropriate interview schedules and scales, further work was needed. Whilst all the scales showed good psychometric properties and were pre-tested, some could have been improved to produce a better Cronbach's alpha score.

## **7.6 Conclusions**

Gangs are considerable concern worldwide and to numerous agencies in the UK. The costs of gang membership are very hard to calculate; however, estimates show that gang membership costs the UK economy a significant amount. Gang membership has been responsible for an increase in fear of crime and even moral panics. Through a century of criminological research, very little was done with regards to understanding the psychology of gang membership. Further, despite calls for an evaluation of group processes in gangs for over half a century, little has been done. Due to the lack of research in the area, the current thesis provided the first comprehensive overview of how group processes manifest in gangs and how they are perceived by gang members. It was found that group processes do, indeed, manifest in gangs. Specific clusters of group processes can define different types of group and different types of gang members. These clusters differ based on stage of membership. These findings provided the

backbone for future study of group processes which is still much needed so that academics and practitioners can gain a holistic picture of gang membership.

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## 9. Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Information sheet (Qualitative study)

You have been asked to take part in a research project and the details of this are below.

#### **What is this study about?**

This study aims to explore the differences between youth offenders. We are trying to see how your experiences differ to other youth offenders. We would like to find out what experiences you've had whilst belonging to a group that was important to you. We are doing so because we would like to provide better support and help to youth offenders who find themselves in a similar situation to yours. Your help would mean that we can better understand the way youth offenders think and what their specific needs are.

#### **Who is doing the study?**

This study is a PhD project. My name is Katarina Mozova and I am doing my PhD at the University of Kent. This project is supervised by Dr. Jane Wood who is a lecturer at the University of Kent.

#### **Do I have to participate?**

No, you do not have to participate. It is totally up to you whether you choose to take part or not, although I would be grateful if you did.

#### **What happens if I decide to participate?**

If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to help us by spending less than an hour with the researcher who will ask you a variety of questions. These questions range and ask you about your experiences in a group environment. You will be asked to think about a special group that you were/are a part of. The researcher will then ask you to answer questions about your own experiences in this group. As the researcher wants to capture all the information you provide, the interview will be recorded on an audio recorder but your name will not be mentioned. You can leave this study at any point without giving any explanation, although we would appreciate if you completed it. You do not have to answer all the questions the researcher will ask. If you withdraw from this study at any point (even up to two months after it was finished), your rights and privileges will not be affected. You will be treated in accordance with the British Psychological Society Guidelines.

#### **Who will have access to the information I provide?**

This study is completely confidential and anonymous. Your name will not be on the audio recording as you will be assigned a participant number. You will never be identified as one of the participants of this project. The only people who will have access to your answers are the researcher (Katarina) and her supervisor (Dr. Wood). Your answers (the interview) will be transcribed into a computer program, just like the answers of all of the other participants will be. Therefore, nobody will be able to

recognize you by your voice. We do not need to know your name for this study as we are not interested in the answers of every individual separately. The results of this study will be submitted as part of a PhD thesis and might be written up for publication. This study complies with the Data Protection Act 1998.

**Does the study have ethical approval?**

Yes, the study has approval from the University of Kent Ethics committee (Code: 220143522). They made sure that no harm can be done to you whilst doing this study. If you feel that your ethical rights were in any way violated, let the researcher know or contact the University of Kent Ethics Committee: Ethics Committee Chair, School of Psychology, University of Kent, Canterbury, CT2 7NP. This study also has ethical approval from Kent and Sussex Regional Forensic Psychology Service for Public Sector Prisons.

**What if I have questions or want to withdraw after the interview?**

You can withdraw your data up to two months from your participation in this project. You can contact me by sending a letter to either Katarina Mozova, or Dr. Jane Wood, to this address: University of Kent, Department of Psychology, Kent, Canterbury, CT2 7NP or, if you'd like to withdraw your data, call 01227 823961 with your participant number and providing my name. You can do this for up to two months after the interview was conducted.

## Appendix 2 – Consent form (Qualitative study)

I consent voluntarily to take part in the above research project. I have read the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions about it. I have had the project explained to me, and I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

- be interviewed by the researcher
- allow questionnaires and other materials completed by me to be analysed as part of this project
- have my interview recorded using an audio recorder

I understand that this consent form, which includes my name and signature, will be transported from the prison to the University of Kent into a lockable cabinet in the researcher's office by the researcher herself in a lockable briefcase.

### Data Protection

Information relating to the above will be held and processed for the purposes of evaluating this research project. I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party. No identifiable personal data will be published. The identifiable data will not be shared with any other organisation. Interview data and other data will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act in a secure environment.

I understand that the researcher will be obliged to pass on any information which I disclose during the interview process regarding:

- A breach of prison security
- If I disclose any further identifiable offences for which I have not been convicted
- If I break a prison rule during interview
- If I indicate a threat of harm to myself or others.
- If I disclose information of concern regarding Child Protection (e.g. history of previously undisclosed abuse).

### Withdrawal from study

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I understand that if I have any questions about this research or about my rights as a research participant I should ask..... If you I wish to ask questions about this research later I should contact.....

Name: .....(please print)

Signature: .....Date:.....



### **Appendix 3 – Debrief form (Qualitative study)**

Towards an understanding of group processes in youth groups

Researchers: Dr Jane Wood, Katarina Mozova

University of Kent

Thank you very much for taking part in this study. Below is more information about the purpose of this research and what we are looking at.

The aim of this study was to see how different youth offenders' experiences in groups differ depending on what kind of group they belong to. We are trying to establish the specific factors that are important to young people and how they motivate (or don't) them to belong to groups. In other words we are looking to find what the important reasons that prompt group membership are. We are doing this research because we would like to help youth offenders when they find themselves in a similar situation to yours, in a secure establishment. We would like to understand the specific needs that youth offenders have and would like to address them. We are therefore very grateful for your participation as this will help us develop our understanding.

If you have any queries about this research please contact the researchers at the address below.

If you feel that you want to discuss any issues raised by this study, you can contact the Samaritans: 08457 90 90 90

If you want to withdraw your data at any point after the researcher has left the prison you can do so by phoning 01227 823961 and giving your participant number and the lead researcher's name. Please bear in mind that you would need to do this within two months from the date of the interview - or your data will already have been included in the study.

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of this study, please contact the Chair of Psychology Research Ethics Committee (via the Psychology School office) in writing, providing a detailed account of your concern.

Once again, we would like to thank you for your time and valuable contribution to this study. Without the help of participants such as you, it would not be possible to examine these issues. So, your participation is greatly appreciated and what you have told us will contribute to a much better understanding of these important issues.

Yours Sincerely  
Jane Wood and Katarina Mozova  
School of Psychology, University of Kent, CT2 7NP

## Appendix 4 – Demographic questions and core items of Eurogang youth survey

### Background

1. Age \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender \_\_\_\_\_
3. Ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_
4. Index offence \_\_\_\_\_
5. Did you commit this offense as part of a group or alone? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Year convicted of index offence \_\_\_\_\_

### Eurogang Youth Survey (Core questions)

Was the group that we are talking about any sort of a team, such as the scouts, sports club, or other formal groups?

- (1) No                      (2) Yes

IF YES, SPECIFY WHICH \_\_\_\_\_

In addition to the above groups or teams, some people have a certain group of friends that they spend time with. The next few questions are about your friendship group that we are talking about. Please answer truthfully – there is no right or wrong answer to any question.

1. Was the group that we are talking about a group of friends that you spent time with, did things together or just hung out?

- (1) No                      (2) Yes

2. Did your group of friends spend a lot of time together in public places like the park, the street, shopping areas, or the neighborhood?

(1) No (2) Yes

3. About how many people, including you, belonged to this group?

2	3-10	11-20	21-50	51-100	More than 100
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)

4. How long did your group exist? (please specify in months/years)

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5. Was being involved in illegal activities accepted by or okay for your group?

(1) No (2) Yes

6. Did people in your group do illegal things together?

(1) No (2) Yes

7. If 'yes' how often did they do illegal things together and what sort of activities were they?

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8. How many offences would you say you committed with this group?

9. How many offences would you say you committed by yourself whilst in this group?

10. Were people in your group involved in acts of violence  
Not at all Very

much so

(1)------(2)------(3)------(4)------(5)------(6)------(7)

11. If yes – who were they violent against and why?

---

---

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12. Did you consider your group of friends to be a gang?

(1) No

(2) Yes

## Appendix 5 – Structured interview schedule

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study. I will not start the recorder. This is participant \_\_\_\_\_. I would like to remind you that all of the information you will provide will remain confidential. However, be reminded that if you tell me about any breach of prison security, disclose further identifiable offences you have not been convicted of, break a prison rule during the interview, or indicate a threat to harm yourself or others, I will be obliged to pass such information.

Do you have any further questions before we start?

**(Social identity)** note: these were not shown on the final interview schedule.

Q1a. What did you think of the group when you were becoming a member (were forming this group) and how did this change being a part of it?

- *Did you want to join it/be in it? Did you have a favourable impression of it?*
- *What did you think about the members, how they behaved individually and as a group. Did they like each other, rely on each other?*
- *Did you think you were going to like the person you would become? Did you think you were going to be proud to become a member, would give you identity?*
- *Did you feel that the group was much better in their activities than other groups? Did you feel that, as compared to other groups, they rarely did something wrong?*

Q1b. How would you describe yourself before joining this group? More specifically, I am interested in whether you felt strong as an individual. How has this change being in the group?

- *Would you be comfortable asking questions, speaking in front of people, and people you don't know well, speaking your mind freely, being a leader*
- *Would you be comfortable in a leading role*
- *Did you think of yourself as quite sure of yourself or not and why?*

**(Social comparison and social influence)**

Q2a. Before you were joining this group, did you often compare yourself to others? Did this change when you became a part of the group?

- *If you wanted to find out how well you were doing, did you often compare yourself with others? Did you compare your social skills?(e.g. popularity, accomplishments)*
- *Did you feel that the people in the group you were going to join would be good to compare yourself to? In terms of being the type of people you would like to compare yourself against or because of the similarity between you and them?*
- *Before you joined this group, did you sometimes feel that you had to hide who you really were? Has this changed once you were a part of this group?*
- *Did you sometimes feel/feel that you acted like a pretender?*

- *Did you sometimes feel that people would discover that maybe you don't have all the qualities they thought you have?*
- *When you were joining this group, did you ever fear that you were going to be evaluated in a negative light? Has this changed when you became a part of this group?*
- *Did you feel people would see you flaws; did you feel they'd judge you?*

Q2b. Did you think that the group or its members would influence you in any way before you joined? How has this changed once a part of it?

- *Did you think they would affect your feelings, behaviour, beliefs?*
- *Did you think this influence would be good/bad?*

**(Social facilitation, group decision making, group performance)**

Q3. I would now like to ask you more about what your group did, or what you thought they did, before joining it. Once you joined, what did you find out about what they really did?

- *Do you think the group accomplished things that no single member could? What kind of tasks did you think this group do together?*
- *Did the members cooperate together? Do you think the members made each other perform better?*
- *Did you feel that the group would improve your own abilities?*
- *Did you feel that your group was going to make good decisions? What kind of decisions did you feel they could help you with?*
- *Did you think that the group might make decisions that you normally wouldn't? Can you give me an example?*
- *Did you think you were going to commit crimes as part of the group?*
- *Did you think that your behaviour was going to become worse or better in this group? What about in terms of offending? Why?*

**(Power related group processes)**

Q4a. Now I'd like to ask you about what you felt that the group could give you/you could give the group when you were joining it. What actually happened when you joined?

- *Did you feel that belonging to this group would give you certain social status? Was this part of your reason of joining? What would you do to gain it?*
- *Did you feel that the group had a special role for you? Tell me more about these roles – did they come with different powers?*
- *Did you feel that your group would give you a place that you could protect? Did you want such a place?*

Q4b. Now I would like to ask you a little about the way you were thinking at the time you were joining your group. Please, try to answer in regard to how you were thinking before you joined this group. Has this thinking changed once in the group?

- *What did you think about issues like 'equality'? Did you think it is good if someone is on 'top' whilst others are at the 'bottom' – there is certain hierarchy?*
- *Did you think it was OK if someone dominated the society?*

**(Social Exchange)**

Q5. Now I'd like to ask you what you thought the group members could do for each other, before you joined this group. Did your understanding change once a part of this group?

- *Did you feel that the group will truly and really care about you?*
- *Did you think there was going to be a lot of give-and-take? Examples?*
- *Did you think there were going to be positive or negative consequences for your actions in terms of fairness?*
- *Did you feel that this was the only group where you could use your abilities to help?*

**(Norms, goals, interdependence)**

Q6a. I'm also very interested in how the group actually worked. Before you joined it, did you know they were going to be certain rules? What did you find out once you joined?

- *What did you think of these rules? Did you think the rules would be good for you?*
- *Did you think that it's important to have rules and consequences attached to them?*

Q6b. Before you joined this group, did you know whether the group had any goals that they were working toward? What were these? Has your understanding of this changed as you became a part of it?

- *Did you feel these goals were similar to your own goals? Did you feel this group could help you achieve your goals?*

Q6c. Now, what did you think, before joining the group, about how you would see yourself in it? How did you see yourself once you joined?

- *Did you think that in this group, you were able to still be an individual, with your own characteristics and interests? Or did you think that steps need to be made and every individual has to sacrifice something about themselves in order for the group to be in harmony?*
- *Did you believe that in this group, people should always consider what other think before the individual does anything?*
- *Did you think you would be willing to go the extra mile, even if it meant doing something you did not agree with, for this group?*

**(Belonging, social support)**

Q7a. Before you joined this group, did you feel that you wanted to be a part of a group? Did this change when you became a part of it?

- *Did you like being lonely or not; did you need to feel that there are people you can turn to?*
- *Did it hurt your feelings when you felt that people did not accept you?*

Q7b. Before you joined this group, did you feel like you could truly belong with this group? Has anything change when you actually joined?

- Did you feel that members would accept you the way you are and involve you in activities?
- Did you feel that this specific group would make you feel like you are truly a part of it?

Q7c. I'd also like to know how supported you felt around the time you were going to join this group. What changed when you were a part of it?

- *Did you feel that there was a special person who could always help you?*
- *Did you feel that your family was always there for you?*
- *Did you feel that institutions around you were there to help you?*
- *Did you feel that the group you were going to join/were in was going to be there for you?*

**(Closing summarizing questions)**

Q8. Now I only have a few questions to summarize what we talked about throughout.

- *Can you describe, in your own words, why wanted to join this group/remain membership?*
- *Why did you think you were going to fit in/you fit in?*
- *What did you think the main benefits were going to be/were?*
- *What did you think the main negatives were going to be/were?*
- *Is there anything else you can tell me?*



## Appendix 6 – Background information and Eurogang Youth Survey

### Background

1. Age \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender \_\_\_\_\_
3. Ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_

#### Offender sample:

4. Index offence \_\_\_\_\_
5. Did you commit this offense as part of a group or alone? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Year convicted of index offence \_\_\_\_\_

#### Student and Prolific Academic sample

4. Have you ever been convicted of a crime?

### Eurogang Youth Survey

Below are a number of statements about people's friendships before coming in to prison. These will ask you about the group, and your time in this group, that I asked you to think about. Please state how much you agree or disagree with each by indicating the number that shows what you think.

IMPORTANT: there are no right or wrong answers we would just like to know what you think.

1. Was the group that we are talking about any sort of a team, such as the scouts, sports club, or other formal groups?

(1) No                      (2) Yes

IF YES, what kind was it? \_\_\_\_\_

In addition to the above groups or teams, some people have a certain group of friends that they spend time with. The next few questions are about your friendship group that we are talking about. Please answer truthfully – there is no right or wrong answer to any question.

2. Was the group that we are talking about a group of friends that you spent time with, did things together or just hung out?

(1) No                      (2) Yes

3. How much time did you spend with this group of friends

Very little time

Most of my free time

(1)------(2)------(3)------(4)------(5)------(6)------(7)

4. Did your group of friends spend a lot of time together in public places like the park, the street, shopping areas, or the neighborhood?

(1) No                      (2) Yes

5. Did your group think of itself as a group

Not at all

Very much so

(1)------(2)------(3)------(4)------(5)------(6)------(7)

6. Did other people recognise you as a group

Not at all

Very much so

(1)------(2)------(3)------(4)------(5)------(6)------(7)

7. About how many people, including you, belonged to this group?

2	3-10	11-20	21-50	51-100	More than 100
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)

8. How old was the youngest and the oldest member of this group?

---

9. How many of your close friends belonged to this group?

All of them	Most of them	About half of them	Less than half of them	None of them
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

10. How long did your group exist? (please tell us in months/years)

---

11. Does it still exist?

(1) No                      (2) Yes

12. Do you still consider yourself as a member of this group?

a. YES

b. NO, how long were you a part of this group for? \_\_\_\_\_

13. How likely do you think it is that you will go back to it when you leave here?

Not at all likely

Very likely

(1)------(2)------(3)------(4)------(5)------(6)------(7)

14. Why do you say this?

---

---

15. Did your group have a name?

(1) No

(2) Yes

16. If 'yes' – what was its name?

---

17. Was being involved in illegal activities accepted by or okay for your group?

(1) No

(2) Yes

18. Did people in your group do illegal things together?

(1) No

(2) Yes

19. If 'yes' how often did they do illegal things together and what sort of activities were they?

---

---

20. How many offences would you say you committed with this group? \_\_\_\_\_

21. How many offences would you say you committed by yourself whilst in this group?  
\_\_\_\_\_

22. Were people in your group involved in acts of violence

Not at all

Very

much so

(1)------(2)------(3)------(4)------(5)------(6)------(7)

23. If yes – who were they violent against and why?

---

24. Did you consider your group of friends to be a gang?

(1) No

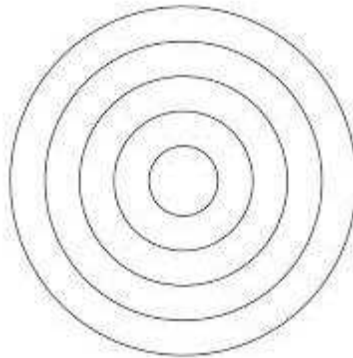
(2) Yes

29. Can you tell me a little more about your involvement in this group? How much were you involved in this group and why do you say so?

---

30. Have a look at the picture below. How far from the centre of the group do you feel you are?

(mark with an X within any of the circles, the middle circle being the centre of your group)



## **Appendix 7 – Scenarios**

### **Joining Scenario**

Now, this questionnaire is all about your group of friends. I would now like you to think about a group that you are, or were a part of that was very important to you growing up. A group that you have a lot of memories with.

You might still be a part of this group or have already left it. That is not important. Once you are thinking about this group, try to think back to the time just before you became a part of it or formed it. All of the questions that I will ask will be about this time in your life. For example, when I was 11, I joined a group of people who lived in an area close to me. If I was answering these questions, I would think about the time when I was 11 and was joining this group.

1. How old were you when you joined/formed this group?

---
2. Tell me a little about your life before you joined this group. For example, how were you feeling, was this a happy or sad time for you?

---

### **Remaining scenario**

Now, this questionnaire is all about your group of friends. I would now like you to think about a group that you are, or were a part of that was very important to you growing up. A group that you have a lot of memories with.

You might still be a part of this group or have already left it. That is not important. Once you are thinking about this group, try to think about the time that you spent in this group, time when you were a part of this group. All of the questions that I will ask will be about this time in your life. For example, when I was 11, I joined a group of people who lived in an area close to me and I was a part of this group until I was 14. If I was answering these questions, I would think about the time when I was 11 to 14 years old and was a part of this group.

1. How old were you when you were in this group?

---
2. Tell me a little about your life when you were in this group. For example, how were you feeling, was this a happy or sad time for you?

---

**Appendix 8 – Final scales (joining stage)**

Group Identity/1

Remember, I asked you think about the time you **were joining your group of friends**. All of the questions are about this time in your life.

**Before I joined this group...**

1. I thought that I would prefer to be in a different group\*

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

2. I thought that members of this group like one another

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

3. I thought I will enjoy hanging out with the members of this group

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

4. I thought that I didn't like many of the other people in this group\*

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

5. I thought that in this group, members don't have to rely on one another \*

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

6. I thought of this group as part of who I was

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

7. I saw myself as quite different from other members of the group\*

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

8. I thought that I was quite similar to other members of the group

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

9. I thought I would be a good person in this group.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

10. I thought that this group would make me happy as a person.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

11. I thought that this group was much better in their activities than any other group

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

12. I had a very good impression of the group

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

13. I thought that I would be proud to be a member of this group.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5



Still remember, these questions are about the time **you were joining or forming**

**a group. Before you joined your group, how willing were you to...**

1. Speak out in front of the rest of the group?  
 1. Not at all willing to do this ..... 2. Not very willing ..... 3. Slightly wiling ..... 4. Fairly wiling ..... 5. very much willing to do this
  
2. Ask questions in front of the group?  
 1. Not at all willing to do this ..... 2. Not very willing ..... 3. Slightly wiling ..... 4. Fairly wiling ..... 5. very much willing to do this
  
3. Take the lead of people even when you didn't know them very well?  
 1. Not at all willing to do this ..... 2. Not very willing ..... 3. Slightly wiling ..... 4. Fairly wiling ..... 5. very much willing to do this
  
4. Challenge a member of a group whose position you did not agree with?  
 1. Not at all willing to do this ..... 2. Not very willing ..... 3. Slightly wiling ..... 4. Fairly wiling ..... 5. very much willing to do this
  
5. Lead a group if asked?  
 1. Not at all willing to do this ..... 2. Not very willing ..... 3. Slightly wiling ..... 4. Fairly wiling ..... 5. very much willing to do this
  
6. Give your personal opinion to the group?  
 1. Not at all willing to do this ..... 2. Not very willing ..... 3. Slightly wiling ..... 4. Fairly wiling ..... 5. very much willing to do this
  
7. Tell the group your ideas even though you are not sure whether you are correct?  
 1. Not at all willing to do this ..... 2. Not very willing ..... 3. Slightly wiling ..... 4. Fairly wiling ..... 5. very much willing to do this
  
8. Give your own opinion on a topic that members of the group are arguing about?  
 1. Not at all willing to do this ..... 2. Not very willing ..... 3. Slightly wiling ..... 4. Fairly wiling ..... 5. very much willing to do this

Still, these questions are about the time you were **joining or forming a special group of friends. Before I joined my group...**

1. I worried about what other group members would think of me.

1. Not at all ..... 2. Slightly..... 3. Moderately..... 4. Very ..... 5. Extremely  
characteristic characteristic characteristic characteristic characteristic

2. I was worried about other members noticing what I wasn't good at.

1. Not at all ..... 2. Slightly..... 3. Moderately..... 4. Very ..... 5. Extremely  
characteristic characteristic characteristic characteristic characteristic

2. I was afraid others will not like me.

1. Not at all ..... 2. Slightly..... 3. Moderately..... 4. Very ..... 5. Extremely  
characteristic characteristic characteristic characteristic characteristic

3. I was afraid that people would criticise me.

1. Not at all ..... 2. Slightly..... 3. Moderately..... 4. Very ..... 5. Extremely  
characteristic characteristic characteristic characteristic characteristic

4. When I was talking to someone, I worried about what they thought of me.

1. Not at all ..... 2. Slightly..... 3. Moderately..... 4. Very ..... 5. Extremely  
characteristic characteristic characteristic characteristic characteristic

5. I was often worried about the impression I made on other group members.

1. Not at all ..... 2. Slightly..... 3. Moderately..... 4. Very ..... 5. Extremely  
characteristic characteristic characteristic characteristic characteristic

6. Sometimes I think I was too worried about what the other group members thought of me.

1. Not at all ..... 2. Slightly..... 3. Moderately..... 4. Very ..... 5. Extremely  
characteristic characteristic characteristic characteristic characteristic

8. I often worried that I would say or do the wrong things.

1. Not at all ..... 2. Slightly..... 3. Moderately..... 4. Very ..... 5. Extremely  
characteristic characteristic characteristic characteristic characteristic

Still thinking about the time **you were joining/forming a group**. Before you joined this group...

1. You often compared your own achievements with what the other group members had already done.

Strongly disagree ..... 1      Disagree ..... 2      Neutral ..... 3      Agree ..... 4      Strongly agree ..... 5

2. You always paid a lot of attention to how you did things compared with how other group members did things

Strongly disagree ..... 1      Disagree ..... 2      Neutral ..... 3      Agree ..... 4      Strongly agree ..... 5

3. If you wanted to find out how well you had done something, you compared yourself to other group members.

Strongly disagree ..... 1      Disagree ..... 2      Neutral ..... 3      Agree ..... 4      Strongly agree ..... 5

4. You often compared how you were doing (e.g., ability, popularity) with other group members

Strongly disagree ..... 1      Disagree ..... 2      Neutral ..... 3      Agree ..... 4      Strongly agree ..... 5

5. You felt that the members of the group you were going to join would be worth comparing yourself to

Strongly disagree ..... 1      Disagree ..... 2      Neutral ..... 3      Agree ..... 4      Strongly agree ..... 5

6. You felt that to know more about yourself, you could compare yourself to the members of the group you were going to join.

Strongly disagree ..... 1      Disagree ..... 2      Neutral ..... 3      Agree ..... 4      Strongly agree ..... 5

7. You felt that the members of the group you were going to join were people you would like to compare yourself to.

Strongly disagree ..... 1      Disagree ..... 2      Neutral ..... 3      Agree ..... 4      Strongly agree ..... 5

8. You felt that the members of the group were like you and it would be easy to compare yourself to them

Strongly disagree ..... 1      Disagree ..... 2      Neutral ..... 3      Agree ..... 4      Strongly agree ..... 5

Remember, we are still talking about the time **before you joined or formed a group of friends. Before you joined your group...**

1. Sometimes you were afraid the group members would discovered who you really are.

1. Not at all characteristic    2. Slightly characteristic    3. Moderately characteristic    4. Very characteristic    5. Extremely characteristic

2. You tended to feel like a phony.

1. Not at all characteristic    2. Slightly characteristic    3. Moderately characteristic    4. Very characteristic    5. Extremely characteristic

3. You were afraid people important to you may find out that you were not as good as they thought you were.

1. Not at all characteristic    2. Slightly characteristic    3. Moderately characteristic    4. Very characteristic    5. Extremely characteristic

4. In some situations you felt like an imposter, like you were pretending.

1. Not at all characteristic    2. Slightly characteristic    3. Moderately characteristic    4. Very characteristic    5. Extremely characteristic

5. Sometimes you were afraid others were going to discover that you weren't as good at stuff as they thought you were.

1. Not at all characteristic    2. Slightly characteristic    3. Moderately characteristic    4. Very characteristic    5. Extremely characteristic

6. In some situations you felt like a "great pretender"; that is, you was not as genuine as others thought you were.

1. Not at all characteristic    2. Slightly characteristic    3. Moderately characteristic    4. Very characteristic    5. Extremely characteristic

Again, I am still asking you about the time you were **joining or forming a group**.

**Before I joined the group...**

1. I thought that the group members would have a good effect on my feelings  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
2. I thought that the group would help me to behave in a way I wanted to  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
3. I felt that the group would have a good influence on me  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
4. I felt that I would like the effect that the group would have on me  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
5. I felt that there was a lot that I could bring to this group  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
6. I thought that what I could provide to the group would be appreciated by group members  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
7. I felt that my influence would be good for this group  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
8. In what ways did you think the group was going to have a positive influence on you?
9. In what ways did you think the group was going to have a negative influence on you?
10. In what ways did you think you could influence this group?

Still thinking about the time **before you joined/formed this group**, answer the following.

**Before I joined, I thought that in this group...**

1. Members cooperated with each other to do things  
Strongly disagree ..... 1 ..... Disagree ..... 2 ..... Neutral ..... 3 ..... Agree ..... 4 ..... Strongly agree ..... 5
2. Members made good decisions together  
Strongly disagree ..... 1 ..... Disagree ..... 2 ..... Neutral ..... 3 ..... Agree ..... 4 ..... Strongly agree ..... 5
3. Members made each other perform better  
Strongly disagree ..... 1 ..... Disagree ..... 2 ..... Neutral ..... 3 ..... Agree ..... 4 ..... Strongly agree ..... 5
4. My own abilities could be improved  
Strongly disagree ..... 1 ..... Disagree ..... 2 ..... Neutral ..... 3 ..... Agree ..... 4 ..... Strongly agree ..... 5
5. I felt that the group would help me make the right decisions  
Strongly disagree ..... 1 ..... Disagree ..... 2 ..... Neutral ..... 3 ..... Agree ..... 4 ..... Strongly agree ..... 5
6. I would like you to tell me a little more about what your group did.
  - a. What kind of things did you think this group did together?
  - b. Did you feel that your group was going to make good decisions? What kind of decisions did you feel they could help you with?
  - c. Did you think that the group might make decisions that you normally wouldn't? Can you give me an example?
  - d. Did you think you were going to commit crimes as part of the group?
  - e. Did you think you were going to become involved in offending in this group? Why did you think that?
  - f. Did you ever think you were going to be involved in any violence? Did you want to be? Would you be if the group needed you to?

We are still talking about the time you were **joining/ forming your group of friends.**  
**Before I joined this group...**

1. I felt that by joining this group, I would gain more status and reputation  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
2. I believed that this group had something for me to do that I would be happy with  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
3. I felt that this group could make me look more powerful in front of people outside of the group  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
4. I thought that group members all had different levels of power within the group  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
5. I felt that my group would give me a territory of my own and that I can protect as my own  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
6. I thought that by having a place to protect, I would have more power in the eyes of other people  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
7. I felt that joining this group would give me a respected social status  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
8. Status and respect are so important to me that I think it was ok to do whatever is necessary to gain and maintain them as part of my group  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
9. Did you know that belonging to this group would provide you with a certain status? Was it part of the reason you wanted to join? Why yes/no?

**Before you joined your group**, you might have been thinking a bit differently to how you think now. Imagine the way you were thinking at **just before/at the time you were joining/forming** your group when answering these questions.

1. We should do what we can to make conditions for different group equal.\*
 

Strongly disagree	.....	Disagree 2	.....	Neutral 3	.....	Agree 4	.....	Strongly agree 5
1								
2. It would be good if all groups could be equal\*
 

Strongly disagree	.....	Disagree 2	.....	Neutral 3	.....	Agree 4	.....	Strongly agree 5
1								
3. Group equality should be our ideal\*
 

Strongly disagree	.....	Disagree 2	.....	Neutral 3	.....	Agree 4	.....	Strongly agree 5
1								
4. Increased social equality would be a good thing\*
 

Strongly disagree	.....	Disagree 2	.....	Neutral 3	.....	Agree 4	.....	Strongly agree 5
1								
5. We would have fewer problems if we treated different groups more equally\*
 

Strongly disagree	.....	Disagree 2	.....	Neutral 3	.....	Agree 4	.....	Strongly agree 5
1								
6. All groups should be given an equal chance in life\*
 

Strongly disagree	.....	Disagree 2	.....	Neutral 3	.....	Agree 4	.....	Strongly agree 5
1								
7. We should strive to make incomes more equal\*
 

Strongly disagree	.....	Disagree 2	.....	Neutral 3	.....	Agree 4	.....	Strongly agree 5
1								
8. No one group should dominate in society\*
 

Strongly disagree	.....	Disagree 2	.....	Neutral 3	.....	Agree 4	.....	Strongly agree 5
1								
9. Sometimes other groups must be kept in their place
 

Strongly disagree	.....	Disagree 2	.....	Neutral 3	.....	Agree 4	.....	Strongly agree 5
1								
10. If certain groups of people stayed in their place, we would have fewer problems



Strongly disagree	.....	Disagree	2 .....	Neutral	3 .....	Agree	4 .....	Strongly agree	5
<b>1</b>									

11. Inferior groups should stay in their place

Strongly disagree	.....	Disagree	2 .....	Neutral	3 .....	Agree	4 .....	Strongly agree	5
<b>1</b>									

12. Some groups of people are just more worthy than others

Strongly disagree	.....	Disagree	2 .....	Neutral	3 .....	Agree	4 .....	Strongly agree	5
<b>1</b>									

13. It is probably a good thing that some groups are at the top and some groups are at the bottom

Strongly disagree	.....	Disagree	2 .....	Neutral	3 .....	Agree	4 .....	Strongly agree	5
<b>1</b>									

14. Superior groups should dominate inferior groups

Strongly disagree	.....	Disagree	2 .....	Neutral	3 .....	Agree	4 .....	Strongly agree	5
<b>1</b>									

15. In getting what your group wants, it is sometimes necessary to use force against other groups

Strongly disagree	.....	Disagree	2 .....	Neutral	3 .....	Agree	4 .....	Strongly agree	5
<b>1</b>									

16. To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on other groups

Strongly disagree	.....	Disagree	2 .....	Neutral	3 .....	Agree	4 .....	Strongly agree	5
<b>1</b>									

Remember, we are still talking about your life **before you joined or formed your group.**

**Before I joined the group, I thought...**

1. That this group will truly care about me, as much as I will care about them  

Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
disagree	..... <b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

**1**
2. That whatever I do for the group would be appreciated by other members  

Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
disagree	..... <b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

**1**
3. That there will be a lot of give and take in my relationship with this group's members  

Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
disagree	..... <b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

**1**
4. That I won't mind giving this group my all, because I will be rewarded for such behaviour  

Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
disagree	..... <b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

**1**
5. That the relationships in this group will be based on mutual trust  

Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
disagree	..... <b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

**1**
6. That if I always look out for the best interest of this group, they will do the same for me  

Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
disagree	..... <b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

**1**
7. That maybe even if my efforts weren't always recognized right away, the group will value them and reward them eventually  

Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
disagree	..... <b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

**1**
8. That this group can give me what I need  

Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
disagree	..... <b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

**1**
9. That this is the best group for me to use my abilities in  

Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
disagree	..... <b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

**1**
10. Can you tell me a few examples of what you thought this group would give you and what you could give to it?

I hope you are still thinking about the time when you were **joining or forming a** group.

**Before I joined the group,**

1. I knew that this group had certain rules that members had to follow
 

Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
disagree	2	3	4	5
1				
  
2. I thought that these rules would be good for me
 

Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
disagree	2	3	4	5
1				
  
3. I thought that the rules of the group were reasonable
 

Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
disagree	2	3	4	5
1				
  
4. I thought that any member who broke the group's rules should and would experience negative consequences from the rest of the group.
 

Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
disagree	2	3	4	5
1				
  
5. I thought that any member who broke rules should be punished to make the group stronger.
 

Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
disagree	2	3	4	5
1				
  
6. Did you think it was important that groups have certain rules? Why yes/no?
7. What was it about this group's rules that you found good/bad before you joined?

Again, think about the time **you were joining a group.**

**Before I joined this group...**

1. I knew that the group members had certain goals for the group's members.

Strongly disagree	1	Disagree	2	Neutral	3	Agree	4	Strongly agree	5
-------------------	---	----------	---	---------	---	-------	---	----------------	---

2. I thought that the group's members worked together to achieve things for the group.

Strongly disagree	1	Disagree	2	Neutral	3	Agree	4	Strongly agree	5
-------------------	---	----------	---	---------	---	-------	---	----------------	---

3. I thought that what the group wanted similar things and had similar goals to me.

Strongly disagree	1	Disagree	2	Neutral	3	Agree	4	Strongly agree	5
-------------------	---	----------	---	---------	---	-------	---	----------------	---

4. I thought that this group was the best one to help me get what I wanted, reach my goals.

Strongly disagree	1	Disagree	2	Neutral	3	Agree	4	Strongly agree	5
-------------------	---	----------	---	---------	---	-------	---	----------------	---

5. What did you think the group wanted to achieve? Did you think it had any goals/aims?

---

6. What did you want?

---

Still thinking back to the time **before you joined your group.**

**Before I joined the group...**

1. I believed that the group would give all members a strong sense of self
 

1. Very strongly disagree	2. Strongly disagree	3. Mildly disagree	4. Neutral	5. Mildly agree	6. Strongly agree	7. Very strongly agree
---------------------------------	-------------------------	-----------------------	------------	--------------------	----------------------	------------------------------
  
2. I believed that success of the group would be more important than success of individuals
 

1. Very strongly disagree	2. Strongly disagree	3. Mildly disagree	4. Neutral	5. Mildly agree	6. Strongly agree	7. Very strongly agree
---------------------------------	-------------------------	-----------------------	------------	--------------------	----------------------	------------------------------
  
3. I believed that once you become a member of a group, you should try hard to adjust to the group's demands
 

1. Very strongly disagree	2. Strongly disagree	3. Mildly disagree	4. Neutral	5. Mildly agree	6. Strongly agree	7. Very strongly agree
---------------------------------	-------------------------	-----------------------	------------	--------------------	----------------------	------------------------------
  
4. I believed that the group should always come first
 

1. Very strongly disagree	2. Strongly disagree	3. Mildly disagree	4. Neutral	5. Mildly agree	6. Strongly agree	7. Very strongly agree
---------------------------------	-------------------------	-----------------------	------------	--------------------	----------------------	------------------------------
  
5. I believed it was important for the group members not to argue
 

1. Very strongly disagree	2. Strongly disagree	3. Mildly disagree	4. Neutral	5. Mildly agree	6. Strongly agree	7. Very strongly agree
---------------------------------	-------------------------	-----------------------	------------	--------------------	----------------------	------------------------------
  
6. I believed that individual interests are less important than the group's interests
 

1. Very strongly disagree	2. Strongly disagree	3. Mildly disagree	4. Neutral	5. Mildly agree	6. Strongly agree	7. Very strongly agree
---------------------------------	-------------------------	-----------------------	------------	--------------------	----------------------	------------------------------
  
7. I believed that membership of the group should be for life
 

1. Very strongly disagree	2. Strongly disagree	3. Mildly disagree	4. Neutral	5. Mildly agree	6. Strongly agree	7. Very strongly agree
---------------------------------	-------------------------	-----------------------	------------	--------------------	----------------------	------------------------------
  
8. I believed that the success and failure of the group is important to me
 

1. Very strongly disagree	2. Strongly disagree	3. Mildly disagree	4. Neutral	5. Mildly agree	6. Strongly agree	7. Very strongly agree
---------------------------------	-------------------------	-----------------------	------------	--------------------	----------------------	------------------------------

9. I believed that group members should perform their group roles well

1. Very strongly disagree    2. Strongly disagree    3. Mildly disagree    4. Neutral    5. Mildly agree    6. Strongly agree    7. Very strongly agree

10. I believed that people in the group would be important to me

1. Very strongly disagree    2. Strongly disagree    3. Mildly disagree    4. Neutral    5. Mildly agree    6. Strongly agree    7. Very strongly agree

11. I believe that people should behave according to their status in the group

1. Very strongly disagree    2. Strongly disagree    3. Mildly disagree    4. Neutral    5. Mildly agree    6. Strongly agree    7. Very strongly agree

12. I believed that belonging to a group was important to my self-identity, or sense of myself

1. Very strongly disagree    2. Strongly disagree    3. Mildly disagree    4. Neutral    5. Mildly agree    6. Strongly agree    7. Very strongly agree

13. I believed that people should consider the opinions and reactions of other members before making decisions

1. Very strongly disagree    2. Strongly disagree    3. Mildly disagree    4. Neutral    5. Mildly agree    6. Strongly agree    7. Very strongly agree

Are you still thinking about the time **before you joined your group?**

**Before I joined my group...**

1. I tried hard not to do things that would make other people in the group avoid or reject me.

Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
disagree	..... 2 .....	3 .....	4 .....	5
<b>1</b>				

2. I wanted other people in the group to accept me

Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
disagree	..... 2 .....	3 .....	4 .....	5
<b>1</b>				

3. I had a strong need to belong.

Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
disagree	..... 2 .....	3 .....	4 .....	5
<b>1</b>				

4. It bothered me a great deal when I was not included in other group members' people's plans.

Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
disagree	..... 2 .....	3 .....	4 .....	5
<b>1</b>				

5. My feelings were easily hurt when I felt that others from the group did not accept me.

Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
disagree	..... 2 .....	3 .....	4 .....	5
<b>1</b>				

We are still talking about the time **before you joined or formed your group**

**Before I joined my group...**

1. I felt like I could feel like a part of this group  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
2. I felt like the other group members would take my opinions seriously  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
3. I felt like the important people in the group will respect me  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
4. I felt like I would be involved in a lot of the group activities  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
5. I felt like I could really be myself in this group  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
6. I felt like the other members would like me the way I am  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
7. I felt that the group members would be friendly to me  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5



Remember, we are still talking about the time **before you joined or formed you group.**

**Before I joined the group I felt that...**

1. I felt that the group I was going to join would really try to help me

Strongly disagree	.....	2	.....	3	.....	4	.....	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>								<b>5</b>

2. I felt I could count on this group when things go wrong

Strongly disagree	.....	2	.....	3	.....	4	.....	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>								<b>5</b>

3. I felt that this group will be friends with whom I can share my feelings

Strongly disagree	.....	2	.....	3	.....	4	.....	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>								<b>5</b>

4. I felt I will be able to talk about my problems with this group

Strongly disagree	.....	2	.....	3	.....	4	.....	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>								<b>5</b>

**Appendix 9 – Final scales (remaining stage)**

GroupID/1

Remember, I asked you think about the time you **were (or still are) part of a group of friends**. All of the questions are about this time in your life.

**When I was (or still am) a part of this group...**

1. I thought that I would prefer to be in a different group\*

Strongly disagree	.....	2	.....	3	.....	4	.....	5	Strongly agree
1									

2. I thought that members of this group like one another

Strongly disagree	.....	2	.....	3	.....	4	.....	5	Strongly agree
1									

3. I thought I will enjoy hanging out with the members of this group

Strongly disagree	.....	2	.....	3	.....	4	.....	5	Strongly agree
1									

4. I thought that I didn't like many of the other people in this group\*

Strongly disagree	.....	2	.....	3	.....	4	.....	5	Strongly agree
1									

5. I thought that in this group, members don't have to rely on one another \*

Strongly disagree	.....	2	.....	3	.....	4	.....	5	Strongly agree
1									

6. I thought of this group as part of who I was

Strongly disagree	.....	2	.....	3	.....	4	.....	5	Strongly agree
1									

7. I saw myself as quite different from other members of the group\*

Strongly disagree	.....	2	.....	3	.....	4	.....	5	Strongly agree
1									

8. I thought that I was quite similar to other members of the group

Strongly disagree	.....	2	.....	3	.....	4	.....	5	Strongly agree
1									

9. I thought I would be a good person in this group.

Strongly disagree	1	Disagree	2	Neutral	3	Agree	4	Strongly agree	5
-------------------	---	----------	---	---------	---	-------	---	----------------	---

10. I thought that this group would make me happy as a person.

Strongly disagree	1	Disagree	2	Neutral	3	Agree	4	Strongly agree	5
-------------------	---	----------	---	---------	---	-------	---	----------------	---

11. I thought that this group was much better in their activities than any other group

Strongly disagree	1	Disagree	2	Neutral	3	Agree	4	Strongly agree	5
-------------------	---	----------	---	---------	---	-------	---	----------------	---

12. I thought that even if that group did something wrong, it wasn't their fault.

Strongly disagree	1	Disagree	2	Neutral	3	Agree	4	Strongly agree	5
-------------------	---	----------	---	---------	---	-------	---	----------------	---

13. I thought that other groups made many bad decisions that were their fault, more so than the group I was a part of.

Strongly disagree	1	Disagree	2	Neutral	3	Agree	4	Strongly agree	5
-------------------	---	----------	---	---------	---	-------	---	----------------	---

14. I had a very good impression of the group

Strongly disagree	1	Disagree	2	Neutral	3	Agree	4	Strongly agree	5
-------------------	---	----------	---	---------	---	-------	---	----------------	---

15. I thought that I could be proud to be a member of this group.

Strongly disagree	1	Disagree	2	Neutral	3	Agree	4	Strongly agree	5
-------------------	---	----------	---	---------	---	-------	---	----------------	---

Still remember, these questions are about the time **you were (or still are) a part of this group.**

**When you were (or still are) a part of this group,** how willing were you to...

1. Speak out in front of the rest of the group?
 

1. Not at all willing to do this	2. Not very willing	3. Slightly wiling	4. Fairly wiling	5. very much willing to do this
----------------------------------------	------------------------	-----------------------	------------------	---------------------------------------
  
2. Ask questions in front of the group?
 

1. Not at all willing to do this	2. Not very willing	3. Slightly wiling	4. Fairly wiling	5. very much willing to do this
----------------------------------------	------------------------	-----------------------	------------------	---------------------------------------
  
3. Take the lead of people even when you didn't know them very well?
 

1. Not at all willing to do this	2. Not very willing	3. Slightly wiling	4. Fairly wiling	5. very much willing to do this
----------------------------------------	------------------------	-----------------------	------------------	---------------------------------------
  
4. Challenge a member of a group whose position you did not agree with?
 

1. Not at all willing to do this	2. Not very willing	3. Slightly wiling	4. Fairly wiling	5. very much willing to do this
----------------------------------------	------------------------	-----------------------	------------------	---------------------------------------
  
5. Lead a group if asked?
 

1. Not at all willing to do this	2. Not very willing	3. Slightly wiling	4. Fairly wiling	5. very much willing to do this
----------------------------------------	------------------------	-----------------------	------------------	---------------------------------------
  
6. Give your personal opinion to the group?
 

1. Not at all willing to do this	2. Not very willing	3. Slightly wiling	4. Fairly wiling	5. very much willing to do this
----------------------------------------	------------------------	-----------------------	------------------	---------------------------------------
  
7. Tell the group personal information about yourself?
 

1. Not at all willing to do this	2. Not very willing	3. Slightly wiling	4. Fairly wiling	5. very much willing to do this
----------------------------------------	------------------------	-----------------------	------------------	---------------------------------------
  
8. Tell the group your ideas even though you are not sure whether you are correct?

**1.** Not at all willing to do this      **2.** Not very willing      **3.** Slightly willing      **4.** Fairly willing      **5.** very much willing to do this

9. Give your own opinion on a topic that members of the group are arguing about?

**1.** Not at all willing to do this      **2.** Not very willing      **3.** Slightly willing      **4.** Fairly willing      **5.** very much willing to do this

Still, these questions are about the time you were (or still are) **a part of a special group of friends.**

**When I was (or still am) a part of this group...**

1. I worried about what other group members would think of me.

1. Not at all characteristic	2. Slightly characteristic	3. Moderately characteristic	4. Very characteristic	5. Extremely characteristic
---------------------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------------------	---------------------------	--------------------------------

2. I was worried about other members noticing what I wasn't good at.

1. Not at all characteristic	2. Slightly characteristic	3. Moderately characteristic	4. Very characteristic	5. Extremely characteristic
---------------------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------------------	---------------------------	--------------------------------

3. I was afraid others will not like me.

1. Not at all characteristic	2. Slightly characteristic	3. Moderately characteristic	4. Very characteristic	5. Extremely characteristic
---------------------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------------------	---------------------------	--------------------------------

4. I was afraid that people would criticise me.

1. Not at all characteristic	2. Slightly characteristic	3. Moderately characteristic	4. Very characteristic	5. Extremely characteristic
---------------------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------------------	---------------------------	--------------------------------

5. When I was talking to someone, I worried about what they thought of me.

1. Not at all characteristic	2. Slightly characteristic	3. Moderately characteristic	4. Very characteristic	5. Extremely characteristic
---------------------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------------------	---------------------------	--------------------------------

6. I was often worried about the impression I made on other group members.

1. Not at all characteristic	2. Slightly characteristic	3. Moderately characteristic	4. Very characteristic	5. Extremely characteristic
---------------------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------------------	---------------------------	--------------------------------

7. Sometimes I think I was too worried about what the other group members thought of me.

1. Not at all characteristic	2. Slightly characteristic	3. Moderately characteristic	4. Very characteristic	5. Extremely characteristic
---------------------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------------------	---------------------------	--------------------------------

9. I often worried that I would say or do the wrong things.

1. Not at all characteristic	2. Slightly characteristic	3. Moderately characteristic	4. Very characteristic	5. Extremely characteristic
---------------------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------------------	---------------------------	--------------------------------

Still thinking about the time **you were (or still are) a part of this group.**

**When you were (or still are) a part of this group...**

1. You often compared your own achievements with what the other group members had already done.  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
  
2. You always paid a lot of attention to how you did things compared with how other group members did things  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
  
3. If you wanted to find out how well you had done something, you compared yourself to other group members.  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
  
4. You often compared how you were doing (e.g., ability, popularity) with other group members  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
  
5. You felt that the members of the group you were a part of would be worth comparing yourself to  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
  
6. You felt that to know more about yourself, you could compare yourself to the members of the group you were a part of.  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
  
7. You felt that the members of the group you were a part of were people you would like to compare yourself to.  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
  
8. You felt that the members of the group were like you and it would be easy to compare yourself to them  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

ImpS/1

Remember, we are still talking about the time **when you were (or still are) a part of this group. When you were (or still are) a part of this group...**

1. Sometimes you were afraid the group members would discover who you really are.

1. Not at all characteristic ..... 2. Slightly characteristic ..... 3. Moderately characteristic ..... 4. Very characteristic ..... 5. Extremely characteristic

2. You tended to feel like a phony.

1. Not at all characteristic ..... 2. Slightly characteristic ..... 3. Moderately characteristic ..... 4. Very characteristic ..... 5. Extremely characteristic

3. You were afraid people important to you may find out that you were not as good as they thought you were.

1. Not at all characteristic ..... 2. Slightly characteristic ..... 3. Moderately characteristic ..... 4. Very characteristic ..... 5. Extremely characteristic

4. In some situations you felt like an imposter, like you were pretending.

1. Not at all characteristic ..... 2. Slightly characteristic ..... 3. Moderately characteristic ..... 4. Very characteristic ..... 5. Extremely characteristic

5. Sometimes you were afraid others were going to discover that you weren't as good at stuff as they thought you were.

1. Not at all characteristic ..... 2. Slightly characteristic ..... 3. Moderately characteristic ..... 4. Very characteristic ..... 5. Extremely characteristic

6. In some situations you felt like a "great pretender"; that is, you were not as genuine as others thought you were.

1. Not at all characteristic ..... 2. Slightly characteristic ..... 3. Moderately characteristic ..... 4. Very characteristic ..... 5. Extremely characteristic

7. In some situations you acted like you thought other group members expected you to act.

1. Not at all characteristic ..... 2. Slightly characteristic ..... 3. Moderately characteristic ..... 4. Very characteristic ..... 5. Extremely characteristic



Again, I am still asking you about the time you were **a part of this group, or if you currently are a part of the group, about the time in your life right now.**

**When I was (or still am) a part of this group...**

1. I thought that the group members had a good effect on my feelings  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
2. I thought that the group helped me to behave in a way I wanted to  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
3. I felt that the group and its members had an effect on my beliefs  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
4. I felt that the group had a good influence on me  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
5. I felt that I liked the effect that the group had on me  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
6. I felt that there was a lot that I could bring to this group  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
7. I thought that what I could provide to the group was appreciated by the group members  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
8. I felt that my influence was good for this group  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
9. In what ways did you think the group had a positive influence on you?
10. In what ways did you think the group had a negative influence on you?
11. In what ways did you think you influenced this group?

Still thinking about the time **when you were – or still are – a part of this group**, answer the following.

**When I was (or still am) a part of this group...**

1. Members cooperated with each other to do things
 

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
  
2. Members made good decisions together
 

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
  
3. Members made each other perform better
 

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
  
4. My own abilities were improved
 

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
  
5. I felt that the group helped me make the right decisions
 

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
  
6. I would like you to tell me a little more about what your group did.
  - a. What kind of things did this group do together?
  - b. Did you feel that your group made good decisions? What kind of decisions did you feel they helped you with?
  - c. Did you think that the group made decisions that you normally wouldn't? Can you give me an example?
  - d. Did you commit crimes as part of the group?
  - e. Did you get involved in any violence? Did you want to be? Would you be if the group needed you to?

We are still talking about the time you were **a part of your group of friends, or the present time, if you still belong to this group.**

**When I was (or still am) a part of this group...**

1. I felt that this group gained me more status and reputation  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
  
2. I believe that this group had something for me to do that I was happy with  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
  
3. I felt that this group made me look more powerful in front of people outside of the group  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
  
4. The group members all had different levels of power within the group  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
  
5. I felt that my group gave me a territory of my own and that I could protect it  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
  
6. I thought that by having a place to protect, I had more power in the eyes of other people  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
  
7. I felt that this group gave me a respected social status  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
  
8. Status and respect are so important to me that it was ok for me to do whatever is necessary to gain and maintain them as part of my group  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
  
9. Did belonging to this group provide you with a certain status? Was it part of the reason you liked being a member? Why yes/no?

**When you were a part of this group**, you might have been thinking a bit differently to how you think now. Or, if you are still a member of this group, answer these questions as you feel about them **now**. Imagine the way you were thinking at **the time you were a part of this group – or now** when answering these questions.

1. We should do what we can to make conditions for different group equal.\*  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
2. It would be good if all groups could be equal\*  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
3. Group equality should be our ideal\*  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
4. Increased social equality would be a good thing\*  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
5. We would have fewer problems if we treated different groups more equally\*  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
6. All groups should be given an equal chance in life\*  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
7. We should strive to make incomes more equal\*  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
8. No one group should dominate in society\*  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
9. Sometimes other groups must be kept in their place  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
10. If certain groups of people stayed in their place, we would have fewer problems

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly agree  
1      ..... 2 .....      3 .....      4 .....      5

11. Inferior groups should stay in their place

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly agree  
1      ..... 2 .....      3 .....      4 .....      5

12. Some groups of people are just more worthy than others

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly agree  
1      ..... 2 .....      3 .....      4 .....      5

13. It is probably a good thing that some groups are at the top and some groups are at the bottom

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly agree  
1      ..... 2 .....      3 .....      4 .....      5

14. Superior groups should dominate inferior groups

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly agree  
1      ..... 2 .....      3 .....      4 .....      5

15. In getting what your group wants, it is sometimes necessary to use force against other groups

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly agree  
1      ..... 2 .....      3 .....      4 .....      5

16. To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on other groups

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly agree  
1      ..... 2 .....      3 .....      4 .....      5

Remember, we are still talking about your life **when you were a part of this group (or now, if you are still a part of it). When I was a part of this group, I thought...**

1. That this group truly cared about me, as much as I cared about them  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
  
  2. That whatever I did for the group was appreciated by other members  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
  
  3. That there was a lot of give and take in my relationship with this group's members  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
  
  4. That I didn't mind giving this group my all, because I was rewarded for such behaviour  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
  
  5. That the relationships in this group were based on mutual trust  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
  
  6. That if I always looked out for the best interest of this group, they did the same for me  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
  
  7. That maybe even if my efforts weren't always recognized right away, the group valued them and rewarded them eventually  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
  
  8. That this group gave me what I needed  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
  
  9. That this was the best group for me to use my abilities in  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
  
  10. Can you tell me a few examples of what you think this group gave you and what you gave to it?
-

I hope you are still thinking about the time when you were **a part of this group of friends – or if you still are a part of it, about the present time.**

**When I was a part of this group,**

1. I knew that this group had certain rules that members had to follow

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b> .....	<b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

2. I thought that these rules were good for me

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b> .....	<b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

3. I thought that the rules of the group were reasonable

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b> .....	<b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

4. I thought that any member who broke the group’s rules should and would experience negative consequences from the rest of the group.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b> .....	<b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

5. I thought that any member who broke rules should be punished to make the group stronger.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b> .....	<b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

6. Did you think it was important that groups have certain rules? Why yes/no?

7. What was it about this group’s rules that you found good/bad for you?

Again, think about the time **you were a part of this group (or still are)**.

**When I was a part of this group...**

1. I knew that the group members had certain goals for the group's members.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b> .....	<b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

2. I thought that the group's members worked together to achieve things for the group.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b> .....	<b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

3. I thought that the group wanted similar things and had similar goals to me.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b> .....	<b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

4. I thought that this group was the best one to help me get what I wanted, reach my goals.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b> .....	<b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

5. What did you think the group wanted to achieve? Did you think it had any goals/aims?

6. What did you want?



Still thinking back to the time **when you were a part of this group (or still are)**...

**When I was a part of this group (or still are)...**

1. I believed that the group gave all members a strong sense of self

1. Very strongly disagree    2. Strongly disagree    3. Mildly disagree    4. Neutral    5. Mildly agree    6. Strongly agree    7. Very strongly agree

2. I believed that success of the group was more important than success of individual members

1. Very strongly disagree    2. Strongly disagree    3. Mildly disagree    4. Neutral    5. Mildly agree    6. Strongly agree    7. Very strongly agree

3. I believed that once you become a member of a group, you should try hard to adjust to the group's demands

1. Very strongly disagree    2. Strongly disagree    3. Mildly disagree    4. Neutral    5. Mildly agree    6. Strongly agree    7. Very strongly agree

4. I believed that the group should always come first

1. Very strongly disagree    2. Strongly disagree    3. Mildly disagree    4. Neutral    5. Mildly agree    6. Strongly agree    7. Very strongly agree

5. I believed it was important for the group members not to argue

1. Very strongly disagree    2. Strongly disagree    3. Mildly disagree    4. Neutral    5. Mildly agree    6. Strongly agree    7. Very strongly agree

6. I believed that individual interests were less important than the group's interests

1. Very strongly disagree    2. Strongly disagree    3. Mildly disagree    4. Neutral    5. Mildly agree    6. Strongly agree    7. Very strongly agree

7. I believed that membership of the group should be for life

1. Very strongly disagree    2. Strongly disagree    3. Mildly disagree    4. Neutral    5. Mildly agree    6. Strongly agree    7. Very strongly agree

8. I believed that the success and failure of the group is important to me

1. Very strongly disagree    2. Strongly disagree    3. Mildly disagree    4. Neutral    5. Mildly agree    6. Strongly agree    7. Very strongly agree

9. I believed that group members should perform their group roles well

1. Very strongly disagree    2. Strongly disagree    3. Mildly disagree    4. Neutral    5. Mildly agree    6. Strongly agree    7. Very strongly agree

10. The people in the group were be important to me

1. Very strongly disagree    2. Strongly disagree    3. Mildly disagree    4. Neutral    5. Mildly agree    6. Strongly agree    7. Very strongly agree

11. I believed that people behaved according to their status in the group

1. Very strongly disagree    2. Strongly disagree    3. Mildly disagree    4. Neutral    5. Mildly agree    6. Strongly agree    7. Very strongly agree

12. I believed that belonging to a group was important to my self-identity, or sense of myself

1. Very strongly disagree    2. Strongly disagree    3. Mildly disagree    4. Neutral    5. Mildly agree    6. Strongly agree    7. Very strongly agree

13. I believed that members should consider the opinions and reactions of other members before making decisions

1. Very strongly disagree    2. Strongly disagree    3. Mildly disagree    4. Neutral    5. Mildly agree    6. Strongly agree    7. Very strongly agree

14. I was willing to make a real effort for my group, even if it meant breaking the law.

1. Very strongly disagree    2. Strongly disagree    3. Mildly disagree    4. Neutral    5. Mildly agree    6. Strongly agree    7. Very strongly agree

Are you still thinking about the time **that you were a part of this group (or present time, if you still are a part of this group)?**

**When I was (or still am) a part of this group...**

1. I tried hard not to do things that would make other people avoid or reject me.  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
  
2. I wanted other people to accept me  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
  
3. I had a strong need to belong.  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
  
4. It bothered me a great deal when I was not included in other people's plans.  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
  
5. My feelings were easily hurt when I felt that others did not accept me.  

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

We are still talking about the **time when you were/are a part of this group...**

**When I was/still am a part of this group...**

1. I felt like a part of this group

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b> .....	<b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

2. I felt like the other group members took my opinions seriously

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b> .....	<b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

3. I felt like the important people in the group respected me

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b> .....	<b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

4. I felt like I was involved in a lot of the group activities

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b> .....	<b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

5. I felt like I could really be myself in this group

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b> .....	<b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

6. I felt like the other members liked me the way I am

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b> .....	<b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

7. I felt that the group members were friendly to me

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b> .....	<b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

Remember, we are still talking about the time **when you belonged to this group (or still belong)**.

**When I was a part of this group (or still am), I thought that...**

1. I felt that the group I was a part of really tried to help me

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b> .....	<b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

2. I felt I could count on this group when things go wrong

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b> .....	<b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

3. I felt that this group were my friends with whom I can share my feelings

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b> .....	<b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

4. I felt that the group was able to talk about their problems with me

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1</b> .....	<b>2</b> .....	<b>3</b> .....	<b>4</b> .....	<b>5</b>

## **Appendix 10 – Information sheet (pre-testing)**

You have been asked to take part in a research project and the details of this are below.

### **What is this study about?**

The aims of this study are two-fold. First, it is to test several new scales concerned with group membership. We are trying to see how experiences of people belonging to different groups differ. We can only do this by using appropriate scales which need to be validated. By participating in this study, you will help us do so. Second, this data may also be used for further analysis by posing as comparison to an offender population. We are trying to see what group processes are present when individuals join/maintain/leave different types of groups, for example delinquent and non-delinquent groups. If you would like full information about the main study, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher.

### **Who is doing the study?**

This study is part of a PhD project. My name is Katarina Mozova and I am doing my PhD at the University of Kent. This project is supervised by Dr. Jane Wood who is a lecturer at the University of Kent.

### **Do I have to participate?**

No, you do not have to participate. It is totally up to you whether you choose to take part or not, although I would be grateful if you did.

### **Eligibility**

You can participate in this study if you are male, UK resident and are less than 25 years of age.

### **What happens if I decide to participate?**

If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to help us by filling in several questionnaires. This should only take you around 30 minutes or less. These questions range and ask you about your experiences in a group environment. You will be asked to think about a special group that you were/are a part of and answer questions about your own experiences in this group. You can leave this study at any point without giving any explanation, although we would appreciate if you completed all of the questionnaires.

### **Who will have access to the information I provide?**

This study is completely confidential and anonymous. Your name will not be on any of the questionnaires as you will be assigned a participant number. You will never be identified as one of the participants of this project. The only people who will see the answers on the questionnaires are the researcher (Katarina) and her supervisor (Dr. Wood). Your answers will be transferred into a computer program along with the answers of all of the other participants. We do not need to know your name for this study as we are not interested in the answers of every individual separately. The results of this study will be submitted as part of a PhD thesis and might be written up for publication. This study complies with the Data Protection Act 1998.

**Does the study have ethical approval?**

Yes, the study has approval from the University of Kent Ethics committee (Code: ....). They made sure that no harm can be done to you whilst doing this survey. If you feel that your ethical rights were in any way violated, let the researcher know or contact the University of Kent Ethics Committee: Ethics Committee Chair, School of Psychology, University of Kent, Canterbury, CT2 7NP.

**What if I have questions or want to withdraw after the interview?**

You can contact me by e-mailing [km443@kent.ac.uk](mailto:km443@kent.ac.uk). You can contact Dr. Jane wood by e-mailing [j.l.wood@kent.ac.uk](mailto:j.l.wood@kent.ac.uk).

## Appendix 11 – Consent form (pre-testing)

Consent form (using Qualtrics – online research)

Title of project: Towards a social psychology framework of youth group membership

Researcher: Katarina Mozova ([km443@kent.ac.uk](mailto:km443@kent.ac.uk)), Supervised by Dr. Jane Wood

Please read the following statements and, if you agree, tick the corresponding box to confirm agreement:

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.

I understand that my data will be treated confidentially and any publication resulting from this work will report only data that does **not** identify me.

I freely agree to participate in this study.

You can only complete this study if you agree with all four of the above statements. If you agree with all of them and tick the appropriate boxes, please press next to proceed to the study.



## **Appendix 12 – Debrief form (pre-testing)**

### **Debrief – Towards a social psychology framework of youth group membership**

In this study, we aimed to test the reliability of some newly developed and some adapted scales concerned with group processes. The study that you just took part in is part of a PhD project which aims to look at differences in group processes between individuals belonging to different types of groups. This will be done using the scales that you have just helped us pre-test.

Further, your answers might be used as part of the main project of my PhD. This project is concerned with gaining a deeper understanding of why, in terms of group processes, people join, maintain and leave groups. It is thought that these processes differ based on the type of group an individual is a part of. The different types of groups in this study are gangs, delinquent groups and non-delinquent groups. This study will be done on a youth offender population. Therefore, your answers will help us enrich this study by adding another dimension – a youth non-offender.

If you have any further questions in regard to this study, or wish to withdraw your data, please contact the researcher, Katarina Mozova, by e-mailing [km443@kent.ac.uk](mailto:km443@kent.ac.uk).

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of this study, please contact the Chair of Psychology Research Ethics Committee (via the Psychology School office) in writing, providing a detailed account of your concern.

Thank you for your participation!

Katarina Mozova

## **Appendix 13 – Information sheet (offender population, quantitative study)**

You have been asked to take part in a research project and the details of this are below.

### **What is this study about?**

This study aims to explore the differences between youth offenders. We are trying to see how your experiences differ to other youth offenders. We would like to find out what experiences you've had whilst belonging to a group that was important to you. We are doing so because we would like to provide better support and help to youth offenders who find themselves in a similar situation to yours. Your help would mean that we can better understand the way youth offenders think and what their specific needs are.

### **Who is doing the study?**

This study is a PhD project. My name is Katarina Mozova and I am doing my PhD at the University of Kent. This project is supervised by Dr. Jane Wood who is a lecturer at the University of Kent.

### **Do I have to participate?**

No, you do not have to participate. It is totally up to you whether you choose to take part or not, although I would be grateful if you did. There will be neither advantage nor disadvantage as a result of your decision to participate or not participate in the research.

### **What happens if I decide to participate?**

If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to help us by spending less than an hour with the researcher who will ask you a variety of questions. These questions range and ask you about your experiences in a group environment. You will be asked to think about a special group that you were/are a part of. The researcher will then ask you to answer questions about your own experiences in this group. You can leave this study at any point without giving any explanation, although we would appreciate if you completed all of the questionnaires. If you withdraw from this study at any point (even after it was finished), your rights and privileges will not be affected.

### **Who will have access to the information I provide?**

This study is completely confidential and anonymous. Your name will not be on any of the questionnaires as you will be assigned a participant number. You will never be identified as one of the participants of this project. The only people who will see the answers on the questionnaires are the researcher (Katarina) and her supervisor (Dr. Wood). Your answers will be transferred into a computer program along with the answers of all of the other participants. We do not need to know your name for this study as we are not interested in the answers of every individual separately. The results of this study will be submitted as part of a PhD thesis and might be written up for publication. This study complies with the Data Protection Act 1998. Data will be stored for 5 years.

**Does the study have ethical approval?**

Yes, the study has approval from the University of Kent Ethics committee. They made sure that no harm can be done to you whilst doing this survey. If you feel that your ethical rights were in any way violated, let the researcher know or contact the University of Kent Ethics Committee: Ethics Committee Chair, School of Psychology, University of Kent, Canterbury, CT2 7NP.

This study also has ethical approval from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS: 2014-144).

**What if I have questions or want to withdraw after the interview?**

You can withdraw your data up to two months from your participation in this project. Just let a member of the prison staff know who will be able to contact the researcher. You will need your participant number.

## **Appendix 14 – Consent form (offender population, quantitative study)**

### **Consent Form**

I consent voluntarily to take part in the above research project. I have read the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions about it. I have had the project explained to me, and I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

- be interviewed by the researcher
- allow questionnaires and other materials completed by me to be analysed as part of this project

### **Data Protection**

Information relating to the above will be held and processed for the purposes of evaluating this research project. I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party. No identifiable personal data will be published. The identifiable data will not be shared with any other organisation. Interview data and other data will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act in a secure environment.

I understand that the researcher will be obliged to pass on any information which I disclose during the interview process regarding:

- A breach of prison security
- If I disclose any further identifiable offences for which I have not been convicted
- If I break a prison rule during interview
- If I indicate a threat of harm to myself or others.

### **Withdrawal from study**

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I understand that if I have any questions about this research or about my rights as a research participant I should ask the researcher now. If you I wish to ask questions about this research later I should contact a member of the prison staff who will be able to contact the researcher.

Name: .....(please print)

Signature: .....Date:.....

## **Appendix 15 – Debrief form (offender population, quantitative study)**

Group processes and youth group membership

Researchers: Dr Jane Wood, Katarina Mozova

University of Kent

Participant number \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you very much for taking part in this study. Below is more information about the purpose of this research and what we are looking at.

The aim of this study was to see how different youth offenders' experiences in groups differ depending on what kind of group they belong to. We are trying to establish the specific factors that are important to young people and how they motivate (or don't) them to belong to groups. In other words we are looking to find what the important reasons that prompt group membership are. We are doing this research because we would like to help youth offenders when they find themselves in a similar situation to yours, in a secure establishment. We would like to understand the specific needs that youth offenders have and would like to address them. We are therefore very grateful for your participation as this will help us develop our understanding.

If you have any queries about this research, please contact a member of the prison staff so that they can contact the researcher.

If you feel that you want to discuss any issues raised by this study, you can contact the Samaritans: 08457 90 90 90

If you want to withdraw your data at any point after the researcher has left the prison you can do so by telling a member of the prison staff and giving your participant number and the lead researcher's name. Please bear in mind that you would need to do this within two

months from the date of the interview - or your data will already have been included in the study.

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of this study, please contact a member of the prison staff who will then contact the Chair of Psychology Research Ethics Committee (via the Psychology School office) in writing, providing a detailed account of your concern.

Once again, we would like to thank you for your time and valuable contribution to this study. Without the help of participants such as you, it would not be possible to examine these issues. So, your participation is greatly appreciated and what you have told us will contribute to a much better understanding of these important issues.

Yours Sincerely

Katarina Mozova and Jane Wood