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The Gang that Plays Together, Stays Together: An Exploratory Analysis of Patterns of Association and Cohesion in Los Angeles Street Gangs

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The Gang that Plays Together, Stays Together: An Exploratory Analysis of Patterns

of Association and Cohesion in Los Angeles Street Gangs

THESIS

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in Social Ecology

by

Jenny Swan West

Thesis Committee:
Professor George E. Tita, Chair
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2016

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

The Gang that Plays Together, Stays Together: An Exploratory Analysis of Patterns of

Association and Cohesion in Los Angeles Street Gangs

By

Jenny S. West

Master of Arts in Social Ecology

University of California, Irvine, 2016

Professor George E. Tita, Chair

Though cohesion is frequently referenced as an important construct of group

process in gang scholarship, little is known of the stability of this process over time. The

present paper utilizes data from the Hollenbeck Community Policing Area of Los

Angeles to examine patterns of association within and between street gangs, focusing on

temporal trends in cohesion. Findings indicate that gangs with high cohesion at the

beginning of the period studied maintain high levels of cohesion, gangs with mid levels

of cohesion experience an increase in cohesion, and gangs of low cohesion present

variability in cohesion levels over time. Findings provide support for both the efficacy

and potential detrimental effects of civil gang injunctions, relating to the level of

cohesion shown in the gang prior to its enjoinment. Areas of future study and policy

implications are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Since the earliest works on American street gangs, scholars have recognized the importance of cohesion in defining and maintaining the group's structure. Yet despite its frequent mention, much remains unknown of the internal dynamics of gang cohesion. In the past decade, work has addressed the relationship between cohesion and the gang's structural characteristics (McGloin, 2007), criminal activity (Moule, Decker, & Pyrooz, 2013; Fox, 2013; Hughes and Short, 2005; Hennigan and Spanovic, 2012), and policy implications (Hennigan and Sloane, 2013; Maxson, Hennigan, and Sloane, 2005). Though these are undoubtedly important areas for scholarly inquiry, they are grounded on assumptions of the nature of cohesion that have yet to be empirically explored. In other words, very little is known of the fundamental characteristics underlying gang cohesion, though very much is assumed as known. How is cohesion formed? Does cohesion fluctuate or remain stable over time? Are the most "resilient" gangs those with higher or lower cohesion? The present paper explores the second of these inquiries, examining the stability of cohesion in a sample of gangs over a twelve-year period.

While scholars disagree on what precisely constitutes a "gang," all definitions recognize the gang as first and foremost, a group. The origins of research focusing on group cohesion date to the early 1950's, with cohesion first defined by Festinger and colleagues as "the total field of forces which act on members to remain in the group" (1950:164). Since this initial work, the definition and measurement of cohesion have been the subject of scholarly debate, centered around two primary issues: whether cohesion is an individual or group-level process, and whether it is best captured through attitudinal or behavior measures.

The conflation of individual and group processes is a difficult issue to circumvent when examining cohesion, given that the concept of cohesion inherently engages both levels: how

individual members of a group are connected to one another, and what that means for the group as a whole. Since the earliest works addressing group cohesion, scholars have recognized this ambiguity (Israel, 1956; Libo, 1953; Van Bergen and Koekebakker, 1959), but have yet to reach consensus on the most appropriate solution.

Aside from disagreements regarding appropriate unit of analysis, measures of cohesion vary in their reference to attitudes or behavior. Initial definitions of cohesion primarily drew from the attitudes of group members. Frank (1957:54) advocated for measuring "members' sense of belonging to a group," while Bednar and Lawlis (1971) emphasized feelings of personal involvement and perceived atmosphere of warmth, unity, and acceptance. Van Berger and Koekebakker (1959: 85) extended the former definitions through a more structural approach, viewing cohesion as "the degree of unification of the group field." While behavioral measures of cohesion primarily followed attitudinal conceptualizations, they were not absent in early cohesion scholarship. The first behavioral measures of cohesion included members' decisions to remain in a group (Schacter, 1952), resistance of a group to "disruptive forces" (Gross and Martin, 1952), and the decision to stay in a group when presented with alternative choices (Libo, 1953).

Studies of gang cohesion soon followed those of general group cohesion, encountering the same challenges in definition and measurement faced by their predecessors. But although gangs are fairly classified as social groups, Klein and Crawford (1967) argue that gangs are distinct in that their cohesion is more externally derived than internally formed. Most social groups draw from a combination of both internal and external sources of cohesion[1]. Informal play groups, social clubs, fraternities and sororities, and academic departments are united by

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[1] Exceptions to this generalization do exist, including other coalitions: sports fan bases, terrorist insurgency cells, activist groups.

similar interests and common goals within members. While these networks may be strengthened by the existence of other or oppositional groups, external forces are not necessary for their formation or sustenance. In contrast, gangs are ultimately coalitions, whose identities and existence hinge upon the rejection of external groups such as mainstream society or other gangs (Vigil, 1988).

While gang membership undoubtedly offers internally derived benefits- social support, identity, friendship, financial opportunities, status- these are not unique to specific gangs. As distinct groups, each gang is fundamentally defined by its "other-ness." Klein and Crawford (1967) argue that external conflict is so vital to the street gang's existence, were it removed from the gang's environment, the group as a whole would likely experience dissolution. Their argument is founded on the conviction that gangs operate with inadequate processes to support an internally derived measure of cohesion, a perspective that has been supported by recent scholarship (Hughes, 2013, Hennigan and Spanovic, 2012). The lack of internal sources of cohesion is partially attributed to the instability of membership and leadership within the gang. Turnover is high in most gangs, with the majority of gang-involved youth only reporting membership tenure of a year or less (Melde, Diem, & Drake, 2012; Gatti, Tremblay, Vitaro, & McDuff, 2005; Peterson, Taylor, & Esbensen, 2004; Thornberry, 2003). Due in large part to the fluctuation of membership, leadership within the gang is tenuous, and few members operate through clearly delineated organizational roles. Gang solidarity and cohesion thus draw much more significance from the impacts of associating with individuals outside of the gang as opposed to occurrences within the gang.

A notable weakness in prior studies of gang cohesion and behavior has been the dearth of longitudinal data available for the analyses necessary to determine fundamental characteristics

about cohesion, such as its stability over time. Despite the lack of an established empirical foundation, cohesiveness has been framed as both a stable group characteristic (Cartwright, Tomson, and Schwartz, 1975; Lucore, 1975) and a dynamic group process (Klein, 1995). If gang cohesion is, as Gerard (1964) describes, "intense but fragile," we would expect its levels to change over time, yielding different findings to studies conducted at different temporal points of a gang's history. If this fluctuation occurs, charting patterns and trends in gang cohesion over a period of time would lend valuable information to our understanding of the process. Though scholars have noted the importance of observing the structural and procedural aspects of gangs, including cohesion, over an extended period of time (Jansyn, 1966), this area remains relatively unexplored.

In contrast, the relationship between a gang's cohesion and the behavior of its members has been of considerable interest to criminologists, particularly the correlation between cohesion and criminal activity. Little work has indicated that there is no relationship between gang cohesion and gang crime, and the majority stress the presence of a positive relationship (Klein 1995; Moule, Decker, & Pyrooz, 2013). The vast majority of studies have examined the relationship between delinquency and group process as a static occurrence, though understanding how cohesion may change over time would be of great value to gang policy. The current paper examines patterns of association within and between street gangs, centered around the following research question: is there evidence of stability in gang cohesion over time?

CHAPTER 1: DATA AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Data were obtained from the Los Angeles Police Department, and cover gang activity within the Hollenbeck Community Policing area. Located East of downtown Los Angeles, Hollenbeck contains a population of approximately 176,505 individuals residing in a 15.2 square mile region, and includes 31 active gangs (LAPD, 2010; US Bureau of the Census, 2010). Half of Hollenbeck's current gangs were in existence before 1960, the remainder forming through the 1980s, contemporaneous with a rising gang presence throughout Los Angeles. Hollenbeck provides a rich environment to study group dynamics given the condensed presence of over thirty gangs within a relatively small geographic area, the long histories of these gangs, and Hollenbeck's distinct physical and political separation from the rest of Los Angeles (Tita et al., 2003). Current gang territories in Hollenbeck are presented in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 Map of Hollenbeck's 31 Active Gangs' Territorial Claims
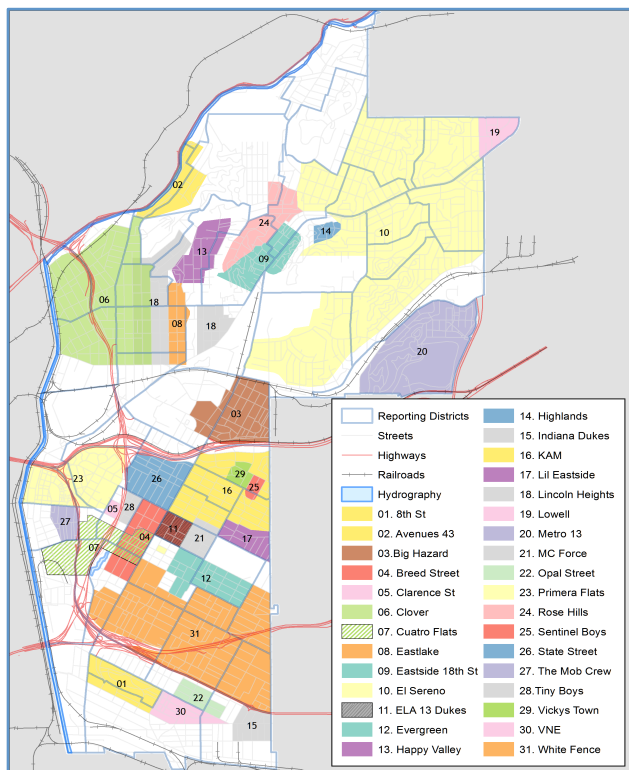
Measure of Cohesion

A measure of cohesion was obtained from LAPD field identification (FI) cards, which catalog police interactions with gang members. Data utilized include FI cards from the years 2001 to 2012 in the Hollenbeck Community Policing Area.

As per the LAPD Department Manual (Line Procedures 4/202.02, 4/269.30 & 5/15.43.01), police are required to fill out FI cards for every discretionary stop and calls for service that result in detention[2] (LAPD, 2012). The cards are framed around

Figure 1.2 The back of a Field Interview (FI) card

Persons with subject				
NAME (LAST, FIRST)	DOB	SEX	GANG/MONIKER	
NAME (LAST, FIRST)	DOB	SEX	GANG/MONIKER	
SUBJECT'S BIRTHPLACE:	CITY	COUNTY	STATE	COUNTRY
ADDITIONAL INFO (ADDITIONAL PERSONS, BOOKING NO., NARRATIVE, ETC.)				
DATE	TIME	LOCATION		RD
OFFICER	SERIAL NO.	OFFICER		SERIAL NO.
FIELD INTERVIEW 15.43.00 (11/03)	INCIDENT NO.	DIVISION	DETAIL	SUPV. INITS.

a primary subject, with demographic information including the individual's race, gender, and age, home address, gang affiliation, and any unique physical characteristics. In addition to describing the primary subject, each card outlines the circumstances surrounding the stop; the date, time,

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[2] As discretionary stops, police are not required to provide a legal basis for the encounter. Encounters recorded in the FI cards can be range from consensual interactions, questioning regarding suspicious activity, or observed involvement in crime. Not every encounter results in arrest or implies that the participants were involved in illegal activities.

and location; officers involved; vehicular or pedestrian status; and whether an arrest was made. Finally, the FI card includes any associates of the primary subject, or other individuals involved in the stop, as well as their demographic information and gang affiliations.

The FI cards were utilized to obtain a count of total associations in which each Hollenbeck gang was involved per year. An association is defined as an incident involving a gang member and at least one other individual. Though the Hollenbeck policing district contains 32 active gangs, certain gangs received greater representation through the FI data than others. Though this distinction is noteworthy, as gangs that are logged more frequently in the FI cards may differ systematically from those with fewer entries[3], the present analyses required a sample restricted to gangs most strongly represented through the data. Without such restriction, a gang only involved in one association in a given year, and two in the following year would have received equal treatment as a gang involved in ten annual associations, subsequently followed by twenty, though the latter provides a richer picture of activity.

To refine the sample, once the total associations for all gangs were obtained, average annual associations were calculated for the entire twelve-year period studied (2001-2012). Gangs with average annual associations of at least 10 were selected for analysis, yielding a final sample of eleven gangs. Yearly totals and averages for these eleven gangs are presented in Appendix A.

Once the final sample was isolated, total associations were then dissected to reflect type of association occurring. Associations were categorized as one of the following:

Intragang: For an association to be classified as *intragang*, all gang members involved in the incident must belong to the same gang.

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[3] Gangs with frequent FI cards may be larger than those with less representation, may interact with police more frequently (either by drawing attention, or through existing official scrutiny), or may be recorded more frequently by officers than police interactions with other gangs.

Intergang: Associations of at least two gang members, each of which belong to a different gang are classified as *intergang* associations. The presence of a different gang affiliation will trump any other affiliations of individuals involved in the association. For example, if an association involved two nongang members, three members of the same gang, and one individual belonging to a different gang, it would be classified as an *intergang* association.

Nongang: Associations in which only one individual is a gang member, all others unaffiliated with a gang, are classified as *nongang* associations.

Each gang received an cohesion score from the proportion of intragang contacts out of the gang's total contacts per year, under the assumption that more cohesive gangs will be documented associating with one another more frequently than less cohesive gangs.

This measure of cohesion is well supported by the current body of knowledge on gang dynamics, and is informed by previous studies of cohesion. Due to the external implications of gang cohesion, scholars have argued that behavioral measures of cohesion, such as measuring frequency of association with the group, are more representative than attitudinal measures that rely on ingroup processes, such as perceived similarity or sense of attachment (Klein and Crawford, 1967; Hennigan and Sloane, 2013). Another strength of utilizing behavioral measures of cohesion, particularly those derived from official reports, is that the data is not subject to the biases associated with self reported data (Klein and Maxson, 2010). That said, official data is not without its limitations. Specific to gang cohesion, we can only expect a very conservative measure of gang associations, and must remain cognizant of the risk for systematic errors in data reporting.

Analytic Strategy

To explore trends in cohesion over time, changes in intragang associations were observed over the study period. To increase the amount of data for comparison, the twelve years of data were separated into four three-year periods. Gangs were then separated into three categories representing high cohesion, mid-range cohesion, and low cohesion based on their cohesion scores in the first period. In the next stage of analyses, types of associations were examined more closely, accommodating nongang and intergang associations as distinct categories. Finally, cohesion is examined in relation to civil gang injunctions.

CHAPTER 2: TRENDS OVER TIME BY COHESION LEVEL

Figure 2.1 presents cohesion levels averaged across all 11 gangs for each year in the sample. Average cohesion is lowest in 2003, with a minimum of .18 and highest in 2006 with a maximum of .64, when almost two thirds of all multiple stops were limited to members of the same group.

Figure 2.1 Average annual cohesion across gangs.
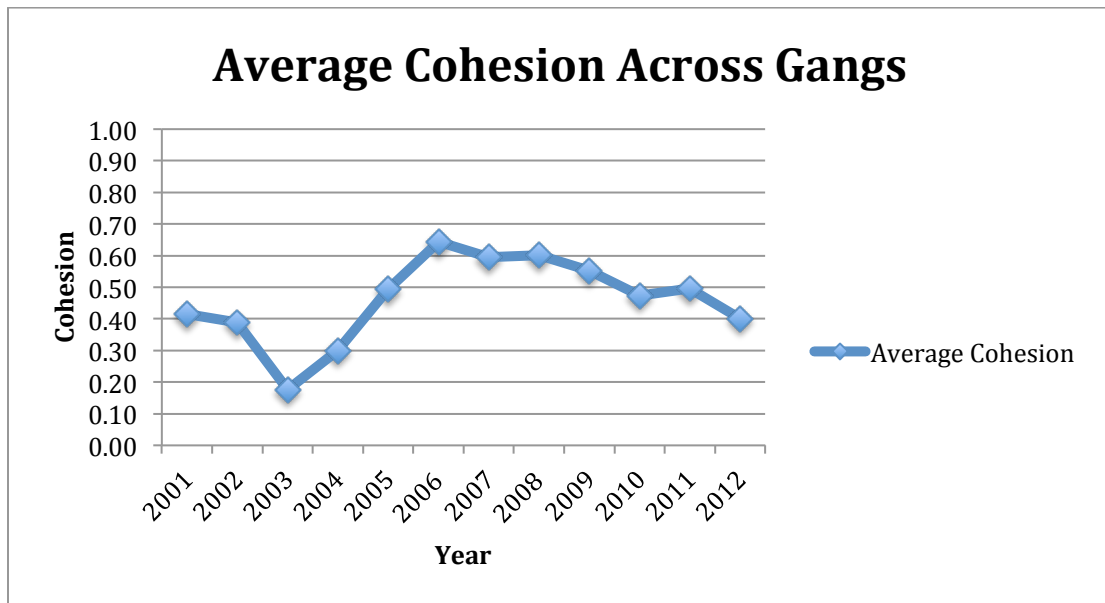
The 2001-2012 study period was divided into four three-year periods for analysis, with 2001-2003 comprising Period 1; 2004-2006: Period 2; 2007-2009: Period 3; 2010-2012: Period 4. Tables 2a-d present the annual cohesion levels for each gang, represented by period. Gangs were categorized as exhibiting either "high," "midrange," or "low" cohesion based on their cohesion levels in the first three years (Period 1) of the twelve-year period examined. The number of inter, intra, and nongang associations per gang, per year are presented by period in Appendix B.

Table 2a. Annual gang cohesion levels in Period 1

Gang	2001	2002	2003	Avg
PRIMERA FLATS	0.17	0.27	0.00	0.15
BREED STREET	0.41	0.38	0.00	0.26
CUATRO FLATS	0.40	0.23	0.00	0.21
WHITE FENCE	0.43	0.24	0.19	0.29
EASTLAKE	0.44	0.60	0.00	0.35
EL SERENO	0.50	0.29	0.23	0.34
MC FORCE	0.38	0.56	0.00	0.31
BIG HAZARD	0.45	0.39	0.00	0.28
VNE	0.44	0.49	0.52	0.48
KAM	0.47	0.51	0.50	0.49
STATE STREET	0.48	0.33	0.50	0.44

Table 2b. Annual gang cohesion levels in Period 2

Gang	2004	2005	2006	Avg
PRIMERA FLATS	0.20	0.47	0.68	0.45
BREED STREET	0.13	0.20	0.25	0.19
CUATRO FLATS	0.50	0.67	0.80	0.66
WHITE FENCE	0.32	0.38	0.65	0.45
EASTLAKE	0.00	0.56	0.87	0.47
EL SERENO	0.36	0.56	0.48	0.46
MC FORCE	0.07	0.37	0.71	0.38
BIG HAZARD	0.53	0.45	0.72	0.57
VNE	0.35	0.59	0.57	0.51
KAM	0.40	0.58	0.60	0.53
STATE STREET	0.44	0.60	0.75	0.60

Table 2c. Annual gang cohesion levels in Period 3

Gang	2007	2008	2009	Avg
PRIMERA FLATS	0.67	0.61	0.50	0.59
BREED STREET	0.67	0.69	0.53	0.63
CUATRO FLATS	0.69	0.71	0.67	0.69
WHITE FENCE	0.69	0.46	0.67	0.60
EASTLAKE	0.67	0.50	0.20	0.46
EL SERENO	0.42	0.65	0.50	0.53
MC FORCE	0.62	0.88	0.50	0.66
BIG HAZARD	0.66	0.72	0.65	0.68
VNE	0.59	0.36	0.23	0.39
KAM	0.70	0.47	0.63	0.60
STATE STREET	0.20	0.56	1.00	0.59

Table 2d. Annual gang cohesion levels in Period 4

Gang	2010	2011	2012	Avg
PRIMERA FLATS	0.17	0.25	0.40	0.27
BREED STREET	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
CUATRO FLATS	0.50	0.00	0.17	0.22
WHITE FENCE	0.49	0.63	0.67	0.59
EASTLAKE	0.69	1.00	0.75	0.81
EL SERENO	0.69	0.52	0.63	0.62
MC FORCE	0.56	1.00	0.50	0.69
BIG HAZARD	0.71	0.47	0.53	0.57
VNE	0.31	0.43	0.00	0.25
KAM	0.67	0.50	0.43	0.53
STATE STREET	0.43	0.67	0.33	0.48

Initial cohesion levels were obtained by averaging annual cohesion scores for the first period. Based on the interquartile range for these values, with a minimum of .15 (Primera Flats) and a maximum of .49 (KAM), the eleven gangs were classified into categories representing the lowest 25%, the middle 50%, or the upper 25%. This categorization yielded:

Low: Primera Flats, Cuatro Flats, Breed Street

Mid-range: Big Hazard, White Fence, MC Force, El Sereno, Eastlake

High: State Street, KAM, VNE.

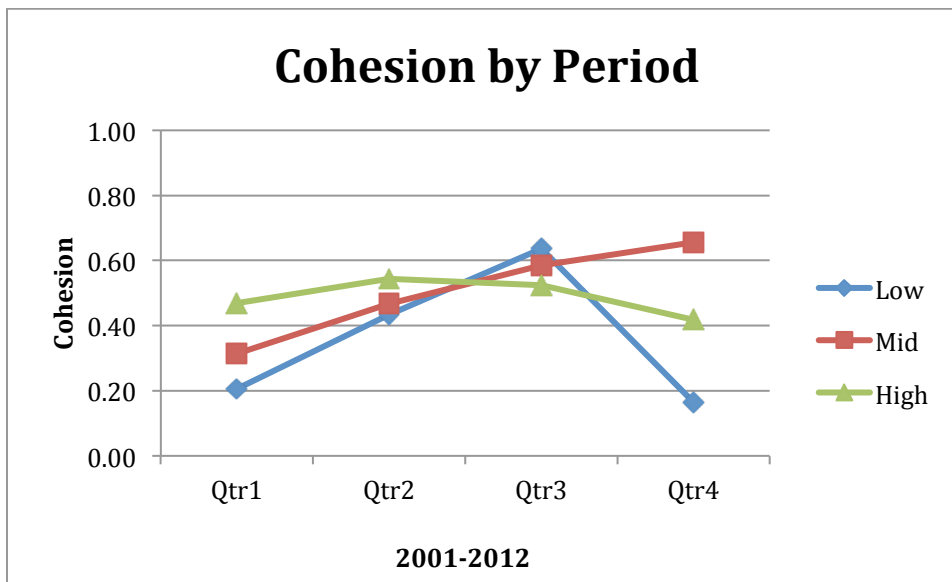**Figure 2.2 Cohesion by Period, Averaged Across Groups**

Figure 2.2 presents the cohesion levels by period, averaged across the three groups. High cohesion gangs are characterized by the greatest stability, with a maximum average cohesion level of approximately .53 in Period 2 and a minimum average cohesion level of .42 in Period 4. Cohesion in the mid-level group steadily increased over the four quarters, beginning at .31 in Period 1 and peaking at approximately .65 in Period 4. Gangs in the low-cohesion group presented the most variability in cohesion, steadily increasing from Period 1 to Period 3, with a maximum of approximately .63, followed by a sharp drop to .17 in Period 4.

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Preliminarily, these findings suggest that high cohesion gangs maintain their high cohesion over time, mid-level cohesion gangs experience a gradual increase in cohesiveness over time, and low cohesion gangs experience the highest variability in cohesion levels.

For the next stage of analyses, each group is further examined with the gangs within the high, mid, and low categories. Figures 2.3a-c present the average cohesion levels for each gang within the three cohesion groups, separated by period.

Figure 2.3a Cohesion by Period Across Low-Cohesion Gangs
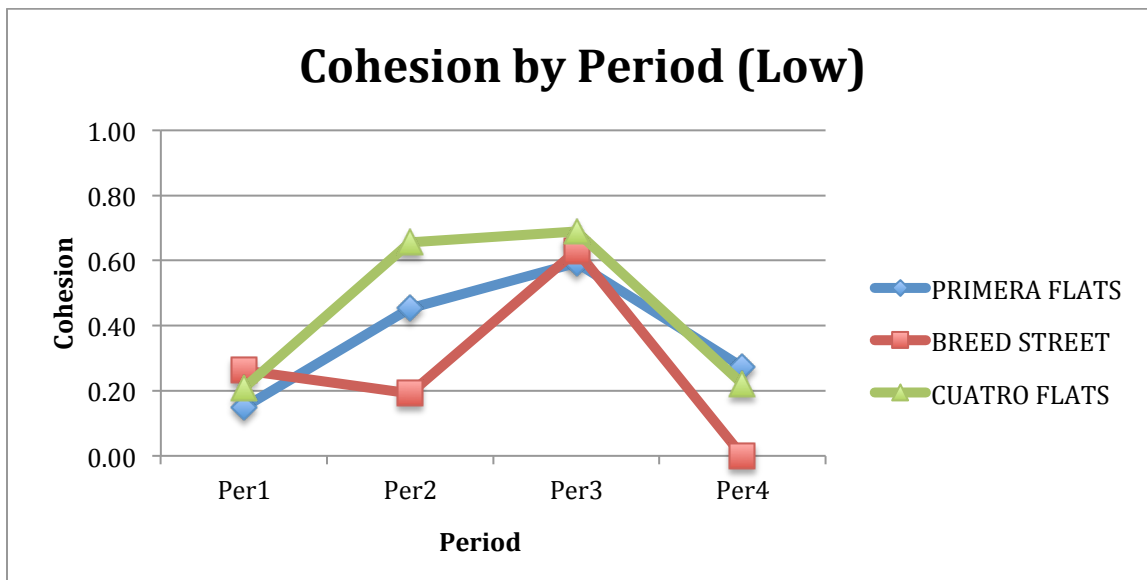
Figure 2.3b Quarterly Cohesion Across Mid-Cohesion Gangs

Cohesion by Period (Mid-range)

Legend: WHITE FENCE, EASTLAKE, EL SERENO, MC FORCE, BIG HAZARD
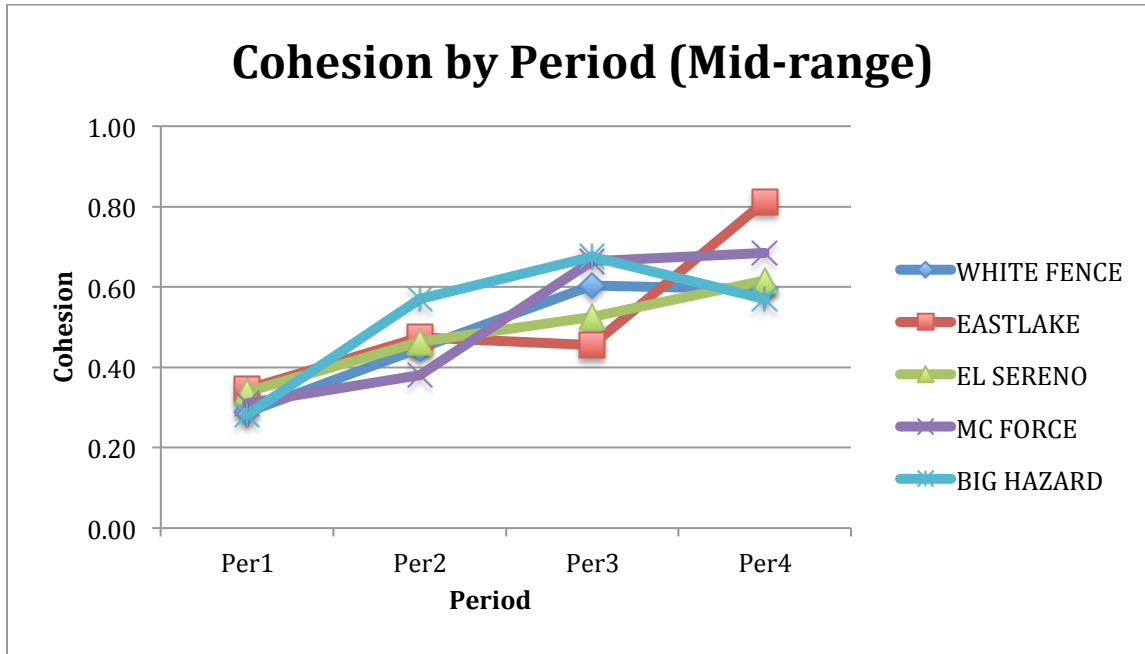
Figure 2.3c Quarterly Cohesion Across High-Cohesion Gangs

Cohesion by Period (High)

Legend: VNE, KAM, STATE STREET
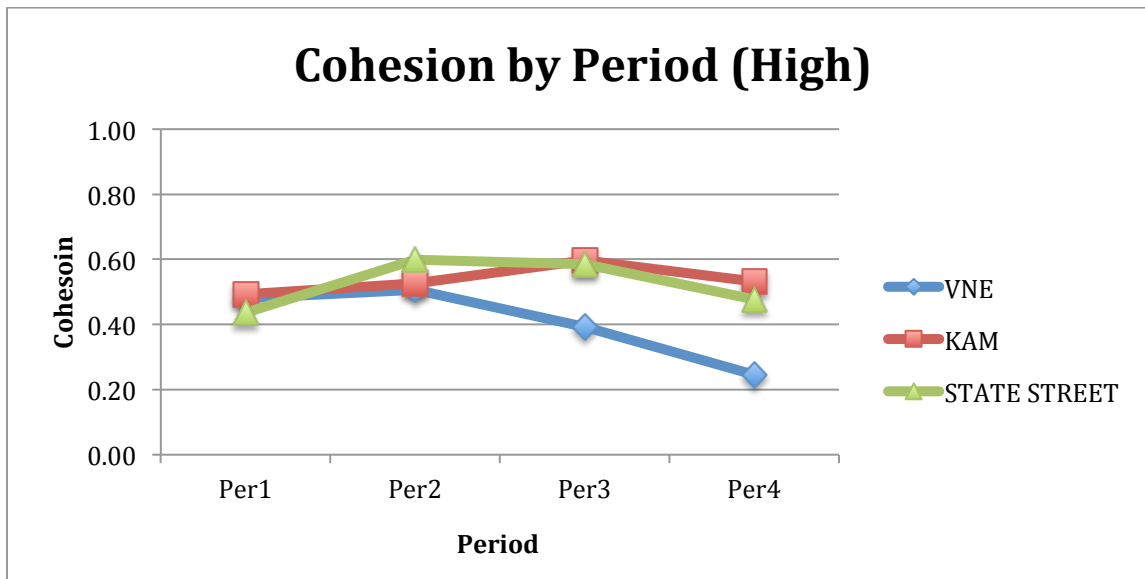
While the gangs within each category in Figures 2.3 a-c generally support the trends

evident in Figure 2.2, examining each category separately provides a richer picture of the extent

to which the gangs within these categories vary in their cohesion. As shown in Figure 2.3a, two

of the three low cohesion gangs follow similar patterns, steadily increasing from Period 1-3, and decreasing sharply from Period 3-4. The remaining low cohesion gang, Breed Street, experienced a decrease in cohesion in Period 2, followed by a sharp increase in Period 3 where its cohesion levels reached similar points as Primera Flats and Cuatro Flats. As with the other two gangs, Breed Street experienced a dramatic decrease form Period 3 to Period 4.

Gangs in the mid-level cohesion group behave more similarly to one another. Four out of the five gangs classified as mid-level at the beginning of the study period steadily increased throughout the four periods. The remaining gang, Eastlake, experienced a slight drop in cohesion from Period 2 to Period 3, followed by a sharp increase between Quarters 3 and 4.

Within the high cohesion group, KAM and State Street follow similar patterns of high stability, remaining in the .40-.50's range of cohesion throughout the four periods. Cohesion trends in the remaining high cohesion gang, VNE, diverge from the other two gangs' in Period 2, steadily decreasing from approximately .50 to .25 in Period 4.

These findings suggest that gangs with higher levels of cohesion are better equipped to sustain stability in cohesion over time. Potential policy-driven explanations for cohesion variability within and across groups are discussed in the final stage of analyses.

CHAPTER 3: TRENDS OVER TIME BY ASSOCIATION TYPE

By measuring cohesion as a function of time spent associating with members of one's own gang, the first stage of analyses do not accommodate the consideration that nongang and intergang associations may reflect fundamentally different social processes. Individuals engaging in intergang associations are not only socializing with individuals outside of their own gang, but with members of a delineated, different group. As gangs are fundamentally formed through the recognition of the group as distinctly separate from external groups or individuals, members of a gang will not only maintain a personal identity, but a group identity that drives their behavior as well. Different gangs may characterized as rival or oppositional groups, allied forces, or groups whose existence has little impact on the behavior and livelihood of the other. Yet it is the existence of a group identity that distinguishes association with another gang from association with an unaffiliated individual. Furthermore, given the many dimensions of gang membership, individuals who are classified as non-gang members may still associate with a gang regularly, or maintain fringe membership. These individuals may not be officially labeled or even self-identify as gang members, but maintain an active association with the group.

Given these important differences in group and individual processes, intergang, intragang, nongang associations are each incorporated into the following stage of analyses. Figure 6 presents the average proportion of intra, inter, and nongang associations averaged across all gangs for each year.

Figure 3.1 Average proportion of intra, inter, and nongang associations across gangs, per year.

Cohesion by Association Type
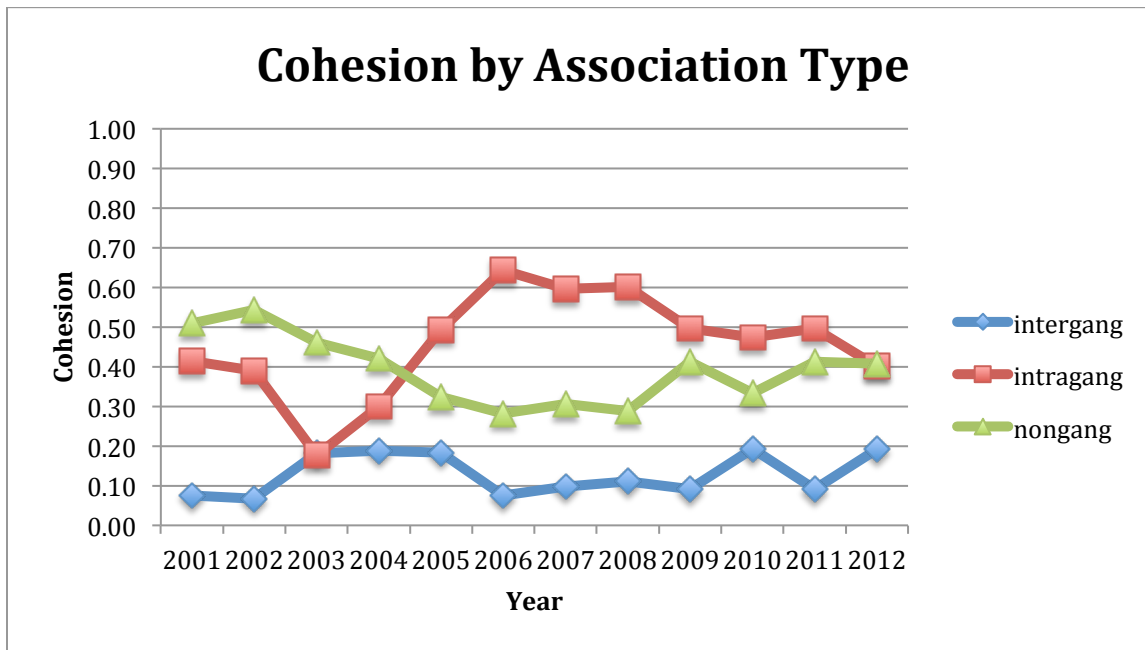
Intergang associations consistently comprise the smallest proportion of total associations throughout all twelve years of data. This finding is unsurprising, as little in the current body of gang research suggests that gang members would be spending more time with members of other gangs than with their own. Intragang and nongang associations flucutate, with nongang associations comprising a higher proportion of total associations through the first period and into the beginning of the second, but intragang associations comprising a higher proportion through the rest of the period examined.

Next, the averaged associations were again dissected into the same three cohesion level categories of low, mid, and high utilized in the first stage of analyses. Figures 3.2a-c convey the averaged levels of association in each cohesion group, presented by period.

Figure 3.2a Average proportion of associations in low cohesion gangs by association level, presented per period.
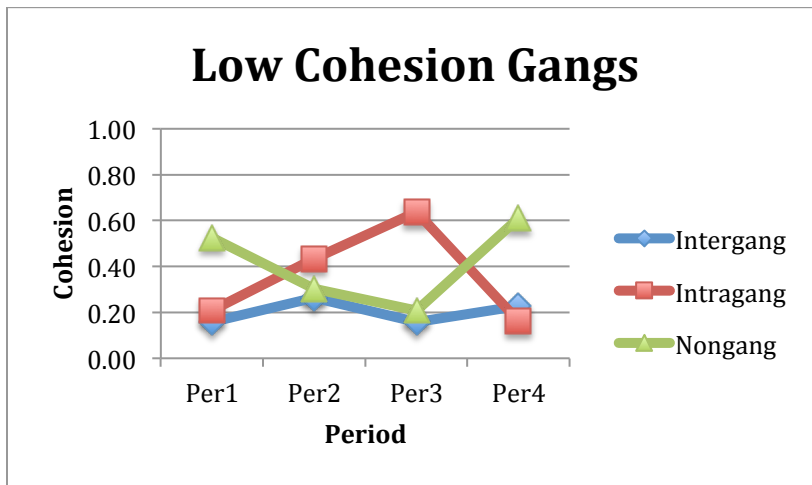

Low Cohesion Gangs

Figure 3.2b Average proportion of associations in midrange cohesion gangs by association level, presented per period.
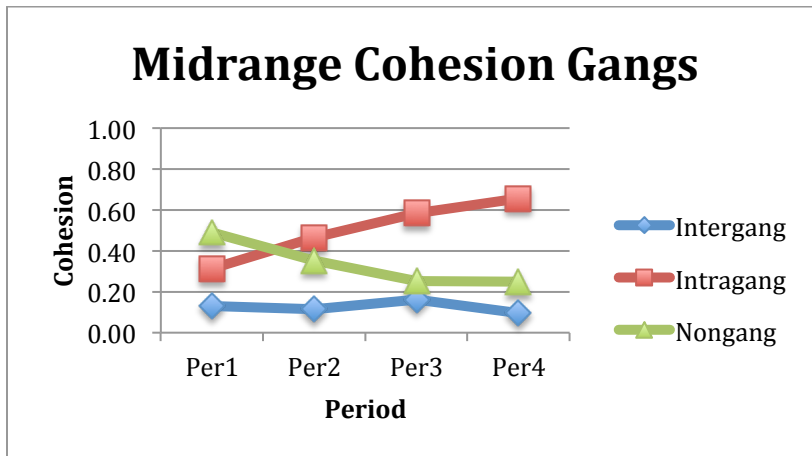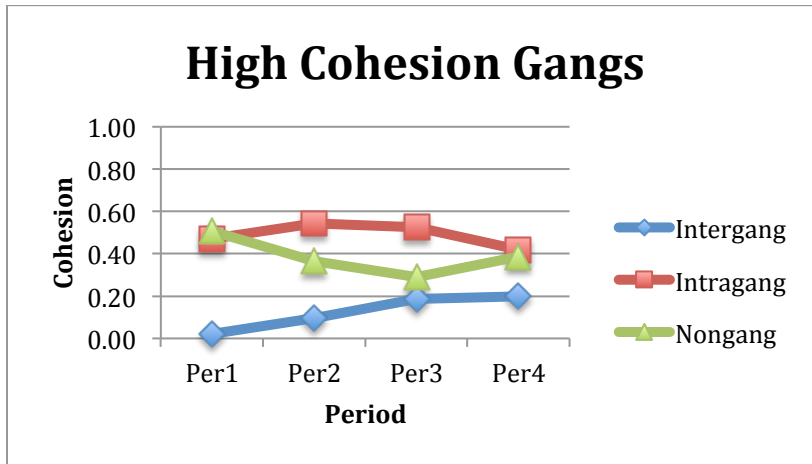

Midrange Cohesion Gangs

Figure 3.2c Average proportion of associations in high cohesion gangs by association level, presented per period.

The most striking difference reflected in separating the intergang and nongang categories is depicted through Figure 3.2a's representation of low cohesion gangs. Intergang associations remained relatively stable over the four periods studied, with a maximum of .26 in Period 2 and a minimum of .16 in Periods 1 and 3. In contrast, nongang associations experienced a steady average decrease from Period 1 to their minimum of .21 Period 3, then a dramatic increase to their maximum of .61 in Period 4.

In the mid-level cohesion gangs, intergang associations remained low but consistent, with a minimum of .10 in Period 4, and a maximum of .16 in Period 3. The non-gang associations were at their highest in Period 1, with a level of .49, briefly surpassing intragang associations. Nongang associations gradually decreased over the remaining three periods while intragang associations steadily increased. Intergang and nongang associations reached their most similar points in Period 3 with levels of .16 and .25 respectively). Intergang associations were not as well represented in mid-level gangs as they were in low cohesion gangs, but were present in every period examined.

In high cohesion gangs, intergang associations gradually increased over the four periods studied. In contrast, nongang associations among high cohesion gangs were at their highest levels at the beginning of the analysis, gradually decreasing during the middle two periods before rising again in Period 4. The trend of increasing intergang associations in high cohesion gangs is surprising, given that one would expect the more cohesive a gang is, the less likely its members are to interact with members of outer or oppositional groups. However, associating with a different gang does not necessitate cooperation with a rival gang. These associations may be occurring between allied groups. Additionally, although the proportion of intergang associations is increasing, the change is not very dramatic (increasing from 0 in Period 1 to 20 in Period 4). Furthermore, intragang associations maintain relative stablity, so despite an increase in intergang associations, we do not see a large decrease in individuals spending time with members of their own gang.

One of the most interesting trends presented in these figures is the relative representation of intergang associations across the three cohesion groups. Both the intergang maximum (.26) and minimum (.16) in the low cohesion group were higher than that of either other group. In other words, though intergang associations still comprised the smallest type of association compared to intragang associations or nongang associations, they retained the greatest presence and stability in the low cohesion group. The representation of intergang associations decreased through the midrange and high-cohesion groups. These findings suggest that low cohesion gangs are more likely to interact not just with members of other groups, but members of other gangs than those with higher levels of cohesion.

CHAPTER 4: Impact of Civil Gang Injunctions

While interpreting these findings, it is important to consider the potential impact civil gang injunctions (CGI's) may have on a gang's level of cohesion. Civil gang injunctions (CGI's) prohibit named individuals from engaging in specific behaviors or associating with other named gang members within a defined safety zone. While CGI's date back to the 1980's in Los Angeles, they did not gain popularity until the 1990's, and became implemented in Hollenbeck through the first decade of the 21st century (Rosen & Venkatesh, 2007; Stewart, 1998; Van Hofwegen, 2009).

Empirical studies examining the effectiveness of CGI's have produced mixed results. While some have provided support for the effectiveness of injunctions in reducing gang activity and crime (Grogger, 2002; O'Deane & Morreale, 2011), others suggest enjoinment may prompt the gang to draw together as a group and unify against the external threat of the police/new law, increasing cohesion (Klein & Crawford, 1967; Klein, 1998; Maxson et al., 2005).

Seven of Hollenbeck's 31 active gangs are enjoined, beginning with KAM in late 2003. The four other enjoined gangs included in the current analyses include Big Hazard (enjoined in 2005), VNE (enjoined in 2004), White Fence (enjoined in 2006), and Eastlake (enjoined in 2007). The remaining two Hollenbeck gangs under injunction are Clover and Lincoln Heights, but are not considered in the present paper due to inadequate numbers of associations for the study years (LACA, 2014; LAPD, 2011).

Figures 4.1a-e present the five enjoined gangs included in the previous analyses. Figures display both the type of association involved as well as the period in which the gang was enjoined.

Figure 4.1a Big Hazard's Associations by Period (enjoined in Per 2)
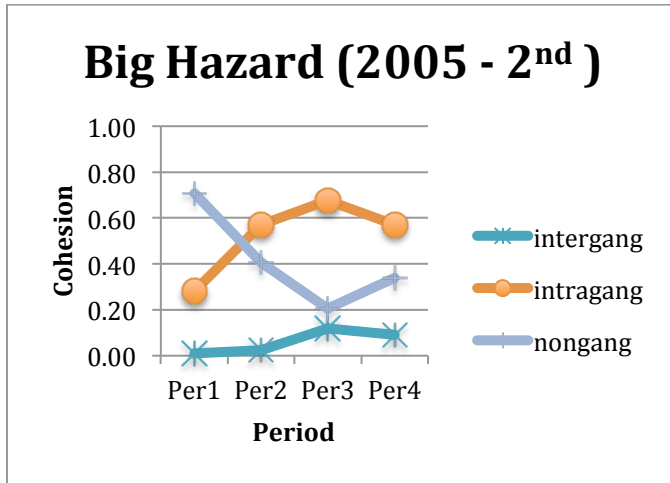

Big Hazard (2005 - 2nd)

Figure 4.1b Eastlake's Associations by Period (enjoined in Per 3)

Eastlake (2007 - 3rd)
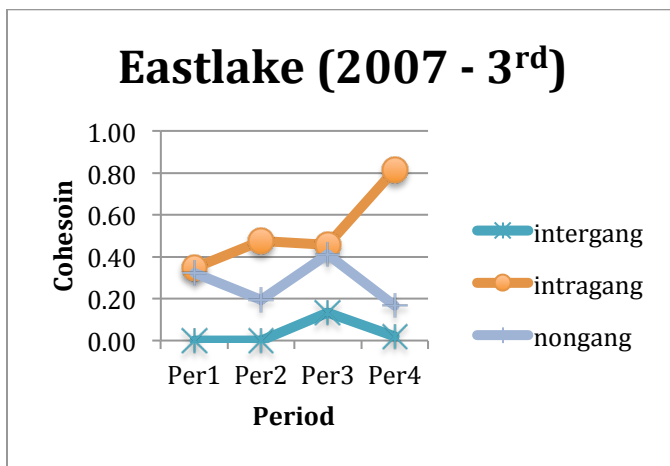
Figure 4.1c KAM's Associations by Period (enjoined in Per 1)

KAM (2003 - 1st)
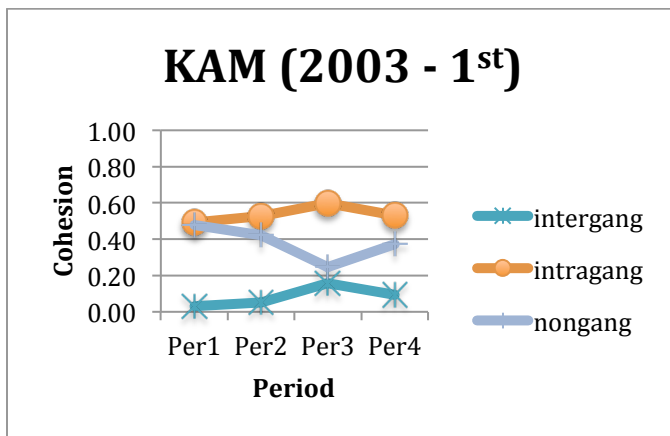
Figure 4.1d VNE's Associations by Period (enjoined in Per 2)

VNE

Cohesion vs Period (Per1, Per2, Per3, Per4)

Legend: intergang, intragang, nongang
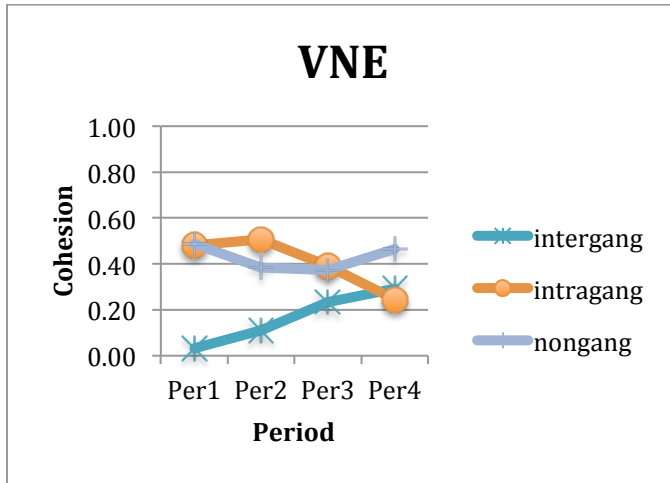
Figure 4.1e White Fence's Associations by Period (enjoined in Per 2)

White Fence

Cohesion vs Period (Per1, Per2, Per3, Per4)

Legend: intergang, intragang, nongang
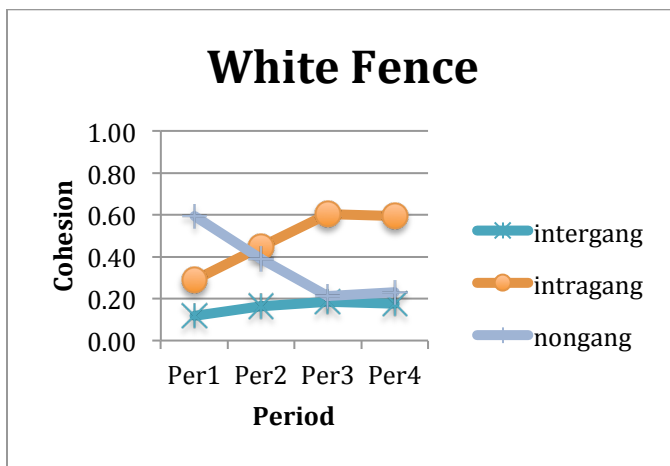
Big Hazard was enjoined in 2005, in the middle of Period 2. Cohesion, as measured by intragang associations, increased from Period 1 through Period 4. Eastlake was enjoined in 2007, in the beginning of Period 3, its intragang activity dramatically spiking from Period 3 to Period 4. White Fence was enjoined in 2006 in the end of the 2nd period, and experienced an increase in cohesion over the following two periods. As intragang association increased, the proportion of nongang associations involving White Fence decreased. The trends in cohesion in these three gangs provide support for the hypothesis that an injunction may have the unintended consequence of increasing gang cohesion. KAM was enjoined in 2003, and while a slight

increase occurred in cohesion levels following the first period, the change was very small, providing a less striking example as presented by the other enjoined gangs.

The pattern evidenced by VNE presents support for the alternative perspective, that civil gang injunctions may produce the desired effect of reducing cohesion and collective activity. VNE was enjoined in 2004, during the beginning of the second period. Intragang associations dramatically decreased following this period. Interestingly, intergang associations increased consistently over the course of the three periods, even surpassing intragang associations in the fourth period. Contrary to what was seen in the other gangs, this suggests that injunctions may be having the desired effect of decreasing gang cohesion. Although the proportion of intergang associations rose following the injunction, the injunction dictates that members of VNE *"are enjoined and restrained from engaging in…any of the following activities in the Safety Zone:*

> *a. Do Not Associate: Driving, standing, sitting, walking, or gather, anywhere in public view or anyplace accessible to the public, with any known member of VNE… (LACA, 2014)*

Members of one gang are prohibited from associating with members of their same gang, but not necessarily from associating with members of other gangs.

Further examination of VNE's intergang associations during this time period did not yield much qualitative information regarding the nature and situation surrounding the incidents. Though it would be helpful to identify whether the intergang associations clustered around a specific type of activity, such as narcotics sales or criminal activity, the detail included in each FI card varies, tending to be limited in nature. Most officers only include the penal code associated with a given charge, any further descriptives tending to be limited to information such as

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"stopped for loitering" or "observed with other gang members." While this data is still valuable for its rare insight into everyday associations that are not captured by other official data (i.e. arrest data or homicide), further inquiry would be necessary to derive richer knowledge of why the association occurred.

None of the gangs identified as low cohesion in the first stage of analyses are enjoined, while the majority of both the midrange (White Fence, Big Hazard, Eastlake) and high (KAM, VNE). This suggests that less cohesive gangs may be less likely to attract attention from law enforcement, perhaps by spending less time associating with one another, or by engaging in less conspicuous activity.

These analyses also provide support for the theory that the efficacy of injunctions may be contingent on the level of cohesion prior to a gang's enjoinment (Valasik, 2014). Categorized as a high cohesion gang, VNE was the only gang to exhibit a dramatic decrease in intragang associations after being enjoined, a finding consistent with the hypothesis that an injunction may have its desired effect only when placed on a highly cohesive gang. The three gangs in the mid-level cohesion group all experienced an increase in cohesion following the injunction, suggesting that gangs without existing high levels of cohesion may consolidate after being enjoined.

Figure 4.2. Non-enjoined gangs' average cohesion by period.
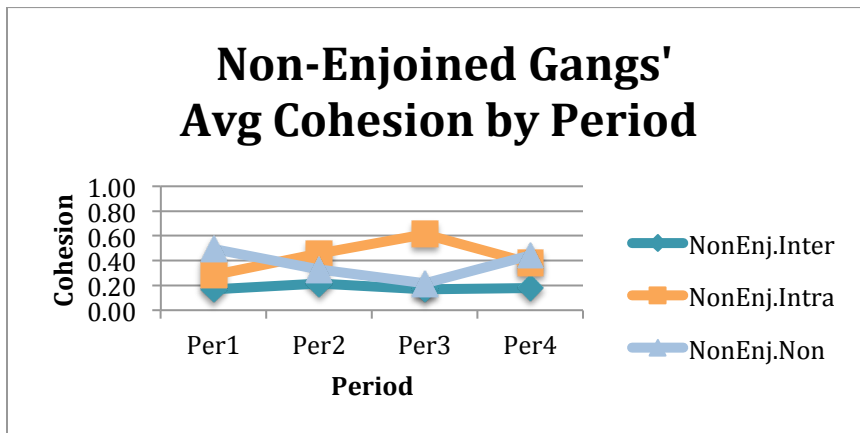
As a point of comparison for interpreting patterns of cohesion in enjoined gangs, non-enjoined gangs' average cohesion by period is presented in Figure 8. Cohesion levels for the individual gangs that comprise these non-enjoined averages are presented in Appendix C. Given that variability exists between the non-enjoined gangs' patterns of cohesion, examining the non-enjoined gangs separately would be useful in future analyses. For the purposes of the present paper, analyses are restricted to the average levels of cohesion across non-enjoined gangs. Appendix D contains representations of each enjoined gang from Figures 7a-e with the averages of the nonenjoined gangs added to each figure.

As presented in Figure 4.2, non-enjoined gangs experienced an increase in cohesion, as measured by intragang associations, from Period 1 to Period 3, then a decrease in cohesion from Period 3 to Period 4. Non-enjoined gangs experienced stability in proportion of intergang associations, which remained at average levels approximately at or just below .20 for the period studied. Nongang associations gradually decreased over the first three periods, followed by a dramatic increase in the fourth period. The most striking similarity between enjoined and nonenjoined gangs is found in the consistent decrease in proportion of nongang associations from Period 1 to Period 3, followed by an increase in Period 4. This pattern occurs in three (Big Hazard, KAM, White Fence) of the five enjoined gangs.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Decker and colleagues noted in 2007 that, "we know a fair amount about gang structures but very little about their relationship to behavior" (Decker, Katz, and Webb, 2007: 5). While their statement holds true to the present day, it may be more accurately stated that we know a fair amount about gang structures, far less about cohesion, and very little about the relationship of either to behavior. In the current present paper, I addressed one of the gaps in our knowledge concerning gang cohesion, focusing on patterns of stability in cohesion over time, levels of association, and the relationship of these trends to external policy.

All of the gangs examined in this paper experienced a level of variability in cohesion over the twelve years of data, which supports the framing of cohesion as an unstable, fluctuating process (Klein, 1995; Gerrard, 1964). Upon further analysis, this variability appears to be associated with the initial level of cohesion a gang presents with. Gangs with a high level of cohesion in the beginning of the analyses present the most stability in cohesion over the twelve years examined in this paper. This finding is consistent with Lucore's (1975) notion that high cohesion is a reinforcing process and that highly cohesive gangs will maintain their cohesion over time. Gangs with mid-level cohesion showed an increase in cohesion over time, and gangs with low levels of cohesion presented the widest range and highest variability in cohesion.

Upon exploring levels of association, results indicate that intergang associations were represented most strongly in the low cohesion group, and least strongly in the high cohesion group. In other words, of the time spent associating with individuals outside of the home gang, low cohesion gangs associations contained a higher proportion of time spent with other gang members, while people in high cohesion gangs spent comparatively more time with non-gang members. Assuming that time spent associating with one's own group is an accurate measure of

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cohesion, and acknowledging that associating with a separate group requires assimilation with another group identity, time spent with members of other gangs is likely indicative of lower levels of cohesion than time spent with unaffiliated individuals. However, as previously acknowledged, this interpretation would not apply to time spent with members of an allied or inconsequential group.

Interpreting these patterns in the context of civil gang injunctions produced interesting implications. Analyses yielded two distinct trends apparent in enjoined gangs, supporting previous findings that injunctions may yield different results depending on the cohesion level of a gang (Valasik, 2014). This is an important area for further research, as the two potential effects are associated with dramatically different policy implications.

It is important to interpret these findings with adequate consideration of the limitations of the data utilized. First, as this paper's analyses are restricted to one policing area and only a portion of the gangs located within that zone, the generalizability of the findings is low. Furthermore, of the gangs analyzed, the data obtained from FI cards is a highly conservative measure of gang associations. The FI cards will not capture associations that occur in private areas, public associations of which the police are unaware, or associations of which the police are aware but choose not to document.

The latter exclusion is of particular concern as it leaves the data vulnerable to police discretion. Not only may the associations captured by the FI cards be different from those that are not recorded, but these differences may be systematic. Police may pay greater attention to people they recognize, so new gang members may not receive adequate representation. Gangs that are enjoined may receive more scrutiny than nonenjoined gangs. Specific officers may be more vigilant or conscious of departmental protocol than others. If a police-gang interaction

involving an arrest is taking place, the officers involved may be less likely to complete an FI card when they are already completing arrest paperwork. State funding fluctuates, so the resources allocated to various policing initiatives are inconsistent.

Additionally, the representation of each gang in this data may be a function of gang size, as opposed to activity. Larger gangs may have more members on the street, and more opportunities for members to be represented through this data. Though the present measure of cohesion attempted to circumvent this issue by utilizing proportions of total associations in lieu of individual counts, gangs' inclusion eligibility was contingent on adequate representation in the dataset.

Finally, the categorization of "nongang association" is not entirely reliable. Individuals within the nongang category may actively deny gang membership, or may simply be unidentified. Unidentification could be due to a) police not recording a known gang membership, b) police being unaware of gang membership, c) an individual answering dishonestly, or d) an individual not classifying him/herself as a gang member despite spending considerable time with a given gang. It can be argued that vocalizing gang membership or being tied to a group closely enough that police are aware of one's affiliation is an indicator of cohesion that should be accommodated by the measure of cohesion utilized. However, this justification does not compensate for all of the limitations of the nongang categorization as it allows for human error in recording as well as respondent dishonesty.

Though not without their limitations, these data provide valuable opportunities to inform our current knowledge of gang cohesion. First, the data allow an opportunity to examine cohesion over time. Though many scholars have made claims regarding the temporal nature of gang cohesion, few studies have utilized longitudinal data to support each view. This data are

also valuable in its recency. Though the generalizability of the present analyses is low, the data are current and has more relevance to present policy than that utilized in many older studies.

A unique aspect of this data is their provision of information on nonviolent interactions. While much gang activity consists of simply hanging out, it is difficult to capture this type of informal, nonviolent interaction (Papachristos, et al., 2012). Many studies of gang behavior rely on official reports, which primarily capture known crime, skewing both the type of gang behavior available for study, and the type of analysis that can be conducted. While the FI data is still a conservative measure of gang activity, they allow a glimpse into the elusive normalcy of gang behavior.

As an exploratory analysis, one of the primary purposes in examining trends in cohesion over time was to identify areas for further inquiry. First, it would be beneficial to examine trends in cohesion in other cities, both with gang activity similar to and fundamentally different from Los Angeles. Spergel (1993) noted the difference between gang cities with chronic and emergent gang problems and that the structure and behavior of these gangs often vary systematically. Cohesion patterns in cities with more recent gang histories should be analyzed, in addition to replicating analyses in other cities with long gang histories (i.e., Chicago).

In addition to increasing the generalizability of these findings by extending the scope and types of gangs studied, an important next step will be to examine the relationship between cohesion and behavior, particularly crime. Few studies have systematically examined the relationship between gang cohesion and behavior, and those that have present mixed findings (Klein 1995; Moule, Decker, & Pyrooz, 2013; Jansyn, 1966; Decker and Van Winkle, 1996; Jankowski, 1991; Hughes and Short, 2005). A longitudinal approach could better delineate the relationship gang cohesion shares with delinquency.

Future work should extend the present analyses of intergang associations by comparing interactions with rival gangs, friendly gangs, and gangs that rarely interact. Additionally, studies of cohesion could consider how a gang's spatial distribution affects cohesion; specifically, if geographic boundaries, such as interstates, bodies of water, railroad tracks, impact the frequency with which a gang's members interact with others.

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APPENDIX A. Gang names and total associations for each year.

Gang	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Tot	Avg
BIG HAZARD	33	23	4	15	22	36	38	54	34	28	15	51	353	29.42
BREED STREET	22	29	0	16	5	12	15	29	15	4	1	2	150	12.50
CUATRO FLATS	25	31	2	6	3	5	16	21	6	6	1	6	128	10.67
EASTLAKE	16	25	0	0	18	15	9	2	5	16	2	12	120	10.00
EL SERENO	62	28	13	14	34	21	33	26	42	49	23	19	364	30.33
KAM	43	86	2	15	19	10	23	17	16	6	4	7	248	20.67
MC FORCE	8	9	5	15	19	17	21	8	8	9	1	2	122	10.17
PRIMERA FLATS	35	22	1	15	19	19	18	41	26	12	4	10	222	18.50
STATE STREET	21	27	4	9	10	8	10	9	3	7	3	3	114	9.50
VNE	25	35	29	31	32	7	17	25	13	13	7	2	236	19.67
WHITE FENCE	21	29	26	28	16	31	35	57	36	43	8	6	336	28.00

**APPENDIX B.** Gang names and number of inter, intra, and nongang associations for each year (presented by period).

Per 1 Associations									
Gang	inter01	intra01	non01	inter02	intra02	non02	inter03	intra03	non03
BIG HAZARD	1	15	17	0	9	14	0	0	4
BREED STREET	3	9	10	2	11	16	0	0	0
CUATRO FLATS	1	10	14	1	7	23	0	0	2
EASTLAKE	0	7	9	0	15	10	0	0	0
EL SERENO	4	31	27	2	8	18	2	3	8
KAM	3	20	20	2	44	40	0	1	1
MC FORCE	2	3	3	2	5	2	4	0	1
PRIMERA FLATS	2	6	27	2	6	14	1	0	0
STATE STREET	0	10	11	0	9	18	0	2	2
VNE	1	11	13	2	17	16	0	15	14
WHITE FENCE	3	9	9	5	7	17	1	5	20

Per 2 Associations									
Gang	inter04	intra04	non04	inter05	intra05	non05	inter06	intra06	non06
BIG HAZARD	0	8	7	1	10	11	1	26	9
BREED STREET	10	2	4	2	1	2	2	3	7
CUATRO FLATS	2	3	1	1	2	0	0	4	1
EASTLAKE	0	0	0	0	10	8	0	13	2
EL SERENO	3	5	6	6	19	9	2	10	9
KAM	0	6	9	3	11	5	0	6	4
MC FORCE	5	1	9	4	7	8	2	12	3
PRIMERA FLATS	2	3	10	6	9	4	1	13	5
STATE STREET	2	4	3	0	6	4	1	6	1
VNE	2	11	18	4	19	9	1	4	2
WHITE FENCE	4	9	15	4	6	6	3	20	8

Per 3 Associations									
Gang	inter07	intra07	non07	inter08	intra08	non08	inter09	intra09	non09
BIG HAZARD	4	25	9	1	39	14	8	22	4
BREED STREET	0	10	5	2	20	7	6	8	1
CUATRO FLATS	1	11	4	1	15	5	1	4	1
EASTLAKE	0	6	3	0	1	1	2	1	2
EL SERENO	4	14	15	4	17	5	13	21	8
KAM	1	16	6	3	8	6	4	10	2
MC FORCE	1	13	7	1	7	0	3	4	1
PRIMERA FLATS	2	12	4	8	25	8	9	13	4
STATE STREET	5	2	3	0	5	4	0	3	0
VNE	0	10	7	6	9	10	6	3	4
WHITE FENCE	3	24	8	11	26	20	10	24	2

Per 4 Associations									
Gang	inter10	intra10	non10	inter11	intra11	non11	inter12	intra12	non12
BIG HAZARD	2	20	6	1	7	7	7	27	17
BREED STREET	2	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	2
CUATRO FLATS	0	3	3	0	0	1	2	1	3
EASTLAKE	1	11	4	0	2	0	0	9	3
EL SERENO	1	34	14	4	12	7	3	12	4
KAM	0	4	2	0	2	2	2	3	2
MC FORCE	2	5	2	0	1	0	0	1	1
PRIMERA FLATS	6	2	4	2	1	1	2	4	4
STATE STREET	2	3	2	0	2	1	1	1	1
VNE	3	4	6	1	3	3	1	0	1
WHITE FENCE	10	21	12	1	5	2	1	4	1

APPENDIX C. Non-enjoined gangs' cohesion by period.

Breed St

Cuatro Flats

El Sereno
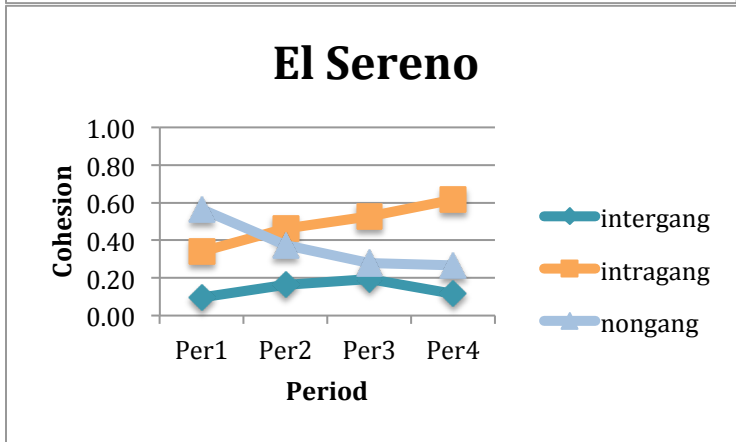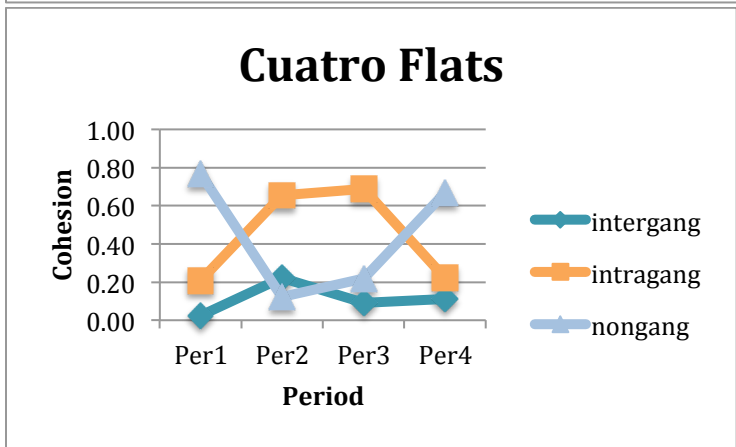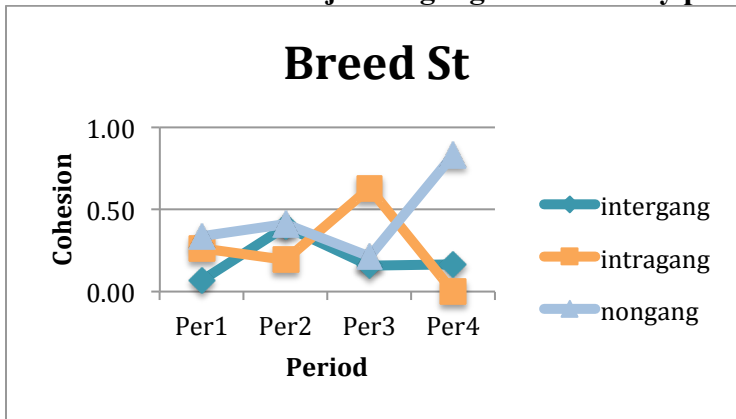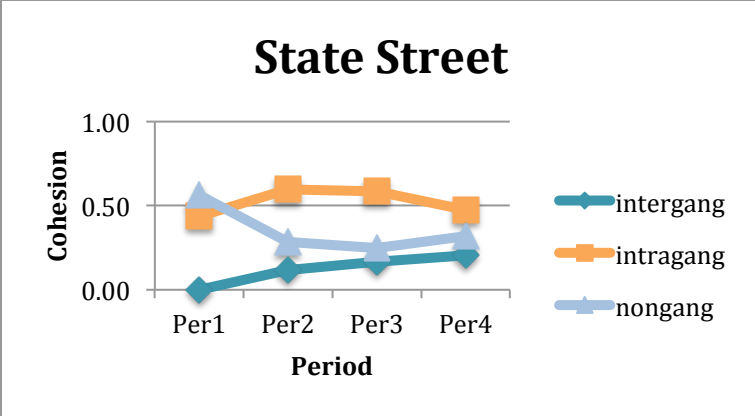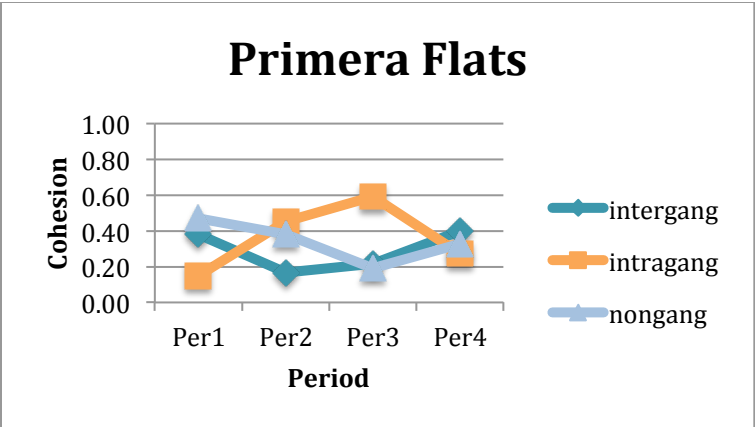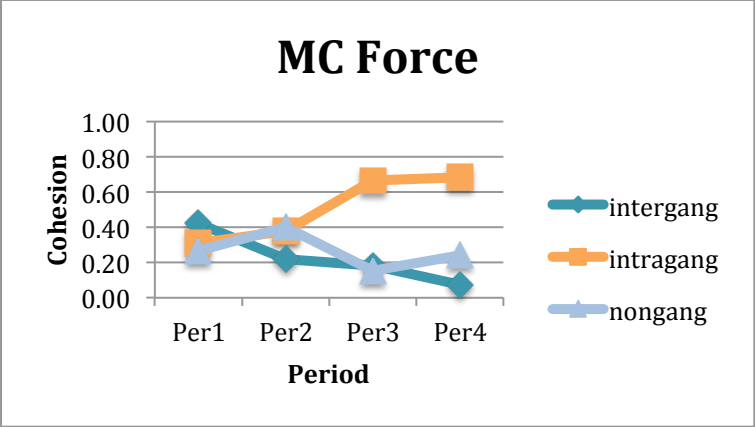
APPENDIX D. Enjoined gangs' cohesion by period, with average non-enjoined gangs' cohesion as comparisons.

Big Hazard (2nd)

Eastlake (3rd)

KAM (1st)

VNE (2nd)

White Fence (2nd)