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**“IMAGES” IN VOGUE:
THE TRANSITIONS AND IDENTITY CHANGES
OF FORMER STREET YOUTH RE-ENTERING
MAINSTREAM SOCIETY**
by
ELIO SERGNESE, B.A.

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
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**"IMAGES" IN VOGUE: THE TRANSITIONS AND IDENTITY CHANGES
OF FORMER STREET YOUTH RE-ENTERING MAINSTREAM SOCIETY**

submitted by Elio Sergnese, B.A.
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

Tullio Caputo, Thesis Supervisor

Chair, Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University

April 3, 1996

Abstract

A description and analysis of the transitions that young people go through when they leave home prematurely are reported using an interactionist framework. This thesis examines the process of identity change as young people go to the streets, become entrenched in the street lifestyle, then make their way back to mainstream society. Informed by previous research examining the socialization of street children (Visano, 1990), the study employs the "career model" to outline the various contingencies and stages which characterize the transition off the street. The findings for this research, which are based on 70 interviews with former street youth, suggest that the transitions to the street and to mainstream society are similar in that there are three important career contingencies which include: skills; affirmation; and self-image. Concluding statements include a discussion of the street youth phenomenon within the context of possibilities for intervention.

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As I approach a turning point in my academic career, I realize that this research, the completion of which marks the climax, would never have been completed without the assistance and support of many people to whom I remain deeply indebted.

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success and happiness and hope that you will never experience a retrogressive career turning point.

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Dedication

To My Family,

Remembering with gratitude the selfless acts of love that will no longer be taken for granted.

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1.0 Introduction

Find yourself in the gutter in a lonely part of town. Where death waits in the darkness with a weapon to cut some stranger down. Sleeping with an empty bottle, he's a sad and empty man. All he needs is a job and a little respect, so he can get out while he can.

We always need to hear both sides of the story (Phil Collins, 1993).

Homelessness and poverty have become concerns that have traversed the boundaries of social science and entered mainstream popular culture. Music, television and film have depicted the street as a lonely and dangerous place, replete with individuals who suffer the consequences of engaging in the street lifestyle. The street is portrayed as "an institution of higher learning" for individuals who seek deviant or criminal careers; as a shelter for those who lack a home; and as an escape from reality for those less fortunate than most. Those who partake in the street lifestyle are usually considered social outcasts.

Street people carry labels such as wino, prostitute, drug dealer, junkie, street kid, etc. Michaud (1988: 11) argues that, "this societal condemnation serves to strengthen these peoples' involvement and identification with the street culture, pushing them into further isolation from mainstream society." While these descriptive labels appear to reflect

the reality' of the street, they are often misleading. They capture only some of the consequences of being involved in the street lifestyle. They fail to reveal when and how these people ended up on the street. Moreover, they do not depict the street people's subjective accounts of themselves. This is an important factor to consider when asking the question, "How does identity change when people, specifically youth, move onto and off the street?" In attempting to address this question, it becomes important to listen to their personal stories. In doing so, we begin to understand the heterogeneous nature of the people who live on the street, and how their nature changes as they travel to and from the mainstream.

While there is an eclectic cast of characters on the street, during the past 10 years we have witnessed a growing concern with respect to one particular group -- street youth. The increasing number of young people on the street has led to a large number of studies that, among other factors, attempt to identify who these young people are and why they run away (Brannigan and Caputo, 1993; Michaud, 1988; Kufeldt and Nimmo, 1987). This research has helped to dispel some common and long standing myths about street youth. For example, street youth are not predominantly from one socio-economic background, culture or gender (Brannigan and Caputo, 1993; Kufeldt and Nimmo, 1987; Justice and Duncan, 1976). They are not hippie 'wannabees' trying to resurrect the youth culture from the late 1960s and early 1970s (Kufeldt and Nimmo, 1987). While a small percentage of the street youth population consists of adventurers and thrill seekers, the research indicates that for a greater

portion of these youth, the street becomes the only alternative to intolerable and unchangeable home environments (Brannigan and Caputo, 1993; Webber, 1991; Michaud, 1988; Ek and Carr Steelman, 1988).

Once on the street, these young people are faced with the hazards associated with street life. Being young, uneducated and unskilled, they have few options for survival. Their attempt to meet some of life's basic needs exposes them to the dangers and exploitation of the street, where drugs and/or alcohol are used to "escape" the horror of street life. Out of necessity, many develop a survival system that includes using their bodies as the currency of exchange to acquire cigarettes, drugs, alcohol, food, money, accommodations, etc. (Kurtz et al., 1991). This illicit behaviour subjects these young people to a life of violence (Levine Powers et al., 1990), high risk sex, prostitution, STDs and AIDS, substance abuse and criminality. They are also at risk of long term involvement with social services and the criminal justice system (Caputo et al., 1994a; Michaud, 1988).

If the street represents an undesirable, hazardous and abusive environment, why then do so many young people stay on the street? Research indicates that, aside from having few viable options, many young people experience a sense of belonging, loyalty and shared understanding on the street. Street culture consists of activities that are conducive to surviving on the street. Street friends become a substitute family, filling the emotional gap left by disapproving or abusive families

and former friends. Caputo and his colleagues (1994a: 17) explain how these substitute families consist of street names and differentiated roles. While the street names ensure anonymity, older members of the street scene become street mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters to many street youth, and are depended upon for social interaction, nurturance, love and protection. They also teach street youth about 'street smarts' or survival techniques.

Participation in street culture is risky. Studies have found that the more involved the young people become in street culture, the further entrenched they become in the lifestyle (Visano, 1990; Michaud, 1988; Palenski and Launer, 1987). The dangers inherent in the street lifestyle have been noted above. The greater the level of entrenchment, the greater the exposure to the risks associated with living on the street.

While we know much about street youth and runaways, and the challenges they encounter on the street, little work has been done on the transition back to the mainstream. Studies have documented the range of services that emergency shelters, drop-in centres, out-reach services and counselling facilities offer to young people on the street (Brannigan and Caputo, 1993; Michaud, 1988). Brannigan and Caputo (1993: 146-154) identified a continuum of services, based on a pilot study conducted in Calgary in 1992, that ranges from prevention services, to crisis intervention, maintenance and transition services. However, little is known about the factors influencing transition.

Michaud (1988) provides some information about the social structural factors related to transitions from the mainstream. Several of the notable factors include: negative experiences and interactions with social service agencies contribute to a sense of helplessness and hopelessness that makes the possibility of seeking or accepting help, less and less plausible; street youth will not give up their well developed survival system without the creation of and gradual integration into an equally effective system; there is a need for specialized services to provide long term and individualized treatment that is necessary to address the damage done to children who are processed through the criminal justice system; and street youth need to be represented when solutions are developed. Lack of ownership in the solution is likely to produce failure.

In addition to structural factors, there are personal dynamics, such as identity, which influence transition experiences. Studies conducted by Visano (1990) and Palenski (1984) provide a discussion of the transition to the street and the identity change that accompanies this transition. These discussions are conceptualized using a "career" perspective. Visano (1990: 142) states, "essentially, the concept of a career refers to the progression of related experiences and identity changes through which actors move. This constellation of activities and values can serve as a framework for interpreting action and charting identities." Visano (1990) identifies disengagement from the street as a final stage in the career

process. His research, however, does not elaborate on the transition of street youth from the street to the mainstream.

In conceptualizing the transition to the street, both Visano (1990) and Palenski (1984) examine the interaction that takes place between young people new to the street and seasoned members of the street scene. Strauss draws our attention to the interdependency of interaction and identity. He states that, "the student of identity must necessarily be deeply interested in interaction for it is in, and because of, face-to-face interaction that so much appraisal of self and others occurs" (1969: 44). Identity refers to our understanding of who and what we are; to our self-image, which is shaped by social interaction. Haas and Shaffir (1978: 11) state:

Identity is, of course, formed, maintained and reinforced on a daily basis during and as a result of interaction with other people. Everyone develops a conception of the kind of person they are based on the way they imagine other people react to their behaviour.

Young people new to the street, go through a series of stages and contingencies, which may lead to the development of a new identity. These stages include: becoming connected to a street sub-group, and staying connected to a street sub-group. It is important to note that these stages are analytical tools that mark the young people's progression or retrogression through the process. Movement among these stages is subtle or gradual. It is dependent on a variety of tightly interwoven contingencies that operate and assume different meanings during each

stage (Visano, 1990: 143). "The nature of these contingencies is significant in affecting the next stage actors will pursue in advancing, maintaining or abandoning their career" (Ibid. p. 144). Among the various contingencies, Visano (Ibid. p.143) states that there are three main contingencies that include: skills, affirmation from a group of significant others and self-image.

Newcomers to the street learn that assistance is necessary if they are to survive life on the street. Thus, many seek to become connected to a street sub-group, from which they form relationship bonds with seasoned street youth. Visano has characterized these relationship bonds as an "apprenticeship" type of relationship. As apprentices to seasoned street youth, newcomers learn their roles through exposure to various group activities. In the course of interacting with these seasoned street youth and participating in unskilled activities, newcomers come to be publicly accepted by other group members. Public acceptance is important to newcomers for it affirms their roles. Moreover, this public acceptance affirms their self-images of being among a group of young people who share similar circumstances. In other words, newcomers have gained entrance into a street sub-group that offers a collective identity or a reference group from which to develop a valued identity. However, the development of a new identity or street youth identity requires the learning of a street perspective. This includes learning: the skills, knowledge, attitudes, values and motives of the groups in which the newcomers belong or seek to become members. The learning of a street perspective is

reflective of the newcomers' attempts to "stay connected" to and become members of their street sub-groups.

Newcomers acquire a street perspective through their continued participation in their apprenticeship relations with seasoned street youth. In acquiring a street perspective, newcomers have not only learned new roles, but they have also had their roles affirmed by other street youth. Further, in the process of learning their new roles, newcomers begin to re-adjust their self-images according to their perceptions of the attitudes of the members of their street sub-groups. Thus, as their new roles are affirmed so too are their street youth identities. While this is a simplified version of the arguments presented by Visano (1990) and Palenski (1984), it suffices to illustrate how identity change shapes the transition to the street.

This line of reasoning may be useful in understanding how identity change might affect the transition off the street to mainstream society. The "mainstream" here, refers to a conventional lifestyle that includes meeting societal expectations, such as participating in employment and/or education and other mainstream activities. Street youth re-entering mainstream society should go through a series of stages similar to the ones experienced in their transition to the street, which lead to an identity change when leaving the street. The skills necessary to function in mainstream society can be acquired from members of the mainstream, such as social service professionals, family members or friends. The

affirmation of the new role from this group of significant others will influence the development of a new self-image. It is only after street youth acquire this affirmation that they re-adjust their conception of "self" (Visano, 1990; Mead, 1934).

Young people's experiences getting off the street may be similar to that of going to the street. An examination of their self-images and identity changes may be important markers, ways for us to understand more about this process of transition.

This thesis examines the process of identity change as young people go to the streets, become entrenched in the street lifestyle, then make their way back to mainstream society. The study focuses on developing a conceptual model that outlines the contingencies and various stages that characterize the transition off the street. Since self-identity is one of the concepts of this model, a focus of this study is also the factors that facilitate or hinder identity transformation.

1.1 Outline Of The Following Sections

In Chapter Two a review of the related literature on runaways and street youth is undertaken. An examination of the various studies of this population provides necessary information regarding the diverse characteristics of runaways and street youth, the antecedents to running to the street and the consequences of adopting the street lifestyle.

Very little research has examined the way in which young people make the transition off the street to mainstream society. In order to address this question, we can draw upon related literature on transitions. Studies, for example, on drug rehabilitation and dieting, while not related specifically to street youth, have much in common with making lifestyle transitions.

The nature of identity is central to a discussion of transitions. Chapter Three examines the politics of identity transformation. Using models similar to those constructed by Visano (1990) and Palenski (1984), this section describes the process of identity change as a young person passes through the stages involved in becoming an entrenched street youth and in the transition to mainstream society.

Chapter Four deals with the methodology that is employed in this study. The method used consisted of a two-pronged approach: i) in-depth interviews involving both open and close ended questions were conducted with former street youth; ii) participant observation of street youth in several youth-serving agencies. Chapter Five presents the findings of this study. In this chapter, the findings are used to test the conceptual model used in this research. This model consists of contingencies and stages that reflect the transition to the mainstream. In Chapter Six, the conclusions derived from this study are discussed. This chapter also addresses possibilities for future research.

2.0 Literature Review

During the past 10 years, we have witnessed a growing concern with regard to youth related issues. Specifically, the concern surrounding street youth and runaways has led to a plethora of research, the focus of which has ranged from conflict in the family to street youths' involvement with the criminal justice system. Included within this broad scope are issues surrounding: the use of drugs and alcohol by street youth, the sexual behaviour of street youth, street youth concerns regarding education and employment, and community responses to the problem of runaways and street youth.

In attempting to learn more about the antecedents to running, the consequences of living on the street and the responses of the youth service system, many studies have highlighted existing definitional problems surrounding the term "street youth." As Brannigan and Caputo state, "the common term 'street youth' implies a homogeneity that is misleading" (1993: 20). They argue that the problem of definition arises

because the population at risk is, in fact, quite heterogeneous. Few of those who are called homeless runaways are actually homeless and many in fact may be AWOL temporarily. Many run from home to the home of a friend or relative. Some find their way to emergency shelters and soup kitchens. Some of the shelters provide temporary residency, some are longer term (1993: 19).

Studies have employed terms such as "homeless" (Kurtz et al., 1991; Whitbeck and Simons, 1990), "chronic runaways" (Whitbeck and Simons, 1990), "throwaways" (Adams et al., 1985), "societal rejects" (Adams et al., 1985), and "in and outers" (Kufeldt and Nimmo, 1987) to classify the various young people leaving home prematurely. While these terms are used to classify the various sub-groups of young people on the street, they are not definitive terms. As is discussed below, there are contradictions in the literature between various studies employing these terms and others to describe the various types of young people on the street. In this way, the term "street youth" becomes an umbrella term for the various sub-groups of young people who find their way to the street.

According to the research conducted by Kurtz et al. (1991) "homeless youth" have no place of shelter and are in need of services and shelter where they can receive supervision and care. In contrast, Whitbeck and Simons (1990) argue that "homeless youth" are running from family situations that are characterized by poor parenting practices, violence and sexual abuse. While the former is based on the presumed shelter service needs of youth, the foundation for the latter is the young person's background characteristics.

Johnson and Carter's (1980) research described "runaways" as being rejected by families, schools and communities. Their use of the term "runaways" paradoxically coincides with the meaning that Adams et al. (1985) attach to their concept of "societal rejects" with one notable

exception. Adams and his colleagues state that "societal rejects" are provided no long-term services by public social service agencies. Thus, this stipulation brings their "societal rejects" closer to the "homeless youth" described by Kurtz et al.

There also continues to be a lack of consensus surrounding the composition of the subgroups of the runaway population. Classification methods appear to be based on one of two factors: the reasons for running or the chronicity of the run (Whitbeck and Simons, 1990). This inconsistency has created many contradictions between the various studies. At the forefront is the assumption that these subgroups are mutually exclusive.

Brannigan and Caputo (1993: 96-108) recommend an alternative method for identifying the various sub-categories of street youth. They created a four quadrant model based on the intersection of two axes: a horizontal axis that measures the amount of time individuals spend "on the street" and a vertical axis that measures the degree to which young people are involved in street culture. Each axis forms a continuum. The horizontal axis ranges from young people who spend little time on the street, to entrenched street youth who spend most of their time on the street. The vertical axis ranges from involvement in conventional behaviour to extensive participation in the dangerous and risky activities associated with street life.

Rather than create typologies, Brannigan and Caputo place the individual in one of four quadrants. Despite the identification of these four quadrants, their model is transitory and individuals can move between quadrants, such as from being "curbsiders" to entrenched street youth and back. The model allows them to account for, among other factors, the heterogeneous nature of the population without creating definitive subgroups. It also allows them to separate antecedents to running from classification methods. This is important because, as we will see below, a young person may have multiple reasons for leaving home.

Prior to discussing the antecedent conditions leading to the street it is important to raise one further concern related to the various classification methods. The definitional problems surrounding the term "street youth" have, in part, contributed to problems incurred with estimating the size of the population (Brannigan and Caputo, 1993: 21). As was noted above, the term is very broad. As such, it raises several questions related to the various estimates of the population size, specifically concerning who is being included in the estimates. These questions include: Are the population estimates based on the number of young people involved in the street scene at any given time?; Are they based solely on the number of young people that do not have a place to sleep at night, and thus may have to resort to hostels?; or Are the estimates based on the number of young people reported to have run away? It is important to clarify who is being included in the population estimates, for without this clarification it is difficult to assess the size of

the problem. For example, The Portage Foundation (1993: 3) cited UNICEF's 1990 estimate of approximately 100 million "street children" in the world, while Radford et al. (1989: 9) cited Covenant House's estimate of 150,000 Canadian "runners." On a smaller level, McCarthy and Hagan (1992: 612) argued that despite not knowing the exact size of Toronto's "homeless adolescent" population, estimates ranged from 10,000 to 12,000. They, however, used a conservative estimate of 7,500 for the purposes of their research. Caputo et al. (1994a) had an alternative approach for estimating the size of Ottawa's street youth population. Having benefited from the lessons learned from previous research (Brannigan and Caputo, 1993), Caputo and his colleagues focused on a segment of the street youth population. Their target population specifically included the young people involved in the street scene for a longer period of time, the entrenched street youth. Their findings yielded an estimate that ranged from 200 to 300 entrenched street youth. While noting that the size of the street youth population "varies depending on the season and the migration patterns of street youth" (p. 15), Caputo and his colleagues were also informing their readers of the importance of separating antecedent conditions from classification methods, especially when attempting to estimate the size of the target population.

2.1 Antecedents To Running: The "Push"

Attempts to develop responses to the runaway and street youth phenomenon have led many to focus their research on the antecedents

leading to the street. The antecedents or causes concentrate on the young person's background characteristics and range from a general cause to a number of specific factors that may be interrelated. For many young people running to the street, these antecedent conditions represent "the push" away from home.

Despite the variance between studies regarding antecedent conditions leading to the street, the literature notes a fallacious relationship between the youth movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s and the existence of street youth. In other words, street youth are not an off-spring of this earlier youth movement. This is alluded to by Adams and Munro (1979). In attempting to resolve the question: "Are runaways a reflection of a greater dissatisfaction with society and its general belief system?" Adams and Munro review some of the "generation gap" literature linking runaways to the counter-culture, which began its thrust in the fifties. They identify several movements that include: the Beat movement; the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament; the Mods and Rockers of England; the Hells' Angels of the United States; Students for a Democratic Society; the Hippies; and the New Left. They state that, "a common thread unifying these movements is their dissatisfaction with an existing value system" (p. 366). Recognizing the limitations of much of the "generation gap" literature, Adams and Munro state in a footnote, that "our effort should not be confused with the former line of thought. However, it is not totally incompatible with a generation conflict perspective" (p. 367). Adams and Munro state that runaways ". . . are

reflecting a growing trend across many social classes and situations which indicates the problem may not be one of simple situational causation, but a question of challenging an entire social system" (p. 362). They conclude their study by arguing that runaways are part of a greater social group that recognizes the need for systemic change. According to Adams and Munro (1979: 370), youth are leaving:

what appears to be a system which does not provide adequate reinforcement for an individual's needs socially or intrapsychically. Runaway behaviour is one alternative which, in part, seeks to find alternatives to this dilemma.

McCarthy and Hagan (1992) conducted a study of street life and delinquency and found four primary causes for running away. These include: family breakdown, neglect, physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse and rejection. Several other studies offer variations of the McCarthy and Hagan findings. For example, Whitbeck and Simons (1990) find poor parenting practices, violence and sexual abuse to be the primary factors related to running away, while Johnson and Carter (1980) attribute this behaviour to an all-inclusive "rejection." Kufeldt and Nimmo (1987) argue that the "spiral of neglect" begins in the family with intentional or unintentional abuse and neglect occasioned by poverty and/or stress.

While the family appears to be the main source of conflict for young people running away from home, several other studies cite factors outside young people's home situations as causes related to runaway behaviour. Ek and Steelman (1988) add school problems to their list of factors related

to running away from home. In addition to school problems, Levine Powers et al. (1990) found depression and poor self-image, trouble with the justice system and alcohol and drug abuse to be the primary factors for running away from home.

Although there is a lack of consensus, collectively, there are five main factors that have been identified as leading young people to run away and go to the street. These include: personal problems; family conflict; educational problems; peer relationships and their impact on the young people's behaviour; and conflict with the law. In addition to these five main factors, there is a sixth category consisting of youth who inadvertently end up on the street as a result of, for example, their inability to find work in the new towns or cities to which they recently migrated.

These main factors can be further subdivided to examine what they include. For example, alcohol and drug abuse (Levine Powers et al., 1990) and interpersonal turmoil which may lead to suicidal behaviour (Adams et al., 1985) may all be examples of the types of variables subsumed under the broader factor of social problems.

The factor known as family conflict can be subdivided to include physical, emotional and sexual abuse (McCarthy and Hagan, 1992; Whitbeck and Simons, 1990; Kurtz et al., 1991; Kufeldt and Nimmo, 1987), violence amongst parents (Ek and Carr Steelman, 1988), parental substance abuse (Whitbeck and Simons, 1990), neglect or being thrown

out of the home (McCarthy and Hagan, 1992) and parental unemployment (Kurtz et al., 1991). This differs from the educational problems factor which focuses on young people's conflict with the administration, teachers and/or students as well as young people's ability or lack thereof, to perform well in school (Levine Powers et al., 1990; Johnson and Carter, 1980).

Conflict with the law, as a primary factor, includes within it young people who are on the run from state care facilities like foster/group homes or from young offender facilities. It also reflects young people's aggressive or anti-social behaviour (Kurtz et al., 1991; Levine Powers et al., 1990; Kufeldt and Nimmo, 1987).

Within the factor of peer relationships we locate youth who are still at home but identify with the street scene and may be tempted to leave home prematurely (Brannigan and Caputo, 1993). These young people are connected to street youth, drug dealers and/or youth working in the sex trade. They seek the assistance of their street contacts if and when they decide to leave home in search of the freedom and independence of street life (Visano, 1990). This factor also informs us of the impact of peer relationships on the behaviour of these youth. For example, peer relationships provide us some indication of young people's values, behaviour patterns and what they think is "normal" behaviour.

Finally, the factor of inadvertent street youth includes a small number of unemployed youth who leave one city or town in search of work and are unsuccessful (Brannigan and Caputo, 1993). Their need to survive leads them to participate in the street lifestyle. Many of these youth become primary targets for recruitment into prostitution and drug dealing (Kurtz et al., 1991).

While we have identified six primary factors, each containing various sub-categories, it is important to recognize that the factors that "push" youth away from their homes and lead many of these youth to the street are neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive. There may be an interrelationship between one or more sub-categories within the same primary factor. There may also be a relationship between one or more sub-categories from different primary factors. Finally, there may be an overlap between primary factors. For example, in studying street youth, Visano (1990) found that some youth that confronted their parents about incest were often met with further emotional abuse such as ridicule and guilt. Similarly, school problems may be manifested in family conflict when parent(s) and youth argue over lack of attendance and poor grades. Rather than attempt to isolate and solve the problem behind the young person's poor school performance, parents contribute to the youth's problems by making the home situation even more intolerable.

Although abuse (physical, emotional and sexual) was included in the family conflict factor, it is an example of a sub-category that cuts-

across several other factors. Abuse could be the cause of personal and educational problems which lead to poor self-esteem and interpersonal turmoil. For example, the abuse at home may make it difficult for the young person to concentrate at school, resulting in poor grades. Consequently, the young person is made to feel incompetent at home and at school, and these feelings may lead to poor self-esteem and interpersonal turmoil, which may in-turn lead to suicidal behaviour.

It is important to recognize the problems with classification, since as Roberts (1982: 387) states, "there is no single characteristic which determines a youth's potential for running away from home. Rather, it is a group or cluster of personal and situational characteristics taken together that can provide significant indicators of runaway proneness."

2.2 The Street As An Alternative: The "Pull"

Despite the wide range of reasons for being on the street, the consensus among these young people is that while street life is terrible, life on the street is better than any alternative they perceive is available to them (Webber, 1991). One of the primary lures of the street is the false sense of freedom that it creates. As Visano (1990: 148) states, "the psychic lure of the downtown glitter of the 'fast lanes', features prominent in their talk, especially for those who have learned to resent their many mundane rounds." For the aspiring and neophyte street youth, the unconditional "freedom" in conjunction with the perceived "lack of

responsibilities" become forces "pulling" young people into a greater degree of involvement in the street lifestyle.

One of the benefits that comes with forming and maintaining street relations is the positive sense of belonging, loyalty and shared suffering that they attain from street culture (Michaud, 1988). "Alienated from home and peers, the adolescent may leave home to find warmth, love, or a caring other on the streets" (Adams et al., 1985: 722).

Strong street relations and networking will increase the youth's involvement in street culture. Street culture refers to the interaction that exists among people on the street and includes their collective ideas about the behaviour that is conducive to surviving the lifestyle. "Survival requires them to be constantly on the prowl and ready to score by rolling a drunk, boosting, smashing and grabbing anything of value or simply panhandling" (Visano, 1990: 150). Kufeldt and Nimmo (1987: 537) refer to street culture as the "street welfare system" which is characterized by the illegal activities and helpful friends. A consequence, as Michaud explains, is that street friends become "substitutes for the lost family and community supports" (1988: 11).

Caputo et al. (1994a: 17) found evidence to support this notion of the existence of "street families." Many of the youth they interviewed for the Ottawa case study indicated that a pseudo family exists on the street, complete with street names and differentiated roles. While the street

names protect anonymity, the presence of older street mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters provides the semblance of security usually found in a family.

Street families provide youth with social interaction, nurturance, love and protection. According to Caputo et al. (1994a: 17), street youth "say that people on the street listen to them, understand them and really care about them. Street youth often share similar experiences, allowing them to relate easily to each other's problems." This pseudo family plays an important role in educating the young person. "Street smarts," which according to Visano (1983: 223), "involves general information on different activities, expectations, client contacts, coping strategies and manipulations which serve to minimize risks" are acquired from street families.

Participation in street culture is not without its consequences. Studies propose that the more involved the young person becomes in 'street culture,' the further entrenched he or she becomes in the lifestyle (Michaud, 1988; Whitbeck and Simons, 1990; Brannigan and Caputo, 1993).

2.3 Consequences To Living On The Street

In Dead End, Michaud (1988: 10) presents evidence to support the relationship between the length of time a teenager has been involved in

street culture and the degree of difficulty involved in exiting the lifestyle. Michaud's findings direct our attention to the consequences of becoming entrenched in street life. For example, the depth of entrenchment is compounded by substance abuse. Entrenchment, according to Radford et al. (1989), is a consequence of being addicted to substances. Many of the street youth in their study, "had become entrenched in street life because of an alcohol or drug addiction acquired while on the street. This could occur in as brief a period as one month" (1988: 56). Radford et al. go on to state that once addicted, street youth are less likely to abandon their dangerous habits and reintegrate into 'straight' society. While this study provides some insight on causes and consequences of entrenchment, other studies have shed light on various types of illicit behaviour, such as prostitution, drug dealing and other types of criminality, which can lead not only to entrenchment but to other deleterious consequences (Michaud, 1988; Kurtz et al., 1991; Levine Powers et al., 1990; Justice and Duncan, 1976; Whitbeck and Simons, 1990).

One of the concerns which Kurtz et al. (1991) cite relates to the sexual behaviour of street youth. They found that shelter staff members feared that many of the runaways that frequented the shelters engaged in "survival sex." "Survival sex" refers to the use of the body as a currency of exchange for drugs, alcohol, money, cigarettes, food, accommodations, etc.. This differs from prostitution which, Levine Powers et al. (1990), Michaud (1988) and Janus et al. (1987) argue, many street youth are pushed into by seasoned members of the street scene, who seek to survive

through the exploitation of these vulnerable youth. Kurtz et al. (1991) suggest that street youth selling sex and/or drugs are liable to suffer violence at the hands of pimps and drug dealers.

Paradoxically the behaviours in which street youth engage to survive, subject them to a life of violence, high risk sex, prostitution, STDs and AIDS, substance abuse and criminality (Kurtz et al., 1991). The Portage Foundation (1993: 8) reports that, "most respondents indicated that drug use permeated the culture of the street and was responsible for a great deal of violence, theft, criminal activity and violations of 'friendships' among street peers."

Whitbeck and Simons (1990) explain how the routine behaviours of street youth render them vulnerable to criminal attack. The street youth they sampled reported being robbed, sexually assaulted and threatened and/or assaulted with a weapon. Levine Powers et al. (1990) add to this list of risks suicide, murder and drug overdose. Given the obvious dangers, the youth fail to see any alternatives to living on the street (Michaud, 1988).

The involvement in illegal activities often results in conflict with the criminal justice system and the beginning of what Michaud has termed a "revolving door of youth containment, arrests, apprehensions and foster or group home placements" (1988: 1). Similarly, Caputo and his colleagues (1994a: 22) refer to the, "revolving door syndrome" as the repeated

processing of young people by police and the courts. Many youth lose respect for the youth justice system as a result of their experiences with it.

Kufeldt and Nimmo (1987) found that 53% of the runners in their sample were from child welfare facilities. Justice and Duncan's 1976 American study provides evidence to support two relationships: the first being that contact with the juvenile justice system will increase the street youth's probability of engaging in further delinquent behaviour; and the second that confinement in a juvenile institution will increase the probability of the youth's involvement with drug abuse. The criminal justice system, thus, becomes an institution in which young people may gain further knowledge of the street lifestyle. Levine Powers et al. (1990) claim that the criminal justice system is overwhelmed and as a consequence, victimized youth are at risk of being exposed to those involved in more serious criminal behaviour.

Within the broader realm, participation in street culture leads to many social consequences, such as acquiring a deviant label from and being rejected by members of the mainstream. For example, The Portage Foundation (1993) found street youth to be marginalized members of society. This marginalization is, in part, a result of a general ignorance across society surrounding the problems that have led young people to the street. With respect to street culture, they explain "these coping mechanisms are viewed by the wider community as distasteful, disrespectful and rebellious, which further perpetuates the public's image

of street youth as losers" (1993: 5). Consequently, they found that this general ignorance across society often facilitates further street youth involvement with the criminal justice system by pressuring authorities to impose criminal sanctions on street youth to clean up the community.

2.4 Responses Of The Youth Service System

Aside from identifying the antecedents and consequences of being on the street, studies have also been concerned, either critically (Kufeldt and Nimmo, 1987; Michaud, 1988) or informatively (Adams et al., 1985; Johnson and Carter, 1980; Kurtz et al., 1991; Brannigan and Caputo, 1993), with programs and services which have been designed to respond to the phenomenon. Kufeldt and Nimmo (1987) briefly introduce their readers to some of the problems that can occur with services and programs that focus on helping young people. Their argument is that inadequate services and programs contribute to the spiral of abuse and neglect. As an example, they examine child welfare services, which have been developed to respond to the dysfunctional family, and state that they do not always meet the needs of children. They argue that service providers compound the inadequacy of services by developing 'professionalized' descriptions of needs. Finally, the lack of services and programs helping street youth leave the streets and deal with their troubled lives makes it difficult for them to re-integrate into mainstream society.

Unlike Kufeldt and Nimmo, Adams et al. (1985) based on the findings of their research argue for secondary preventative measures to deal with the family problems which they have identified as the primary source of street youths' problems. They suggest that preventative programs should include the total family to reduce communication problems, parent-child conflict and stress. Further recommendations include: training programs for working with 'difficult' adolescents; positive peer counselling and social competence and friendship training for runaway and throwaway youth; and individual counselling efforts designed to help easily frustrated and more impulsive adolescents to control their impulses.

Similarly, Johnson and Carter (1980) argue for a preventative type of response. They identified rejection as being the primary cause for running away behaviour. Their argument is that youth are rejected by their families and in turn grow to reject themselves. "A cure for running away and for other forms of delinquency rooted in rejection and alienation, requires that communities creatively harness youthful vitality in service of meaningful goals" (1980: 457). Thus, they suggest that youth must be provided with options and choices in order for them to become honest or better yet "productive" law-abiding members of the community. They state that the justice system, particularly its correctional arm, can have a constructive role in the interplay of youth and society, however, they caution against using penal institutions as part of the community's response.

Unlike the studies mentioned above, Kurtz and his colleagues (1991) identified the need for various services and programs to work simultaneously in dealing with the diverse group of troubled youth. They call it a "continuum of care" and argue that "services should build on each other, from crisis intervention and intensive home based intervention to intermediate and long-term residential programs" (1991: 313). The programs must include the following: they must repair the damage of abuse, rejection and poverty and build new skills for employment and for positive relationships; they must be flexible and forgiving; and they must be organized to allow these youth to return again and again.

Brannigan and Caputo (1993) describe such a continuum of services. Based on a pilot study conducted in Calgary in 1992, Brannigan and Caputo (1993: 146-154) identified a continuum of services that included prevention, crisis intervention, maintenance and transition services. At one end of the continuum, one finds services that are preventative in nature. The preventative programs are broad in scope and may be aimed at all adolescents. However, the programs that are aimed specifically at the runaway and street youth population may include, "those that provide information and counselling about the available services and may extend into the area of providing condoms or needle exchange services to persons engaged in high risk activities" (1993: 148). Moving along the continuum, one finds crisis intervention programs. These programs are designed to respond to the young person's immediate

problems either by attempting to stabilize the distressed young person or by providing shelter in a short-term, emergency safehouse. Further along the continuum can be found maintenance programs. These are programs that are designed to meet the ongoing needs of runaways and street youth. They provide, " . . . money, shelter, clothing, transportation, emotional support and a variety of other social services including legal and medical services" (1993: 148). Towards the opposite end of the continuum, one finds transitional programs which are designed to assist young people in making the transition from the street to mainstream society. These programs include, "life skills training, special educational services and employment programs" (1993: 149).

Concerns regarding programs and services designed to help street youth leave the streets were raised by Michaud (1988). In arguing for a multi-service approach, she explains the need for more transitional services and programs for entrenched street youth. Michaud suggests that programs and services which aim to help street youth off the streets must appreciate the following: the problems that street youth have in seeking and accepting help; in order for street youth to abandon their 'survival systems', they need the creation and gradual integration into an equally effective system; specialized services should provide long-term and individualized treatment and must address the damage done to children who are processed through the criminal justice system; and finally, as marginalized members of society, street youth require representation when solutions are developed.

The Portage Foundation (1993: iv) found that most of the youth they interviewed insisted that they had goals for the future which involved leaving the street life behind and re-integrating into the mainstream. However, many of the young people expressed fear over the idea of adopting a traditional lifestyle. Fear appeared to evolve from their uncertainty regarding their ability to cope in mainstream society. This finding, in conjunction with Michaud's recommendations, directs our attention to the importance of transitional programs. Specifically, more research focussing on the young people's transition to the mainstream must be conducted prior to developing further transitional programs.

3.0 Theoretical Framework

The previous chapter reviewed the related literature on runaway and street youth. The aim was to identify and examine specific issues, such as antecedents to leaving, street culture, consequences to being on the street and responses of the youth service system, in order to provide a broader picture of the runaway and street youth phenomenon.

One of the concerns that came out of the literature review surrounded the lack of research examining the transition off the street. The intention of this thesis was to examine the transition that street youth go through in re-entering mainstream society. The purpose of this chapter is to present the theoretical framework from which the hypothetical assumptions guiding this research were derived. There are two main assumptions informing this study. These include: the transition to the mainstream, like the transition to the street, is a social process that includes a change in identity; and there are factors influencing and/or inhibiting identity change throughout the transition process.

These assumptions are predicated on two studies; "The Socialization of Street Children: The Development and Transformation of Identities" (Visano, 1990) and Kids Who Runaway (Palenski, 1984). Both studies examined the process which may lead young people, who have prematurely left home, to become entrenched in street culture.

Salient features of these studies include linking antecedents, street culture and consequences of being on the street, to a larger social process which may lead to the development and acquisition of a deviant identity.

According to Haas and Shaffir (1978: 10) the family, the peer group, the mass media and the educational system are all agents that are important to the socialization of the young. Working within the symbolic interactionist tradition, Visano (1990) and Palenski (1984) respectively examined the role that these agents, with the exception of the mass media, have on the socialization of street youth and runaways in general, and on their identities in particular. While the two studies examined the social process leading to the street, they provide valuable insights from which we can begin to conceptualize the transition to mainstream society.

3.1 Socialization And Symbolic Interactionism

Socialization, according to Sewell (1970: 566) is, "the process by which individuals selectively acquire the skills, knowledge, attitudes, values and motives current in the groups of which they are or will become members." Socialization, in accordance with the symbolic interactionist perspective, is dependent on human interaction or communication. The importance of interaction rests in the fact that human behaviour is thought of, "as a process in which humans act toward and in response to objects depending on the meaning of those objects" (Haas and Shaffir, 1978: 4). The meanings given to objects, the language symbols used to describe the

objects and our actions toward them evolve out of the context of social interaction.

In addition to emphasizing social interactions and negotiations, Berg (1989) suggests that symbolic interactionists equally emphasize the "empathic" role-taking between human beings. Hale (1990: 31) states, "the patterns of behaviour that people come to interpret as roles are actively created and negotiated, sustained or abandoned in on-going interaction."

Denzin (1972: 291) reminds us that symbolic interactionists attempt to answer the question, "How do selves develop out of the interaction process?" Haas and Shaffir (1978: 12) explain that a key tenet of the symbolic interactionist approach is the notion that human beings have a self. Human beings can be the object of their own actions by acting towards themselves as they might act towards others, or as they imagine others act toward them.

George H. Mead (1934) argued that an individual is not born with a self. Rather, the self has a development; it arises in the process of social experience and activity. The self, according to Mead, "develops in the given individual as a result of his [sic] relations to that process as a whole and to other individuals within that process" (1934: 135). He further explains that the self has a reflexive nature, thus, allowing it to be both subject and object. The objective element of the self, the "me," is what

Mead referred to as the social self, while the "I" is the subjective part of the self which is aware of the social "me." Mead (1934: 175) states, "the 'I' is the response of the organism to the attitudes of others which one himself [sic] assumes. The attitudes of others constitute the organized 'me,' and then one reacts toward that as an 'I'."

Stone's (1970: 394-414) discussion of the self adds to Mead's work by identifying another dimension of interaction. Stone explains that social interactions must be broken down into two analytic components of process; appearance and discourse. Appearance is the phase of the social interaction which establishes identifications of the participants. It is communicated by such non-verbal symbols as gestures, grooming, clothing and location. Discourse is conceptualized as the text of the transaction and is communicated by verbal symbolism (p. 397). Thus, personal appearance arouses challenges and validations of the self. Stone states:

In response to his [sic] clothes, the wearer was cast as a social object -- a "me" -- or, as we shall say, given some identity. A person's dress also imbued him [sic] with attitudes by arousing others' anticipations of his [sic] conduct as well as assisting the mobilization of his [sic] own activity (1970: 398).

Consequently, an individual's identity is formed or shaped when he or she is situated as a social object. "To situate the person as a social object is to bring him [sic] together with other objects so situated, and, at the same time to set him [sic] apart from still other objects" (Stone, 1970: 399). Thus, self-identity is forged and validated through the interactional

process. Identities are non-static and may be altered and refined, disrupted and negotiated as individuals enter and leave social relations (Haas and Shaffir, 1978: 17).

In accounting for identity, what we have arrived at is a refined understanding of the socialization process that is described by Visano as follows:

Socialization refers to an interactive process of transmitting and learning 'acceptable' ways of acting, interpreting and feeling. This process is viewed as occupying a central place in the lives of children. Sociologists analyze socialization as an important clue to determining how children construct their identities, interpretations and social relations (1990: 139).

3.2 Becoming A Street Youth

In the previous chapter we reviewed some factors that "push" young people out of conventional society and "pull" them towards what they perceive to be the more attractive alternative provided by the street. Both Visano (1990) and Palenski (1984) incorporate these factors into a conceptual model which they used to examine the development of a street youth identity. Both researchers used the notion of "career" to examine the process of identity change. Briefly, each study identifies a series of stages and contingencies which are important to a young person new to the street. However, the studies have slightly different foci and, consequently, the researchers identify different stages and contingencies

of the process. Palenski placed a greater emphasis on examining pre-street conditions and focussed on the runaway role and runaway identity. Conversely, Visano examined the socializing influences of the street and their impact on the development of a street youth identity. Visano went one stage further than Palenski by identifying and explaining some of the factors surrounding disengagement from the street.

While the theoretical contributions of a career model and the importance of a disengagement stage will be discussed in the next section, it is important to note that the present study places greater reliance on Visano's research for several reasons including: Visano focuses on street youth and thus, broadens the scope of his analysis by examining the interaction that takes place between young people new to the street and diverse members of the street youth population; Visano specifically states which contingencies are important to a street youth's career and illustrates their interdependence; and similar to the present study, Visano collected his data in Canada, thus allowing comparisons to be made between his findings and the findings reported in this study.

In tracing the process that leads to a street youth identity, Visano begins with a discussion of antecedent conditions and their relationship to the young person who has decided to 'hit the street.' Visano illustrates the dual nature of these pre-entry conditions. Young people troubled by the experiences at home and at school begin searching for alternatives. The "pulling" forces of the street present images of freedom and adventure to

these young people which they find more attractive. These perceptions help young people to reinterpret their troubled situations. Young people argue that they were "pushed" out of their homes because of intolerable and uncontrollable situations (Visano, 1990: 145). Many state that they had to turn to the street because they lacked other alternatives (Ibid).

Once on the street, Visano explains how the antecedent conditions serve an alternate purpose. Unfavourable conditions of the past are used to define current conditions as favourable. In this respect, antecedent conditions, including negative experiences come to symbolize "membership badges" which street youth flash to one another. These badges become the basis on which street youth claim that they have paid their dues and belong on the street. Moreover, they establish a foundation or common ground on which new friendships can be developed.

Friendships are conducive to a street youth's survival. Visano states that the young person new to the street is faced with the problem of being on the street but not of it. Newcomers are marginal members of both conventional society and the street environment. Despite partially relinquishing former cultural traditions, they have not won acceptance in the culture toward which they are beginning to drift. According to Visano, marginality becomes their key to identity transformation. This dislocation from mainstream society renders newcomers susceptible to street socialization. "Paradoxically, then, the street kid faces the identity

problem of developing an ongoing creation of self that is more compatible with this newly discovered environment" (Visano, 1990: 150).

The marginal nature of the newcomer facilitates the seeking out of street relations. This finding led Visano to identify two types of newcomers; neophyte street transients and street youth who are new to street associations. He explains, "In general, newcomers to the street are new group members. But new group members are not necessarily newcomers to the street scene" (Visano, p. 152). The marginalized newcomer may view street relations as a possible solution to the problems encountered with being a solitary street transient. Thus, newcomers develop street relations by seeking out seasoned street youth in some of the typical places that they frequent. Visano found seasoned street youth hanging-out in arcades, parks, coffee-shops, hostels and on street corners.

Relationship bonds between newcomers and seasoned street youth are developed through the course of interaction. "The structure of street relations is a contingency that shapes newcomers' self-image as well as their understanding of situational difficulties" (Visano, p. 151). Newcomers to a group learn their role through exposure to various group activities. During these episodes of exposure, identities are disclosed and receptivities of others are tested. Being publicly accepted is also an important contingency which according to Visano is an outcome of this "apprenticeship" type of relationship. "Eventually, aspirants are invited to

tag along and participate in unskilled tasks, the completion of which leads to acceptance" (p. 152).

The dynamics of the apprenticeship relationship include a seasoned street youth who sponsors the newcomer to the group. However prior to sponsoring a newcomer, Visano explains that the seasoned street youth will assess the newcomer by testing his or her loyalties and determining his or her levels of naivete. If the newcomer passes the assessment, the seasoned street youth will recommend him or her to other group members and will serve as a source of knowledge about general situational uncertainties. Thus, included within the apprenticeship relationship is the theme of dependency.

The theme of dependency that arises from street relations consists of newcomers coming to depend on their sponsors, to provide them with a street education, while sponsors depend on the assistance of their apprentices to help them earn money. In this respect, Visano explains how both newcomers and sponsors are motivated by personal gain. Newcomers are promised money, companionship and fun in exchange for their services, which include: posing as prostitutes and luring clients into an area where other street youth wait to "roll" (rob) the client; acting as look-outs; or becoming involved in the drug and/or sex trades.

In addition to the benefits that come from apprenticeship relations, street relations provide the newcomer with an opportunity to acquire a

street perspective. Visano explains that, "the street offers newcomers a collective identity, a reference group from which to develop a valued identity" (p. 154). However, the development of a new identity or a street youth identity requires the learning of a street perspective which, Visano states, consists of an ethos of individualism, a theme of survival and a game perspective.

The theme of individualism is predominant on the street. The notion that one must always look out for oneself is reinforced even within street groups. Individualism is related to the theme of survival. A street youth's survival depends on two factors: money and street wisdom. While money is viewed as a necessary requirement for survival, a powerful and positive reward and a justification for action, street wisdom provides the young person with the skills that are necessary to obtain money. For example, Visano explains how newcomers are taught to be prepared to take advantage of, or seize upon any opportunity that offers a fast buck. Street wisdom also prepares the newcomer for anticipated violence which is part of the lifestyle. According to Visano, street youth consider fighting to be a legitimate technique for resolving disputes on the street. Thus newcomers must be prepared to defend themselves at all times.

A game-oriented perspective is part of street youths' coping strategies. According to Visano, "games make apprenticeship more exciting and pleasurable and are useful in sustaining the involvement of

newcomers with more seasoned kids" (p. 155). Some of the activities they participate in can be viewed as both a means of making money as well as a form of entertainment. In addition to income and entertainment, the game perspective serves an alternative function. Visano states that the game serves to protect identity against possible spoilage by providing a number of masks which can be utilized in various encounters. For example, newcomers learn to play games with social workers by offering them hard luck stories and with police by presenting themselves as victims exploited by adults.

Visano concludes his research by identifying the final stage in this process, disengagement. He proceeds with a discussion of some of the factors surrounding a street youth's disengagement from the lifestyle. The disengagement stage will be discussed below in greater detail.

3.3 The Career Model

A fruitful analytic device for examining socialization is the concept of career. Traditionally, it has been used to investigate occupations or deviant behaviour (Hughes, 1958; Becker, 1963). A career is the, "movement of individuals through the structure of a society. The various stages signal people's changing status and identity and enable them to see themselves as moving along a continuum" (Haas and Shaffir, 1978: 19). Both Hughes (1958) and Goffman (1961) find value in its two-sidedness. As Goffman (1961: 127) states, "one side is linked to internal matters held

dearly and closely such as image of self and felt identity; the other side concerns official position, jural relations and style of life and is part of a publicly acceptable institutional complex." Visano (1990: 144) informs his readers of the interdependency of career, socialization and identity for street youth.

Becker (1963) employed the concept of career in his research on deviant behaviour. His research on the process of becoming a marijuana user seeks to understand the sequence of changes in attitude and experiences which lead to the use of marijuana for pleasure. Becker describes the social process which leads to the construction and acquisition of a deviant identity. He refers to these deviants as being "outsiders." Specifically, they are people who are looked on as "deviants" or "problems" for the greater society. Their actions are outside the ordinary routines of ordinary people. Thus, for Becker, deviance is socially manufactured and not the consequence of personality traits or motivations. He states, "social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labelling them as outsiders" (1963: 9).

Various features of the concept of career, stages and contingencies, are important in the socialization process. Becker identified three stages or turning points in the career of the marijuana user: the beginner; the occasional user; and regular user. Palenski (1984) and Visano (1990) have identified similar stages in their respective studies on street youth.

For example, Palenski explains that a runaway career includes an unsettling stage, an exploratory stage and a routinization stage. Alternatively, Visano collapses the three stages into two and identifies a third stage in the street youth's career. According to Visano, the stages in the street youth's career include: getting connected, staying connected and disengagement.

Becker argued that each stage in the career of a marijuana user represents a distinct shift in the actor's relation to the social controls of the larger society and to those of the subculture in which marijuana use is found (1963: 61). According to Strauss, turning points or stages are markers of progression or retrogression in a social process. "A change in your relations with others is often so mundane, so gradual that it passes virtually unnoticed. Some incident is needed to bring home to you the extent of the shift" (1969: 93). Visano (1990: 143) argues that these career shifts signal new evaluations of the self and others, of events and objects. In his research on outlaw-bikers, Daniel Wolf provides a clear illustration of a particular turning point in his own career as a participant-observer of a specific out-law biker gang. He explains:

Gradually my status changed from being a 'biker' with a familiar face to a 'friend of the club.' There were no formal announcements. Tiny just yelled across at me one afternoon while we were starting up our bikes, 'Hey Coyote!' . . . This was in reference to the Coyote skin I had taken to wearing over my helmet. Wee Albert looked at me, grinned and said 'that's it, Coyote. From now on that'll be your club name.' Most of the patch holders had club names These names are reminders

of club association. More important, they separate the individual from his past; giving him the opportunity to build a new persona in terms of group valued traits (1991: 17).

Wolf's explanation of the symbolic meaning of a club name directs our attention to another important feature of the career model, namely "career contingencies." According to Becker, "career contingencies" are, "those factors on which mobility from one position to another depends. Career contingencies include both objective facts of social structure and changes in the perspectives, motivations and desires of the individual" (1963: 24). Contingencies, as Visano (1990: 143) suggests, do not necessarily operate concurrently. They may be important to the actor during different stages of commitment to a career. At each stage, there are a variety of tightly interwoven contingencies which operate and assume different meanings. "The nature of these contingencies is significant in affecting the next stage actors will pursue in advancing, maintaining or abandoning their careers" (Ibid: 144).

3.4 Career Stages And Progression

The concept of career has been used to explore a variety of diverse deviant¹ behaviours. For example, Degher and Hughes (1991) examined

¹ The terms "deviant" and "outsiders" are used to refer to various behaviours or activities that are or may have at one time been considered non-mainstream. However, the author of this study recognizes that some of the behaviours or activities may currently be viewed as mainstream.

obesity while Sawchuk (1974) investigated homosexuals and homosexual communities. As was mentioned above, Visano (1990) employed the use of the career model to examine street socialization. These studies will be used to illustrate the continuous process of the career model. In this respect, the significance of these studies lies not with who is being labelled an "outsider" but with the focus and outcome of each particular study.

Degher and Hughes (1991) focused their research on the internal and external features of the identity change process for people who possess certain objective status characteristics, specifically the obese. Briefly, they argue that the identity change process consists of two parts: the internal and the external components. The internal part, which consists of "recognizing" that one is obese and "placing" or identifying a new status, is triggered and mediated through status cues. Status cues are career contingencies and they are said to exist in the external environment. "Recognition" occurs in response to status cues. "The self-evidentiality of a status will influence the type of cues which play the most prominent role in identity change" (p. 396).

Degher and Hughes collected their data in an organization specifically designed to help people lose weight. Their research sheds some light on the importance of "identity transformation organizations" (Greil and Rudy, 1984). Specifically, they argue that an overweight person must internalize an overweight identity before he or she can proceed with losing weight. Weight loss can only occur once the

overweight person "recognizes" that he or she is overweight. According to Mead (1934: 171):

Our bodies are parts of our environment; and it is possible for the individual to experience and be conscious of his [sic] body, and of bodily sensations, without being conscious or aware of himself [sic] -- without, in other words, taking the attitude of the other toward himself [sic].

Thus, the process leading to normality begins with the acquisition of a deviant identity and can be conceptualized in a similar manner. Degher and Hughes state that this identity change process can operate generically. "That is, it is not only applicable to the 'identity change' from 'normal' to a 'deviant' identity, but can encompass the reverse process as well" (p. 394).

Sawchuk's (1974) research on homosexual careers differs slightly from the obesity research conducted by Degher and Hughes (1991). The difference lies not in the subject matter but in the fact that Sawchuk focused his research on two stages or turning points: the process by which an individual comes to identify himself as a homosexual; and the process by which an individual becomes socialized and integrated into a homosexual community.

Similar to Degher and Hughes, Sawchuk argues that the acquisition of a new identity precedes entrance and participation, in this case, into a homosexual community. Examining the homosexual in the homosexual community allows Sawchuk to take his research one step further than

Degher and Hughes. The term community, according to Sawchuk, refers to, "a community of understanding involving shared perspectives and expectations and arising out of the continuing shared activity and interaction of members and their common commitment" (p. 233).

Entrance into a homosexual community is referred to as "coming out" and begins when the individual makes his/her homosexual identification public in the presence of other homosexuals. The decision to "come out" is reflective of the individual's determination to manage his/her identity by participating in the organized group life of fellow homosexuals. This decision marks the beginning of a process of socialization, whereby the individual's homosexual identification is reinforced by various activities, people, places, events and beliefs that compose the homosexual community. Sawchuk states that this process results in a socialized member who, in varying degrees, identifies with the homosexual community and is subject to its norms, values and contingencies.

Theoretically, Visano's study is similar to Sawchuk's in that he focuses on the socialization process. However, Visano was able to take the analysis of the socialization process one stage further than Sawchuk. Visano argues that there are three stages in this process, the first two being the "getting connected" and "staying connected" stages. In addition to these stages there are three important career contingencies which include: the constituting skills of actors; the reactions of others; and self-identity. Constituting skills of actors refers to the interpersonal skills which one

must learn to ensure continued participation in a career. These skills include, "a stock of beliefs, values and ways of acting" (p. 143). The reactions of others refer to the reactions from a social audience consisting of "others" who are in similar circumstances. In attempting to become "one of them," the actor seeks affirmation from this social audience. "By attending to the reactions of others, the actor learns favourable definitions of experience and of self that, in turn, guide new strategies of interactions" (p. 143). The young person new to the streets acquires a role by interpreting the role and reactions of other street youth. Self-identity refers to the identity that the young person establishes and situates for the self at different stages. Visano states that movement within a career is dependent on the methods the young person uses to establish and sustain identity, the strategies used to ensure recognition and acceptance of self and the ways that the young person seeks out relationships that are supportive of prior expectations.

Visano's argument differs from Sawchuk's in two principle ways. First, unlike a homosexual who seeks a homosexual community in order to manage his/her homosexual identity, Visano is not suggesting that socialization within the street community is a means of managing a pre-existing identity. Rather, Visano argues that young people new to the street employ their pre-street experiences when attempting to gain entrance into street culture, into the street socialization process, by presenting themselves as victims of conflict, abuse, etc. It is through street socialization that young people develop street youth identities. A second

difference lies in the fact that Visano takes the process one step further by identifying a disengagement stage. While informing his readers that some street youth eventually leave the street lifestyle, Visano provides a point of departure for future research by explaining some of the factors surrounding the disengagement stage.

According to Visano, ". . . disconnecting occurs when actors subjectively abandon their involvements for some significant period of time" (1990: 156). Visano explains that disengagement is a complex process which requires a series of ongoing evaluations and adjustments and includes an identity change. Similarly, Strauss (1969: 92) states; " . . . the transformation of perception is irreversible; once having changed there is no going back. One can look back, but he [sic] can evaluate only from his [sic] new status." Thus, a street youth who has become disenchanted with street life and decides to disengage begins restructuring the self. However, Visano states that abandoning the street lifestyle is a difficult task for many street youth. Identity transformation requires help from significant others who are not on the street. "Successful disengagement involves the development of close bonds with contacts outside of the street" (1990: 157). Visano also found that solitary street transients have an easier time disengaging.

Disengagement from the street as a career turning point can be likened to what Lofland (1969) has termed "disorientation." For the deviant actor, disorientation serves to question the morality and utility of

his or her deviant status. Consequently, the actor may cease to view the deviant role, "as a valid or reasonable way to conceive oneself and organize one's life" (1969: 260). A theme that is consistent with disorientation is that of "hitting bottom" (Kurtz, 1982; Blumberg, 1977). This is a common experience among street youth who want to leave the street lifestyle.

The theme of "hitting bottom" is commonly found in the literature on substance abuse and refers to a specific vulnerable period in the abuser's career. This period of vulnerability usually occurs when service providers attempt to help substance abusers help themselves; it is the point at which substance abusers are susceptible to change. The individual who "hits bottom" is typically remorseful, full of shame and guilt and believes that he or she has reached the end of the line (Lofland, 1969). Alcoholics typically stop drinking and begin recovering when the harmful consequences of their drinking begin to outweigh the benefits (Herscovitch, 1989).

Lofland states that while disorientation may be a turning point, it is not necessarily facilitative of escalation to a normal identity. Moreover, with respect to substance abusers, Lofland states that two or more experiences of "hitting bottom" are required to bring the substance abuser to the point of requisite "vulnerability" (1969: 252). Thus, while disengagement is a turning point in a deviant's career, it is not the only stage in the transition to normality. For example, Herscovitch states that

an alcoholic trying to achieve sobriety must survive a 1 to 2 year transition which consists of first becoming abstinent and then a re-orientating from a lifestyle of drinking to a lifestyle of sobriety. Furthermore, the sober alcoholic must continuously lead a lifestyle and maintain an attitude which prevents a loss of sobriety (1989: 86).

3.5 The Transition To The Mainstream

Very little research has examined the way in which young people make the transition off the street. In order to address this question, we can borrow from the existing literature on transitions. Studies, for example, on substance abuse and dieting, while not related specifically to street youth, have much in common with making lifestyle transitions. The common theme running through this research is identity change.

Typically, the identity change process takes place within formal organizations which have been characterized as Identity Transformation Organizations (ITOs) (Greil and Rudy, 1984). Greil and Rudy (1984: 260) state, "such identity transformation organizations encourage their members to reorganize their behaviour, offer them new social roles to play, socialize them to new values and foster in them new modes of self conception." To achieve these goals, ITOs focus on the interaction process that takes place within formal groups consisting of others in similar circumstances (English, 1993; Greil and Rudy, 1984; Laslett and Warren, 1975). Thus, an examination of the nature of many of these ITOs yields themes that are

consistent with a symbolic interactionist perspective. Themes such as identity models, new world-view and ideological hardware feature prominent in much of the existing transitions literature (English, 1993; Degher and Hughes, 1991; Greil and Rudy, 1988; Greil and Rudy, 1984; Kurtz, 1982; Blumberg, 1977; Laslett and Warren, 1975; Lofland, 1969) and a consideration of each will provide a better understanding of factors that can facilitate or inhibit identity change.

If one's beliefs and self-conceptions are in large part a function of the definitions of reality and of self made available by one's reference group, then it stands to reason that transformations of identity are likely to be accomplished by changes in the perspectives of one's reference others (Greil and Rudy, 1984: 262).

English (1993) examines the social factors in the dieter's world which have a significant impact on the degree of success he or she experiences. English explains how the obese, seeking to lose weight, are marginal members of both conventional and unconventional society. Their deviant statuses deny them full participation in the culture in which they wish to participate (mainstream society). A potential consequence is, what English refers to as, "social isolation." This notion of being socially isolated suggests that the marginalized member is in the mainstream but not of it. This is similar to street transients who have not become part of a street group. The marginal nature of their status creates many obstacles for them. While the street transient seeks out seasoned street members, obese individuals and substance abusers who have become disoriented with their current lifestyles join self-help groups where they meet others in similar

circumstances. It is in this context that the theme of "identity model" arises.

The term "identity model" was borrowed from Lofland's (1969: 268) research. The term refers to the members of the new reference group from which the disoriented deviant (the candidate) will acquire a new definition of self. Lofland explains that potential identity models derive legitimacy from their having travelled the same route as the new candidate. Thus, the candidate finds within this new reference group 'others' who were once themselves deviant. With such backgrounds, the identity models are living examples of the identity transformation that is possible. This creates, among other things, an atmosphere of understanding which is important to the new candidate or apprentice who experiences difficulties. The candidate may find strength and comfort in knowing that others were able to make the transition. Lofland states, "to be understood is to be not alone. To be understood is to have one or more others who also see things that way" (1969: 272).

Greil and Rudy (1984) discuss the nature of ITOs and state that ITOs encourage candidates to change reference groups. By ceasing to identify with an old reference group, the candidates bind themselves to another set of reference others who can provide social support for acceptance and maintenance of a new world-view. Further, they suggest that their research on the identity transformation process that takes place in Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) has, "shown that an important feature of

this process is the development in the prospective A.A. affiliate of close ties to and a feeling of identification with A.A. members" (1984: 262).

A.A. uses sponsors to help develop close personal ties between the candidates and their new reference group. Lofland (1969: 226) explains that sponsors are to take responsibility for new group members by trying to control their cravings or desires. The sponsor, in conjunction with other A.A. members, helps candidates control their lives by subjecting them to the A.A. perspective day and night. With time, new candidates become sponsors for future members joining the A.A. group. Kurtz (1982) explains that A.A. establishes a foundation for mutuality which entails a reciprocal relationship. Members get by giving and give by getting. New candidates allow others to help them and then eventually take on that role so that they help future candidates. Part of the recovery process entails helping others recover.

Laslett and Warren (1975) discuss the strategies employed by a weight loss clinic to help members protect themselves from the temptations encountered in daily life. The weight loss clinic in which they conducted their research used change agents who were themselves graduates of the program. The change agents lectured at weekly meetings and explained the variety of positive changes that accompanied their own personal weight loss. Specifically, they spoke of being the sparkling wit at parties, having more energy as well as having a greater ability to cope with life's vicissitudes. These individuals served as excellent identity models.

They stressed that these positive things would automatically follow from the transformation in lifestyle accompanying weight loss (p. 74). Laslett and Warren explain that all the lecturers and other organizational personnel, “. . . provide a vital symbol of identification for persons who believe that ‘no one ever loses weight and keeps it off’” (p. 77 - 78).

According to English (1993), the critical variables for many groups facing identity transformation appear to be the reactions of others, interaction with others and the degree to which the individual views the changes as positive. Identity models help to facilitate transformation by providing support to the new candidate during difficult times as well as by exemplifying the possibility of change. Identity models embody the new candidate's old and new lifestyle. Thus, they can relate to the candidate throughout the whole process. Moreover, identity models provide social support for acceptance and maintenance of a new world-view.

Candidates acquire a new world-view from their new reference groups. In a previous section, we noted Visano's (1990: 154) argument regarding the capacity of street relations to provide the newcomer with an opportunity to acquire a street perspective -- a new world-view. Similarly, through interacting with a new reference group, candidates acquire a valued group perspective or a new world-view. Blumberg sheds some light on the nature of a new world-view. He states that it is:

. . . the central governing set of beliefs or assertions which explain the predicament in which people find themselves, which provide a focus for the behaviour of those who subscribe

to this set of beliefs, which justify one set of practices rather than another, and which form the basis for the program advocated to others (1977: 2123).

While Blumberg was referring to the A.A. perspective, specifically the "Twelve Step" program which codifies the A.A. outlook and program (Greil and Rudy, 1984), his description of a new world-view applies to the perspectives of various self-help groups.

The candidate that acquires a new world-view also acquires a new vocabulary of motives, ideology and affiliation (Lofland, 1969). Lofland explains how the acquisition of a new world-view can signal transformation of identity. He argues that A.A. members develop a set of concepts that are discontinuous with their past. Transformed members speak of, among other things, "salvation," "the love of Christ," and "one day at a time" (1969: 289). In addition to developing a new vocabulary, the candidate must also develop skills which allow him or her to appreciate the value of their new selves. For example, English (1993: 239) suggests that a dieter's new world-view should include: learning how to make 'normal' conversation and how to walk and present oneself as a thin person; learning how to accept responsibility for life's slings and arrows; social skills training, relationship training and assertiveness training; and basic sex education, marriage counselling and family therapy. Laslett and Warren (1975) explain how members of the specific dieting clinic were encouraged to quarantine themselves from the surrounding temptations of their everyday lives by mentally disassociating themselves from civilians who were pictured as dedicated to the members' failure. The weight loss

clinic also stressed that weight loss and weight loss maintenance could only be achieved with life time participation in the organization. While this was viewed as a factor which facilitated change, it could also be viewed as an inhibitor of change. A life time commitment to a new reference group may be unrealistic. A commitment of this nature precludes any personal changes other than those stressed by the organization. It assumes that the individual's life will constantly revolve around the organization.

Many ITOs recognize that candidates will face obstacles during and after the identity change process. Some of the obstacles include challenges from others outside the candidate's new reference group. These challenges may impede the candidate's commitment to his or her new world-view. Consequently, ITOs employ commitment mechanisms in the form of 'ideological hardware' to help candidates during difficult times.

Lofland (1969: 245 - 247) describes the way in which A.A. members make use of 'ideological hardware' as a means of carrying the group with them even when they leave its confines. For example, wallet size cards with the 'twelve steps' printed on them are distributed to members. A.A. also produces placards, signs, books, magazines and a variety of leaflets on specialized topics.

Greil and Rudy (1984: 267) state that some formal self-help groups prescribe specific modes of dress or behaviour that symbolize, for

members and others, the difference between those who belong and those who do not. One of the expressive functions of adornment and clothing is to express group affiliation or the values and standards of the group (Polhemus and Procter, 1978: 11). However, it is not always possible to achieve this social boundary. Rather than cut candidates off from reference others, Greil and Rudy explain how ITOs attempt to bring them into the fold. For example, they state, ". . . A.A.'s satellite organizations like Alanon and Alateen may function to unite the prospective affiliate's new reference group with previous reference groups by initiating his or her significant others into the A.A. world-view" (1984: 266).

Laslett and Warren (1975: 77) focus on commitment mechanisms that foster an in-group sentiment. They identify organizational rituals which include: graduation ceremonies from the three phases of the program; special pins; certificates of merit; semi-public weekly weighings of each member; and group encouragement, through applause, for members that had lost weight or were trying.

While ideological hardware, in the context of ITOs, refers to commitment mechanisms, when taken out of the ITO context it can refer to what Rubin et al. (1993) have identified as 'personal definitional rites.' They state that these rites are carried out by individuals undergoing an identity change and accomplish the change rather than merely symbolizing it

Rubin et al. (1993) refer to case studies of formerly obese individuals who medically underwent a process of drastic weight loss and rid themselves of the stigma of being fat. They state:

In the case of these patients, once the results of the surgery become more evident, the question is not just of physical adjustment, but primarily of social adjustment: a new personal and social identity. This adjustment is accomplished by private rites that help the person cross the barrier into the normal world (p. 6-7).

Since the physical transformation from fat to thin occurred by means of an operation, the formerly obese people did not require the assistance of a formal self-help group. However, despite having changed their physical appearance, the operation itself did not change their identities. Rubin et al. explain how the identity change process occurred as a result of both self- and social-ratification; internalizing the new self combined with receiving social confirmation for the new self. In other words, identity change was accomplished once the formerly obese people internalized a "thin" identity and had this new identity affirmed by a group of others.

Clothing and mirrors are examples of ideological hardware which can strengthen individuals' perceptions of their new self. ". . . [H]ere individuals see themselves through a new mirror -- 'the mirror' of new clothing and a truly new image in a real mirror" (p.7). The formerly obese's ability to purchase normal-sized clothes as well as their ability to try clothes on in a store, serve to remove the "badge of shame" that was attached to their previous identity.

Alone and in front of a mirror, Rubin et al. state that the formerly obese try on old clothes to strengthen their conceptions of their new self. This mirror reflects the dialectical relationship between the old and new self and can only be settled when the formerly obese receive social ratification. "Regardless of whether the identity change is abrupt or gradual, . . . social approval to establish the new identity will be forthcoming so long as the identity that we attribute to ourselves corresponds with that which others attribute to us" (p. 1). Social-ratification, according to Rubin et al., is a retrospective process which involves a confrontation between the present and the past. "The individuals who lose weight transmit a message that requires immediate feedback" (p. 13). Ideological hardware used to achieve social-ratification include: telling stories about the past; showing old pictures; and identification tests.

Rubin and his colleagues found that during social events, the former obese reveal their past to strangers, through stories of when they were fat or by showing them old pictures, in order to gain recognition for their success. It was also common, at social gatherings, for those who had been obese to trick friends and strangers that had not yet seen them in their thinness. "Everyone emphasized the 'fun' aspect of not being recognized and the renewed enjoyment in each identification test" (p. 13). Thus, Rubin et al. state that the objective fact of losing the weight was not

important until it received social recognition. Thus, ideological hardware is used to achieve self- and social-ratification.

The concepts of: identity models, new world-view and ideological hardware are interdependent and have also been discussed in the previous section, in the context of developing a deviant identity. At this juncture, we can begin to speculate as to how a street youth might begin to make the transition to the mainstream. As was mentioned above, Degher and Hughes (1991) indicated that the process leading back to a normal identity is conceptually similar to the process leading to a deviant identity. Thus, theoretically, Visano's "getting connected" and "staying connected" stages can apply to the transition back to mainstream society. In this respect, "getting connected" refers to the young person seeking out a new reference group consisting of seasoned members of mainstream society, while "staying connected" suggests the development of a mainstream perspective. Briefly, a "mainstream perspective" refers to belonging to a mainstream reference group, engaging in socially acceptable behaviour, such as going to school or having a job, and having a stable living situation.

3.6 Discussion

In this chapter, we have reviewed several key concepts derived from the literature, which are instrumental to this study. These concepts

include: socialization, career, and identity. According to Visano (1990: 144), these three concepts are interdependent.

As a multi-faceted concept, identity is not easily understood. Symbolic interactionists argue that identity consists of our subjective definitions of self, who and what we are, in conjunction with the objective facts of our social reality, or our societal position or roles. Moreover, symbolic interactionists argue that we are not born with an identity, rather our identities are forged, maintained and validated in the course of interacting with others.

Typically, the significant others that tend to have the greatest impact on our self-conceptions are members of our reference groups. The term reference group is used loosely to refer to the group of people whom we seek to interact with and possibly emulate. Reference groups may be large or small, formal or informal, known or unknown. Regardless of their social construction, they offer a collective identity from which one can obtain a valued self-identity.

It is from one's reference group that an individual acquires the skills necessary to participate in the group. In essence, an individual both acquires and learns to perform his or her societal role from his or her reference group. However, prior to adjusting their self-conceptions to meet that of their reference groups, individuals seek affirmation from their reference groups.

Affirmation from a group of significant others is connected to the reflexive nature of the self (Mead, 1934). The responses or attitudes of others constitute the individual's objective element of the self, the "me," while the subjective element of the self, the "I," internalizes the social self. In simple terms, to receive affirmation from a reference group suggests that, "they see 'me' as one of them and, therefore, 'I' must be one of them." In this way, individuals readjust their conception of self according to their interpretations of the attitudes of others.

Included within the interaction that takes place between the individual and his or her reference group is the concept of appearance. Appearance is the phase of the social interaction process which includes the identification of the participants as members of a reference group. As such, appearance is linked to the social self or the "me" (Stone, 1970). Appearance, specifically adornment, allows us to identify ourselves as part of a social collective by expressing group affiliation or the values and standards of the group. In this respect, clothing and adornment may communicate "I'm one of us" (Polhemus and Procter, 1978).

The interactional process which I have attempted to explain is commonly known as socialization. At this juncture, it is important to understand that we are not born with identities. Rather, socialization or identity development begins after birth. The identities that we develop in the early stages of our lives are typically shaped by family, school and

peers. However, despite our early socializing influences, our identities are not static; they are subject to constant challenge, change and/or readjustment. Generally, our identities change or are re-developed with every major change in our lives since new reference groups usually follow life changes. For example, students embarking on a new career will begin to associate with others in similar careers. Career changes foster reference group changes, just as a change in marital status is accompanied by a change in reference group.

4.0 Methodology

The methodological strategy employed in this study consists of a two-pronged approach. Participant observation was undertaken at a drop-in centre and a youth hostel, both of which were frequented by young people currently on the street. The information obtained from participant observation was used to design an in-depth semi-structured interview schedule, with open and close ended questions. The interview schedule was then administered to a sample of former street youth.

Participant observation took place from June of 1994 to February of 1995 in the city of Ottawa as well as in several towns in the Ottawa Valley. This strategy was made possible by an individual who was conducting a project involving high-risk youth in the Ottawa Valley. He agreed to be my "gatekeeper" (Whyte, 1993; Berg, 1989) and began introducing me to a number of street youth, former street youth and service providers. As my gatekeeper, he not only made connections possible but also discussed with me many details that are important to the participant observer. For example, there are certain slang words which are meaningless in the mainstream, however, using these words incorrectly around someone with a "street education" could prove to be unwise.

In addition to terminology, we also discussed the importance of closing "wounds." Briefly, for many youth a discussion of their past is both difficult and painful. Opening up any old wounds necessarily requires closing them. This is not a simple procedure. To avoid opening

wounds, I did not probe for specifics. Instead, I let the youth I encountered speak candidly and listened to their stories. I found that many of the probes that I would have normally asked were eventually answered indirectly. This involved a degree of patience and understanding on my part and a degree of receptivity on the part of the young people I met.

Many of the young people that I met in the early months of my participant observation suggested that I try living the street lifestyle for a short period of time. Becoming one of them was seen as both an academically and personally fruitful method of understanding the issues and circumstances which street youth face on a daily basis. This approach was used by John R. Coleman (1983) to conduct his research on the homeless population in America. Coleman spent one week living as a homeless person in New York City. He recorded his daily activities and interactions, and the impact that they had on his identity. While the present study would have benefited greatly from such an approach, I decided against the idea. My naivete regarding the street lifestyle would have placed me in many compromising and potentially harmful situations for which I was unprepared. Instead of going to the street myself, I opted to volunteer in two agencies that provide maintenance services to this population.

The first agency in which I volunteered was specifically for youth between the ages of 16 and 21. It is a shelter for the homeless and also a good place to meet a variety of youth. The clientele using this shelter

ranged from the neophyte street youth, to those who had been entrenched in the street lifestyle for many years. There were also a number of street youth in this shelter who were trying to leave the street.

I worked as a volunteer at this shelter on a weekly basis. Many of the youth that used the shelter stayed from one night to one month or until they were able to find a suitable alternative. For some, this meant speaking to a welfare worker and trying to obtain some means of financial assistance so that they could find an apartment or room to rent. For others, the shelter was a safe place to stay and sleep while they waited for the effects of their last drug binge to wear off. Once they recuperated, they returned to the street and to their usual routines. The shelter kept files containing case histories of all its clients. I was able to read through these files and keep track of the youth that passed through the shelter. The information was confidential and I agreed not to use it in this study.

The second agency was a drop-in centre which was frequented by both youth and adults. I presented myself there on a weekly basis as well. Much of my time was spent playing cards, smoking cigarettes and interacting with the various characters that frequented the drop-in on a regular basis. It was only after I became a familiar face that the clients felt comfortable enough to tell me their stories. This experience proved to be both interesting and educational.

One evening, while playing cards and interacting with a group of people, I began talking to two street youth who appeared to be interested in my research. As I listened to their stories, I made several observations about these individuals which were useful when I was constructing my interview schedule. These youth were carrying pagers. I knew that the pagers could mean several things: that they were involved in the sex trade; that they were involved in the drug trade; that they were involved in some type of illegal activity; or that the pagers were status symbols. I decided not to probe the purpose of the pagers because I had just met these young people. That same evening, they offered to take me on a stroll and teach me how to panhandle. While I was excited by the offer, I declined because I knew little about the activities in which they participated. This proved to be a wise decision on my part. I learned later that the pagers were not status symbols at all. Through several informal conversations, I was told by these young people of their involvement in both the sex and drug trades.

As I began to spend more time volunteering at the drop-in, I noticed that I was not the only one making observations. There were casual comments made about my clothes, watch and grooming habits which appeared to suggest that I was financially better off than they were².

² This was not the first instance where my appearance proved to be disadvantageous. During the early stages of this research I had approached a youth serving agency with the intentions of volunteering some time inexchange for allowing me to interview some of the agency's clients. After a brief conversation with the manager, I was sent away and told not to return. The manager was apparently suspicious of my motives, implying that I may have been a drug dealer or a pimp, as they frequently passed through the agency's doors attempting to recruit young people into their respective trades.

Fearing that I would become, what Lofland (1969: 266) has termed, their moral superiority, I made the necessary adjustments, which included changing my style of dress and paying less attention to my grooming habits on the nights that I was scheduled to volunteer. I found this to be advantageous. As Berg (1989: 29) explains, appearance and demeanour are central to building a rapport. "Overt, observable characteristics such as race, gender, ethnicity, style of dress, age, hairstyle, manner of speech, and general demeanour provide information used by the interviewee to confirm or deny expectations about what an interviewer ought to be like" (Ibid). As time went on, many of the regular patrons began to treat me as a friend.

The data that was collected through participant observation was recorded in a journal and used to construct the interview schedule used in this study, as well as to ground an understanding and appreciation of many of the issues which street youth face on a daily basis. These include: the difficulty they experience in meeting some of their basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter; problems encountered trying to obtain financial assistance; complications brought on when a young woman becomes pregnant; and the inconsistency in the response of the service system on which many of these youth depend. For example, many youth expressed their frustrations with the inability of one service provider to assist them in meeting all of their needs.

In addition to participant observation, an in-depth semi-structured interview schedule with open and close ended questions was administered

to a sample of former street youth. The data collected from the interviews were drawn from a larger study of street youth sponsored by Health Canada. The main purpose of the Health Canada study included: (i) identifying and examining the antecedent risk factors that influence young people to adopt the street lifestyle; (ii) identifying and examining the factors that influence young people making the transition off the street; and (iii) developing appropriate and effective intervention strategies based on an assessment of both the antecedent and transition factors.

The Health Canada study had already been in progress prior to my involvement. Previous efforts resulted in a detailed research design exercise and comprehensive literature review (see Brannigan and Caputo, 1993) as well as two in-depth case studies of the manner in which the service system in different communities responded to runaways and street youth (see Caputo et al., 1994a and 1994b). Briefly, as a member of the research team, my involvement in the Health Canada study was limited to participating in the development of the interview schedule, assisting in the pre-testing and revising of the schedule, conducting the Ottawa interviews and coding all seventy interviews.

The research team collected data in five cities including: Vancouver, Calgary, Montreal, Halifax and Ottawa. A city was selected in each of the five federal regions including: the Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, Prairie and British Columbia. The selection of potential research sites was made in consultation with representatives from Health Canada, key

informants in each region and the research team's prior knowledge of communities in each region. Potential sites were identified on the basis of their having sizable street youth populations. The research team then utilized key informants to assist in identifying major agencies providing services to street youth in each of the potential sites. These agencies were contacted and invited to participate if they had access to the required population, interest in the study, and the capability of meeting the study requirements.

The research team based their research design on the selection of a convenience sample of former street youth by staff in agencies that work with the target population. The agencies that agreed to participate in the study were asked to select a convenience sample of twenty potential respondents on the basis of a set of criteria developed for the study. The criteria included: respondents had to be between the ages 14 and 29; known to have been on the street for at least one year; known to have been off the street and in a stable living situation for at least one year. Approximately equal numbers of male and female subjects were sought.

Despite the fact that a convenience sample is not representative of all the street youth in any given community who have successfully made the transition off the street, the research team felt that a convenience sample was the most viable way of gaining access to a large number of individuals who both met the eligibility criteria and were willing to participate in the study. Moreover, the exploratory nature of the Health

Canada study justified such a sampling strategy as both practical and appropriate.

Once the agencies identified potential respondents, they were asked to contact these respondents and administer a short screening questionnaire to ascertain eligibility (See appendix B). The respondents who met the eligibility criteria were then asked if they were interested in participating in the study. The respondents that agreed to participate were paid a token sum of \$15.00 for completing an interview. We felt that this fee was not only adequate but important because it acknowledged the contribution that the respondents made and affirmed the value of their knowledge.

Where possible, interviews were held in the offices of the host agency. This was important because it was usually more convenient and comfortable for the participants to meet in an environment that was familiar to them. The interviews took approximately one to one and one half hours to complete. Answers were recorded verbatim during the interviews. Respondents were asked for their indulgence and patience to allow accurate recording of their responses.

Prior to commencing the interview, researchers read a short statement to each respondent on informed consent (see appendix C). This outlined the purpose of the study and the respondents' role in it. The informed consent form discussed confidentiality, anonymity and the voluntary nature of the study. The researchers encouraged participants to

be forthright. They were then asked if they understood the information on the informed consent form and if they did, they were asked to initial the form.

4.1 Sample Description

The interview portion of this study took place in 5 Canadian cities. The number of interviews conducted in each city varied. For example, 19 young people were interviewed in Halifax. This consisted of 11 male and 8 female respondents with ages ranging from 19 to 31. There were 16 respondents from the city of Calgary, including 6 males and 10 females falling between the ages 18 and 25. The sample from Ottawa consisted of 12 males and 3 females ranging in age from 17 to 22. Of the 12 youth that were interviewed in Montreal, there were 4 males and 8 females between the ages 19 and 24. The smallest sample came from Vancouver. Here 2 males and 6 females were interviewed. They varied in age from 18 to 26 years. The total sample consisted of 70 interviews with an even number of male and female respondents. Their ages ranged from 17 to 31 years. Sixty-two of the 70 youth who were interviewed were born between the years 1969 and 1977. The majority of the respondents (52 out of 70) lived in one of three situations prior to going to the street. Twenty-seven young people lived with both parents, 14 lived with their mothers only and 11 lived with their mothers and friends or step-fathers.

As was mentioned above, a convenience sample is not necessarily representative of all the "former street youth" in any given community. There are various limitations to this study that are related to the challenges encountered in gaining access to an appropriate sample. For example, Berg (1989) explains how a representative sample may be obtained through the "random" sampling process. According to Berg (*Ibid.*, p. 110), "the process draws subjects from an identified population in such a manner that every unit in that population has precisely the same chance (probability) of being included in the sample." However, the actual size of both the "street youth" and "former street youth" populations nationally or in particular cities is unknown. Thus, an exhaustive list of the target population needed to select a random sample is not available. Further, even if there was a method of developing such an exhaustive list, there would continue to be problems surrounding access to these young people given that they are very mobile and may be reluctant to discuss their pasts (Brannigan and Caputo, 1993; Portage Foundation, 1993).

A second and related limitation of this study concerns the small sample size per research site. The agencies used to identify and contact potential respondents are street based, front-line agencies. These agencies relied on their files to identify and contact youth that met the eligibility criteria. Consequently, the agencies were only able to identify small samples based on the young people that had used their services. In cases where agencies had lost contact with potential respondents, or when respondents scheduled to be interviewed would cancel, agencies relied on

a snowball sampling technique. For example, respondents that had already been interviewed were asked if they had any friends or knew of any young people that met the eligibility criteria and that were available to be interviewed.

The related limitations of the convenience sample and the small sample size limit the generalizability of the findings in this study. However, as Babbie (1989: 269) states, "even when controlled probability sampling methods are impossible or inappropriate, the logical link between representativeness and generalizability still holds." Various factors support the sample's representativeness of the young people in Canada who have made the transition off the street. A prominent factor is related to the knowledge and experience of the members of the research team that conducted the larger study sponsored by Health Canada. The research team had conducted numerous research projects in the past focussing on this population (see Caputo et al. 1994a and 1994b; Brannigan and Caputo, 1993). Thus, they were familiar with the target population and its characteristics. A second factor that supports the representativeness of the sample is related to the agencies that participated in the study. The research team requested that agency staff members identify subjects that were representative of their client population. Steps were taken during the sampling process to minimize the possibility of sampling bias by agency staff members and to ensure that the sample was as representative of the target population as possible.

A final limitation is related to the retrospective nature of many of the questions, specifically the questions surrounding pre-street and street experiences. While some may be critical of this, we found that this was not a major limitation since much of the existing research has concentrated on these respective areas. We found that there were many parallels between the existing research and what our respondents told us.

4.2 Data Description

A semi-structured interview schedule consisting of both open and close ended questions was used to conduct the interviews. In order to construct the interview schedule, we referred to questionnaires that had been previously used in existing research (Brannigan and Caputo, 1993; Voakes, 1992). A number of the questions evolved from discussions that I had with young people and service providers while doing participant observation. For example, an informal conversation with a male street youth yielded an understanding and appreciation of "street identities." Consistent with "street identities" as he explained them, are street dress, street names and street language. He briefly informed me of the transformation that would be necessary if he was to attempt to find work in the mainstream. This included changing his appearance and becoming more conscientious of his vocabulary. Conversations with other street youth further helped to clarify the importance of questions surrounding the system's response to street youth as well as questions surrounding the difficulties encountered while leaving the street lifestyle.

The inclusion of both open and close ended questions served two purposes. First, it allowed us to gather a variety of information on both qualitative and quantitative variables. As Berg explained, ". . . qualitative analysis deals with forms and antecedents -- consequent patterns of form, while quantitative analysis deals with duration and frequency of form" (1989: 106). While the open-ended questions allowed respondents to tell their stories within a semi-structured format, the close-ended questions helped to systematically measure concepts, such as level of entrenchment and ease of re-entry. Secondly, many of the close ended questions were less personal in nature and served to close wounds that we anticipated would arise from some of the open ended questions.

Once the interview schedule was constructed, it was pre-tested with a number of young people and discussed with service providers familiar with the subject area. The purpose of pre-testing was two-fold. First, we wanted to identify potential problems. These included: poorly worded questions; questions with offensive or emotionally laden wording; or questions revealing the researchers' own biases, personal values or blind spots. The second purpose was to assess the effectiveness of the questions. We were interested in knowing whether the type of information that was being sought was actually going to be obtained.

The interview schedule was revised after each pre-test and debriefing session. The revised interview schedule was used in subsequent

pre-tests. During pre-testing, one other factor was monitored. We were interested in the amount of time that it took to conduct the interviews. A lengthy interview schedule would make it hard to keep the research participants both interested and focussed on the interview. We reworked the interview schedule so that it took approximately one hour to complete.

4.3 Analysis Techniques

Once we were satisfied with the interview schedule and began the interviewing process, a coding strategy was devised. Many of the questions were self-coded. Upon completing all the interviews, data from the self-coded questions were recorded for computer based analysis.

The responses to the open-ended questions were transcribed directly from the interview schedule using a word processing program. A systematic analysis of these responses was then conducted. The responses were examined and analyzed for themes and patterns. The themes and patterns were then used as coding categories. Concerns regarding intercoder reliability are nullified since I coded all 70 interviews.

The questionnaire focused on several key concepts. These concepts included the following: identity; pre-street experiences; experiences while on the street; and experiences during the transition off the street. Issues pertaining to pre-street, street and post-street experiences were also related to the larger issue of self-identity. The concept of self-identity is

one of the main foci of this research. Specifically, the concern was with identity change as the young people gravitated from their home, to the street and eventually back to the mainstream.

The literature in the area of identity examines key features which include interaction with agents shaping identity and appearance. Briefly, identities are forged and maintained in the course of interaction (Mead, 1934). Appearance can be a component of interaction (Stone, 1970), while the family, friends and school are examples of several of the agents which can shape identity (Haas and Shaffir, 1978). These three concepts are theoretically interrelated and represent stages or turning points in the identity change process. Respondents were asked to think back and describe their self-image during each stage of the identity change process. Several questions were used to measure self-identity. For example, young people were asked to describe how they felt about themselves before going to the street, while on the street, and now that they had been off the street for some time. Both identity change and factors influencing and/or inhibiting identity change during each stage of the process are discussed in detail below.

The literature in the area of pre-street experiences identifies a number of key issues that revolve around the family, school and peers. A series of questions were used to measure a number of these issues. For example, respondents were questioned about: who they lived with; their experiences at home; whether their experiences at home affected their

decision to leave; and the circumstances surrounding their decision to go to the street.

Pre-street school issues were also explored. Respondents were asked to describe: their experiences at school; the most negative and positive things about their school experiences; what their overall performance was like; whether their experiences at home had an affect on their school performance; and whether they had dropped out of school.

Pre-street peer relationship issues were explored in a series of questions. Respondents were asked: if they had connections on the street; if they belonged to a group of friends; to describe their group identity; and if their friends had ever been involved with the police.

The second section of the questionnaire focussed on street experiences. A review of the literature that examines this area produced issues surrounding the "pulling" mechanisms of the street, street survival tactics, and the consequences of being on the street. These issues were explored in questions that asked respondents to describe: any type of help they may have received once on the street; where this help came from; the types of activities that they engaged in; and any involvement with police and/or agencies established to assist street youth.

The final section of the questionnaire dealt with the transition off the street. Several key factors were identified in the literature. In general,

these factors include issues surrounding the decision to leave the street, assistance that may have been obtained, direction or plans for the future, and degree of stability or possibilities for relapse. Questions surrounding young people's decision to leave the street dealt with the "pulling" and "pushing" mechanisms of the street, factors that could have influenced their decision to leave sooner, and approaches taken to leave the street lifestyle.

A series of questions dealt with the issue of assistance, specifically measuring assistance from agencies, friends and/or family members. Consistent with the issue of assistance is the type of assistance obtained. For example, was the assistance financial, supportive, professional or job and/or educational related?

Issues revolving around direction or plans for the future were also addressed in a number of questions. Respondents were questioned about goals, both short- and long-term and their ability, or lack thereof, to achieve their goals.

The final component of this section examined how grounded the young people currently are in mainstream society. A series of diverse questions were asked focussing on: thoughts of returning to the street; current living situations; current educational and employment statuses; image and attitude; and appearance.

A composite variable was created in each section of the findings by factoring several variables into a single composite measure. The reliability of each composite variable was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. An Alpha level of .6000 is considered acceptable for creating a composite variable. The three composite variables are respectively as follows: pre-street identity, level of entrenchment, and mainstream identity.

5.0 Research Findings

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings of this study. The interview schedule was divided into three main sections: pre-street; on-street; and post-street experiences. The findings will be presented in a similar manner. In each sub-section, particular emphasis will be placed on the process of identity formation and identity change.

5.1 Pre-street Experiences

The principle issues examined in relation to pre-street experiences were those involving the family, experiences at school and with peers. During this early period of socialization, family, school and peer relations have the greatest impact on shaping young people's identity. The pre-street section serves a dual purpose: it provides us with an understanding of young people's motives for leaving home while establishing a sense of their identities prior to going to the street.

In the literature review section, we discussed the five principle motives surrounding young people's decisions to leave home prematurely. Briefly, these include: personal problems; family conflict; educational problems; peer relationships; and conflict with the law. In addition to these main factors, there is a sixth category consisting of youth who inadvertently go to the street. Our findings are consistent with the literature. However, our research suggests that these categories are not

mutually exclusive. Many of the youth had more than one motive for leaving. The multiple motives are related to the various problems that they had prior to leaving home. For example, 51 (75%)³ of the 68⁴ respondents that answered the question on conditions at home prior to going to the street came from very conflictual homes. Some responses to the question on situations at home are as follows:

My mom died when I was 8 and my so called father abused me and my sisters. We took him to court and they said that there wasn't enough evidence. After that they split us up and put me in foster homes. I didn't like it there because of the physical abuse, so I left and went to B.C. because I had an aunt there (Respondent 064).

It was hard . . . I was in and out, getting in trouble with my parents for not studying or just not being home. There was sexual abuse to add to everything else (Respondent 068).

Dysfunctional . . . my father's an alcoholic. My mother is an abuser . . . mentally and physically. I had it very hard when I was growing up (Respondent 018).

³ While the data obtained from the indepth interviews would presume a qualitative approach to the overall data analysis, statistical data is used to support the themes and patterns that emerged from the qualitative analysis. Although the numbers and table cell sizes are small, they affirm the value of what the respondents told us.

⁴ The total sample consisted of 70 cases, however we found that the "N's" changed throughout the analysis. This inconsistency was expected, given the voluntary nature of the study. We anticipated that many of the interviews would contain unanswered questions, since the consent form (see appendix C) informed the research participants of their right to refuse to answer any questions.

2

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PRECISIONSM RESOLUTION TARGETS

The remaining 17 (25%) of the 68 respondents had a different home experience. Some examples of what they said are provided below:

Everything was great at home. I had grown up in a small town . . . I felt it was boring and wanted to find the world (Respondent 030).

When I think about it now, it was pretty normal, a pretty good living situation. But back then as a teenager, I thought it was pretty bad. I felt like I had no freedom (Respondent 031).

Mother had 8 kids . . . it was hectic. Raising a family alone was hard on her so I said it's about time one of us left the nest (010).

Despite the fact that almost all 70 young people would argue that they were "pushed" out of their homes for various reasons, the division between the two groups suggests that the majority of our sample left intolerable and uncontrollable home situations which were plagued by neglect, conflict and/or abuse. We will refer to this group of young people as belonging to the "conflict group."

The second group, representing a quarter (25%) of the respondents, was more rebellious. Their home situations generally lacked conflict, abuse and neglect. Rather, they perceived their home situations as too controlling and infringing on their independence. Thus, it was a perceived lack of freedom that "pushed" them out of their homes. This group of young people will be referred to as the "freedom group⁵."

⁵ The notion of two groups of young people based on their home situations will be a re-occurring theme used at various points throughout the analysis, where it contributes to the overall analysis.

When we examined the impact that other agents, such as peers and school, had on these young people prior to leaving home, we found variations in their responses that demonstrate their heterogeneous nature. For example, twenty-six (38%) of 69 respondents said they were loners prior to going to the street, while 43 (62%) respondents said they belonged to a group of friends. Forty-one (59%) of the 70 respondents had friends or siblings on the street, while the remaining 29 (41%) had no street ties. When asked if they were ever involved with the police before leaving home 32 (46%) of the 69 that answered this question replied yes, while the remaining 37 (54%) said no. However, when it came to their friends' involvement with the police, 45 (64%) out of 70 stated that they had friends with police involvement. Twenty-five (55.6%) of these 45 respondents had friends that were involved with major property crimes such as break and enter or robberies. The remaining 25 (36%) respondents out of 70 did not have friends that were involved with the police.

When we examined school experiences 17 (25%) out of 69 respondents felt that school was an overall positive experience. Fifty-two (75%) out of 69 young people had negative feelings toward their school experiences. When asked to describe the most positive and negative things about their school experiences 23 (33%) out of 70 stated that their friends made school a positive experience. Twelve (17%) respondents stated that they liked a specific course or subject. Seven (10%) of the 70 respondents felt that participating in sports was positive, while 8 (11%)

liked a specific teacher. Thirteen (18%) young people felt that the learning experience combined with the fact that school was a safe place made for a positive experience. The remaining 7 (10%) found nothing positive about their school experiences.

There were three common responses when it came to the most negative things about their school experiences. Twenty (30%) out of 66 respondents stated that they felt isolated and alone at school. The majority of the respondents (38 or 58%) felt that not getting along with teachers or the administration contributed to a negative school experience, while the remaining 8 (12%) out of 66 felt that their entire school experience was negative.

Despite the fact that only 17 (25%) of the respondents felt that school was an overall positive experience, slightly more, 31 (44%) out of 70 respondents had 'B' averages or better. The remaining 39 (56%) respondents performed poorly in school. This difference in academic performance is better understood in light of the differences between the young people who felt that their school experience was affected by their home situations and the young people who felt their home situations had no impact on their school experience. Forty-six (68%) of 68 respondents said that their home situations had a negative impact on their school experience, while the remaining 22 (32%) young people were able to separate their home and school experiences.

5.2 Pre - Street Identities

An examination of the agents involved in the young person's early stages of socialization produced a dichotomy of variables. This dichotomy also surfaced when we examined the young people's responses to several questions, including: how they felt about themselves; if they were part of a group; what type of group affiliations they had; and their thoughts about society's image of them.

When asked how they felt about themselves prior to going to the street 20 (29%) of the 70 respondents felt positive, while the majority of the respondents (50 or 71%) felt negative. The following are some examples of these responses:

I guess I was full of life. I enjoyed living . . . felt pretty good about myself (Respondent 010).

Fine, normal. I wasn't feeling depressed or anything . . . I was happy (Respondent 060).

Horrible, I hated myself. I felt stupid. I hated my body, I hated my looks. I looked inside and I was disgusted. I never felt accepted (Respondent 028).

I had no confidence. I had feelings of abandonment. I felt alone in the world . . . a sense of failure (Respondent 048).

The remaining three variables are interrelated and originate from the following question: "Young people have a number of ways of classifying themselves according to fashion, dress, interests or music. How would

you have classified yourself before leaving home the most recent time?" We then proceeded to ask them to describe their answers as well as to provide us with some sense of how they felt society viewed them. We found that 47 (69.1%) of 68 respondents identified themselves with a specific group. For example: 20 (29%) of the 68 respondents said they were headbangers/rockers; 6 (9%) said punk/alternative; 1 (1%) young person said skin head; 3 (4%) identified with skaters; 5 (7%) said they were preppies; 3 (4%) were druggies; and 2 (3%) said they were hookers. Alternatively, the remaining 21 (31%) of the 68 respondents felt that they were a mix of everything.

When explaining their answers, they provided descriptions that could be divided into two groups: 39 (65%) of 60 respondents that answered this question described street connected sub-groups, while the remaining 21 (35%) described mainstream youth groups. The majority of the respondents, 50 (88%) of the 57 that answered the question regarding society's image of them, felt that society's image of them was negative. Only 5 (9%) respondents felt that society had a positive image of them. Given these findings, we can suggest that the majority of the respondents felt that they were "outsiders" (Becker, 1963) or marginal members of the mainstream (Visano, 1990) prior to going to the street. These are some examples of what the respondents said:

[I'm a] rocker.

Q: What does it mean to be a rocker?

Jeans and T-shirt and listen to rock.

Q: What is society's image of a rocker?

Well, they think they're stupid juvenile delinquents. Basically stereotyping us as not being real people. The stereotype is so strong that people are oblivious to who you really are. People just think you're drunk and don't think you have a brain. See you as being weird and wired out and shit (Respondent 033).

I've always been the way I am. I've always had a tendency to be different. I'd wear chains, leather jackets, but I've never considered myself punk. I guess I'm somewhere between a rock and roller and a head banger . . . sort of like a biker.

Q: What does it mean to be a biker?

A hard core head banger likes to wear leather, studs and spiked hair. The rock and roller wears tight jeans and T-shirts. I've always been in-between. I guess I'm sort of a biker.

Q: What is society's image of a biker?

Society's image is it's not the norm. It's looked upon as it's inferior to the society. It's almost like *we're outcasts because of our appearance, speech and style . . .* because of who we are. So you sort of get the feeling of being out of place . . . *out of the norm* (Respondent 059). (Emphasis added)

I was a mix of everything.

Q: What does it mean to be a mix of everything?

I liked having different perspectives . . . didn't want to associate with just one group.

Q: What is society's image of a person who is a mix of everything?

They probably saw it as bizarre and mixed up (Respondent 048).

[I was a] preppie

Q: What does it mean to be a preppie?

Just the designer clothes and the amount of money your family makes.

Q: What is society's image of a preppie?

I guess just like the upper middle class rich kids (Respondent 009).

Clearly, these statements suggest that a relationship exists between reference groups, appearance and identity. We found support for this relationship in the fact that a majority of the respondents identified with a social collective. Moreover, many of the youth described the reference groups which they identified in terms of adornment, dress and/or music. This reference to appearance raises two important points: many of the respondents had pre-street identities that differed from their on-street and post-street identities; and that appearance is altered with identity change. Appearance was also a variable in the on-street and post-street identities. The significance of appearance was captured tersely by one respondent who was astutely aware of its relationship to the attitudes of others. When asked to describe society's image of him prior to going to the street, this respondent stated:

[I was] pretty much accepted. Usually, when they [society] meet someone it's the appearance that they look at first. So it helped me because they look at me and think 'there's a nice guy . . . well dressed.' You could be the biggest jerk, but if you dress nice people will have a different opinion (Respondent 069).

The quotations provide a qualitative sense of the young people's pre-street identity. They suggest that young people running to the street are not part of a homogeneous group. Some young people had a very negative pre-street identity, while others had a positive pre-street identity. Quantitatively, the young people's pre-street identity can be measured by combining the scores of several variables into a single composite measure of pre-street identity. These variables measured: how they identified

themselves; society's image of them; and peer group affiliations. Cronbach's alpha⁶ was used to determine the reliability of the composite measure of pre-street identity. Alpha, as Bohrnstedt and Knoke (1994: 267) state, "... is a measure of internal consistency of a set of items, and it ranges from zero (no internal consistency) to unity [one] (perfect internal consistency)." The alpha value for the pre-street identity variable was .6501. Moreover, the composite variable of pre-street identity produced an ideal type. Ideal type refers to the range of pre-street identities. For example, 36 (64.2%) out of 56 young people had a very negative pre-street identity, while 10 (17.9%) young people had a mixed pre-street identity, meaning their pre-street identity was neither very positive nor very negative. Ten (17.9%) of the 56 young people had a very positive pre-street identity. While this ideal measure suffices to show the range in the young people's pre-street identity, the frequency distributions for the mixed and positive pre-street identities are too small to be used for purposes of analysis. Thus, the pre-street identity variable was recoded into the dichotomous variable, negative pre-street identity. Using this procedure, 36 (64.2%) of the 56 young people were identified as having a negative pre-street identity, while 20 (35.8%) of the 56 young people did not have a negative pre-street identity.

⁶ Carmines and Zeller (1979: 45) state that alpha, "... is a lower bound to the reliability of an unweighted scale of N items. . . . It is equal to the reliability if the items are parallel. Thus, the reliability of a scale can never be lower than alpha even if the items depart substantially from being parallel measurements. In other words, in most situations, alpha provides a conservative estimate of a measure's reliability."

We were able to qualify the differences in pre-street identity, based on the young people's responses to a series of specific questions. Briefly, the young people with a negative pre-street identity were more likely to have identified themselves with street connected sub-groups, were more likely to have adopted a non-mainstream style of dress and a tough, rebellious or anti-mainstream perspective. Conversely, the young people that did not have a negative pre-street identity were more likely to have identified with mainstream sub-groups and to have adopted a more mainstream style of dress. These young people were also more likely to have been able to interact with various groups of young people. Consequently, members of the mainstream were more likely to have looked favourably toward these young people for they did not have a deviant appearance.

5.3 "Freedom" Versus "Conflict" Youth

Our findings showed that there are two groups of young people with various pre-street family experiences. We found that 17 (25%) out of 68 young people had relatively stable living situations prior to leaving home which generally lacked conflict, abuse and neglect. Their motives for leaving were connected to their desires for freedom and independence. For example, in describing the circumstances surrounding her decision to leave, one respondent stated, "I went to a party and my parents were going to pick me up early and I didn't want to go so I ran away (Respondent 060)."

The remaining 51 (75%) young people came from very conflictual living situations. The circumstances surrounding their decisions to leave typically included a build up of conflict or abuse. In some cases they were the result of a specific incident, such as the incident described by this young person:

I think the day I left we were having an argument about school. I told my dad to fuck off and he told me to get out . . . that was after he put my head between his legs and started jumping up and down (Respondent 059).

The distinctions between these two sub-categories were not as clear when we examined pre-street identity. In the pre-street identity section, we identified young people with a negative pre-street identity and young people without a negative pre-street identity. When we examined the relationship between the young people's pre-street identity and their situations at home we discovered that both the "freedom" and "conflict" groups contained sub-groups of young people with negative and non-negative pre-street identities. Table 1, below, demonstrates the relationship between the young people's pre-street identity and their home situations. Table 1 is important for it illustrates two important findings: (i) young people that prematurely leave home are not part of a homogeneous group; and (ii) the young people's home situations is not the only variable affecting their pre-street identity.

Table 1: Negative Pre-Street Identity By Home Situation

	"Freedom Youth" N = 14	"Conflict Youth" N = 40
Negative Pre-Street Identity	8 57.1%	27 67.5%
Non-negative Pre-street Identity	6 42.9%	13 32.5%
	100%	100%
	Phi = .10	
	N = 54	Missing = 16

Table 1 suggests that "conflict" young people are more likely than "freedom" youth to have a negative pre-street identity. Twenty-seven (67.5%) of the 40 "conflict" youth had a negative pre-street identity in comparison to 8 (57.1%) of the 14 "freedom" youth. Moreover, Table 1 produced a low, positive relationship with a Phi⁷ of .10. This low Phi suggests that there are other variables affecting the young people's pre-street identity. While the young people's "home situations" provide some insight on their relationships with their families, the family is one agent among various others that influence the socialization of the young (Haas and Shaffir, 1978: 10).

⁷ Phi and Cramer's V are the measures of association used in the analysis of data for this research. Bohrnstedt and Knoke (1994: 167) state that Phi, "measures association for a 2x2 table. . . . Phi ranges between -1.00 and +1.00, with 0.00 indicating no relationship." Similarly, Cramer's V ranges between -1.00 and +1.00 and is used for tables larger than 2x2 (Norusis, 1991: 313).

We can continue to demonstrate the differences between these groups through an examination of the relationship between negative pre-street identity and several other variables, including: peer group affiliation, the impact of peer relations on the young people's behaviour; and academic achievements. The significance of these variables rests in the fact that peers and school are also agents involved in the socialization of the young (Ibid).

Tables 2a to 2d demonstrate the relationship between negative pre-street identity, peers and school, while controlling for the respondents' gender. Table 2a examines the relationship between peer group affiliation and negative pre-street identity. Briefly, we were interested in knowing if the young people were "loners" or if they were "part of a group of friends." Table 2a shows that the males that associated with a group of friends were more likely to have a negative pre-street identity than were the males that were not part of a group of friends. For example, 14 (70%) of the 20 males that were part of a group of friends had a negative pre-street identity, while 3 (42.9%) of the 7 males that were "loners" had a negative pre-street identity. Similarly, females that were part of a group of friends were more likely to have a negative pre-street identity than were females that were not part of a group of friends. Twelve (75%) of the 16 females that were part of a group of friends had a negative pre-street identity, while 7 (58.3%) of the 12 females that were "loners" had a negative pre-street identity.

**Table 2a: Negative Pre-Street Identity By Peer Affiliation
Controlling For Gender**

	Male N = 27		Female N = 28	
	Loner N = 7	Part of a group N = 20	Loner N = 12	Part of a group N = 16
Negative Pre-Street Identity	3 42.9%	14 70.0%	7 58.3%	12 75.0%
Non-negative Pre-street Identity	4 57.1%	6 30.0%	5 41.7%	4 25.0%
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Phi = .25		Phi = .18	
	N = 55	Missing = 15		

Table 2a also produced two Phi coefficients: a low, positive Phi of .25 for the males and a low, positive Phi of .18 for the females. The difference in the Phi coefficients suggests that the relationship between peer group affiliation and negative pre-street identity is slightly stronger for the males.

If we accept the notion that young people's involvement with the police is an indicator of the impact of peer relations on the young people's behaviour, then Table 2b demonstrates the relationship between the impact of peer relations and being labelled deviant by agents of the criminal justice system, and negative pre-street identity.

Table 2b: Negative Pre-Street Identity By Police Involvement Controlling For Gender

	Male N = 27		Female N = 28	
	Police Involvement N = 16	No Police Involvement N = 11	Police Involvement N = 11	No Police Involvement N = 17
Negative Pre-Street Identity	11 68.8%	6 54.5%	10 90.9%	9 52.9%
Non-negative Pre-street Identity	5 31.2%	5 45.5%	1 9.1%	8 47.1%
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Phi = .14		Phi = .40	
	N = 55		Missing = 15	

Table 2b shows that males that were involved with the police were more likely than males without police involvement to have a negative pre-street identity. Eleven (68.8%) of the 16 males that had involvements with the police had a negative pre-street identity, while 6 (54.5%) of the 11 males without police involvements had a negative pre-street identity. Similar to the males, the females that had police involvements were more likely to have a negative pre-street identity than were the females without police involvements. Ten (90.0%) of the 11 females with police involvements had a negative pre-street identity, while 9 (52.9%) of the 17 females without police involvements had a negative pre-street identity.

When we compare the difference in the Phi coefficients for males and females, Table 2b suggests that the relationship between the impact of

peer relations and negative pre-street identity is stronger for females than for males. For example, Table 2b produced a low, positive Phi of .14 for the males and a moderately low, positive Phi of .40 for the females.

Tables 2c and 2d focus on the young people's experience at school. Table 2c demonstrates the relationship between academic performance and negative pre-street identity. Table 2c shows that males that performed poorly in school were more likely to have a negative pre-street identity than were males that performed well academically. For example, 13 (65%) of the 20 males that performed poorly in school had a negative pre-street identity in comparison to 4 (50%) of the males that performed well academically. A similar relationship exists among the females. Eleven (78.6%) of the 14 females that performed poorly in school had a negative pre-street identity, while 8 (57.1%) of the 14 females that performed well in school had a negative pre-street identity. Table 2c also generated two Phi coefficients: a low, positive Phi of .14 for the males and a low, positive Phi of .23 for the females. This suggests that the relationship between academic performance and negative pre-street identity is stronger for the females than for the males.

Table 2d illustrates the combined affect of two socializing agents on the young people's negative pre-street identity. This table demonstrates the relationship between the young people's responses to the question "Did home affect school?" and negative pre-street identity.

Table 2c: Negative Pre-Street Identity By Academic Achievement Controlling For Gender

	Male N = 28		Female N = 28	
	Performed Poorly N = 20	Performed Well N = 8	Performed Poorly N = 14	Performed Well N = 14
Negative Pre-Street Identity	13 65.0%	4 50.0%	11 78.6%	8 57.1%
Non-negative Pre-street Identity	7 35.0%	4 50.0%	3 21.4%	6 42.9%
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Phi = .14		Phi = .23	
	N = 56	Missing = 14		

Table 2d shows that males that stated their home situations affected school were more likely to have a negative pre-street identity than were the males that stated their home situations had no impact on school. Twelve (75%) of the 16 males that stated their home situations affected school had a negative pre-street identity in comparison to 5 (41.7%) of the 12 males that stated their home situations did not affect school. Similarly, 15 (71.4%) of the 21 females that stated their home situations affected school had a negative pre-street identity, while 3 (50%) of the 6 females that stated their home situations did not affect school had a negative pre-street identity.

Table 2d: Negative Pre-Street Identity By Home Affecting School Controlling For Gender

	Male N = 28		Female N = 27	
	Negative Impact N = 16	No Impact N = 12	Negative Impact N = 21	No Impact N = 6
Negative Pre-Street Identity	12 75.0%	5 41.7%	15 71.4%	3 50.0%
Non-negative Pre-street Identity	4 25.0%	7 58.3%	6 28.6%	3 50.0%
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Phi = .34		Phi = .19	
	N = 55	Missing = 15		

The Phi coefficients for Table 2d are as follows: a moderate, positive Phi of .34 for the males and a low, positive Phi of .19 for the females. The difference in the Phi coefficients suggests that the relationship between home situation affecting school and negative pre-street identity is stronger for the males than for the females.

Tables 2c and 2d are important for they show that school performance has an affect on the young people's negative pre-street identity. While academic performance was more likely to affect the females' negative pre-street identity, the combination of the young people's home situations and school was more likely to affect males' negative pre-street identity.

Tables 1 through 2d raise several important points about the factors influencing the young people's negative pre-street identity. Briefly, there are two groups of young people: young people that left relatively stable living situations (freedom youth) and young people that left conflictual home situations (conflict youth). Each group contains sub-groups of young people with both negative and non-negative pre-street identities. While "conflict" youth are more likely than "freedom" youth to have a negative pre-street identity, the young people's home situations is not the only variable affecting negative pre-street identity. Tables 2a to 2d show that school and peer relations also affect negative pre-street identity. At this juncture, it is important to note that different dimensions of school and peer relations have slightly different affects on males and females. However, the outcomes of these affects are similar for both male and female young people; they may contribute to the young people's negative pre-street identity.

5.4 Street Experiences

The second section of the interview schedule examined street experiences, specifically the socializing influences of the street and their relationship to the young people's identity change.

According to Visano (1990), going to the street represents the beginning of the socialization process that leads many young people to develop and acquire a street youth identity. Despite many street youth

arguing that they were "pushed" out of their homes, young people follow various paths when gravitating to the street. When we examined paths leading to the street, we found that 46 (66%) of the 70 participants had run away from home; 14 (20%) were thrown out; and the remaining 10 (14%) inadvertently ended up on the street. The following are several examples of what the young people stated:

[I] ran away . . . after a while my mom didn't want me back (Respondent 028).

[I was] thrown out. [We] had a blow out. She told me to get out at 4 o'clock in the morning (Respondent 024).

I was on my own living in an apartment on mother's allowance and I found it really tough to get by. [I had] a lot of financial difficulties . . . went to the street when I was 19. I met a guy who introduced me to the streets. That's when I found out my sister was already hooking and she showed me the ropes (Respondent 011).

In the literature reviewed, we discussed how once on the street many young people find a positive sense of belonging, loyalty and shared suffering which they attain from involvement in street culture (Michaud, 1988). Street culture refers to the interaction that exists between people on the street and includes their shared ideas about the behaviour which is conducive to surviving the lifestyle. Thus, for many young people, street friends become a substitute family, filling the emotional gap left by disapproving families and former friends (Adams et al., 1985). It is from this substitute family that young people learn survival techniques. These

techniques or skills (Visano, 1990) are important, when young people learn that their age and lack of education and/or skills become obstacles inhibiting their attempts to find legitimate ways to survive.

The skills that young people acquire and the relationships that they form while on the street, further contribute to their identity changes. Given this, we asked a series of questions surrounding the process of "getting connected" (Visano, 1990) to a street sub-group. We were specifically interested in knowing if young people received help when they first went to the street, what type of help they received and who the help came from. We found that 43 (61%) of the 70 respondents received help upon arrival. Thirty-four (79.1%) of the 43 that were helped received help in the form of maintenance such as shelter, food, and/or money. Moreover, 21 (48.8%) of the 43 young people that received help, stated that the help came from other street youth. When we examined their statements regarding the type of help that they received, we found evidence of new reference groups and apprenticeship relations, both of which were discussed in the literature reviewed above. The following quotations represent some of the responses we received to this question:

Other people in the sex trade got me connected with it. I got lots of advice and encouragement, mostly socializing with other prostitutes (Respondent 030).

I learned [from street youth] the tricks of the trade . . . where to sleep, how to get food. Basically, how to take care of myself, including how to fight (Respondent 064).

[Gay street youth] gave me a place to stay, partied with me a bit and showed me how I could make my own money (Respondent 021).

These findings raised two important issues that include: upon going to the street, some young people immediately find new reference groups and enter apprenticeship relations; and a percentage of the young people become solitary street transients, choosing to make it on their own.

To determine the level of involvement in the street lifestyle, we focussed on several variables that are related to street experiences. We asked respondents if they had been tattooed while on the street, if they carried a pager, used drugs and/or alcohol, changed their appearance, had a street name or had some involvement with the police. Several of the variables, specifically, tattoos, street names and street dress are related to street identities. According to Lofland (1969: 221), "deviants who desire to avoid identification as normals are well advised to mutilate their bodies in some public and permanent way, to adopt distinctive dress or to practice special facial and body gestures." We found that 28 (40%) of the 70 respondents were tattooed while on the street, 15 (21%) out of 70 carried pagers, 67 (96%) out of 70 used drugs and/or alcohol, 44 (63%) of the 70 respondents changed their style of dress, 36 (51%) out of 70 respondents were identified by street names, and 52 (74%) of the 70 had some involvement with the police. We used these variables, with two exceptions, to determine the young people's level of entrenchment in the street lifestyle. The exceptions include substituting the variables pagers

and drug/alcohol use for two other variables that are more reflective of the young people's level of entrenchment in the lifestyle.

While pagers may reflect level of entrenchment, they capture another dimension of the street lifestyle, specifically an occupational dimension. According to Visano (1987: 24), "Prostitution is a semi-skilled occupation in which an actor sells or is hired to provide sexual services for financial gain." The pagers may also be indicative of the young people's involvement in the drug trade, which may similarly be viewed as an occupation. Given the small number (15 out of 70 or 21%) of the young people that carried pagers, we can suggest that the majority of the respondents were not working in the drug and/or sex trades.

In addition to substituting the "pagers" variable, it was determined that the "drug/alcohol use" variable was also an ineffective indicator of the young people's level of entrenchment in the street lifestyle. Drug/alcohol use was practiced by 96% of the respondents. As such, it is not an accurate indicator of entrenchment, but rather an example of an activity or behaviour that is salient in the street lifestyle. In retrospect, the various types of drugs/alcohol consumed by the young people would have provided better insight as to their level of entrenchment in the lifestyle.

Substitutions were made for the "pagers" and "drug/alcohol use" variables which examined the following issues: factors that kept the young people on the street, and factors that influenced the young people's

decision to leave the street lifestyle. The young people's responses to these two questions reflected their level of involvement in the street lifestyle. Both variables were recoded to form a dichotomous measure. We compared forces that "pull" young people to the street and those that "push" them off the street. The young people that identified freedom and social bonds as the forces that pulled them to the street were defined as "less entrenched" than those that said that money, drugs or fear/coercion pulled them to the street. Similarly, the young people that identified boredom and/or taking on responsibility for others as forces "pushing" them off the street were defined as "less entrenched" than those that said that fear, "hitting bottom," and/or a critical event such as an arrest pushed them off the street.

A composite variable was created by combining the scores of the 6 variables into a single composite measure of level of entrenchment. A reliability test was performed for the composite measure "level of entrenchment" and the resulting Alpha coefficient was .6123. An Alpha level of .6000 is considered acceptable for creating a composite variable. We found that 41 (58.6%) of the 70 respondents had higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle, while the remaining 29 (41.4%) respondents had lower levels of entrenchment. The analysis presented below shows that the level of entrenchment in the street lifestyle had an affect on the young people's self-image while on the street. This affect can be summed up in the following proposition: the higher the level of

entrenchment the more likely the young people had a negative self-image while on the street.

Table 3: Level Of Entrenchment By Help Once On The Street

	Recieved Help Once On The Street N = 43	Did Not Receive Help Once On The Street N = 27
Higher Levels Of Entrenchment	22 51.2%	19 70.4%
Lower Levels Of Entrenchment	21 48.8%	8 26.6%
	100%	100%
	Phi = .19	
	N = 70	

Table 3 examines the relationship between young people that received help, such as counselling, shelter, food, clothing, and/or money when they first went to the street and level of entrenchment in the street lifestyle. This produced a low, positive Phi of .19. Table 3 shows that 21 (48.8%) of the 43 young people who received help had lower levels of entrenchment in comparison to 8 (29.6%) of the 27 young people who did not receive help. When we questioned the type of help that these 43 young people received, we found that 7 or 16.3% of the young people were counselled, 33 or 76.7% of the young people received help in the form of maintenance (food, shelter, drugs, alcohol, etc.), 1 (2.3%) young

person received financial assistance, and 2 or 4.7% of the young people received transitional help.

Table 3 illustrates two important points: not all young people that receive help when they first go to the street go on to become entrenched in the street lifestyle; and a portion of the solitary street transients find reference groups and enter apprenticeship relations at later points.

5.5 Street Identities

Our examination of street experiences yielded two important findings. These include: not all young people seek help or "get connected" when they first arrive on the street; and not all young people who prematurely leave home become entrenched in the street lifestyle. These findings are important when considering identity change or the development of a street youth identity. We know, from the literature review above, that there are three main variables that feature prominently in the identity change process. Briefly, these variables include: the actor's skills; affirmation from a group of significant others; and the actor's self-image (Visano, 1990). Upon acquiring the necessary skills and affirmation from the individual's new reference group, the actor readjusts his or her conception of self according to his or her perceptions of the attitudes of the members of the actor's new reference group.

We were interested in knowing what image young people had of themselves while they were on the street as well as what image they thought society had of street youth. We found a consensus regarding the latter question. All 70 (100%) of the respondents felt that society holds negative opinions toward street youth. Despite this consensus, we found a slight variation in their responses. When we examined their statements closely, we found that some young people referred to street youth as "us," while others referred to street youth as "them." These are some examples of what they told us:

They [society] don't care. They think we're low class people, that we're worth nothing, that we're not human beings (Respondent 018).

That we're uh, no good and that we're there because we can't handle normal parents. But that's bullshit. It's just that we can't handle really strict bullshit (Respondent 033).

Dirty, lazy, no reason for being there, scared of us . . . that they might be harassed . . . [that] we could be violent (Respondent 043).

They just think they're problem children and that their parents didn't look after them right, or couldn't cause they're fucked up themselves (Respondent 014).

The wrong image. They . . . society looks at it like they did it to themselves . . . they're filth, they're the reason for all the crime. Any time anything happens it's like we've got to get ride of them . . . no sympathy. They use them as statistics and film them (Respondent 028).

They judge them by their looks, what they wear and who they hang around with, which they shouldn't be doing. They should judge them for who they are and their personalities (Respondent 068).

The alternate use of the pronouns "us" and "them" can be interpreted in two ways. The first interpretation is that this variation is further evidence to support the fact that not all young people experience identity changes once on the street. Some young people become street youth, while others remain on the street, but not of it (Visano, 1990). However, the retrospective nature of this question diverts our attention to a second interpretation. According to Ray (1961: 136):

In the early phases of an episode of cure, the abstainer manifests considerable ambivalence about where he [sic] stands in addict and non-addict groups, and in discussions of addiction and addicts, he [sic] may indicate his [sic] ambivalence through his [sic] alternate use of the pronouns "we" and "they" and thus his [sic] alternate membership in addict and non-addict society.

If we apply Ray's explanation of the alternate use of the pronouns to the quotations above we can suggest that the young people that used the pronoun "us" were in the process of being "cured,"⁸ while the young people that used the pronoun "them" had either been "cured," or had failed to develop a street youth identity. In this case, our first interpretation that not all young people experience identity changes once on the street is a valid one, given the retrospective nature of the question.

⁸ The term "cured" refers to identity change, specifically to the development and acquisition of a mainstream identity.

The responses to the question regarding how self-image had changed once they were on the street were coded under one of three categories: positive self-image; negative self-image; and not aware of self-image. Our findings suggest that 24 (34.8%) of 69 respondents had positive self-images once on the street; 39 (56.5%) had negative self-images once on the street; and 6 (8.7%) of the 69 respondents were not aware of their self-images because they never gave it much thought.

These categories are slightly misleading. Despite knowing that not all the young people experienced an identity change, the reference to positive and negative self-images creates the false impression that all the young people with positive self-images failed to experience an identity change, while the young people with negative self-images did experience a change. Rather, when we examined the relationship between level of entrenchment in the street lifestyle and self-image on the street, we found among both the young people with lower levels of entrenchment and higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle, those that said they had positive self-images as well as young people that said they had negative self-images. Table 4a illustrates this relationship.

Table 4a examines the relationship between level of entrenchment and the young people's on-street self-images. This produced a low, positive relationship with a Cramer's V of .18. Table 4a shows that 14

(48.3%) of the 29 young people with lower levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle

Table 4a: On-Street Self-image By Level Of Entrenchment

	Lower Levels Of Entrenchment In The Street Lifestyle N = 29	Higher Levels Of Entrenchment In The Street Lifestyle N = 40
Self-image Became More Positive	11 37.9%	13 32.5%
Self-image Became More Negative	14 48.3%	25 62.5%
Self-image Never Occurred To Them	4 13.8%	2 5.0%
	100%	100%
	Cramer's V = .18 N = 69	Missing = 1

had more negative on-street self-images versus 25 (62.5%) of the 40 young people with higher levels of entrenchment. Table 4a also shows that 11 (37.9%) of the 29 young people with lower levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle had more positive on-street self-images in comparison to 13 (32.5%) of the 40 young people with higher levels of entrenchment. Table 4a also shows that the young people with higher levels of entrenchment in street life were more likely to have been aware of their self-image than were the young people with lower levels of entrenchment. For example, 4 (13.8%) of the 29 young people with lower

levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle stated that their self-images never occurred to them, while 2 (5%) of the 40 young people with higher levels of entrenchment stated that their self-images never occurred to them.

While the percentages regarding more positive on-street self-image are similar, there is a significant difference in the percentages regarding more negative on-street self-image, which suggests that the introduction of a control variable may help to clarify this relationship. Table 4b below re-examines this relationship while controlling for the respondents' gender. However, prior to discussing Table 4b, it should be noted that we found evidence to support the relationship between level of entrenchment and the young people's on-street self-images in their descriptions of their self-images. For example, among the young people with lower levels of entrenchment in street life, we found that some of the respondents had more positive on-street self-images. In describing their on-street self-images, these young people were more likely to make reference to the benefits of the freedom and adventure of the street or they were ignorant of the hardships and horrors of the lifestyle. The following are examples of some of their statements:

Thought I was ok . . . felt I was free and having fun
(Respondent 005).

I was on top of the world. I was in control. I thought I was big and best. I could go anywhere I wanted and do anything I wanted to do (Respondent 027).

[I] was proud of myself at the time. Was happy - go - lucky. Had money . . . nice things (Respondent 008).

We also found among the young people with lower levels of entrenchment in street life, a group of respondents that had more negative on-street self-images. Their descriptions of their self-images reflected their conscious awareness of their marginal statuses. These young people were neither full members of the mainstream nor full members of street culture. They stated:

[My self-image was] more negative. I needed a change and the street really didn't help (Respondent 050).

[It was] negative. I didn't care about anything . . . about impressing anyone or nothing (Respondent 009).

[At first] I felt free. I felt that I could do anything . . . that I could be anything. [However] after about six months I thought this isn't fun any more . . . it started getting tough (Respondent 056).

Similarly, we found young people with both more positive and negative on-street self-images among the young people with higher levels of entrenchment in street life. Their statements regarding their self-images reflected their participation in the lifestyle. For example, we found one group with more positive on-street self-images. In describing their on-street self-images, these young people were more likely to make reference to their social collectives and/or to a sense of belonging. The following are examples of several of the respondents' statements:

I felt like I, like I fit in. I felt good about myself . . . a lot better (Respondent 012).

I felt sexy . . . I felt that I could do anything. The sex wasn't too bad either and the money was good (Respondent 018).

Kinda tough. I felt independent. Like you'd see these school kids coming down going to their mommies. I was a bitch. Kinda felt important . . . like you knew so many people (Respondent 028).

I became in my head . . . that I was king of the street. I thought that it was a positive image. I thought that people would respect me because I'm king of the street (Respondent 058).

The second group of young people with higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle consists of young people with more negative on-street self-images. Despite the advantages⁹ of being

⁹ The qualitative differences between positive and negative on-street self-image signal the existence of a theoretical concept which was briefly mentioned in the theoretical framework of this thesis: career commitment. Hearn and Stoll (1975) examine the difference between "continuance" commitment and "value" commitment in low status occupations, specifically the work of the cocktail waitress. They cite Stebbins in defining both "value" and "continuance" commitment. "Value" commitment, "may be defined as a frame of mind that arises from 'the presence, in exceptional number, of subjectively defined rewards associated with a particular position or social identity in which the person finds himself [sic] or hopes to find himself [sic]'" (p. 105). Conversely, "continuance" commitment is defined as, "'the awareness of the impossibility of choosing a different social identity . . . because of the imminence of penalties involved in making the switch'" (p.105). Hearn and Stoll (ibid) continue to explain that a cocktail waitress may begin her career with a "value" commitment and in the process develop a "continuance" commitment orientation to her work. Hearn and Stoll attribute the change in "career" commitment to the "career contingencies" of persons in such occupations. In this respect, the differences between positive and negative on-street self-image may reflect how committed the young people were to their street youth careers.

entrenched in street life these young people typically expressed their dissatisfaction with street life. For example:

I was a hooker, I was a hoe. I was tough . . . I felt tough . . . not to beat people up, but personality. You have to be strong out there, if you think of all the danger you move yourself to. You have to put on a major defence and not think about it (Respondent 031).

A piece of scum, but yet a tough guy. You have to put on that act, you know (Respondent 024).

I felt really low. I had really low self-esteem. Before I was on the street my friends were doing favours for me, but now I was doing it for them. I felt really low, but I figured I had to do it because I had to survive somehow (Respondent 069).

Table 4b re-examines the relationship between the young people's on-street self-image and level of entrenchment in the street lifestyle, while controlling for the respondents' gender. For males, this produced a low, positive relationship with a Cramer's V of .18, and a low, positive relationship for the females with a Cramer's V of .19.

When we examine the relationship for the males, Table 4b shows that 8 (47.1%) of the 17 males with lower levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle had more negative on-street self-images in comparison to 9 (52.9%) of the 17 males with higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle. Similarly, Table 4b shows that 6 (50%) of the 12 females with lower levels of entrenchment had more negative on street self-images, while 16 (69.6%) of the 23 females with higher levels of entrenchment had

more negative on-street self-images. Among the males who had more positive self-images, level of entrenchment in the street lifestyle did not make a significant difference. Six (35.3%) of the 17 males with lower levels of entrenchment

Table 4b: On-Street Self-image By Level Of Entrenchment Controlling For Gender

	Males N = 34		Females N = 35	
	Lower Entrenchment N = 17	Higher Entrenchment N = 17	Lower Entrenchment N = 12	Higher Entrenchment N = 23
Self-image Became More Positive	6 35.3%	7 41.2%	5 41.7%	6 26.1%
Self-image Became More Negative	8 47.1%	9 52.9%	6 50.0%	16 69.6%
Self-image Never Occurred To Them	3 17.6%	1 5.9%	1 8.3%	1 4.3%
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Cramer's V = .18		Cramer's V = .19	
	N = 69		Missing = 1	

in the street lifestyle had more positive self-images in comparison to 7 (41.2%) of the 17 males with higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle. Conversely, females with lower levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle were more likely to have had a more positive self-image

than were females with higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle. For example, 5 (41.2%) of the 12 females with lower levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle had more positive self-images in comparison to 6 (26.1%) of the 23 females with higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle. Males with higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle were more likely to have been aware of their self-images than were males with lower levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle. Three (17.6%) of the 17 males with lower levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle stated that their self-images never occurred to them, while 1 (5.9%) of the 17 males with higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle stated that his self-image never occurred to him. The percentages for this group of females were similar. For example, 1 (8.3%) of the 12 females with lower levels of entrenchment stated that her self-image never occurred to her in comparison to 1 (4.3%) of the 23 females with higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle.

Table 4b raises two important points: (i) young people with higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle are more likely to have increasingly negative on-street self-images; and (ii) females are slightly more likely to have higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle. In addition to these two points, the low Cramer's V coefficients for both Tables also suggest that there are other variables affecting the young people's on-street self-image.

5.6 Street Freedom Versus Conflict Family Situations

In the pre-street section above, we identified two groups based on their situation at home prior to going to the street. We found that youth from conflictual backgrounds (conflict youth) were typically marginal members of the mainstream. They participated in many non-mainstream, or deviant activities. Moreover, many of the conflict youth identified with street connected sub-groups.

Table 5a: Level Of Entrenchment By Home Situation

	"Freedom Youth" N = 17	"Conflict Youth" N = 51
Higher Levels of Entrenchment	8 47.1%	32 62.7%
Lower Levels Of Entrenchment	9 52.9%	19 37.3%
	100%	100%
	Phi = .14	
	N = 68	Missing = 2

In the section in which we examined their experiences on the street, we found evidence of two additional groups. One group consisted of

young people with lower levels of involvement in the street lifestyle. The second group consisted of young people who were more highly entrenched in the street lifestyle. We found differences in their self-images and a relationship between level of involvement in the lifestyle and self-image. What remains to be determined is whether the young people's home situation had an affect on their level of involvement in street culture.

Table 5a demonstrates the relationship between level of entrenchment and the young people's home situations. This produced a low, positive relationship with a Phi of .14. Table 5a shows that "conflict" youth are more likely to have higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle than are "freedom" youth. For example, 8 (47.1%) of the 17 "freedom" youth had higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle in comparison to 32 (62.7%) of the 51 "conflict" youth.

Table 5b examines the relationship between level of entrenchment in the street lifestyle and the young people's gender. This produced a low, positive relationship with a Phi of .15. Table 5b shows that females are more likely to have higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle. For example, 23 (65.7%) of the 35 females had higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle in comparison to 18 (51.4%) of the 35 males that had higher levels of entrenchment in the lifestyle. Moreover, the low Phi coefficient suggests that there are other factors affecting the young people's level of entrenchment.

Tables 5a and 5b raise several important points: young people from conflictual home situations are more likely to end up entrenched in the street lifestyle; female street youth are more likely to have come from conflictual home situations¹⁰; and that in addition to home situations and gender, there are other variables affecting the young people's level of entrenchment in the street lifestyle that revolve around social and human issues, such as survival. Paradoxically, the findings appear to suggest that for many young people, the ability to survive street life over a long period of time is dependent on their becoming entrenched in the street lifestyle.

Table 5b: Level Of Entrenchment By Gender

	Males N = 35	Females N = 35
Higher Levels of Entrenchment	18 51.4%	23 65.7%
Lower Levels Of Entrenchment	17 48.6%	12 34.3%
	100%	100%
	Phi = .15	
	N = 70	

¹⁰ This finding is questionable given the extremely small number of "freedom" females (5 out of 17 freedom youth).

5.7 Post-Street Experiences

In the previous sections, we discussed many of the factors that contribute to the development and acquisition of a street youth identity. Conversely, the focus of this section is on the factors that facilitate and/or inhibit identity change as street youth attempt to re-integrate into the mainstream.

Despite knowing that many street youth eventually leave the lifestyle, we know very little about the factors that lead this group of young people to disengage from the street, as well as the actions that they take to re-connect to mainstream society. Among the 70 young people that we interviewed, we found that street youth have various reasons for leaving the lifestyle. Fear, disillusionment, "hitting bottom," and taking on responsibility for others featured prominently in many of their explanations. Moreover, 32 (46%) of the 70 respondents were motivated to leave the street after a critical event occurred. We can interpret this to mean that young people leave the street lifestyle for one of two main reasons: realizing that the freedom and adventure of the street is only an illusion, young people become bored with the lifestyle and move on; or they realize that it is time for change once they reach their thresholds for pain and suffering.

As was mentioned above, the young people's "motives for leaving the street lifestyle" was a variable included in the composite measure "level of entrenchment." When we asked the young people what made

them decide to leave the street, we found that 43 (61.4%) out of 70 young people were motivated by fear, a critical event, such as an arrest, and/or after "hitting bottom." Alternatively, 27 or 38.6% of the young people were motivated to leave the street lifestyle as a result of boredom and/or taking on responsibilities for others, such as family. The following are several examples of what the young people stated:

I was tired of being caught in a circle. Get up, go out and make a bit of money, go to the bar, do a bit of acid. I was tired of all the misconceptions of what life was like (Respondent 021).

I got bored and started doing correspondence. I applied to university to get \$15.00 from the "Back Door" [a private sector agency]. Then I got in (Respondent 026).

I just felt like going home. I started missing my family after a while. I realized that I was over-exaggerating and they weren't as bad as I thought. Other people on the street . . . their stories about why they left home were a lot worse than mine (Respondent 060).

Well, I was really in a deep hole, you could say, I was really heavy into prostitution. I needed the money cause my drug habit was getting too out of control and I was plain old addicted to the money. I got kidnapped by a pimp. I was well hidden from my friends and family. About a week after that the "Exit" van [private sector agency] came by (Respondent 024).

I lost everything. I was deeply in love. The man I loved I lost. I didn't want to live like that any more. I was selling everything I could for drugs. Also, I was charged and I was going to court and I was scared (Respondent 036).

My boyfriend killed himself and all I wanted to do was do coke and I did coke and lost weight. Then I met someone who saw through the exterior tracks and had total confidence in me and he knew I could do it and he didn't even want to have sex with me (Respondent 028).

The above quotations suggest that the greater the level of involvement in the lifestyle the more likely the career turning point was some very threatening experience, such as, fear of physical harm or prosecution by the criminal justice system.

Deciding to leave the lifestyle is the first step in the young person's career change. However, making the decision to leave is much easier than actually following through. Forty-three (62%) of 69 respondents attempted to leave the street more than once. Many of these young people claimed that their unsuccessful attempts at disengagement were a consequence of the "pulling" forces of the street and/or the "pushing" forces of the mainstream.

Table 6 illustrates the relationship between the young people's level of entrenchment and their attempts to disengage from the street lifestyle. This produced a low, positive relationship with a Phi of .03. Table 6 also shows that 17 (60.7%) of the 28 young people with lower levels of entrenchment tried to disengage more than once, while 26 (63.4%) of the 41 young people with higher levels of entrenchment attempted to disengage more than once. The low Phi coefficient and the similar percentages suggest the absence of a relationship between level of

entrenchment and the young people's attempts to disengage from the street lifestyle. However, the significance of Table 6 rests in the marginals. Forty-three or 62.3% of the 69 young people attempted to disengage more than once. When we asked the young people what caused them to return to the street, we found that 18 (41.9%) of the 43 young people that attempted to disengage more than once were "pulled" back to the street by factors, such as freedom of the lifestyle, money, drugs/alcohol, and/or social bonds.

**Table 6: Attempts To Disengage The Street Lifestyle
By Level Of Entrenchment**

	Higher Levels Of Entrenchment N = 41	Lower Levels Of Entrenchment N = 28
Multiple Attempts To Disengage	26 63.4%	17 60.7%
Single Attempt To Disengage	15 36.6%	11 39.3%
	100%	100%
	Phi = .03	
	N = 69	Missing = 1

Conversely, 25 (58.1%) of the 43 young people that attempted to disengage more than once identified factors related to mainstream society which "pushed" them back to the street. These factors include no reliable shelter, support or effective intervention programs, and/or fear of not

being able to cope in the mainstream. Many street youth refused and/or could not return to the homes from which they had previously fled. One respondent captured this sentiment when he stated "[it was the] same old thing . . . I had no place to crash and I couldn't go back to my parents. So I just ended up back on the street (Respondent 016)." Only 15 (21.4%) of the 70 young people in our sample stated that they returned to live with their parents once they left the street. Moreover, some of the young people that did return to their parents, returned to find that, "things were still intolerable at home (Respondent 006)." The continued intolerable home situations and the lack of known mainstream alternatives lead these young people to rely on the only skills they had; street survival skills. Thus, they returned to the street where some became further entrenched in the lifestyle and eventually graduated to become street adults (Visano, 1990), while others waited for the next critical event before re-attempting to disengage. Clearly, many young people require assistance in order to successfully disengage from the lifestyle.

Forty-nine (70%) of the 70 research participants sought help when they left the street. Forty-two (85.8%) of these 49 young people received either personal support or professional help. We found that the majority (31 (63.3%) out of 49 respondents) stated that help came from counselling agencies. Ten (20.4%) of the 49 young people stated that they received help from their family members, while 8 (16.3%) out of 49 received help from friends. A closer examination of their statements regarding the type of help they received yields evidence of two central themes discussed in

the literature review above: new reference groups and identity models. For example, when asked what other factors helped them make the transition back to the mainstream, some respondents said the following:

Some counsellors . . . there were some that looked beyond what I was. The group of friends I started hangin' around with . . . some through the group home and through their friends and also when I went to school (Respondent 009).

An employer to believe in you, to give you a chance cause that's what happened with me (Respondent 010).

The buddies I was working with were great, I felt part of something (Respondent 013).

[You] need to have a mentor. For me it was my girlfriend (Respondent 046).

Having someone to believe in me. Maybe if you're lucky you'll have that person love you and care for you . . . like you never had before (Respondent 021).

In addition to assistance, street youth disengaging from the lifestyle are astutely aware of the need for skills. Skills, such as job training and/or educational upgrading are salient in many of their statements regarding the personal goals they had when they first left the street; 42 (60%) out of 70 respondents felt that job training and/or educational upgrading were important. These skills are necessary if the individual is to become a responsible member of the mainstream because they help to anchor the individual to his or her new environment. Moreover, skills can be motives

for identity change by allowing the individual to place more value on a "normal" self than on a "deviant" self (Lofland, 1969: 292). Lofland explains how skills, specifically technical skills, provide converts with "prestige, possession and power to which they become attached and which give them something to lose if they engage in significant deviance" (Ibid: 293).

**Table 7a: Goals When First Leaving The Street
By Level Of Entrenchment**

	Higher Levels Of Entrenchment N = 41	Lower Levels Of Entrenchment N = 29
Job &/Or Education Upgrading	24 58.5%	18 62.2%
Personal Growth	10 24.4%	9 31.0%
Taking On Responsibilities	3 7.3%	0
Get Off Drugs &/Or Alcohol	2 4.9%	1 3.4%
No Goals	2 4.9%	1 3.4%
	100%	100%
	Cramer's V = .19	
	N = 70	

Table 7a illustrates the relationship between the young people's level of entrenchment in street life and the goals that they had when they

first left the street. This produced a low, positive relationship with a Cramer's V of .19. Table 7a shows that there is very little difference in percentages between the respondents with lower and higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle and goals surrounding job training and/or educational upgrading. Eighteen (62.2%) of the 29 young people with lower levels of entrenchment had goals surrounding job training and/or educational upgrading, while 24 (58.5%) of the 41 young people with higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle had similar goals. However, 9 (31%) of the 29 young people with lower levels of entrenchment stated that they had goals regarding personal growth, such as regaining their self-respect, learning to deal with their past experiences, etc., in comparison to 10 (24.4%) of the 41 young people with higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle.

Despite the findings in Table 7a we found that the level of entrenchment in street life had a qualitative difference in the respondents' goals. For example, one group had short-term or immediate goals, focussed on quitting drugs or alcohol, finding a place to live, getting a job or going back to school. Some examples of the statements from this group of youth include:

Get a good job, get a steady girlfriend, have some kids, get cable t.v. and a phone (Respondent 017).

I wanted to feel better about myself. I wanted to be a cook or baker. I wanted to own my own house and car (Respondent 018).

First of all, just to make it work, not give up and then once I had a fairly good foot hold I'd start building things for myself . . . possessions . . . like, this is mine, I own it and I don't want to lose it type thing . . . acquiring materials. I wanted a job (Respondent 023).

The second group of young people had more forward looking goals, which were much more sensitive to meeting longer term personal needs. For example:

I wanted to stand on my own two feet . . . to learn who I was. Just basically grow and improve (Respondent 034).

To go to school and then to university. Good employment. Regain self-respect. I wanted to find happiness for the first time (Respondent 007).

I wanted to be an architect (Respondent 052).

In view of the quotations above and the low Cramer's V coefficient for Table 7a, we re-examined the relationship between level of entrenchment in street life and the goals that young people had when they first left the street. Table 7b illustrates this relationship while controlling for the respondents' gender. Gender is used as a control variable because we suspected that level of entrenchment in the street lifestyle had opposite affects on the types of goals that males and females had when they first left the street. This opposite relationship would lead to the similar percentages that were reported in Table 7a.

Table 7b produced a moderately low, positive relationship for males, with a Cramer's V of .29 and a moderately low, positive relationship for females, with a Cramer's V of .31. Table 7b shows that 9 (52.9%) of the 17 males with lower levels of entrenchment in street life had goals surrounding job training and/or educational upgrading versus 13 (72.2%) of the 18 males with higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle.

Conversely, 6 (35.3%) of the 17 males with lower levels of entrenchment in street life had goals surrounding personal growth versus 2 (11.1%) of the 18 males with higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle.

Table 7b shows the opposite relationships to exist among female respondents. Nine (75%) of the 12 female respondents with lower levels of entrenchment in street life had job training and/or educational upgrading goals compared to 11 (47.8%) of the 23 females with higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle. Alternatively, 3 (25%) of the 12 females with lower levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle had goals regarding personal growth in comparison to 8 (34.8%) of the 23 females with higher levels of entrenchment in street life.

Table 7b clarifies the relationship presented in Table 7a between level of entrenchment in street life and the young people's goals when they

first left the street. Briefly, males with higher levels of entrenchment were more likely than males with lower levels of entrenchment to have goals surrounding job training and/or educational upgrading, while females with higher levels of entrenchment were more likely than females with lower levels of entrenchment to have goals surrounding personal growth.

Table 7b: Goals When First Leaving The Street By Level Of Entrenchment Controlling For Gender

	Male N = 35		Female N = 35	
	Higher Entrenchment N = 18	Lower Entrenchment N = 17	Higher Entrenchment N = 23	Lower Entrenchment N = 12
Job &/Or Education Upgrading	13 72.2%	9 52.9%	11 47.8%	9 75.0%
Personal Growth	2 11.1%	6 35.3%	8 34.8%	3 25.0%
Taking On Responsibility	0	0	3 13.0%	0
Get Off Drugs &/Or Alcohol	2 11.1%	1 5.9%	0	0
No Goals	1 5.6%	1 5.9%	1 4.4%	0
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Cramer's V = .29 N = 70		Cramer's V = .31	

The difference in the quality of their goals begins to disappear as they spend more time in mainstream society. We found that 45 (66%) of 68 respondents stated that their goals had changed now that they had been off the street for some time. Thirty-nine (86.7%) of the 45 young people that had changed their goals made practical changes, such as job changes, decisions to continue with their education, or choosing different careers.

We were interested in knowing what, if anything, helped these young people achieve their goals. We isolated a number of variables and asked the respondents to rate each variable with a score of one through to five, with one representing not very important and five representing very important. These variables included: having a decent job; having a decent place to live that is affordable; having access to personal services; knowing what services or resources were available; having supportive people around; and having friends who understand. We found that there were two prominent variables. Fifty-eight (84%) out of 69 respondents felt that having supportive people around was a very important factor which helped them achieve their goals. Fifty-three (76%) of the 70 respondents felt that having friends who understand was, similarly, very important in helping them achieve their goals.

If we accept the notion that goals are representative of the skills required to function in the mainstream, then the significance of these findings rests in the fact that the individual's new reference group facilitates the acquisition of the necessary skills (Lofland, 1969). For

some young people, supportive individuals and/or friends become identity models, while others turn to more formal organizations, such as public and/or private sector agencies that offer counselling and that have former street youth as staff members. Regardless of the reference group or significant other, "deviants" seeking to become "normal" require affirmation from "normal others." For example, when asked what other factors helped in achieving goals, typical responses included:

A place like "Stepping Stone" [private sector agency]. A person who knows what it's like (Respondent 007).

Yes, my girlfriend . . . someone who believes in me (Respondent 017).

My friends were a lot of help and my group of supporters from agencies. Love from a partner is never a guarantee, but friendship is the most solid support (Respondent 001).

One thing that I'm surprised about is that my parents are behind me, helping me to achieve my goals. So I guess you'd rate that a five . . . very important (Respondent 057).

As was discussed in the literature review above, young people seek affirmation from members of their new reference groups; from the significant "others" in their lives. Thirty-four (49%) of the 70 respondents stated that none of their current friends were friends from the street, while 23 (33%) had one or two friends from the street in their current group of friends. We discovered similar findings by examining the types of activities that they engage in for leisure and recreation. For example, 19

(27%) of the 70 respondents liked to relax by reading, watching t.v., or listening to music. Fourteen (20%) participated in sports, 12 (17%) spent their time at drop-in centres or local malls, 10 (14%) enjoyed going to the cinemas or playing bingo and 8 (11%) liked to go dancing or bar-hopping. With the exception of frequenting drop-in centres, these are all activities in which mainstream youth participate. Moreover, 49 (71%) out of 69 respondents stated that they liked to spend their leisure or recreational time with their friends. As we will see below, new reference groups and mainstream skills contributed to the development and acquisition of a "normal" or mainstream identity.

5.8 Post-Street Identities

Upon disengaging from the street, many street youth seek to become connected to a new reference group. It is from their mainstream reference groups that they acquire the assistance, support, skills and affirmation necessary to become responsible members of mainstream society. Adopting a mainstream perspective leads to the development and acquisition of a mainstream identity. This mainstream identity is a reflection of the young people's perceptions of the attitudes of the members in their new reference group. To determine the number of youth that experienced an identity change after leaving the street, we examined several variables, which included: change in appearance, change in attitude, and change in post-street self-image.

Appearance, as we discussed above, is related to the individual's self-image. As a dimension of interaction (Stone, 1970), appearance conveys two important messages: it is a reflection of how individuals identify themselves as well as whom they identify with. Unlike pre-street and street identities, young people who have made or are in the process of making the transition back to the mainstream lack a prevalent collective identity. The majority of the young people aspire to be "normal" and define "normal" in various ways. For the most part, they seek to relinquish their "outcast" statuses by shifting their concerns toward "fitting in." Thus, their appearances tend to reflect their desires for normalcy. For example, we found that 56 (80%) of the 70 respondents had changed their appearance since leaving the street. Moreover, 55 (98.2%) of the 56 youth that had changed their appearance were consciously aware of the importance of looking "normal." When asked how their appearances changed, respondents typically stated:

I no longer dress like a hooker (Respondent 001).

I barely wear make-up . . . I have straight hair . . . I listen to rock 'n' roll . . . I'm just plain. I'm pretty comfortable just being me (Respondent 025).

I look so much more conservative. I've become more mature. I fit in better. I understand you have to (Respondent 046).

I dress laid back, loose clothing. I got rid of all my earrings. I cut my hair short instead of letting it grow long. [Why?] People had an image of me that I didn't like and I didn't like myself any more (Respondent 058).

I've cut my hair, I dress more appropriately, I've changed my earring and I'm clean shaven most of the time. [Why?] I guess it has to do with society. Society looks at you differently if you dress against the norm. I do it to make society and myself happy. I normally don't give a shit about what others think, except for this (Respondent 070).

In addition to changing their appearances, many of the young people also stated that their attitudes had changed since leaving the street. Sixty-two (88.6%) of the 70 respondents explained that they had developed more of a positive outlook on life or were more open and accepting toward others. This attitude change is indicative of the identity changes that occurred or were in the process of occurring. In the pre-street and street sections, we were able to ascertain a sense of the various types of attitudes through the self-image questions. Their self-images tended to reflect their attitudes: negative, rebellious, marginal or deviant. In describing their self-images, many youth emphasized clothing and adornment, which in turn reflected the collective identities to which they belonged. The majority of the young people felt that society held condescending opinions of their reference groups, which further contributed to their marginalization and their images as "outsiders" (Becker, 1963). Conversely, the majority of the youth re-entering the mainstream value the opinions of society. Their descriptions of the changes in their attitudes echo their need to belong and to "fit in." For example:

Mainstream values have become more important. Partying isn't as important. [Now] I look at long term value instead of immediate gratification . . . unlike the street. [For example,]

having stable relationships and taking time out to give to other people (Respondent 033).

I don't have the attitude that the world is out to get me any more. I'm more willing to listen to authority now. I'm much more positive now. I have a better outlook than before (Respondent 034).

Maturity. I don't see life from the same perspective. I'm more focused. My goals are clearer (Respondent 050).

I'm not as egotistical as I was. I used to think that I was "God" at one time. I believe I'm an average 19 year old kid now (Respondent 058).

I take things more seriously and instead of running away from my problems I face it and settle it instead of running and having the problem get bigger (Respondent 069).

In conjunction with a change in appearance and attitude, many young people experienced real changes in their post-street self-images. When we coded self-image as positive and negative, we found that 64 (91%) of the 70 respondents had positive self-images, while the remaining 6 (9%) had the latter. This finding is slightly deceiving for it suggests that the majority of our research participants had developed and acquired a mainstream identity. When we asked the young people to explain their statements we were able to attain a clearer appreciation of the changes that had occurred. These changes can best be represented by a range that places young people with negative self-images on one side and young people with positive self-images on the opposite side. For example, we found one young person with a negative self-image, showing no signs of

change. He represents the "solitary street transient" that we discussed in the previous section. Despite being in the mainstream, he was not a part of it for he failed to relinquish his street ties. He stated:

I always consider that I am in the street. I don't live there, but my life is continuously involved with the street (Respondent 044).

In the middle category, we found 5 young people with negative self-images that were in the process of transition or rather, were in the process of exploring the mainstream. These young people expressed feelings of uncertainty, insecurity and fear, all of which they attribute to the unfamiliarity of the mainstream. Some examples of their statements include:

Slightly better but not much . . . do to the lack of support (Respondent 032).

It's kind of in transition . . . not sure of the territory. I don't know, I guess I don't feel worthy (Respondent 026).

Still very conscientious about certain things. I still don't have a lot of self-esteem. I'm still scared a lot (Respondent 021).

We also found 5 young people with positive self-images that were in the process of transition. While accomplishing small goals, they were receiving affirmation and were beginning to realize that longer term changes were possible. For example, these respondents stated:

I'm a fairly decent person, someone who's trying to get their life in order. People have been saying lately that I am a decent person. My grandfather is telling me that I'm putting my life back together. It's important to me because it gives me a boost (Respondent 064).

I'm respecting myself. I'm telling myself I can continue on and achieve my goals. When I was on the street I lacked self-esteem and self-confidence. I don't feel that way any more. I figure I can do anything if I try or at least [attempt] to do anything if I try (Respondent 063).

I'm putting myself back together. I'm healing. I am now setting small goals every day and achieving them with help from others (Respondent 047).

Finally, we found 59 young people with positive self-images who, generally, felt better about themselves, had positive outlooks on life and had gained a greater degree of control over their personal lives. Many of these young people had developed or were close to developing mainstream identities. Some examples of their statements include:

I'm important, I'm special, I'm a really good person. I love myself very much. Because I have a grasp on life now. I don't have to feel ashamed of who I am or what I've become. I know I am the number one person (Respondent 018).

Very confident. I see myself as a professional in an area other than prostitution. I don't see myself as a street walker any more. I can't picture myself that way any more. The training program that I was in helped me deal with my past issues and learn new ways of thinking that I developed on my own. Like,

recognizing when I'm falling and knowing what to do to pick myself up (Respondent 031).

A lot more confidence and I know that if my friends like me it's not because of what I can do for them . . . it's me, that's it. Because my life has settled down a lot more since then and I don't have to do favours for guys that I don't want to do favours for. I have choice now. I have more freedom now than when I was on the street looking for freedom (Respondent 069).

To obtain an idea of the number of young people that had developed mainstream identities, we created a composite variable by combining the scores of several variables, such as change in appearance, change in attitude, self-image, and the meaning of their self-image, into a single composite measure of mainstream identity. The reliability of the composite variable was measured and the Alpha coefficient was .6143. We found that the composite measure of mainstream identity produced an ideal type. For example, 47 (67.1%) of the 70 young people had experienced an identity change and had developed a mainstream identity, 19 or 27.1% of the young people were in the process of transition, 3 or 4.3% of the young people were in the initial stage of the process, the "healing" stage, and 1 (1.4%) young person was in the mainstream, but not of it. However, the frequency distributions for this composite variable are difficult to use in further analysis. To simplify matters, we recoded mainstream identity into a dichotomous variable labelled "developed a mainstream identity." In this respect, 47 (67.1%) of the 70 young people had developed a mainstream identity, while 23 or 32.9% of the young people had not developed a mainstream identity.

A closer examination of the young people that had experienced an identity change produced an interesting finding. Young people with higher levels of entrenchment in street life were more likely to have experienced an identity change than were young people with lower levels of entrenchment. Table 8 demonstrates this relationship.

Table 8: Developed Mainstream Identity By Level Of Entrenchment

	Higher Levels Of Entrenchment N = 41	Lower Levels Of Entrenchment N = 29
Developed Mainstream Identity	32 78.0%	15 51.7%
Did Not Develop A Mainstream Identity	9 22.0%	14 48.3%
	100%	100%
	Phi = .27 N = 70	

Table 8 examines the relationship between level of entrenchment and the development of a mainstream identity. This produced a moderately low, positive relationship with a Phi of .27. Table 8 shows that 15 (51.7%) of the 29 young people with lower levels of entrenchment in street life had developed a mainstream identity in comparison to 32 (78%) of the young people with higher levels of entrenchment in street life.

Among the young people that had developed a mainstream identity, we suspected that those with higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle were more likely to have received help disengaging from the street. They were also more likely to have valued the importance of having supportive people and/or friends assist them to achieve their goals. Table 9 demonstrates this relationship.

Table 9 re-examines the relationship in Table 8, while controlling for the young people that had help getting off the street. Table 9 helps to clarify the relationship in Table 8. Table 9 produced two Phi coefficients: a moderately low, positive Phi of .26 for the young people that had received help getting off the street; and a moderately low, positive Phi of .31 for the young people that had not received help getting off the street.

Table 9 shows that among the young people that had received help getting off the street, the young people with higher levels of entrenchment were more likely than the young people with lower levels of entrenchment to have developed a mainstream identity. For example, 23 (79.3%) of the 29 young people with higher levels of entrenchment had developed a mainstream identity in comparison to 11 (55%) of the 20 young people with lower levels of entrenchment. Table 9 also shows that the same relationship exists among the young people that did not receive help getting off the street. For example, 9 (75%) of the 12 young people with higher levels of entrenchment developed a mainstream identity in

comparison to 4 (44.4%) of the 9 young people with lower levels of entrenchment.

Table 9: Developed Mainstream Identity By Level Of Entrenchment Controlling For Received Help Leaving The Street

	Received Help Leaving The Street N = 49		Did Not Receive Help Leaving The Street N = 21	
	Higher Entrenchment N = 29	Lower Entrenchment N = 20	Higher Entrenchment N = 12	Lower Entrenchment N = 9
Developed Mainstream Identity	23 79.3%	11 55.0%	9 75.0%	4 44.4%
Did Not Develop A Mainstream Identity	6 20.7%	9 45.0%	3 25.0%	5 55.6%
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Phi = .26 N = 70		Phi = .31	

Table 9 appears to deny our suspicions regarding the relationship between the development of a mainstream identity, level of entrenchment and help getting off the street. Table 9 suggests that receiving help getting off the street has an insignificant affect on the original relationship in Table 8. However, it is important to note that the variable "getting help leaving the street" is similar to a variable that was examined in the previous section, specifically regarding getting help when the young

people first arrived on the street. Recalling, Table 3 raised two important points, which were: not all young people seek help or "get connected" when they first arrive on the street; and a portion of the solitary street transients find reference groups and enter apprenticeship relations at later points. Table 9 demonstrates a similar finding: not all young people "became connected" to a mainstream reference group upon leaving the street lifestyle. Table 9 suggests that some young people became "connected" at later points.

One other variable, which has not yet been discussed, emphasizes the difference among the young people that had experienced identity changes. As was discussed in the literature review above, ideological hardware (Lofland, 1969) can help facilitate identity change. We asked our research participants if they had kept anything as a reminder of the time they spent on the street. We found that 42 (60%) of the 70 respondents had kept street clothing, momentos, or pictures. For many of these youth, the items represented mirrors reflecting the changes between their old and new selves. For example:

T-shirts and a pair of jeans. It's a humility device in case I get too cocky (Respondent 040).

A necklace . . . it's one of the most sentimental things I have. A woman gave it to me. She said that as long as she saw me wearing it she'd know that I wasn't using drugs . . . cocaine. I wore the necklace even though I was and one day I got so desperate that I tried to sell it. A guy was going to give me \$10.00 for it and that's when I realized that I had hit rock bottom. I was selling everything that meant a lot to me just to

get high. I knew I had to stop using. So the necklace is a reminder of what I went through and learned (Respondent 059).

My hat. It reminds me that now I'm a person that's respected . . . then, when I was on the street, I wasn't respected for who I was. I don't think I'll be able to get rid of this hat (Respondent 056).

Tables 10a and 10b respectively examine the relationship between level of entrenchment and ideological hardware as well as the relationship between ideological hardware and the development of a mainstream identity.

Table 10a examines the relationship between level of entrenchment and the young people that kept reminders of the time they spent on the street. This produced a low, positive relationship with a Phi of .14. Table 10a shows that 27 (65.9%) of the 41 young people with higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle kept reminders of the time they spent on the street, versus 15 (51.7%) of the 29 young people with lower levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle.

Table 10b illustrates the relationship between reminders of street life and the development of a mainstream identity. This produced a low, positive relationship with a Phi of .17. Table 10b shows that 31 (73.8%) of the 42 young people that had kept reminders of the time they spent on the street had developed a mainstream identity in comparison to 16 (57.1%) of the young people that had not kept reminders.

**Table 10a: Kept Reminders of The Street
By Level Of Entrenchment**

	Higher Levels Of Entrenchment N = 41	Lower Levels Of Entrenchment N = 29
Kept Reminders Of The Street	27 65.9%	15 51.7%
Did Not Keep Reminders Of The Street	14 34.1%	14 48.3%
	100%	100%
	Phi = .14	
	N = 70	

**Table 10b: Developed Mainstream Identity By
Kept Reminders Of The Street**

	Kept Reminders Of The Street N = 42	Did Not Keep Reminders N = 28
Developed Mainstream Identity	31 73.8%	16 57.1%
Did Not Develop A Mainstream Identity	11 26.2%	12 42.9%
	100%	100%
	Phi = .17	
	N = 70	

While Table 10a suggests that young people with higher levels of entrenchment in street life are more likely to hold on to reminders of the time they spent on the street, Table 10b suggests that ideological hardware can facilitate the development of a mainstream identity.

5.9 Post-Street Freedom versus Conflict Youth

In the pre-street section, we identified two groups of young people based on their home situations: the freedom and the conflict groups. We discussed the different experiences that these young people had on the street. Briefly, we found that young people that had left very conflictual home situations were more prone to becoming entrenched in the street lifestyle. The majority of the young people in the conflict group were marginalized members of the mainstream prior to leaving home. Once they "hit the street" and became connected to a street sub-group, they discovered, among other things, that they belonged.

Similar to the previous two sections, our discussion of post-street experiences has yielded a two group division. We found that 47 (67.1%) of the 70 respondents had developed mainstream identities, while the remaining 23 (32.9%) had not developed a mainstream identity. Each group contains two sub-groups consisting of a percentage of young people with lower and higher levels of entrenchment in street life. Among the 47 young people that had experienced an identity change, we found that slightly more had higher levels of entrenchment. This difference is related

to the fact that entrenched young people were more likely to have internalized their deviant identities, similar to the overweight person that must internalize an obese identity before he or she can proceed with losing weight (Degher and Hughes, 1991).

In the street section we stated that level of involvement in street culture had an affect on the young people's identity. Young people that were entrenched in the lifestyle were more likely to have acquired a street youth identity. Given that the young people with higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle were more likely to have run from conflictual home situations, the young people from very conflictual home situations should be more likely to acquire a mainstream identity.

Table 11a: Developed Mainstream Identity By Home Situation

	Relatively Stable Living Situation N = 17	Conflictual Home Situation N = 51
Developed Mainstream Identity	10 58.8%	35 68.6%
Did Not Develop A Mainstream Identity	7 41.2%	16 31.4%
	100%	100%
	Phi = .09	
	N = 68	Missing = 2

Table 11a illustrates the relationship between the development of a mainstream identity and the young people's home situations. This produced a low, positive relationship with a Phi of .09. Table 11a shows that 35 (68.6%) of the 51 youth in the conflict group had developed and acquired mainstream identities in comparison to the 10 (58.8%) of the 17 youth from the freedom group. The low Phi coefficient for Table 11a suggests that there is no relationship between the development of a mainstream identity and the young people's home situations.

Table 11b re-examines the relationship in Table 11a while controlling for the young people's level of entrenchment. Table 11b produced two Phi coefficients: a moderately low, positive Phi of .33 for the young people with higher levels of entrenchment; and a low, positive Phi of .23 for the young people with lower levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle.

Table 11b shows that "conflict" youth with higher levels of entrenchment are more likely than "freedom" youth with higher levels of entrenchment to have developed a mainstream identity¹¹. For example, 27 (84.4%) of the 32 "conflict" youth with higher levels of entrenchment developed a mainstream identity in comparison to 4 (50%) of the 8 "freedom" youth with higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle.

¹¹ It is important to note that these findings are questionable given the small cell sizes for freedom youth with both higher and lower levels of entrenchment.

Alternatively, Table 11b shows the opposite relationship for young people with lower levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle. Six (66.7%) of the 9 "freedom" youth with lower levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle developed a mainstream identity in comparison to 8 (42.1%) of the 19 "conflict" youth with lower levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle.

Table 11b: Developed Mainstream Identity By Home Situation Controlling For Level Of Entrenchment

	Higher Entrenchment N = 40		Lower Entrenchment N = 28	
	Freedom Youth N = 8	Conflict Youth N = 32	Freedom Youth N = 9	Conflict Youth N = 19
Developed Mainstream Identity	4 50.0%	27 84.4%	6 66.7%	8 42.1%
Did Not Develop A Mainstream Identity	4 50.0%	5 15.6%	3 33.3%	11 57.9%
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Phi = .33 N = 68		Phi = .23 Missing = 2	

When comparing the Phi coefficients from Table 11b to the Phi coefficient reported for Table 11a, we can interpret the relationship between the development of a mainstream identity and the young people's home situations. In this respect, the young people's home situations affects

their level of entrenchment in the street lifestyle, which in turn affects their ability to develop a mainstream identity. It should be noted that the significant differences in the Phi coefficients reported in Table 11b suggest that the relationship between home situations, level of entrenchment and the development of a mainstream identity is stronger for the young people with higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle.

Table 11b suggests that "conflict" youth with higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle are more likely to develop a mainstream identity. Recalling, Table 5b suggested that females are more likely to have higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle. If we accept this finding then the following proposition should also be true: females are more likely to develop a mainstream identity. Table 12 examines the relationship between the development of a mainstream identity and the respondents' gender.

Table 12 supports the assumption that females are more likely to develop a mainstream identity. Twenty-eight (80%) of the 35 female respondents had developed a mainstream identity in comparison to 19 (54.3%) of the 35 male respondents. Table 12 produced a moderately low, positive Phi of .27.

Tables 5b, 11b and 12 collectively suggest that "conflict" females with higher levels of entrenchment are more likely to develop a mainstream identity. We will assume this to be true, however, given that

Table 12: Developed Mainstream Identity By Gender

	Males N = 35	Females N = 35
Developed Mainstream Identity	19 54.3%	28 80.0%
Did Not Develop A Mainstream Identity	16 45.7%	7 20.0%
	100%	100%
	P = .27	
	N = 70	

there were only 5 "freedom" females, an accurate examination of the relationship between the development of a mainstream identity and the young people's home situations, while controlling for gender is not possible. The small cell sizes would make it impossible to analyze the results of such a procedure.

6.0 Discussion and Conclusions

The central thrust of this research has been to examine the transition that street youth go through in re-entering mainstream society. The term "transition" requires elaboration for it denotes change without specifying the types of change that young people experience. Briefly, the transition consists of two parts: change in self-image and change in social status. The symbolic interactionist perspective, specifically the notion of career (Hughes, 1958; Goffman, 1961; Becker, 1963) is a fruitful analytic device for examining such transitions. The notion of career, as it was outlined above, refers to an individual's movement through the structures of society. The various stages and contingencies of a career signal people's changing status or role and identity (Haas and Shaffir, 1978).

Previous research on street youth (Visano, 1990) has examined the socializing influences of the street and the impact that they have on a young person's identity. Visano's (1990) examination of the stages and contingencies in the street youth's career was influential for the current research. Visano concluded his insightful study with a point of departure for future research. The identification of a disengagement stage in conjunction with Strauss's argument regarding the irreversible nature of identity change suggested that the transition to the mainstream was a separate career. Disengaging from the street represents a turning point in the street youth's career and marks the beginning of a new process which can lead to the development of a "normal" identity.

In order to gain a better understanding of the transition to the mainstream, the current study focussed on three specific areas which collectively represent the street youth phenomenon: pre-street experiences; on-street experiences; and post-street experiences. Each area contains socializing influences that have an impact on shaping the young person's self-image. Moreover, each area can be understood better as separate, but interrelated careers with distinct turning points. For example, the departure from home represents the turning point in the pre-street youth's career, while disengaging from the street is the turning point in the street youth's career. The interrelationship between careers refers to the fact that pre-street experiences affect street experiences, which in turn have an affect on the young person's transition back to mainstream society.

6.1 The Transition To The Mainstream

Visano's (1990) study on the socialization of street youth provides us with a conceptual model for understanding the development of street youth identities. According to Visano, the career of the street youth includes three central stages and three main contingencies. Similarly, these generic stages and contingencies apply to the transition off the street. We obtained support for this finding from both existing research (Becker, 1963; Degher and Hughes, 1991) and from the respondents interviewed for this study.

Conceptually, the transition to the mainstream consists of three main stages that include: disengaging from the street lifestyle; becoming connected to a mainstream reference group; and becoming a responsible member of the mainstream. Movement from one stage to the next is propelled by the young person's acquisition of various skills, affirmation from his or her reference group and change in self-conception.

All young people that have spent a considerable amount of time on the street go through a disengagement stage when attempting to return to the mainstream. Disengaging from the street lifestyle differs with respect to the amount of time spent on the street and the level of involvement in the street lifestyle. For example, we identified two groups of young people based on their level of involvement in the street lifestyle and found that the majority of the young people with lower levels of involvement in street culture typically disengaged after becoming disillusioned with the street lifestyle. Boredom and frustration in conjunction with some of the consequences of the street lifestyle, generally, led these young people to become disillusioned with the perceived freedom and independence of street culture.

Conversely, the majority of the young people that became entrenched in street culture attempted to disengage after "hitting bottom." The theme of "hitting bottom" is commonly found in the literature on substance abuse and refers to a specific vulnerable period in the abuser's career. Accordingly, the individual who has "hit bottom," generally, is

remorseful, full of shame and guilt and believes that he or she has reached the end of the line (Lofland, 1969). The majority of the young people we interviewed who were in this type of situation were more likely to have experienced very threatening career turning points, such as fear of physical harm or prosecution by the criminal justice system. These turning points combined with their perceptions of society's negative image of street youth helped the respondents to readjust their self-conceptions from "street youth" to "deviants" or "outsiders." In this case, "deviants" or "outsiders" refer to the fact that the respondents realized that they were marginal members of mainstream society, despite being street youth. Thus, the reconceptualization of self, at this juncture, is important for it may signal the young people's desire to disengage from the street lifestyle.

Upon disengaging from the street, young people have few options. Lack of skills and/or education become obstacles inhibiting the transition to the mainstream. Moreover, to facilitate disengagement and identity change, physical separation from the old reference group or severance of communication with it is necessary (Boyanowsky, 1984; Greil and Rudy, 1984). Thus, many young people find that they lack supportive individuals from the mainstream and seek to become connected to a new reference group.

Mainstream reference groups vary in the fact that there are many collective identities from which young people can acquire a valued identity. For the most part, these young people seek to become "normal."

However, pre-street experiences and the young person's level of involvement in street culture influence the type of reference group that the young person will pursue. For example, many of the young people that were entrenched in the street lifestyle could not return home and did not have supportive individuals such as family members or friends that could help them. These young people, typically, sought professional help from counselling agencies. Many of these agencies employ staff members or counsellors who were once themselves street youth. These staff members or counsellors become identity models for the young person attempting to re-enter the mainstream. Similar to the A.A. member who finds a sponsor among a group of others with similar experiences, young people find identity models in many of these agencies. The identity model is one who can both appreciate and understand the young person's past experiences as well as his or her current experiences. Furthermore, identity models are examples of the identity change that is possible (Lofland, 1969).

A number of young people do not request professional help when disengaging from the street lifestyle. These young people become connected to new reference groups through employment, school or through contact with pre-street friends. Once they become connected to mainstream reference groups, they enter into apprenticeship relations with responsible members of the mainstream. In the course of interacting with members of their new reference group, they acquire a new world-view (Greil and Rudy, 1984) or a mainstream perspective, which includes: a stable living situation; job training and/or educational upgrading; and

participation in various mainstream activities, such as hanging out, playing sports, going to the movies, etc.

There are a number of young people who are unable to successfully make the transition off the street on their first attempt. Their inability to make the transition off the street is a consequence of the "pulling" forces of the street and/or the "pushing" forces of the mainstream. While the level of entrenchment in the street lifestyle may be a factor "pulling" young people back to the street, lack of supportive mainstream groups or individuals is a factor "pushing" young people out of the mainstream and back to the street. These youth return to the street where some become further entrenched in the street lifestyle and eventually graduate to become street adults (Visano, 1990), while others wait for the next critical event before re-attempting to disengage.

All young people that are attempting to become members of the mainstream seek affirmation from members of their new reference groups. Affirmation is important for it signifies that young people belong and that identity change is imminent. In the course of acquiring a mainstream perspective young people form bonds with members of their new reference groups. These mainstream bonds replace those developed among the substitute families on the street. They are critical for they help young people overcome feelings of marginalization by allowing them to feel as if they belong. Affirmation is also important because it leads to a re-conceptualization of "self"; to the development of a "normal" identity.

Identity transformation occurs when the individual's subjective element of the self, the "I," responds to the objective element of the self, the "me." The "me" is a reflection of the individual's perceptions of the attitudes of his or her significant "others." Thus, identity change occurs when the "I" internalizes the "me" (Mead, 1934).

A number of young people require additional assistance in the form of ideological hardware (Lofland, 1965). Reminders of the time they spent on the street can serve two purposes: self- and social- ratification (Rubin et al., 1993). Old clothing, pictures and momentos can strengthen young people's perceptions of their new self. These objects become mirrors reflecting the change between past and present lives. They may also be used to attain affirmation from members of young people's new reference groups. Old clothing, pictures and stories may be used by people to gain recognition for their success. In this respect, these objects help to influence the attitudes of "others" who may not have been aware of the young people's transformation.

The acquisition of a mainstream perspective suggests that the young person has become a responsible member of mainstream society. Aside from having secured a stable living situation, employment and/or educational upgrading and new reference groups, young people have also acquired a "normal" identity. This identity change is reflected in the fact that many young people have longer time horizons and are better able to

plan for their futures. Many young people have long-term career oriented goals. They aspire to become professionals or service providers and feel that these goals are both realistic and achievable.

6.2 The Street Youth Phenomenon And Possibilities For Intervention

The notion of "career" is a valuable analytic device for examining processes of change. The current research has examined three interrelated processes or careers, which can collectively be viewed as the street youth phenomenon. Much of the existing research on street youth and runaways focuses on one or more of the following issues: antecedents to running; consequences to being on the street; and/or the youth serving system's response. However, shifting the focus on to the young people's identity in the pre-street, on-street and post-street sections of the phenomenon has yielded a number of findings, which have generated a broader understanding of the overall street youth experience. For example, the avoidance of life on the street may be a possibility for many of these young people. Based on the findings of this study, this section will review the complete street youth experience and address possible areas of intervention and/or offer suggestions for approaches to intervention.

Many of the street youth and runaway studies that concentrate on pre-street experiences focus on young people's motives for leaving and typically classify young people under one of two categories: runaways or throwaways (Whitbeck and Simons, 1990; Kufeldt and Nimmo, 1987;

Adams et al., 1985). While antecedent conditions are an important element in the equation, they are not the only element. The emphasis on antecedent conditions creates an image of the types of young people that turn to the street. With the exception of young victims of abuse, young people that prematurely leave home are generally viewed as rebelling against societal norms. However, a closer examination of several of the socializing influences in the young person's life yields evidence to contradict the former line of thought. Many young people run away from very conflictual home situations that are characterized not only by abuse, but also conflict and/or neglect (Brannigan and Caputo, 1993; Webber, 1991; Michaud, 1988; Ek and Carr Steelman, 1988).

According to the symbolic interactionist perspective, socialization is the process by which individuals acquire the skills, knowledge, attitudes, values and motives of the members of the groups in which they belong or seek to become members. Moreover, socialization is dependent on human interaction or communication. Similarly, it is through the course of interacting with others that identities are forged, maintained and validated (Sewell, 1970; Haas and Shaffir, 1978). Our examination of the agents that have the greatest impact on shaping the young person's identity during this early period of socialization has helped us to identify two paths that most youth take to the street. The first path is that of the freedom youth, who are young people that are rebellious in nature. The second path is that of the conflict youth, who are young people that come from very conflictual home situations.

One group consisted of young people that were from relatively stable living situations. The majority of these young people were marginal members of the mainstream. Their marginal statuses were largely consequences of their rebellious natures. These young people, generally, had affinities for freedom and independence, which they believed to exist on the street.

Once on the street, the majority of these young people failed to develop street youth identities. Their concerns were typically with drugs and/or alcohol, having fun and finding a blissful freedom. Despite being on the street, they failed to become a part of it. Their lower levels of involvement in the street lifestyle inhibited them from internalizing a street youth identity. Rather, they remained marginal members; belonging neither fully to the mainstream nor to street culture. Their participation in various street activities was merely a response to their life situations. Once the lifestyle became too difficult, they generally became disillusioned and, consequently disengaged. For this group of young people, leaving home and turning to the street is a means of expressing their frustrations with their previous situations. This is similar to English's (1993) explanation of "reactive obesity." English states:

. . . cases of reactive obesity involve individuals who have gained weight in response to a specific life situation and once the situation is resolved these individuals rapidly lose the excess weight. For this group, the status of being heavy is so

recent and generally so short-lived, that the identity associated with being fat never has a chance to fully develop (1993: 237).

For the majority of these young people, leaving home is temporary. Once they experience some of the harsh realities of street culture they become bored, frustrated and disillusioned and begin to seek an alternative to the street lifestyle.

Given the rebellious nature of this particular group of young people, it is difficult to suggest specific areas of intervention. However, there are two central questions guiding this discussion of possible interventions. These include: i) What are the factors inhibiting "freedom" seeking young people from going to the street?; and ii) What are the factors facilitating feelings of disillusionment and boredom which lead "freedom" seeking young people to disengage from the street lifestyle? In order to address the first question it is important to understand that the central problem for these young people, prior to leaving their homes, appears to be a lack of available choices in both their home situations and school. Running away from home is a means of dealing with their joint feelings of powerlessness and dependency which they are subject to through parental and school authority. Thus, intervention strategies should be directed toward social institutions, specifically the family and the school. To inhibit young people from running to the streets, these institutions should mutually work to prepare young people for emancipation. This would include: educating them about independent living and what it may entail; informing young people of the skills that are necessary if they are to become independent of

their families as well as the various methods of acquiring the essential skills; and helping young people to set and achieve goals, for this may help to foster direction in their lives. These three suggestions help to create more choices for young people. They empower young people with knowledge about life and living independently as well as help them to realize that there are alternatives to going to the street.

The second question deals with "freedom" seeking young people that are on the street. Feelings of disillusionment can be facilitated with strategies focussed on educating this particular group of young people about the consequences of participating in the street lifestyle. The idea is to give them as much information as possible about the street lifestyle so that they in turn can use this information to reflect on their lives. In order for this information to be effective, it must come from people who understand and may have experienced life on the street. Thus, out-reach workers, staff members and counsellors working in drop-in centres and youth hostels and street youth with higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle, who are in the process of making the transition to the mainstream are in the most favourable positions to educate these young people for they may be viewed as knowledgeable, creditable, and understanding by these young people. In addition to educating the young people of the consequences of the street lifestyle, intervention strategies should also focus on creating alternatives for these young people. This could include: helping the young people to re-establish relationships with their families; and/or helping the young people to acquire stable living

situations as well as skills, such as job training and/or educational upgrading, which are essential for independent living.

The second group of young people consisted of the majority of our sample. These young people came from very conflictual home situations which were plagued by conflict, abuse and/or neglect. The majority of these young people viewed themselves as "outsiders" (Becker, 1963). Despite being in the mainstream, the absence of stable living situations combined with the conflict and/or abuse set them apart from regular mainstream youth. Problems at home escalated into problems at school for many of these youth. Consequently, refuge was sought among understanding "others" who were, generally, in similar circumstances. Thus, the street was seen by those young people as the only alternative to intolerable and uncontrollable environments. In addressing possible intervention strategies that may help this particular group of young people to avoid life on the streets, it is important to understand what these young people acquire from participating in street culture. "Conflict" youth differ from "freedom" seeking young people in that they are not searching for freedom and independence. Rather, "conflict" youth seek to belong, to be a part of an understanding group or family that shares similar circumstances. Young people find, among street culture, "others" that "share experiences in common and these experiences can be referred to with the expectation that they will be understood by other members, and further can be employed to construct a social reality" (Fine, 1979: 734). The street lifestyle can be very appealing for these young people in that it

symbolizes freedom from their pasts and the ability to govern themselves in the wake of the conflict that plagued their previous living situations. The street lifestyle may also be temporarily therapeutic for these young people. In the short-term, the advantages gained from participating in street culture may help these young people to fill a pre-existing void that is centred around the notions of being unwanted, unloved and the general feeling that they do not belong in the mainstream.

In addition to the crisis intervention programs that already exist (see Brannigan and Caputo, 1993: 146-154), intervention strategies designed to help "conflict" youth should be directed toward long-term care. However, this long-term care must consist of a loving and caring environment in order for these young people to develop the belongingness that they long. In addition to long-term care, contact with a formal self-help organization would be helpful for these young people. The dynamics of such an organization would be similar to those of A.A., in that former street youth could act as sponsors or identity models for these young people. The idea of sponsors or identity models who understand what it means to be a street youth and who are now responsible members of the mainstream, would benefit these young people greatly. These identity models would help these young people forge and maintain new identities.

The final process in the street youth phenomenon is the transition to the mainstream. When disengaging from the lifestyle, young people from both freedom and conflict groups seek to become "normal" or "regular"

members of mainstream society. The process to mainstream society is similar for both groups. Despite the fact that the majority of the rebellious young people did not develop street identities, they still have unresolved issues with which to contend. Many of these young people were marginalized prior to going to the street. Once on the street, they failed to lose their marginal statuses. Thus, the transition to the mainstream and the development of a "normal" identity means becoming a full member of mainstream society. For many of these youth, this includes going back to school, finding a job and/or resolving their family problems.

The transition to the mainstream is slightly different for conflict youth. While the process is the same, the meaning of "normal" has a different connotation for these young people. For example, as a concluding statement to our interview, one respondent stated:

Our kids are out there feeling like crap and they've had so much taken away from them. But you can't give it to them they have to earn it. They have to feel useful. Robbing people is an act of earning their keep. You could walk out there and give a kid 10 million dollars, but that's not going to fix what's in here . . . they need their families back . . . something to belong to (Respondent 038).

As was stated above, the street lifestyle can be temporarily therapeutic for these young people for it helps to fill a void in many of their lives. However, in addition to being short-lived, it is neither the proper medical nor clinical therapy that these young people generally require. For the

reality of being a part of street culture over a long period of time impedes any means of treatment that may help these young people to heal their wounds. Rather, participation in street culture is likely to lead to entrenchment in the lifestyle, which in turn has many undesirable consequences, such as physical or sexual abuse and/or substance abuse, to name several. Among the various consequences of entrenchment is the fact that these young people continue to be "outsiders" within mainstream society. Thus, while street culture may temporarily fill a void in their lives, the reality is that it is both repugnant and destructive. Many of these young people eventually realize that they have "hit bottom" and cannot continue to function within their deviant culture. They come to this realization after experiencing very threatening career turning points.

Intervention strategies focussing on helping "conflict" youth disengage from the street lifestyle should be directed toward helping these young people realize that they have "hit bottom." Out-reach workers, staff members and counsellors working in drop-in centres and youth hostels, and former street youth appear to be in excellent positions to facilitate this realization for they may have some form of regular contact with this group of young people. They are also understanding "others" who can relate to what these young people are experiencing. As one respondent stated:

teel the workers and police officers not to give up either. It's very important that whoever is reaching out to you is a real person, shows you some of their emotions and shares with you not just a clinical relationship. You have to have something to fill the gap that's existing (Respondent 022).

In order to facilitate this realization, these young people require knowledge or evidence of an alternative lifestyle which they can compare with their street lifestyle. Moreover, this alternative lifestyle must be realistic -- it must be attainable. Illustrating that there are alternative lifestyles creates choice for these young people. Choice is important for it allows them to feel as if they are in control of their lives. Control or the notion of control is something that they attained on the street and may be reluctant to give up when leaving the street lifestyle.

When disengaging from the street, many return to the mainstream equipped exclusively with "street wisdom" and an understanding of what it means to belong to a group. However, the majority of these young people lack an understanding of what it means to be a part of the mainstream. In returning to the mainstream, many young people adopt mainstream values and place an emphasis on acquiring material possessions, such as cars, houses and well paying jobs. These unrealistic goals are modified as they begin to become connected to mainstream sub-groups; to their new reference groups. Through the course of interacting with members of their new reference groups, they adopt group values and attitudes and re-adjust their goals. Skills, developed through job training and/or educational upgrading become prominent short-term goals. As they strive to achieve these goals, many receive affirmation from members of their new reference groups. This affirmation is critical for it reinforces the notion that they now belong to the mainstream and it permits them to re-

conceptualize their self-images. As putatively responsible members of the mainstream, they can now begin to set long-term goals and consider new careers.

Based on the findings of this research, we know that street youth are able to successfully make the transition to the mainstream, that they require assistance and affirmation from the members of their new reference groups and that they also require the skills necessary to become responsible members of the mainstream. Thus, the dynamics of the transition to the mainstream are similar to the dynamics of the transition to the street. Moreover, the dynamics of these two processes are similar to the dynamics of formal self-help groups, such as weight loss organizations or A.A. However, as we are informed by Greil and Rudy (1988), there are religious features to A.A. and we are not suggesting that these religious features exist in the street youth transitions. Nonetheless, in order to facilitate the transitional process to the mainstream, both "freedom" and "conflict" youth would benefit from formal organizations similar to A.A. or weight loss organizations. For "conflict" youth, the organization would be a fruitful place for them to develop new relationship bonds that foster a sense of belongingness. In addition to developing new relationship bonds, both groups of young people would benefit from the assistance and support of a sponsor or identity model. As time passes, these young people will become sponsors for newcomers to the group. This is equally important for it adds to their sense of belongingness a sense of

contribution¹². Many young people who have successfully made the transition to the mainstream feel that it is important to contribute to society. Helping other young people make the transition to the mainstream is one way of contributing or "giving back" to society. Further, helping others affirms their value as responsible members of mainstream society.

6.3 Possibilities For Future Research

The majority of the research on street youth and runaways focuses on antecedent conditions and consequences of being on the street. Very little research has attempted to examine the way in which young people make it off the street. The current study has conceptualized the transition to the mainstream by focussing on the young people's changing identity as they moved through each stage of the street experience. At this juncture, the identification of several of the study's short-comings may benefit future research.

One of the principle short-falls of this study is the lack of emphasis on the young people's age. Age was not considered to be a factor at the outset of the study. Consequently, the research participants were only

¹² Many of the young people who participated in the study stated that they were happy to do so because they felt that their contributions might help to make a difference for others who may be contemplating the street lifestyle. While these young people were "giving back" or contributing to society, they were having the value of their experiences affirmed by members of the mainstream or rather by the researchers who sought their assistance and knowledge.

asked for their dates of birth. This information proved to be invalid for it only confirmed their ages at the time that the interviews took place. While we knew that the respondents' ages ranged from 17 to 31 years, we failed to ask for their ages when they first went to the street and at the time of disengagement. Thus, we have no method of determining if age is a variable affecting the transition off the street. However, there is some indication that the young people's age may be a variable inhibiting and/or facilitating the transition off the street. For example, the young people's age determines whether they are subject to prosecution under the Young Offender's Act or the Criminal Code. Many of the respondents that had higher levels of entrenchment in the street lifestyle experienced critical turning points such as prosecution by the criminal justice system. The young people's age may also have an impact on the types of services that they may receive, such as student welfare and job training and/or educational upgrading programs sponsored by specific youth serving agencies.

A second short-coming is related to the fact that the findings for the pre-street and street sections of this research are based on the respondents' retrospective answers. In grappling with this issue, we turned to the existing literature on runaways and street youth that has concentrated on these respective areas. We found many parallels between the existing research and what our respondents told us. In addition to the existing literature, the key informants that I had met while doing participant observation were used to test the reliability and validity of the ideas

generated in this study. However, had time permitted, in addition to the 70 interviews we could have utilized control groups for each section. For example, this would include a number of young people that were in the process of leaving home as well as a number of young people that were members of street culture at the time of the interviews.

This research was concerned with developing a general conceptual model that applies to street youth. In so doing, we interviewed an equal amount of male and female street youth. However, the relatively small sample size limited our ability to explore gender issues. Future research may benefit from examining issues surrounding gender and identity as well as gender issues surrounding the young people's experiences prior to, once on, and coming off the street.

A final consideration surrounds the young people that successfully made the transition back to the mainstream. While on the street, many of these young people acquired a "street wisdom" that becomes part of their repertoire of knowledge. We know from this research that street youth can re-integrate into the mainstream and become responsible members, however, we are unclear as to whether street culture has any lingering effects on the young people's lives. The recovering alcoholic is encouraged to accept A.A. and the A.A. world-view as part of his or her life. Former street youth lack a formal identity transformation organization such as A.A. Thus, follow-up interviews are necessary for they can provide insight on this issue.

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PM-1 3½"x4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT

PRECISIONSM RESOLUTION TARGETS

APPENDIX A: TRANSITIONS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

TIME: Start . End .

I. LET'S BEGIN WITH SOME GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU.

1. To start with, what is your date of birth?
Month ? Year?
2. Are you
1) Male or
2) Female
3. Who did you live with before going to the street the first time?
4. How were things at home before you went to the street the first time?
5. Did this effect your decision to leave?
1) Yes
2) No
6. If yes ask: How?
7. What were the circumstances surrounding your decision to go to the street the first time?
8. Can you tell me how you felt about yourself before going to the street the first time?

9. Can you tell me what things were like at home before you went to the street the most recent time?
10. Before you left home the most recent time, did you have any connections on the street?
11. If Yes, ask: Can you describe these connections?
12. Before going to the street the first time, how would you have identified yourself? For example, were you:
 - 1) a loner OR
 - 2) part of a group of friends
13. If part of a group of friends, Ask:
Can you describe this group of friends?
14. Young people have a number of ways of classifying themselves according to fashion, dress, interests, or music. How would you have classified yourself before leaving home the most recent time?
15. What does it mean to be a (their response to #14)?
16. What do you think society's image is of a (their response to #14) ?
17. Before leaving home, were any of your friends involved with the Police?
 - 1) Yes
 - 2) No
18. IF Yes, ask What was the reason for their involvement with the Police?
19. Before you left home were you ever in trouble with the Police?
 - 1) Yes
 - 2) No

20. IF Yes, ask: What was the reason for your involvement with the Police?
21. How would you describe your experience at school before leaving home the first time ?
22. Can you describe the most positive thing about your school experience?
23. Can you describe the most negative thing about your school experience?
24. Can you tell me how you did in school in general?
Academic:
25. How was your experience at school affected by what was going on at home? Impact of family relation on academics:
26. Have you ever dropped out of school?
 - 1) Yes
 - 2) No
27. If yes, Why (was there a critical event)?

EXPERIENCES ON THE STREET

28. So when you went to live on the street, you went because you (base answer on previous information and
Probe if: ran away / thrown out / other e.g. to get a job)

29. Did you get help when you first went to the street?
1) Yes
2) No
30. If Yes, ask: What type of help did you get?
31. If Yes, ask: Who helped you?
32. Looking back at it now could anything have kept you from going to the street?
1) Yes
2) No
33. If yes ask:, What could have helped?
34. What kinds of activities did you get involved in while living on the street? For example, did you get tattooed?
1) Yes
2) No
35. Did you carry a pager or cellular phone?
1) Yes
2) No
36. While on the street, were you using drugs?
1) Yes
2) No
37. While on the street, did you change your style of dress?
1) Yes
2) No

38. While on the street, did you have a street name?
1) Yes
2) No
39. What image did you have of yourself while you were on the street?
Probe: negative or positive
40. What image do you think society has of young people living on the street?
41. While on the street, did you ever have any involvement with the Police?
1) Yes
2) No
42. If Yes, ask: What was the reason for this involvement
43. While on the street, did you ever have any involvement with social agencies e.g.: people trying to help street kids, like CAS, Operation Go Home, etc.?
1) Yes
2) No
44. If Yes, ask: What was the nature of this involvement? Would you say that these agencies were:
45. Can you tell me why you feel this way?

III. MOVING BACK TO MAINSTREAM

46. What were the things about the street that kept you there?
47. What made you decide to leave the street?
Probe: for critical event
48. Looking back at it now, was there anything that could have made you leave the street sooner?
 - 1) Yes
 - 2) No
49. If Yes, ask: What could have made you leave the street sooner?
50. Did you try to get off the street more than once?
 - 1) Yes
 - 2) No
51. If Yes, ask: What caused you to return to the street?
52. How did you know you were ready to get off the street?
53. What was the hardest thing about getting off the street?
54. Once you decided to leave the street, what did you do to get back into the mainstream? That is, what actions did you take?

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not very important and 5 being very important, how would you rate the following factors in making the transition back to the mainstream?

- 55. Having a decent job
- 56. Having a decent place to live
- 57. Being in a program or working with a particular agency (which one?)
- 58. Were any other factors important in helping you make the transition back to the mainstream?
 - 1) Yes
 - 2) No
- 59. If yes, ask: Which one(s)?
- 60. Did you get any help getting off the street?
 - 1) Yes
 - 2) No
- 61. If Yes, ask: What type of help did you get?
- 62. If Yes, ask: Where (who) did this help come from?
- 63. What kind of help did you get?
- 64. What personal goals did you have when you decided to leave the street?

65. Now that you've been off the street for some time, have your goals changed?
- 1) Yes
 - 2) No
66. IF Yes, ask: How have your goals changed?
67. How have you done in achieving your goals?
68. Could you explain why you say this?

We would like to know what has helped to achieve your goals? On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not very important and 5 is very important, how helpful would you say the following have been in helping you to achieve your goals:

69. Having a decent job?
70. Having a decent place to live that is affordable?
71. Having access to personal services?
72. Knowing what services or resources were available?
73. Having supportive people around?
74. Having friends who understand?

84. If yes, ask: How long have you been going to school? # of months
85. Are you currently working?
1) Yes, full time
2) Yes, part-time
3) No, not working
86. If yes, ask: How long have you been working? # of months
87. How many close friends would you say you currently have?
88. How many of these close friends are new friends?
89. How many of these close friends are friends from the street?
90. What do you do for leisure and recreation?
91. Who do you spend your leisure or recreational time with?
92. What image do you have of yourself now that you are off the street?
Probe: If Positive or Negative Self-Image
93. Why do you feel this way?
94. Has your attitude changed since leaving the street?
1) Yes
2) No

95. If yes, ask: How?
96. Has your appearance changed since leaving the street?
- 1) Yes
 - 2) No
97. If yes, ask: How?
98. Have you kept anything as a reminder of the time you spent on the street?
- 1) Yes
 - 2) No
99. If yes ask: What have you kept?
100. What would you say is the biggest challenge facing young people getting off the street today?
101. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

That concludes the interview. Thank you for taking the time to answer my questions.

APPENDIX B: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your date of birth? Year _____ Month _____ Day _____
2. Are you male _____ or female _____.
3. Where are you currently living?
Probe: Type of accommodation, e.g. apt., house, residence, etc.
4. Where have you lived during the past year?
Record: Place Length of Time
5. How long has it been since you lived on the street?
6. How long did you live on the street the most recent time?
7. Do you currently have a job? IF NO, SKIP TO QUESTION #10.
8. How long have you had this job?
9. Did you have a job before this one?
If yes, what job? How long were you in the job?
10. If you don't currently have a job, are you looking for one?
IF NO, SKIP TO QUESTION #13. If yes, what type of job are you looking for?
11. What type of job would you like to have eventually?
12. What do you think your chances are of getting the type of job you want?
13. Are you or have you been in an employment preparation program?

14. Are you currently enroled in school?
If Yes, what grade are you in? _____ Which school _____.
15. What is the last grade of schooling you completed?
16. How much schooling would you like to get eventually?
17. How often do you go out in an average week, e.g. a movie, dinner, dancing etc.?
18. Are the people you go out with friends you knew while living on the street or friends you've made since then?

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

I hereby give my informed consent to be interviewed. I understand the nature of my involvement, and I have been assured that my answers will be kept strictly confidential. At no point during future analysis will I be identified by name. Any quotations from this interview will appear without anything which identifies who I am.

I am aware that I have the right to refuse to answer any questions and that I may withdraw at any time. I agree that the interviewer may also terminate this interview with me.

Finally, I understand that there is no risk to me or to my relatives or friends stemming from this interview.

Please initial or make your mark. _____ Date _____.

END

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FIN