
“Street Kids”: Towards an Understanding of Their Motivational Context

DONALD M. TAYLOR, JOHN E. LYDON, ÉVELYNE BOUGIE,
and KIRAZ JOHANNSEN, McGill University

Abstract

The focus of the present research was the daily behaviours and goals of a sample of urban homeless youth, or, as they prefer, “street kids.” The challenge of choosing an appropriate control sample was resolved by comparing street kids to two separate samples: University students and young people from a community club in a poor neighbourhood. A standard interview requiring daily recall of behaviour on an hour-by-hour basis, and ratings on 10-point scales to a series of questions focusing on motivation, role models, trust, and psychological and physical well-being, was administered on a one-to-one basis. Results revealed that street kids stand out as having no coherent set of medium- and long-term goals. Moreover, they do not trust, nor look up to authorities, but neither do they have stable friendships involving trust and admiration. However, those few street kids who do have a trusted friend are more intrinsically motivated and tend to feel less irritable and less anxious.

Résumé

La présente recherche visait à étudier les comportements et les buts quotidiens d’un échantillon de jeunes sans-abri en milieu urbain, ou comme ils préfèrent se faire appeler « des jeunes de la rue ». La difficulté de choisir un échantillon témoin approprié a été surmontée en comparant des jeunes de la rue à deux échantillons distincts; des étudiants universitaires et des jeunes d’un club communautaire dans un quartier pauvre. Une entrevue standard a été menée au cours de laquelle les jeunes devaient, un à un, se rappeler leurs comportements quotidiens, d’heure en heure, et ils étaient notés sur une échelle de dix points, sur une série de questions portant sur la motivation, les modèles de comportement, la confiance et le bien-être psychologique et physique. Les résultats révèlent que les jeunes de la rue ne semblent pas avoir un ensemble cohérent de buts à moyen et à long terme. De plus, ils n’ont pas confiance envers les autorités et ne les respectent pas, non plus qu’ils ne jouissent d’amitiés stables reposant sur la confiance et l’admiration. Cependant, le petit nombre de jeunes qui ont un ami de confiance sont davantage motivés de façon intrinsèque et ont tendance à se sentir moins irritables et moins anxieux.

We call them, and indeed with some pride they label themselves as, “street kids.” They can be found roaming the core of any metropolis, and their ragged appearance almost demands attention, but for the most part they pose no threat whatsoever. That is to say they present no physical threat, but they do threaten society in that they seem to defy society’s understanding of how the world works. Members of mainstream society cannot imagine that any young person would *choose* to live on the streets, even for the sake of independence and adventure. On the other hand, mainstreamers have no ready solution, especially given their perception that these young people seem to eschew most social support agencies.

Research to date has little to offer in terms of understanding the lifestyle of street kids. The research preoccupation has been with descriptive issues, largely because these are especially challenging in the case of street kids. In order to underscore the magnitude of the issue, efforts are made to estimate the number of street kids in a particular urban setting. Projections are usually made based on the numbers who frequent shelters or other social agencies. These estimates are problematic, however, because many street kids deliberately avoid shelters and social agencies, and they tend to be highly mobile both within and between urban centres, and indeed across the border between the United States and Canada. As with all societal categories, there has been reluctance among those who work closely with street kids to view them as a homogeneous group. Thus, for example, distinctions have been drawn between young people who seek the streets as some form of adventure and those who are runaways or throwaways, and between those who suffer family neglect and abuse (Kufeldt & Nimmo, 1987; Ringwalt, Greene, & Robertson, 1998; Zide & Cherry, 1992). Finally, there have been a number of studies attempting to document the litany of health problems associated with street life, most notably risky sexual behaviours and the prevalence of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (see Johnson, Aschkenasy, Herbers, & Gillenwater, 1996; Luna, 1991; Roy et al.,

2000; Yates, MacKenzie, Pennbridge, & Swofford, 1991), the widespread misuse of alcohol and drugs (see Bailey, Camlin, & Ennett, 1998; Baron, 1999; Diaz, Dusenbury, Botvin, & Farmer-Huselid, 1997), and general health issues (see Craig & Hodson, 1998; Ennett, Bailey, & Federman, 1999; Ensign & Gittelsohn, 1998; Kennedy, 1991; McCaskill, Toro, & Wolfe, 1998; Powers, Eckenrode, & Jaklitsch, 1990; Unger, Kipke, Simon, Montgomery, & Johnson, 1997; Unger et al., 1998).

Developing constructive support systems for street kids requires a basic understanding of what they do and why they do it. The underlying puzzle is explaining why these young people choose, if indeed they do choose, a lifestyle that on the surface seems incomprehensible. Two fundamental motivational assumptions about street kids form the rationale for the questions raised in the present research. First, beyond a litany of medical problems, are these young people feeling physically and psychologically miserable? Second, do street kids have the same motivational aspirations as mainstream young people? Specifically, what exactly do street kids do all day and do they derive any sense of purpose as well as physical and psychological well-being from what they do?

These two questions are derived from competing "folk theories" that mainstream North Americans have about street kids, a group of young people with whom they have very little direct experience. The first "folk" theory is that these are young people who have dropped out of mainstream society, for a variety of sympathetic reasons, including a dysfunctional family environment, mental illness or systematic academic failure. Accordingly, these young people need a supportive environment that, firstly, meets their basic needs for food, shelter, and addresses drug misuse. Equally important is their need for a form of support that offers them the opportunity to gain a foothold in mainstream society. The assumption is that these young people are in a poor state of physical and mental health. They are, nevertheless, motivated, and while they may need more support than other young people to get ahead, once support is provided, their physical and psychological well-being will improve dramatically.

The second, and competing, "folk theory" that is popular among mainstreamers is quite different. It assumes that these young people have freely chosen to live on the streets, and have no motivation to engage mainstream society. Street kids are viewed as embracing a lifestyle devoid of responsibilities and pressures, one that uses society's generosity as much as possible while obliviously but happily engaged in

parties and drugs all the while. It is believed that they look to each other as a reference group, eschewing everything and anything that is valued by mainstream society.

These competing "folk theories" depict street kids in quite different ways. The first assumes they are motivated to join mainstream society and are in poor physical and mental health as they live aimlessly on the streets. The second believes them to be disidentified (Steele, 1997) in their motivation, or united in their rejection of mainstream society. And, while they may be malnourished and addicted to drugs, they nevertheless are happy and go-lucky in a lifestyle they have freely embraced, if not chosen, for themselves.

Based on psychological theory and research, we suggest that there may be elements of truth to both of these folk theories, but that neither properly illuminates the motivational forces that influence the lives of street kids. Recent psychological theories consider not only the degree to which a person's behavior is motivated as opposed to amotivated, but also distinguish among different categories of motivated behaviour, such as intrinsic versus extrinsic. Importantly, these finer distinctions within motivated behavior have been shown to have important implications for well-being (see Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000). The most basic motivational distinction contrasts passive, purposeless, and helpless behaviours reflecting amotivation with active, goal-oriented, behaviours that reflect purposeful motivation. A considerable body of research has documented that amotivation is associated with psychological distress (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Amotivation results from the perception that there are no predictable contingencies between one's behavior and the outcomes one experiences. Motivated behaviour, by contrast, is rooted in the perception of predictable linkages between one's behaviors and the outcomes one experiences.

Further important motivational distinctions can be made among purposeful, goal-oriented behaviours. A first distinction, between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, concerns the source of the goals that one pursues. Intrinsic motivation refers to behaviours that one chooses freely, because of the experience of enjoyment one has in doing the activity. By contrast, extrinsic motivation refers to engaging in behaviours because of their instrumental value or importance. There may be a payoff such as an external reward or a feeling of pride to extrinsic goals, but it is not the inherent enjoyment of the process of pursuing the goals. Extrinsic motivation accounts for the bulk of what we do in our daily lives, and it is typically tied to a drive to internalize behavioral standards and

guidelines of the important groups with which we live. As Ryan (1995) has argued, “Much of human behaviour is not intrinsically motivated” and so “Learning to work rather than play, to follow social laws and rules, to engage in practices of civil behaviour often falls far short of being intrinsically motivating” (p. 405).

The internalization process can take different forms, however, and results in qualitatively different kinds of extrinsic motivation. The key issue is the extent to which the individual comes to personally endorse the instrumental goals he or she has adopted (i.e., the extent to which the goals are self-determined). Some social standards are internalized because of external pressures and take the form of an introjected motive. When standards are internalized in this introjected form, feelings of guilt are often the driving force behind behavior. These same social standards, however, may be internalized by the person at a deeper level. Standards that one has made his or her own are referred to as identified or integrated, because they reflect personal values and important life goals. Research has generally shown that intrinsic motivation and self-determined forms of extrinsic motivation are associated with healthy adaptation and well-being whereas amotivation and the nonself-determined forms of extrinsic motivation are associated with poor adaptation and psychological distress (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

We propose that street kids will evidence high levels of amotivation, reporting that they generally fail to see the purpose of their behaviors. We also expect that these young people will report very low levels of extrinsic motivation because they have failed to become invested in the process of internalizing the mainstream cultural values around them. Consistent with folk theories, we also expect that street kids will not be motivated by introjected motives such as guilt and the concern to not let others down. However, because of their disconnection from their cultural or societal identity, we expect that this will undermine their personal identity (Taylor, 1997). Consequently, we expect that street kids will score very low on identified motives that are shaped by a consistent and supporting social environment (Ryan, 1995). That is, goals become internalized in the form of identification when family, authorities, friends, and one’s culture point to important goals to which the individual can relate. Identification involves the distillation of social values into a set of personal values. However, this presupposes a supporting social context that allows for the development of identified motives. The development of identified motives may be especially problematic for street kids. By defini-

tion, street kids do not have a supportive family context and such young people are notoriously suspicious of all authorities. These are two critical sources of support for identified motives.

The prediction for intrinsic motivation is the most puzzling. Intrinsic motivation is about choosing to engage in activities that are fun and enjoyable (Ryan & Connell, 1989). It is possible that the street kids will report a high level of intrinsic motivation while at the same time reporting amotivation. They may feel helpless about their general situation and their future while also feeling that from moment to moment they are doing things that interest them and that give them the experience of pleasure. A major purpose of the present research is to determine if street kids do engage in behaviours that are intrinsically motivating.

Finally, although we expect that street kids will not trust authority figures, one might assume that they will trust their friends and intimates, the social network that is part of their life on the street. The question is, do their peers provide the social support necessary for these young people to develop a set of identified goals? The goals may be at odds with those that are prescribed by mainstream society, but at least they might be coherent and motivating.

Methodological Challenges

It is a major challenge to explore the motives and competing “folk theories” among a group that is disenfranchised as street kids. Specifically, two methodological issues need to be addressed.

The first challenge is how to offer street kids the opportunity to report their behaviour, and perceptions of their behaviour. Normally, young people, especially in a school setting, adapt easily to social psychological instruments that require up to an hour of concentration, demand some degree of literacy, and ask for responses in a standard rating-scale format.

Meeting this challenge with street kids, of course, presupposes that a rapport and trust can be established. This is especially important in the case of street kids because most are engaged in nonnormative behaviours and unless they are willing to share their reality, there can be no confidence in their responses.

It is not easy to find a time or place where these young people are rested, not on drugs and alcohol or not generally quite agitated. Two of us regularly spend all night in a van that tours the city feeding street kids. Thus, they know us well and, indeed, our respondents made great efforts and we were able to devise a formal instrument for them to complete. The instrument was designed to be relatively short and as

concrete as possible in terms of its demands. For example, in order to document their behaviour, complex diary and paging/telephone methods were abandoned. Instead, respondents were asked to indicate their precise activity at a specified time the day prior to the day of testing. They could then be asked in a rating-scale format about their attitudes and perceptions of the behaviour they had generated.

The second major challenge is finding appropriate control groups of young people for comparison purposes. What exacerbated the challenge was the observation that the “kids” actually range in age from 16 to 27, an observation that is consistent with our personal experience on the streets. The implication of this reality is that no obvious control group presents itself. Thus we sought two separate control groups. The first was comprised of younger secondary-school students from a lower to working-class community who are involved in a youth club. The second involved a sample of university students who range in age from 19 to 23. Neither of these control groups on their own would offer a realistic basis for comparison, but it was hoped that the combination of the two would increase confidence in interpreting the responses of the sample of street kids.

Hypotheses

The methodological challenges associated with our unique group of young people include less than optimum sampling opportunities, the need to cope with limits in terms of attention and concentration span, and the lack of readily available experimental control groups. In the present context, then, we sought to test our motivational hypotheses at a variety of levels with a view to seeking converging evidence. Three specific hypotheses will be addressed. First, we hypothesize that street kids, compared to the two control groups, will evidence lower levels of psychological and physical well-being. Second, we hypothesize that street kids will evidence less intrinsic and identified motivation, and greater amotivation, than their control counterparts. Support for this second hypothesis will be sought at a variety of levels, including the behaviour of street kids, their answers to direct motivational questions, and motivational social support in terms of who they trust and who they admire. Finally, we hypothesize that street kids will distinguish themselves from the control samples by being motivated by identified values that arise from commerce and respect for their peers, rather than authority figures such as family and traditional role models. Finally, we hypothesize that for street kids, having identified motivation will be associated with greater psychological and physical well-being.

Method

Participants

Three separate groups of young people participated in the study. The first group comprised 50 homeless youth. These young people frequent a drop-in centre and thus were well known to the researchers as prototypic street kids. Indeed, the centre is notorious for not being funded by government and thus street kids feel comfortable using its services, and indeed the kids who frequent the centre are the same ones we encounter regularly on the streets. There were 25 young men and 25 young women. The average age was 20.8 years, ranging from 16 to 27 years. The second group served as a control group and respondents were selected from a community centre in a lower working-class area of the city. Like the drop-in centre for street kids, the community centre has a variety of programs, including a food bank and clothing for the poor. In terms of young people, the centre is well known for its structured activities generally, and athletic programs in particular. Our sample involved 45 young men and 5 women. The average age was 15.3 years, ranging from 10 to 25 years. The third group was comprised of students at a major metropolitan university. Most of the 50 students were from middle-class homes. There were 25 young men and 25 young women and their average age was 20.5, ranging from 19 to 23 years. Both English- and French-speaking young people were accepted into the study and addressed in the language of their choice. Participation in the study was voluntary, anonymous, and confidential.

Procedure and Questionnaire

Respondents were approached individually and asked to complete a questionnaire comprised of three sections. The street kids and those from the community centre required individual help to complete the questionnaire, whereas the university students completed it with little assistance.

The first section focused on the 24-hour behaviour recall task. The second section involved the psychosocial assessment of trust, motivation, and psychological and physical well-being. The third section was comprised of a series of demographic questions.

The response rate from all three groups of participants was extremely high. We are well known to the street kids and the young people at the community centre. Thus, the response rate was in the 80% range with only those who were not able to concentrate being eliminated from being approached to complete the questionnaire.

Behaviour recall. Each respondent was instructed to focus on “the previous day.” They were asked to recall precisely what they were doing at seven specified times on that previous day, and all questionnaires were administered from Tuesday to Friday, thereby assuring that “the previous day” would always be a week day. Half the respondents were asked to record their behaviour on the hour beginning at noon and continuing in two-hour intervals until midnight of that day. The other half of the respondents began at 1 PM and continued at two-hour intervals until 1 AM.

In order to make the task as concrete as possible, respondents were asked to describe precisely what they were doing at the specified time (e.g., 2 PM). Having the times staggered allowed for each hour between noon and 1 PM to be covered without making the questionnaire inordinately long for any one respondent.

For every recall hour, respondents were asked a standard series of questions about the behaviour they described. Specifically, the questions included:

1. “What were you doing?” as an open-ended question.
2. “Where were you doing it?” as an open-ended question.
3. “Who was with you?” as a multiple-choice question with 10 options:

a. Alone	b. Acquaintances
c. Female friend(s)	d. Mother
e. Male friend(s)	f. Father
g. Girl/Boy friend	h. Siblings
i. Authority figure(s)	j. Other family member(s)
4. “Did you enjoy it?” on an 11-point scale ranging from 0 (*Not at all*) to 10 (*Very much*).
5. “Do you do it often?” on an 11-point scale ranging from 0 (*Not at all*) to 10 (*Very much*).
6. “Was it an important event for you?” on an 11-point scale ranging from 0 (*Not at all*) to 10 (*Very much*).
7. “Is that activity respected by society?” on an 11-point scale ranging from 0 (*Not at all*) to 10 (*Very much*).
8. “Is that activity respected by your friends?” on an 11-point scale ranging from 0 (*Not at all*) to 10 (*Very much*).

Psychosocial assessment. After completing the behavior recall section, participants received a set of questions assessing trust, motivation, and psychological and physical well-being.

Participants were asked the following three questions once: “Who do you trust?” as a multiple-choice question with the same 10 options as Question 3, “Who do you look up to?” as an open-ended question, and “Who is that person?” as an open-ended question.

A short motivation scale was created to assess the source of participants’ behaviour. Participants responded to the question: “In general, I do things because... .” The scale required participants to rate, on an 11-point scale ranging from 0 (*Not at all*) to 10 (*Very much*), the extent to which they “did things” for each of five different reasons (Sheldon & Kasser, 1998):

- a. But I don’t know why I do them.
- b. I don’t want to let other people down.
- c. I would feel guilty if I did not do them.
- d. I choose to do them to reach my goals.
- e. I have fun doing them.

These five options represent a continuum of perceived locus of causality for action, ranging from nonself-determined to self-determined (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000; Ryan & Connell, 1989; Vallerand, 1997). The reasons reflect, in order, amotivation, external regulation, introjection, identification, and intrinsic motivation. Only single items were used because of time constraints. Previous studies have obtained a quasi-simplex pattern of correlations among these scales, supporting the hypothesis that a continuum of self-determination underlies these distinctions (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Vallerand, 1997).

The third instrument was a general measure of psychological and physical well-being that was comprised of the following question: “In the last week, to what extent did you...” with six options, each on an 11-point scale ranging from 0 (*Not at all*) to 10 (*Very much*). Options *a*, *b*, and *f* assessed the participants’ psychological well-being, whereas options *c*, *d*, and *e* assessed their physical well-being:

- a. Feel depressed
- b. Feel irritable
- c. Have headaches
- d. Feel tired
- e. Have stomach aches
- f. Feel anxious

The final section of the questionnaire focused on demographic questions, which included age, gender, language fluency, and ethnic background as open-ended questions.

Results and Discussion

Relatively little is known about the cadre of young people who are street kids. For this reason, in the first section of the results we present a descriptive analysis of the ethnic composition of our sample. This is followed by a descriptive analysis of their psycholog-

TABLE 1
Distribution of the Three Ethnic Groups for Each of the Three Samples

Ethnic Groups	Sample					
	Street Kids		University		Boys Club	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
White, Mainstream	41	82	36	69.2	16	32
White, Other	3	6	6	11.5	8	16
Visible Minority	3	6	9	17.3	22	44

ical and physical well-being in order to test Hypothesis 1. In the next four sections we test the hypotheses focusing on the motivational bases of street kids by exploring, in turn, the behaviour of street kids, their self-reported motivation, and motivational social support in terms of who they trust, and who they admire.¹ Finally, in the last section we focus exclusively on the sample of street kids in order to explore the hypothesized relationship between motivation and psychological and physical well-being.

Data Analysis Strategy

In order to control for multiple comparisons, multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVAs) were used. In all analyses involving the psychological and physical well-being measures, the MANOVA combined all six indices. In all analyses involving the motivation indices, the MANOVA combined the amotivation (reverse-scored), external, introjected, and identified motives, such that high scores represented higher motivation. Intrinsic motivation was analyzed in a separate ANOVA because we expected this motive to go in a direction opposite to the other four motives within our street kid sample.

Additionally, in order to isolate potential group differences from potential confounding variables, all the statistical analyses (MANOVAs and ANOVAs) were conducted with the participants' age, gender, and ethnic background as covariates. The data analysis strategy was to conduct a first analysis including the three covariates to determine if any of the covariates were significantly associated with the dependent variable under investigation. The covariates that were significantly associated with the dependent variable under investigation were then retained for a second analysis. Results report the final model with the covariates that were retained (if any). All report-

¹ Correlations not related to these hypotheses are not reported but a complete matrix of correlations for the three samples is available upon request from the authors.

TABLE 2
Mean Psychological and Physical Well-Being Scores (Standard Deviations) for Each of the Three Samples

	Sample		
	Street Kids	University	Boys Club
Well-being indices:	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Depression	5.6 (3.4) _a	3.4 (2.7) _b	3.6 (3.6) _b
Anxiety	6.3 (4.0) _a	3.3 (2.8) _b	3.5 (3.9) _b
Stomach Aches	4.0 (3.9) _a	1.0 (2.0) _b	1.9 (3.3) _b
Irritability	5.3 (3.7) _a	3.8 (2.8) _b	4.3 (3.4) _a
Headaches	3.6 (3.9)	2.4 (2.7)	2.8 (3.3)
Tired	6.2 (3.7)	5.9 (2.6)	6.7 (3.1)

Note: Comparisons of means indicate that scores in the same rows with different subscripts differ significantly ($p < .05$, two-tailed). *SD* = Standard deviations.

ed results are thus significant even when controlling for the participants' age, gender, and ethnicity. In all analyses involving MANOVAs, the statistics associated with Pillai's Trace multivariate test are reported.

The Ethnic Composition of Street Kids

The first question of interest with respect to our sample of street kids is a demographic one: Who are they? Do they represent a variety of ethnic backgrounds, or are they a relatively mainstream, homogeneous group? In order to address this issue, we classified all participants into three groups based on their open-ended answers to the language and ethnic background questions. Classified in the "White, Mainstream" group were the participants who reported speaking English and/or French *only*, along with a White, Western, European cultural background, such as Canadian/Québécois, Irish, German, Italian, and so on. Those who reported a similar cultural background but who also reported speaking a language other than English and/or French were classified in the "White, Other" group. This way of categorizing allowed us to create a group as homogeneous as possible with respect to mainstream culture. Finally, those participants who reported membership

TABLE 3
Distribution of the Fifteen Categories of Activities for Each of the Three Samples

Activities	Sample					
	Street Kids		University		Boys Club	
	SUM	%	SUM	%	SUM	%
Chores	7	2	18	4.9	2	0.6
Commuting	2	0.6	28	7.7	11	3.2
Drugs & Alcohol	66	19	8	2.2	8	2.3
Guardian/family	3	0.9	7	1.9	0	0
Homework	1	0.3	49	13.5	16	4.6
Hygiene	0	0	3	0.8	3	0.9
Meals	24	6.9	40	11	43	12.4
Nonorganized	55	15.8	24	6.6	31	8.9
Organized	37	10.6	9	2.5	33	9.5
Residential environment	32	9.2	46	12.6	24	6.9
School	10	2.9	41	11.3	50	14.4
Sleep	45	12.9	53	14.6	70	20.2
Social institutions	18	5.2	0	0	1	0.3
TV	10	2.9	29	8	47	13.5
Working	38	10.9	9	2.5	8	2.3
TOTAL	348	100	364	100	347	100

in cultural groups usually labeled as “visible minorities,” such as Haitians or Asians, were classified in the “Visible Minority” group, and this, regardless of the language(s) they reported speaking.

Table 1 presents the distribution of the three ethnic groups for each of the three samples. The results for street kids with respect to their ethnic background are revealing: 82% of our sample of street kids were White, mainstream, English- and French-speaking youngsters, compared with 69% in the university sample, and 32% in the “boys club” sample. Only three participants in the sample of street kids were classified into the visible minority group, and only three were classified into the “White, other” group. We expected that any sample of downtown urban centre youth would be ethnically diverse. Such is not the case for street kids in this metropolitan centre: Our sample of inner-city homeless youth is comprised almost exclusively of White, mainstream individuals.

The Psychological and Physical Well-Being of Street Kids

Another important broadly based assumption addressed by the present research was the general mental and physical health of street kids. A multivariate analysis of variance with the three samples as the between-subject variable was performed on the six psychological and physical well-being indices. The MANCOVA reached statistical significance, $F(12, 282) = 3.6, p < .001, \eta^2 = .13$. Specifically, univariate tests revealed significant between-subject effects for depression, $F(2, 145) = 7.0, p = .001, \eta^2 = .09$, anxiety,

$F(2, 145) = 10.8, p < .001, \eta^2 = .13$, as well as stomachaches, $F(2, 145) = 12.2, p < .001, \eta^2 = .14$. Irritability was also marginally statistically significant, $F(2, 145) = 2.7, p = .07, \eta^2 = .04$. The results, in terms of respondents’ self-reports, are presented in Table 2.

Clearly, the street kids conform to society’s view of them as troubled. Comparisons of means revealed that the street kids report being significantly more depressed and anxious, and report having significantly more stomachaches, than both the boys club and the university groups. Street kids also report feeling significantly more irritable than the university group ($ps < .05$, two-tailed). Furthermore, contrasts comparing the street kids with both the boys club and the university groups revealed that street kids report feeling significantly more depressed, anxious, irritable, and symptoms of stomachache than the boys club and the university participants together as one group, $t(146) = -3.7, p < .001$ for depression, $t(146) = -2.2, p < .05$ for irritability, $t(147) = -4.8, p < .001$ for anxiety, and $t(147) = -5.0, p < .001$ for stomachache.

One noteworthy finding revolves around reported feelings of fatigue. In terms of feeling “tired,” the street kids do not stand out in comparison with the university students and the boys club respondents, and indeed the two control groups gave “tired” their highest ratings. That street kids do not stand out in this regard is striking. There is no surprise that the ratings for “tired” are consistently high for street kids, rather it is the high ratings made by the two control groups of young people that stand out. Despite the profound differences in terms of social

status and preoccupation of our three groups of young people, all report feeling tired. Does society place demands on young people that leave all of them feeling tired, or are our different groups tired for very different reasons?

What motivates Street Kids? A Behavioural Analysis

We begin our understanding of life on the street by exploring the actual behaviours of young people. Fifteen categories of behaviour were created in order to classify the behaviours recorded by each of our 152 respondents for 12 different specific times during the day. In addition, each response was coded into a subcategory for each of the 15 main categories in order not to lose detailed information. For example, for the Hygiene category, responses were assigned to subcategories such as “Brushing teeth” or “Taking a shower,” to cite two examples. Subcategories could include as many as 100 codes.

The responses for the major 15 categories are presented in Table 3. Compared to university students and members of the boys club, street kids eat less, are not engaged in school, watch less television, spend more time with nonorganized activities, work more, sleep less, and are heavily involved in drugs and alcohol.

Each of these requires some elaboration. Street kids are less inclined to be eating meals, largely because they eat when they can, not when they want. Indeed, their only guaranteed meal is at a drop-in centre that they may frequent in the middle of the day. Similarly with respect to sleep, street kids get less of it, and the times they sleep are more variable.

In terms of school and homework, it is clear that street kids are not engaged in the activity that is most valued by society for young people. At first glance, the category “Working” might indicate that street kids have left school for gainful employment. What needs to be underscored here is that every “work” entry by a street kid involved panhandling, prostitution, or squeegeeing. Thus, it would be safe to conclude that from society’s point of view, street kids have no time-consuming mission that appears to have any long-term fulfillment.

The lack of a time-consuming mission on the part of street kids is underscored by their profile for non-organized activities and drug and alcohol use. In these two categories, street kids are involved more than virtually every other group for any other activity.

In summary, street kids have no clear societally defined constructive mission, they spend an inordinate amount of time engaged in unorganized activity that involves alcohol and drugs, they sleep less, and

TABLE 4a
Mean Motivation Scores (Standard Deviations) for Each of the Three Samples

	Sample		
	Street Kids	University	Boys Club
Motivation indices:	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
Amotivation (reverse-scored)	5.2 (3.4) _a	7.7 (2.2) _b	6.0 (3.6) _a
External regulation	4.2 (3.6) _a	5.9 (2.7) _b	6.0 (3.6) _b
Introjected	3.8 (3.5) _a	5.3 (2.6) _b	5.6 (3.8) _b
Identified	6.6 (3.2) _a	7.7 (1.7) _b	8.5 (2.6) _b
Intrinsic	8.1 (2.3)	7.7 (1.6)	8.2 (2.4)

Note: Comparisons of means indicate that scores in the same rows with different subscripts differ significantly ($p < .05$, two-tailed). Amotivation was reverse coded such that a high score represents higher motivation. *SD* = Standard deviations.

they suffer poor nutrition. From such a profile it would be tempting to conclude that street kids do not enjoy, nor find much purpose to, their everyday life. It is this issue we explore in the next section.

What Motivates Street Kids? Their Self-Reports

After providing detailed information about their daily activities, respondents were asked to answer a general question about why they “do things.” Specifically, they were asked the extent to which they do things for fun (intrinsic motive), to achieve their goals (identified motive), to avoid guilt (introjected motive), not to let others down (external regulation), and finally, they really do not know why they do things (amotivation). The responses for our three groups of young people are presented in Table 4a.

As seen in Table 4b, amotivation did not correlate with any of the motivational measures. Also, the three external motivations correlated with each other. However, consistent with the continuum notion, external and introjected motives were more strongly correlated ($r = .50$) than either was with identified motives ($r_{\text{external and identified}} = .30$, $r_{\text{introjected and identified}} = .29$; $t_s = 2.11$ and 2.61 , respectively; $p_s < .05$). Finally, identified motives were correlated with intrinsic motives ($r = .30$), and this association was greater than either of the less self-determined motives had with intrinsic motivation ($r_{\text{external and intrinsic}} = .03$, $r_{\text{introjected and intrinsic}} = .04$; $t_s = 2.91$ and 2.78 , respectively; $p_s < .05$).

A multivariate analysis of variance with the three samples as the between-subject variable was performed on the amotivation (reverse-scored), external, introjected, and identified motives. The intrinsic motive was analyzed in a separate ANOVA. The MANCOVA reached statistical significance, $F(8, 284) = 4.5$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .11$. Specifically, univariate tests

TABLE 4b
Correlations Between the Motivation Indices

	Amotivation	External	Introjected	Identified	Intrinsic
Amotivation					
External	.12				
Introjected	.09	.50***			
Identified	-.07	.30***	.29***		
Intrinsic	.01	.03	.04	.30***	

*** $p < .001$.

TABLE 5
Distribution of Trust Categories for Each of the Three Samples

	Sample					
	Street Kids		University		Boys Club	
Do you trust...	Yes % (n)	No % (n)	Yes % (n)	No % (n)	Yes % (n)	No % (n)
Authority Figures	18 (9)	80 (40)	79.2 (38)	20.8 (10)	64.1 (25)	35.9 (14)
Friends	64.6 (31)	35.4 (17)	96.1 (49)	3.9 (2)	75.6 (31)	24.4 (10)
Parents	56.3 (27)	43.8 (21)	94 (47)	6 (3)	95.7 (45)	4.3 (2)
Siblings	58.1 (25)	41.9 (18)	91.3 (42)	8.7 (4)	73 (27)	27 (10)
Girl/Boyfriend	47.2 (17)	52.8 (19)	88.1 (37)	11.9 (5)	56.8 (21)	43.2 (16)

revealed significant between-subject effects for amotivation (reverse-scored), $F(2, 144) = 8.5, p < .001, \eta^2 = .11$, external regulation, $F(2, 144) = 4.0, p < .05, \eta^2 = .05$, introjection, $F(2, 144) = 3.7, p < .05, \eta^2 = .05$, and for identification, $F(2, 144) = 4.6, p < .05, \eta^2 = .06$. The ANCOVA involving the intrinsic motive did not reach statistical significance.

Comparisons of means revealed that the street kids stand out in comparison to the university group and the boys club group in that they scored significantly lower on external regulation, introjection, and identification ($ps < .05$, two-tailed). Furthermore, the street kids appear to be significantly more amotivated than the university group ($p < .05$). It is worth noting that the boys' club respondents were also significantly more amotivated than the university group ($p < .05$). Additionally, contrasts comparing the street kids with both the boys club and the university

groups revealed that street kids report being significantly more amotivated, as well as less externally regulated, introjected, and identified, than the boys club and the university participants together as one group, $t(145) = -2.4, p < .05$ for amotivation, $t(147) = 2.4, p < .05$ for external regulation, $t(147) = 2.1, p < .05$ for introjection, and $t(147) = -2.5, p < .05$ for identification.

These results reinforce the impression that emerged in the analysis of the daily behaviour of street kids where no clearly defined goal emerged. Importantly, street kids are not motivated out of guilt (introjection) or the fear of not letting others down (external regulation). They rather seem directionless, as indicated by their general lack of motivation. For young people it is usually parents and other authorities that build in the standards that young people might internalize. Clearly, the street kids do not value

authority, have not internalized their values, and do not feel bound by them. Equally important is the one dimension where the street kids did not emerge as different. They report doing things in general “for fun” (intrinsic motivation) as much as the two control groups. Much of their behaviour involves unorganized activity usually associated with drugs and alcohol, and they report being motivated by fun. It is tempting to interpret the substance misuse by street kids as some form of escape, and yet our respondents report doing things for fun. Perhaps respondents are being influenced by the usual association society makes between “fun” social events and drugs and alcohol, or perhaps they genuinely enjoy their preoccupation with these substances.

Trust and Motivation

In addition to the general question about motivation, participants were asked whether or not they trusted authority figures, their parents, their siblings, their friends, and their girlfriend or boyfriend. The responses for our three groups of young people are presented in Table 5.

Our hypothesis was that street kids would be distrustful of authority, but find reliable relationships among their friends. The results paint a bleaker picture in terms of street kids. Compared to the two control groups, street kids trust neither authorities nor friends. While street kids do give their highest “trust” ratings to friends, only 65% report trusting friends, and the percentage is slightly higher for those in the boys club (76%) and significantly higher for the university students (96%; Mann-Whitney $U = 838.5$, $p < .001$). The same pattern applies for intimate friends: only 47.2% of street kids report trusting their girlfriends or boyfriends, and the percentage is slightly higher for those in the boys club sample (56.8%) and significantly higher for the university students (88.1%; Mann-Whitney $U = 447$, $p < .001$). As for parents and authority figures, 56.3% of street kids report trusting their parents and only 18% of street kids report trusting authority figures; the percentages are significantly higher for both the boys club sample (parents: 95.7%, Mann-Whitney $U = 682.5$, $p < .001$; authority figures: 64.1%, Mann-Whitney $U = 518.5$, $p < .001$) and the university sample (parents: 94%, Mann-Whitney $U = 747$, $p < .001$; authority figures: 79.2%, Mann-Whitney $U = 461$, $p < .001$). Indeed, the entire profile is consistent. University students trust everyone, authorities, family, and friends. The younger boys club respondents generally trust everyone, albeit to a lesser extent. The street kids trust no one, especially not authority figures.

This finding challenges one major theoretical

explanation for the lifestyle of street kids, that of disidentification (Steele, 1997). That is, our hypothesis was that our street kids would reject mainstream values embodied by authority figures in their lives, and turn instead to tightly knit friendship groups as a form of counter-identity to the establishment. While the street kids in the present study reject authority, they show no compensating bond with peers who might have a contrary set of values.

Whereas the street kids appear to have relatively little faith in their social networks, the fact that some of them did report trusting some targets allowed us to address an important issue: that is, the impact of actually having someone to trust on the street kids’ psychological and physical well-being. The following section explored the impact of trusting versus distrusting different targets on the street kids’ psychological and physical well-being. This analysis could not be performed for the authority figures target, because only nine respondents reported trusting them. Comparisons with the university sample were not possible because they seldom reported having no trust in any of the targets. For the boys club sample, comparisons were possible for the authority figures and the girl/boyfriends targets only, for the distribution for all the other targets was too unequal (with a ratio higher than 2:1).

Trust in family: Street kids. Two multivariate analyses of variance with trust in parents as the between-subject variable were performed. The first MANOVA involved the street kids’ psychological and physical well-being scores. The second MANOVA involved the amotivation (reverse-scored), external, introjected, and identified motives. The intrinsic motive was analyzed in a separate ANOVA. The MANCOVA involving the psychological and physical well-being indices, as well as the ANCOVA involving the intrinsic motive, did not reach statistical significance.

However, the MANCOVA involving the amotivation (reverse-scored), external, introjected, and identified motives reached statistical significance, $F(4, 41) = 3.0$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .23$. Specifically, univariate tests revealed a significant between-subject effect for external regulation, $F(1, 44) = 12.2$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .22$, such that the street kids who trust their parents are more externally regulated ($M = 6.1$) than those who do not trust their parents ($M = 2.9$). A similar marginally significant pattern was found for introjection, $F(1, 44) = 3.4$, $p = .07$, $\eta^2 = .07$, such that the street kids who trust their parents are more introjected ($M = 5.2$) than those who do not trust their parents ($M = 3.3$).

Two multivariate analyses of variance with trust in siblings as the between-subject variable were per-

formed. The first MANOVA involved the street kids' psychological and physical well-being scores. The second MANOVA involved the amotivation (reverse-scored), external, introjected, and identified motives. The intrinsic motive was analyzed in a separate ANOVA. These analyses did not reach statistical significance.

Trust in friends: Street kids. Two multivariate analyses of variance with trust in friends as the between-subject variable were performed. The first MANOVA involved the street kids' psychological and physical well-being scores. The second MANOVA involved the amotivation (reverse-scored), external, introjected, and identified motives. The intrinsic motive was analyzed in a separate ANOVA.

The MANCOVA involving the psychological and physical well-being indices did not reach statistical significance. However, it is worth noting that the univariate analyses of variance yielded a significant effect for irritability, $F(1, 42) = 5.3, p < .05, \eta^2 = .11$, such that the street kids who trust their friends were less irritable ($M = 4.4$) than those who do not show such trust ($M = 6.9$). The univariate test involving anxiety was marginally significant, $F(1, 42) = 3.4, p = .07, \eta^2 = .08$, such that the street kids who trust their friends were less anxious ($M = 5.6$) than those who do not show such trust ($M = 7.8$).

The MANCOVA involving the amotivation (reverse-scored), external, introjected, and identified motives did not reach statistical significance. However, the ANCOVA involving the intrinsic motive reached statistical significance, $F(1, 40) = 4.0, p = .05, \eta^2 = .09$, such that the street kids who trust their friends are more intrinsically motivated ($M = 8.5$) than those who do not show such trust ($M = 7.0$).

Two multivariate analyses of variance with trust in girl/boyfriends as the between-subject variable were performed. The first MANOVA involved the street kids' psychological and physical well-being scores. The second MANOVA involved the amotivation (reverse-scored), external, introjected, and identified motives. The intrinsic motive was analyzed in a separate ANOVA. These analyses did not reach statistical significance.

However, it is worth noting that the univariate analyses of variance involving psychological and physical well-being yielded a significant effect for irritability, $F(1, 29) = 4.0, p = .056, \eta^2 = .12$, such that the street kids who trust their girlfriends or boyfriends were less irritable ($M = 4.7$) than those who do not show such trust ($M = 6.8$). The univariate analyses of variance involving the four motivation indices also yielded a significant effect for amotiva-

tion, $F(1, 33) = 5.9, p < .05, \eta^2 = .15$, such that the street kids who trust their girlfriends or boyfriends had more motivation in general ($M = 6.9$ for amotivation reverse-scored) than those who do not show such trust ($M = 4.1$ for amotivation reverse-scored).

These results demonstrate a remarkably consistent pattern whereby trust in parents was associated with pressure on street kids not to let others down (external regulation), and a trend to avoid guilt (introjection), whereas trust in friends was associated with more drive to have fun (intrinsic motivation). Furthermore, although trusting family members does not seem to be linked with psychological and physical well-being, it appears that the street kids who do trust their friends tend to feel less irritable and less anxious. Placing one's trust in a circle of friends thus appears to be somewhat of a buffer against the many stresses and challenges associated with living on the streets.

Trust in authority figures and in girl/boyfriends: Boys' club. Two multivariate analyses of variance with trust in authority as the between-subject variable were performed. The first MANOVA involved the boys' club psychological and physical well-being scores. The second MANOVA involved the amotivation (reverse-scored), external, introjected, and identified motives. The intrinsic motive was analyzed in a separate ANOVA. These analyses did not reach statistical significance.

Two multivariate analyses of variance with trust in girl/boyfriends as the between-subject variable were performed. The first MANOVA involved the boys' club psychological and physical well-being scores. The second MANOVA involved the amotivation (reverse-scored), external, introjected, and identified motives. The intrinsic motive was analyzed in a separate ANOVA. The analyses involving the motivation indices did not reach statistical significance.

However, the MANCOVA involving the boys' club psychological and physical well-being scores reached statistical significance, $F(6, 28) = 3.9, p < .01, \eta^2 = .46$. Specifically, the univariate tests yielded significant differences on all physical and psychological well-being indices: Depression, $F(1, 33) = 13.5, p = .001, \eta^2 = .29$, irritability, $F(1, 33) = 5.2, p < .05, \eta^2 = .14$, headaches, $F(1, 33) = 4.2, p = .05, \eta^2 = .11$, tiredness, $F(1, 33) = 6.9, p < .05, \eta^2 = .17$, stomachaches, $F(1, 33) = 8.9, p < .01, \eta^2 = .21$, and anxiety, $F(1, 33) = 5.0, p < .05, \eta^2 = .13$. It thus appears that the more the respondents from the boys club sample trust their girl/boyfriend, the less depressed ($M = 2.1$ vs. 5.9), irritable ($M = 3.3$ vs. 5.7), tired ($M = 5.7$ vs. 8.2), and anxious ($M = 2.1$ vs. 4.7) they are, and the fewer

TABLE 6
Selected Mean Scores (Standard Deviations) for Selected Behaviours Prototypical of Street Kids

	Activities	
	Working <i>M (SD)</i>	Drugs and Alcohol <i>M (SD)</i>
How much is it respected by society	1.5 (3.0)	2.1 (2.3)
How much is it respected by friends	6.3 (3.6)	8.4 (2.4)
How much do you enjoy it	4.1 (2.8)	8.9 (1.4)
How often do you do it	7.6 (3.1)	8.4 (1.8)
How important is it	6.4 (3.2)	7.1 (2.4)

SD = Standard deviations.

headaches ($M = 1.7$ vs. 3.8) and stomachaches ($M = 0.6$ vs. 3.5) they report.

These results indicate that placing trust in close peer relationships can be a powerful buffer against ill being. Authority figures do not appear to play such a role. However, the particularity of the boys club sample must be taken into consideration when interpreting the role of intimate friends on their psychological and physical well-being. Indeed, these respondents are the youngest of all our respondents (with a mean age of 15 years old). Thus, they are just beginning to experience having boyfriends and girlfriends, and such a novel and exciting process no doubt leaves them feeling happy and validated. To conclude, then, the mechanism through which intimate friends affect psychological and physical well-being may not be the same for the younger members of the boys club compared with the sample of street kids.

What Motivates Street Kids? Perceptions of Their Own Behaviour

The general questions on motivation and trust are complemented by questions about the specific behaviours recorded by young people. For each behaviour, respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they believed that behaviour would be respected by “society” on the one hand, and their “friends,” on the other. Presented in Table 6 are selected behaviours that are prototypic of street kids. Comparisons with the two control groups were not possible because they seldom engaged in the behaviours in question. For example, while street kids do not attend school, university and boys club respondents are not working as prostitutes or engaged in panhandling.

We begin with the “work” category which, for street kids, involved panhandling, prostitution, and queegying. Not surprisingly, street kids judge their behaviour to be not at all respected by society ($M = 1.5$), and even respect from friends does not reach 7 on the 10-point scale ($M = 6.3$). For drugs and alcohol the profile is slightly different. These activities are judged to be not at all respected by society ($M = 2.1$)

but with mean rating of 8.4, are judged to be highly respected by friends. Clearly drugs and alcohol are pivotal; it is the first behaviour that street kids believe is respected by anybody.

In order to further address the issue of perceived respect in one’s behaviours and its impact on psychological and physical well-being, an index was created that counted the number of behaviours that elicited ratings of 6 and above (that is, ratings above the middle-point) on the “respected by society” and “respected by friends” dimensions. Correlations were then computed between these two indices and the motivation and psychological and physical well-being scores. For street kids, the results yielded a significant negative correlation between the “respected by society” index and anxiety ($r = -.44, p < .05$), such that the more they engage in activities that they perceive were generally respected by society, the less anxious they felt. For the university students, significant negative correlations between the “respected by society” index and amotivation ($r = -.32, p < .05$) as well as depression ($r = -.29, p < .05$) were observed, such that the more they engage in activities that they perceive were generally respected by society, the less amotivated and depressed they felt. As for the boys club sample, significant positive correlations emerged between the “respected by society” index and motivation to have fun ($r = .30, p < .05$) as well as motivation to reach goals ($r = .30, p < .05$), such that the more they perceived that their activities were generally respected by society, the more motivated toward having fun and reaching their goals they felt.

Clearly, the perception that what one is doing on a daily basis is respected by society at large is related to the psychological well-being and motivation of our respondents, although this impact manifests itself differently for each sample. On the other hand, perceiving that one’s daily activities are respected by friends does not seem to be linked to the psychological and physical well-being of our respondents. It thus appears that even for the street kids, the opinion of society at large on what they are doing does mat-

TABLE 7
Who Do You Look Up To?

	Sample		
	Street Kids	University	Boys Club
Who do you admire?	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
Family members	12 (6)	44.2 (23)	42 (21)
Heroes	16 (8)	3.8 (2)	18 (9)
Authority figures	10 (5)	15.4 (8)	10 (5)
No one	24 (12)	9.6 (5)	10 (5)
Friends	20 (10)	1.9 (1)	8 (4)
Nonspecified	12 (6)	7.7 (4)	0 (0)

ter, at least in terms of helping them feel less anxious when they think that their activities deserve some respect from the greater community.

Who Do Street Kids Admire?

In order to gain some insight into the aspirations of respondents, each was asked to spontaneously record "who they looked up to." The responses were distributed among five broad categories (authority figures, family members, friends, heroes, and "no one") and appear in Table 7.

Again the street kids stand out compared to the two control groups. Only a small percentage of university students (9.6%) and those from the boys club (10%) reported looking up to "no one." Street kids are two and a half times more likely to report looking up to "no one," with a percentage of 24%. For both control groups the largest category are "family members" (44.2% for the university sample and 42% for the boys club sample) with a lessor percentage nominating "friends" (1.9% for the university sample and 10% for the boys club sample). Not so for street kids who nominate friends (20%) more than family (12%), but even the friends category was selected very infrequently. Not surprisingly, there was a tendency for the university students to choose teachers and the boys club respondents to focus on sports heroes.

In general, then, street kids are more likely to have no one to look up to, someone who might serve as a

model for some idealized self. This, coupled with their rejection of mainstream authority figures, and no clear-cut peer group as an alternative, reinforces the view that street kids appear genuinely amotivated.

The majority of street kids reported admiring either "no one" (24%) or a friend (20%). This allowed us to expand our analysis of the impact of friendships on the psychological and physical well-being, as well as the motivation, of street kids. Specifically, is it better to have no one to look up to, or is looking up to a friend acting like a buffer against ill-being? To address this question, two multivariate analyses of variance with looking up to "no one" versus "friend" as the between-subject variable were performed. The first MANOVA involved the street kids' psychological and physical well-being scores. The second MANOVA involved the amotivation (reverse-scored), external, introjected, and identified motives. The intrinsic motive was analyzed in a separate ANOVA.

The MANCOVA involving the street kids' psychological and physical well-being scores reached statistical significance, $F(6, 14) = 5.0, p < .01, \eta^2 = .68$. Specifically, the univariate tests yielded significant differences on three physical and psychological well-being indices: Headaches, $F(1, 19) = 5.7, p < .05, \eta^2 = .23$, stomachaches, $F(1, 19) = 7.5, p < .05, \eta^2 = .28$, and anxiety, $F(1, 19) = 7.8, p < .05, \eta^2 = .29$. These results reveal that the street kids who reported admiring no one felt less anxious ($M = 4.8$), and had fewer stomachaches ($M = 2.3$) and headaches ($M = 1.8$) than the street kids who reported admiring a friend ($M_s = 9.0, 5.7, \text{ and } 5.1$ for anxiety, stomachaches, and headaches, respectively).

The MANCOVA involving the street kids' four motivation indices approached statistical significance, $F(4, 12) = 2.7, p = .08, \eta^2 = .47$. Because the multivariate effect had a large effect size, we examined the univariate tests, which revealed a marginally significant effect for amotivation, $F(1, 15) = 4.3, p = .057, \eta^2 = .22$, and a significant effect for identification, $F(1, 15) = 7.9, p < .05, \eta^2 = .35$. These results suggest that the street kids who reported admiring no one felt less motivation in general ($M = 3.5$ for amotivation reverse-scored) than the street kids who reported admiring a friend ($M = 7.1$ for amotivation reverse-scored). Furthermore, the street kids who reported admiring no one felt less identified ($M = 4.9$) than the street kids who reported admiring a friend ($M = 9.1$).

These results are striking in that they seem to suggest that the street kids who admire no one seem to be better off than those who report looking up to friends. Looking up to friends, in this case, seems to promote ill being, at least in terms of feeling more anxious, and reporting more headaches and stom-

achaches. While *trusting* friends tended to be related to better psychological well-being, *admiring* friends produced an opposite relationship. That trusting friends is related to better psychological well-being seems intuitively compelling. Less comprehensible is why admiration of friends should be associated with worse psychological and physical well-being. One possibility is that street kids tend to admire most those street kids who engage in the riskiest behaviours in terms of defying authority and being absorbed with drugs and alcohol. Admiring, and indeed attempting to emulate, such behaviours might be associated with low levels of psychological and physical well-being. A second possibility is that those worse off are more likely to admire peers who appear better off.

A final comparison was made between university students and boys club respondents who admire no one versus street kids who admire no one. Two multivariate analyses of variance with sample (street kids; university and boys club) as the between-subject variable were performed. The first MANOVA involved the participants' psychological and physical well-being scores. The second MANOVA involved the amotivation (reverse-scored), external, introjected, and identified motives. The intrinsic motive was analyzed in a separate ANOVA. The MANCOVA involving the participants' psychological and physical well-being scores did not reach statistical significance.

However, the analyses involving the participants' motivation indices reached statistical significance, $F(4, 14) = 3.8, p < .05, \eta^2 = .52$ for the MANCOVA, and $F(1, 19) = 4.1, p = .059, \eta^2 = .18$ for the ANCOVA. Specifically, the univariate tests yielded significant differences for amotivation, $F(1, 17) = 7.0, p < .05, \eta^2 = .29$, and identification, $F(1, 17) = 6.6, p < .05, \eta^2 = .28$. These results suggest that respondents from the university and the boys club samples who admire no one reported having more motivation in general ($M = 7.4$ for amotivation reverse-scored) as well as being more identified ($M = 8.8$) than the street kids who admire no one ($M = 2.8$ and 5.2 for amotivation reverse-scored and identification, respectively).

Thus, street kids who have no one to look up to genuinely seem amotivated and lacking an internalized goal system (identification), whereas university students and boys club respondents who report having no one to look up to nevertheless demonstrate more motivation in general as well as evidence of having some goals to pursue and structure their lives (identification). Taken together, these results suggest that while street kids who do not admire anyone may appear better off than street kids who admire friends, they still lack a sense of goal-directed behavior com-

pared to other young people.

Conclusions

First, these preliminary data do depict street kids as less physically and psychologically well than other groups of young people. Second, although our data cannot address whether living on the street shapes motives, or motives prompt young people to live on the street, a preliminary picture begins to emerge of the motivational profile of kids living on the street. Motivationally, what is most lacking is the motivation to reach definable and coherent goals. Street kids are intrinsically motivated and they are not motivated by guilt (introjection) and a concern for letting others down (external regulation). However, they do not appear to have internalized, nor do they identify with a set of standards that motivates them to pursue goals: They lack purpose and mission. Consistent with this is the finding that engaging in activities that are respected by society dampens anxiety. To the extent that they are engaging in behaviours that have some connection to, and approval from, society, they are less anxious.

Third, socially, street kids do not trust others. Clearly they do not trust authority figures but they do not even trust friends as much as comparison groups. This latter finding is particularly telling as trust in friends and intimates does act as a stress buffer for street kids. Thus, being able to trust friends may benefit street kids but such trust is often lacking for them.

Finding that street kids are less motivated by guilt and a concern for others does not seem terribly surprising. Indeed, it is consistent with the folk theory that street kids have rejected mainstream culture and are marching to the beat of their own drum. Folk theory might also not be terribly surprised that street kids are intrinsically motivated. That is, although one might expect there to be a good deal of the listlessness that characterizes amotivation, street kids are seen as doing their own thing – they are self-determined.

The curiosity about this finding is that self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) would expect intrinsic motivation to be linked to positive well-being. We suspect that there are at least two reasons why street kids may be intrinsically motivated and yet less well. First, intrinsic motivation may point to different directions for street kids compared to our university student and boys club samples. For all groups, intrinsic motivation means fun. However, we suggest that for street kids fun is likely derived primarily from very short-term, immediate gratification type activities such as partying, whereas for other young people we expect that the types of activi-

ties that are fun include a mix of short-term, immediately gratifying activities as well as long-term activities with a delay of gratification.

The other reason we believe why street kids can be intrinsically motivated and still physically and psychologically less well is that the street kids lack identified motives. We suggest that a key to navigating our social world in a healthy manner is to be equipped with both intrinsic and identified motives (Koestner & Losier, 2002). The former helps fuel enthusiasm and energy in an almost automatic fashion. However, when adversity temporarily dampens one's intrinsic motivation, identified motives help sustain goal pursuits (Lydon, 1999). Thus long-term goals more so than short-term goals are likely to depend upon a coupling of intrinsic and identified motives.

The dilemma for street kids is that in rejecting the values and standards of society they also lose a sense of the template from which they can develop a set of values and standards of their own (Taylor, 1997). The task becomes all the more difficult when they often do not even trust their friends and intimates. Without anyone or anything to believe in, their lives become aimless.

Although the street kids are more depressed, anxious, and sicker than their peers, interestingly, all groups reported being tired. These are young people with seemingly boundless energy, but they are tired. There are likely a number of explanations for this. However, we wonder if this is a clue that some of the psychological and motivational challenges facing street kids are in fact more pervasive in society. Although the university students and boys club participants may engage in activities to reach goals (identified motives), we wonder if even they, to a certain extent, struggle to ascertain the social template of values and standards, and consequently, developing an internalized set of values and standards with which they personally identify as their own is a difficult and uncertain task. The uncertainty and ambiguity can be draining. Mainstream kids may cling to just enough of a sense of the social template of a collective identity and a set of internalized values that they deem goal-directed behavior and delay of gratification to be worthwhile. However, they may not be as far from a life on the street as they think.

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Donald M. Taylor, Psychology Department, McGill University, 1205 Dr. Penfield Avenue, Montréal, Québec, Canada H3A 1B1 (E-mail: dmtaylor@hebb.psych.mcgill.ca).

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