

THE FACTS ABOUT GANG LIFE IN AMERICA TODAY: A NATIONAL STUDY OF OVER 4,000 GANG MEMBERS

a special report of the
National Gang Crime Research Center

CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS:

George W. Knox, Ph.D.
Jodet Marie Harris, Ed.D.
Thomas F. McCurrie, M.S.
Alice P. Franklin Elder, Ph.D.
Edward D. Tromanhauser, Ph.D.
John A. Laskey, M.S.
James G. Houston, Ph.D.
Avery L. Puckett, B.A.
Shirley R. Holmes, Ph.D.
Sandra S. Stone, Ph.D.
Janice Joseph, Ph.D.
Barbara H. Zaitzow, Ph.D.
Mary S. Jackson, Ph.D.
Curtis J. Robinson, M.A.
Dorothy Papachristos
Robert E. Morris, MD
G.V. Corbiscello
Zheng Wang, Ph.D.
Elizabeth Gail Sharpe, MSW, CSAC
Diane Gunvalson
Thomas McAninch, Ph.D.
Melissa C. Caudle, M.Ed.
John V. Baiamonte, Jr., Ph.D.
Greg Zavala
Laura Rizzardini, M.A.
Dana Caseau, Ph.D.
John F. Kenney, B.A.
Kathleen Aquino
Jeffrey H. Doocy, M.P.A.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Kathleen Aquino has been working with incarcerated youth in Los Angeles for the past six years. She provides Health Education classes and Peer-to-Peer training. The main facility where she works is Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall. Kathleen is currently working towards a Masters degree in Public Health at California State University, Long Beach.

John V. Baiamonte, Jr., Ph.D., is director of the Jefferson Parish (Louisiana) Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, and the author of several books and articles on ethnicity, crime, and corrections. He holds the rank of adjunct associate professor at Southeastern Louisiana University and Loyola University of New Orleans.

Dana Caseau, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of special education at California State University, Fresno. She has over 20 years' experience, as a teacher, administrator, and therapist, working with students who have learning, emotional and/or behavioral problems. Her research interests include programming for students at risk, parent involvement, behavior management, social skills training, and inclusion of special needs students in the mainstream.

Melissa C. Caudle, M.Ed., is recognized as a leading expert in school violence, is the author of Crisis Alert System Implementation, and is an international and national speaker on school violence, gangs, and alternative education. She has sixteen years of experience in education as a principal and teacher working directly with delinquents and gangs.

G.V. Corbiscello, is a gang expert who works in the Monmouth County Sheriff's Office, in New Jersey. He has written a number of gang profiles such as the profile of the New York Latin Kings (see: Volume 4, No. 2, 1997, Winter issue of the Journal of Gang Research).

Jeffrey H. Doocy, M.P.A., is a Senior Investigator with the California Department of Corporations. His current research and publications have focused on economic components of criminal organizations, investigative methodology, and complex frauds.

Alice P. Franklin Elder, Ph.D., administers the Office of Correctional Research for the Ohio Department of Youth Services. As a sociologist, she is interested in the study of social organization of gangs. Her current research examines how gang organizations imitate legitimate social forms. She is a reviewing editor for the Journal of Gang Research.

Diane Gunvalson is the Program Director of the Valley Lake Boy's Home in Breckenridge, Minnesota where she has worked since 1979. She is currently working on her Master's at North Dakota State University.

Jodet Marie-Harris, Ed.D., is an assistant professor in Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, School of Education, Rehabilitation Counseling Program, at Jackson State University in Mississippi. She is also a reviewing editor of the Journal of Gang Research.

Shirley R. Holmes, Ph.D., is an associate professor of Education and Special Education at the North Georgia College - Dahlonega, Georgia. Her research interests include bullying, gangs and deviant behavior among school children, gang behavior in rural areas, as well as prevention and intervention programs.

James G. Houston, Ph.D. is an associate professor of criminal justice at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. He has over 20 years experience in prisons, jails, and community services and is author of Correctional Management: Functions, Skills, and Systems. He has been involved in numerous gang research projects and has completed a book entitled Criminal Justice and the Policy Process for Nelson-Hall, Inc.

Mary S. Jackson, Ph.D., teaches criminal justice at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina.

Janice Joseph, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in criminal justice at Richard Stockton College of New Jersey. Her research interests include violence against women, youth violence, juvenile delinquency, gangs, and minorities and criminal justice.

John F. Kenney is the Deputy Chief of Security of the Hampden County Correctional Center in Ludlow, Massachusetts. He has worked for the Sheriff's Department for 14 years and rose through the correctional officers rank to his present position. He holds a B.S. in criminal justice from Elmira College (N.Y.).

George W. Knox, Ph.D., is the founder and the executive director of the National Gang Crime Research Center. He authored the first full textbook on gangs (An Introduction to Gangs) now in its third edition and he has over 20 years experience in gang research.

John A. Laskey, M.A., is an instructor in the extension division of the Department of Criminal Justice at Chicago State University. He is active in providing gang training to a number of groups and organizations.

Thomas McAninch, Ph.D., is Professor of Criminal Justice at Scott Community College in Bettendorf, Iowa. He is a member of the Quad City Council of Police Chiefs. He toured China and has written articles on Chinese prisons. He has assisted police departments in designing strategies to control gang activity.

Thomas F. McCurrie, M.A., is the Managing Editor of the Journal of Gang Research which is now in its fourth volume. He has been active in a number of gang research projects over the years as a co-founder of the National Gang Crime Research Center. Prior to his work with the National Gang Crime Research Center he served as the Chief Investigator for the Cook County Public Defender's Office.

Robert E. Morris, M.D., is Associate Professor of Pediatrics at UCLA in Los Angeles and senior physician at the Central Juvenile Hall in Los Angeles, California. His research and publications involve HIV risk behaviors and risk reduction. He is responsible for the pediatric and internal medicine training program at the Los Angeles juvenile halls.

Dorothy Papachristos is a co-founder of Communities Dare to Care, a Chicago program that works the streets of the city and sate working with at-risk youth and their families. Dorothy goes into communities and assists them in organizing themselves to combat gangs, drugs and violence in their communities.

Avery L. Puckett, B.A. has been a Nashville, TN, Police Officer, Sheriff's Investigator, and Polygraph Examiner with over twenty years of investigative experience. At the Sheriff's Department, he developed an innovative jail based gang intelligence program and received a grant for funding. He has instructed college level courses on gangs as adjunct faculty, and also serves as a reviewing editor of the Journal of Gang Research. He is now a gang and polygraph consultant.

Laura Rizzardini, M.A., is a graduate student in Sociology and a research assistant in Criminal Justice at Loyola University in Chicago. In addition, she works as a research assistant at the Cook County Adult Probation Department in Chicago. Her work has included the study of gangs, gender and juvenile delinquency, and probation programs.

Curtis J. Robinson, M.A., is the Resource and Development Coordinator for the Lake County, Indiana Juvenile Court. He is also the gang officer for the court where he has been employed for 26 years. He has also been a member of the gang intelligence unit on the Gary Police Department and has also served as the assistant superintendent of the juvenile detention center in Lake County.

Elizabeth Gail Sharpe, MSW, CSAC, is a clinical instructor in criminal justice at East Carolina University. She has over ten years of experience with the North Carolina Department of Corrections in the areas of probation, parole, and chemical dependency.

Sandra S. Stone, Ph.D., has 20 years' experience in social services as a direct service provider, teacher, researcher and administrator. Her primary areas of interest are criminal justice, family violence, juvenile delinquency and public policy. She is currently an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology/Anthropology, State University of West Georgia, Carrollton, GA.

Edward D. Tromanhauser, Ph.D., is the chair of the Department of Criminal Justice at Chicago State University. He co-authored the book Schools Under Siege (1992) which analyzed the role of gangs and gang violence in today's school environment. He has held positions in a number of national and regional criminal justice and criminology professional organizations.

Zheng Wang, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor at Texas Southern University. He also teaches about Asian gangs at the Houston Police Academy. Dr. Wang serves as co-chair for the Mayor's Asian Anti-Gang Advisory Board in Houston, Texas. He has an extensive gang research background and publication record. His main interests include Asian gangs, organized crime groups, and quantitative gang analysis.

Barbara H. Zaitzow, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of criminal justice at Appalachian State University, in Boone, NC. Her current work involves assisting local and state officials seeking the increased use of intermediate sanctions as alternatives to imprisonment. Her primary research areas include female criminality, corrections, and alternatives to incarceration.

Greg "Papa Z" Zavala is a state and federal consultant on gang issues. He is the author of the Street Smart Gang Awareness Program, and Gangs in the Hood Awareness Handbook. He has also taught at Yuba College when he retired from the California Youth Authority. He has been investigating gangs for over 27 years. Greg and his late brother have produced an anti-gang video.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In order to survey over 10,000 confined juveniles and adults in 17 states the researchers are indebted mostly to a large number of individuals who work at the facilities used in our national sampling strategy. While 85 facilities were surveyed, at the time of releasing this report we are authorized to acknowledge only some of these personnel, such as: Terry Timm of the Lincoln Hills juvenile correctional facility in Wisconsin; Warden Jim Cooke and the staff of Corrections Corporation of America at the Metro Nashville Detention Center; Mr. Frank Gunter, Operations Director for the North Carolina Division of Prisons and to Dr. Stephen Kiefer, Research Analyst for the North Carolina Department of Corrections and all the superintendents and support staff who facilitated the research and data collection in the State of North Carolina;

We are thankful from the quality of work from the only two paid personnel during the project, two data entry technicians whose work involved data reduction and data verification during the summer of 1996: Mary Chambers and Debra Mitchell. We are most thankful for the large volume of unpaid labor in data entry from Jodet-Marie Harris, Ed.D. as well.

Executive Summary of Findings

Some 29 researchers collected data in 17 states from 85 different correctional facilities (prisons, boot camps, juvenile institutions, etc). This national sample includes N = 10,166 confined offenders, of which 4,140 are self-reported gang members (i.e., they report having joined a gang). We believe it is one of the largest gang research projects ever.

The research was designed to be truly national in scope. It includes data from the north (North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin), from the northeast (Massachusetts, New Jersey), from the east coast (North Carolina), from the southeast (Florida), from the south (Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi, Texas, Louisiana), from the west coast (3 areas of California), and extensively from the midwest (Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa).

Here are some of the major differences that emerged in Chapter 3 comparing gang members with non-gang members:

- * Gang members were significantly more likely to have the "super predator" personality trait that they always or usually "get what I want even if I have to take it from someone".

- * Gang members were significantly more likely to be bullies in school.

- * Gang members were less likely to regularly attend church.

- * Gang members were significantly less likely to avoid situations involving the risk of personal injury.

- * Gang members were significantly more likely to want to demand that their needs be met.

- * Gang members were more likely to come from a mother-only household.

- * Gang members were more likely to perceive themselves as part of the underclass.

- * Gang members were significantly more likely to sell crack cocaine.

- * Gang members were significantly less likely to have completed minimal educational credentials (high school degree or GED).

- * Gang members were significantly more likely to report having fired a gun at a police officer.

- * Gang members were significantly more likely to report it has been easier since the Brady Bill went into effect to acquire illegal guns.

- * Gang members were significantly less likely to see the deterrent value of prosecuting juveniles as adults.

- * Gang members were significantly less likely to agree with the suppression value of prosecuting gangs as organized crime groups.

- * Gang members were less likely to believe in God, and more likely to claim they were on "Satan's side".

- * Gang members were significantly more likely to have been involved in organized drug dealing.

- * Gang members were significantly more likely to have close friends and associates who were gang members.

- * Gang members were significantly more likely to get disciplinary reports while in custody.

- * Gang members were significantly more likely to report engaging in fights while in custody.

- * Gang members were significantly more likely to report starting a fight or attacking someone while in custody.

- * Gang members were significantly more likely to report carrying an improvised weapon (knife, etc) while in custody.

- * Gang members were significantly more likely to report having threatened a staff person while in custody.

- * Gang members were significantly more likely to attempt to smuggle drugs into the correctional facility.

* Gang members were more likely to report that gangs do seek to influence staff members to bring in drugs/contraband into the correctional facility.

* Gang members were less likely to see the value of a "zero-tolerance" approach in preventing gang recruitment.

* Gang members were significantly more likely to report that a connection exists between prison gangs and juvenile institution gangs.

* Gang members were significantly more likely to have a parent who has served time in prison.

* Gang members were significantly less likely to report having adequate parental supervision as children.

The factual picture that emerged from our analysis of a large national sample of gang members showed these trends about gang life in the United States today:

* Two-thirds (65%) were still active in gang life.

* Many (44.8%) have tried to quit gang life.

* Over half (59.8%) have held some "rank" in their gang.

* Over half (59.3%) have a special language code in their gang.

* Two thirds (67.9%) have written rules in their gang.

* Four-fifths (84.3%) report their gang has adult leaders who have been in the gang for many years.

* Half (58.5%) have committed a crime for financial gain with their gang.

* Half (58.6%) report regular weekly meetings in their gang.

* A fourth (27.9%) report weekly dues are paid in their gang.

* Decisions to join the gang: a fourth (25.3%) indicated that making money was very important; 16.3 percent felt that seeking protection was very important.

* Joining versus volunteering: about half and half, 54.5 percent were recruited, and 44.5 percent volunteered to join the gang.

* The gang gets about a third of the proceeds from drug sales income of its gang members; the estimate therefore being that two-thirds to three-fourths of all illegal drug sale money being disposable income for the "sales force" of the individual gang members.

* Paranoia about the super structure of control: a fourth (28.5%) felt that some outside person/organization or force controls the action of their gang.

* Most (79.6%) would quit gang life given the right circumstances of being given a "second chance in life".

* Four-fifths (82.4%) report that their gang has sold crack cocaine. This should settle the issue about whether gangs or gang members do or do not engage in the illegal sale or distribution of crack cocaine.

* About third (35.2%) have effectively concealed their gang involvement from their parents.

* Most (83.3%) of the gangs have female members.

* About half (45.7%) of the gangs do have female members in a leadership capacity; although, we would not assume this is in a top leadership role, but is probably a more supportive or middle-management role.

* About a fourth (25.8%) indicated the crimes they committed were mostly for the benefit of the gang; about three-fourths (74.2%) indicated most of their crime was committed for their own individual benefit.

* About half (50.1%) claimed their gang does have ties to real forms of organized crime.

* About two-thirds (71.3%) felt that the gang has kept its promises to them.

* A fourth (24.6%) have made false 911 calls to the police emergency telephone number in connection with gang activities.

* Most (70.5%) felt that shooting at a police officer "would be really stupid because of the heat it would bring upon my gang", yet 29.5% felt that shooting at a police office would bring them status and more reputation in their gang.

- * Over half (61.0%) reported that the gangs that exist inside correctional institutions are basically the same gangs that exist on the street.
- * A third (32.5%) report they have never met the top leader of their gang.
- * A new twist on unrealistic expectations: Two-fifths (39.1%) felt they would someday be the top leader of the gang they are in.
- * A fifth (21.6%) felt gang membership has affected their religious beliefs.
- * A third (36.6%) report the compulsion theory of crime: having been told by their gang to perform an act they knew was wrong.
- * Over half (59.7%) indicated they their nicknames were picked for them by their gang friends; most (80.8%) got their nicknames before they were incarcerated.
- * Few indicated that their father (9.7%) or their mother (6.9%) actually encouraged them to join a gang.
- * Half (55.5%) indicated their parents would be embarrassed to learn of their gang involvement.
- * About half (59.9%) agreed or strongly agreed with the idea that if they wanted to they could quit the gang.
- * About half (54.0%) agreed or strongly agreed that they feel protected and loved by their gang.
- * About half (53%) report knowing active gang members who work in criminal justice (i.e., "moles" for the gang).
- * Over a third (40%) have fought with rival gang members while in custody.
- * Over a third (37.8%) have used "legal letters" to communicate with fellow gang members.
- * About two-fifths (39.1%) have known males in their gang who forced females to have sex.

Chapter 4 will develop Model 1 of the gang/STG classification system for correctional institutions. Using a threat analysis rating system, varying from a low of "zero" to a high of "five", the higher the score on this risk assessment the greater the need for close security. A consistent trend was revealed: throughout the spectrum of the risk assessment scale for gang/STG membership, the higher the threat, the larger the problem for correctional managers. The Model 1 gang/STG classification system appears to have substantial validity, and was tested using a number of critical incident variables (fighting with inmates, attacking or provoking other inmates, threatening staff/correctional officers, carrying improvised weapons, attempting to smuggle drugs into the correctional facility, disciplinary reports, etc).

Chapter 5 provides a detailed analysis of the female gang member. Part 1 of the analysis provided an extensive comparison of male gang members with female gang members. A number of variables proved to be significant different in this comparison of male gang members and female gang members. Part 2 compared gang members and non-gang members within the confined female population. This also produced a number of significant differences. Part 3 analyzed the confined female population using the Model 1 gang/STG classification system. A key finding is that the baseline difference comparing confined males and confined females: the males are more violent generally.

Chapter 6 provides an analysis comparing juvenile and adult gang members. Juveniles were defined as those 17 years of age or under. Adults were defined as those 18 years of age or older. The analysis used only active gang members. Adults, somewhat predictably, tended to be more pessimistic about their future, more likely to have held rank or leadership position in the gang, to report that their gang has a special language code, to feel protected and loved by being in a gang, and to not view "seeking protection" as a reason for joining the gang.

In chapter 7 we analyze the gang as a social organization and how the variation in organizational sophistication impacts on gang life and gang members. A scale of organizational complexity in gangs was developed and used to compare informal versus formal styles of gang

organizations. The analysis revealed that the level of organizational sophistication in a gang impacts on its member's behavior in a number of very significant ways. Generally, the member of the more formalized gang tends to represent a higher threat in terms of crime, violence, etc than compared to members of less organized gangs.

Chapter 8 provides an analysis of family factors in relationship to gang behavior. An additive index of family dysfunction was created for the purpose of examining "strong" versus "weak" families. The gang member from the more dysfunctional family generally posed a greater threat in terms of violence, was more disruptive once confined in a correctional institution, founding gang life more satisfying, was more likely to be involved in drug crimes, and was more highly committed to gang life. A gang member from a highly dysfunctional family apparently makes for an "ideal" gang member: a more loyal and dedicated soldier for the gang.

Chapter 9 examines the "super predator" syndrome, by providing an analysis of the most violent of the violent offenders operating in the United States today. Only 6.2 percent of the large national sample met the criteria developed for being a super predator, but this 6.2 percent accounted for a large share of problems. The super predator concept appears, like the notion of the "chronic recidivist", to help us account for the higher threat profiles among the gang member population. While small in their percentage of the overall confined population (6.2%) the super predator shows a consistent pattern of behavior: more likely to engage in crime and violence, and less likely to be deterred by the threat of stiff legal sanctions.

Chapter 10 gives the conclusions and recommendations of this report. The primary recommendation is that Congress pass legislation that upgrades the FBI's Uniform Crime Report, effective immediately, for one small enhancement designed to capture two new variables for all persons arrested in the United States: (1) is the arrestee a gang member, and if yes (2) which gang does the arrestee belong to. The justification for this needed change is the need for a more factual understanding of the scope and extent of gang member involvement in crime and violence in the United States today.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page(s)</u>
About the Authors.....	ii - iv
Acknowledgments.....	v
Executive Summary of Findings.....	vi-ix
Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview.....	2-6
Chapter 2: Methodology.....	7-22
Chapter 3: Descriptive Statistical Results With a Comparison of Gang Members and Non-Gang Members.....	23-44
Chapter 4: Model 1 of the STG/Gang Classification System For Adult and Juvenile Correctional Populations.....	45-54
Chapter 5: The Female Gang Member.....	55-71
Chapter 6: A Comparison of Juvenile and Adult Gang Members.....	72-79
Chapter 7: An Analysis of Gang Organization and its Impact on Gang Life.....	80-93
Chapter 8: Towards an Understanding of Family Factors Among Gang Members: A Large Scale Empirical Assessment.....	94-105
Chapter 9: The Super Predator: The Most Violent of the Violent Criminal Offenders Operating in the United States Today.	106-116
Chapter 10: Conclusions and Recommendations.....	117-122
Endnotes.....	123-126

CHAPTER 1:

Introduction and Overview

INTRODUCTION

In 1995 a group of researchers brought together by the National Gang Crime Research Center met for the purpose of organizing what may be the largest piece of gang research ever conducted. It was an ambitious project that sought a large national sample of gang members. In discussing how to most effectively bridge the gap between current knowledge needs in the area of "gang problems" and the current state-of-the-art in gang research, the researchers quickly came to a point of consensus that would finally serve as the organizing goal for the project. What was really needed was a large national project that would help to finally clarify the facts about gang life in America today. Out of this came Project GANGFACT.

This chapter explains how Project GANGFACT was organized to provide for both research and service, and how it was possible to carry out such a large scale national research project.

What is Project GANGFACT?

Project GANGFACT is an acronym for Project **G**ang **F**ield **A**ssessment of **C**rime **T**hreat. It seeks to clarify the facts about gang life in the United States today. The project was organized in 1995 by the National Gang Crime Research Center. The project includes researchers from a diverse and interdisciplinary spectrum (criminology, health care, special education, criminal justice practitioners, etc). The project was designed to be totally open, where anything could be studied in relationship to gangs. As a result, it is certainly an eclectic approach to hypothesis testing.

What is the National Gang Crime Research Center

The National Gang Crime Research Center (NGCRC) was founded in 1990 and its track record of research productivity has grown considerably since then. The NGCRC track record of organizing, completing, and disseminating useful information from national and local gang research projects has steadily expanded over the last five years. The Center publishes a professional quarterly journal, called the Journal of Gang Research, now in its fourth volume. The Center provides assessment, research, and training services about gangs and security threat/risk groups.

The Center was initially based at a university where several of the key staff also worked as criminal justice faculty. In 1996 the Center became an independent non-for-profit corporation¹. The mission statement of the Center remains the same: to promote and carry out research to more effectively educate the public about how to reduce the crime and violence from gangs and gang members.

Gang Members as the Unit of Analysis

There are a number of different ways of studying gang problems that can be found in the literature today. Some projects survey police chiefs or social workers, and ask their opinions on the scope and extent of the gang problem. Some projects analyze police records to see what can be learned from arrest reports about gang activity. Some projects study the community's attitude toward gangs and gang members and gang victimization. All of these really do not have the gang member as a unit of analysis where new primary data is being collected.

Project GANGFACT uses the individual gang member as the unit of analysis. The research strategy is the classic "self-report" methodology in survey or questionnaire research. The research strategy, it will be seen, is enhanced with additional attention to validity and reliability issues. The idea is to collect new primary data directly from gang members. Project GANGFACT did not target high schools, it targeted the confined offender population in 17 states.

Large National Sample Goals for Project GANGFACT

Project GANGFACT had the original goal of being able to develop a sample of about 5,000 gang members in 17 states. Due to factors of cost and expense, the full sample goal was not met. However, the large sample size of self-reported gang members that was developed in 17 states makes it, we believe, the single largest study of its kind ever undertaken and yet reported in the literature.

Researchers Involved in Project GANGFACT

We are a group of responsible criminological researchers with a positive track record of both good scholarship and good services to the agencies we work with. We are not being paid for this research, it is a pro bono effort. In fact, researchers had to pay many expenses out of their own pockets for this research. No one received any supplemental salary for the research reported here. The reason is easy to understand: we did not seek funding for this project, nor did we receive any. Supplies, photo duplication, amenities used to reward respondents, postage, communication, and travel were expenses assumed by the individual researchers alone.

The training backgrounds of the researchers in Project GANGFACT cover a number of social science disciplines as seen in the section "About the Authors".

Most of the researchers are associated with universities. However, some are also practitioners in the field of criminal justice.

The Strains and Struggles of the Researchers

Most research reports do not include such a section, as most research of this nature is often subsidized by a large government grant or by foundation funding. This project did not have the benefit of such funding, nor did the researchers feel they could wait for funding before carrying out the research. For some of the more active members of Project GANGFACT there were, naturally, strains and struggles. One researcher lost a job, to some extent because of the project. Others struggled to cover small and large expenses that had to be paid for out of pocket. However, in spite of enormous obstacles, the researchers were able to carry out their goals of service to Project GANGFACT. To say that the project in all cases went smoothly would be inaccurate. There were tensions, strains, and struggles. To a large degree these problems were worked out through discussion and dialogue and pooling resources from members of the national project.

The Task Force Approach Used in Project GANGFACT

The researchers involved in Project GANGFACT are providing their services, skills, and work in pro bono fashion: they are not paid, rather they are doing this work as a public service. This approach is therefore a means of carrying out major large scale national research without specific funding for it from government or other sources. This approach also allows for being able to rapidly disseminate findings and results.

This "task force" approach developed by the National Gang Crime Research Center has a long history of previous success. It includes other large scale research projects carried out in recent years such as: Project GANGPINT, Project GANGECON, and Project GANGGUNS.

In the task force approach developed by the NGCRC, each member of the consortium takes individual responsibility for a significant data collection contribution towards the national sampling goal. This is done in their own local areas or in geographical areas not reached by other members of the consortium. All costs are not reimbursed, but are considered local donations to the overall project. The data reduction tasks are handled by the NGCRC. It is the duty of the consortium members to develop strong positive ties to local correctional authorities for purpose of research access. Follow-up after the data collection is essential to maintaining ongoing positive relationships with host sites.

Benefits to Host Sites

Host sites are those criminal justice agencies (jails, programs, juvenile detention centers,

prisons, long term juvenile correctional institutions, etc) who allow a Project GANGFACT researcher to collect local data. A host site receives a major service free of charge: a customized local research report based on an analysis of that local data collected; this is a confidential report for the eyes of the site administration. Project GANGFACT provides this local, rapid, useful feedback at no expense and as a public service to the host agency.

Option to Remain A Totally Anonymous Site

A host site can remain completely anonymous: that is, we do not have to identify it in the acknowledgments section of the final report. About a month before the report is to be released, a copy is provided to the host site for review: at which time the host site is asked whether it wants to be acknowledged (names, titles, etc). If we do not hear from the sites after providing the advance copy of the report and asking them if they want to be acknowledged, then we assume they want to remain anonymous, and thus we will not identify the site or staff.

Protection of Human Subjects

The research strategy used by Project GANGFACT is that of an anonymous questionnaire. It poses no harm to human subjects because it is completely anonymous. Thus, no person who completes the survey can ever be identified, in as much as no identifying information (name, etc) is used in the questionnaire.

Still, the research project had to be approved by a number of Institutional Review boards in the states affected. In some states legal opinions had to be obtained that would exempt the researchers from parental notification policies. In California, a detailed court motion had to be filed along these same lines in order to obtain approval for access to incarcerated juveniles. Access to incarcerated adults proved a somewhat easier task.

Process For Collecting Data

The best process we have found that works best in secure settings is to rapidly distribute the surveys as quickly as possible. Thus, if it takes an hour to get all the surveys distributed to the population, at the end of distribution, the local researcher simply returns to the first point of distribution for collection. Thus, we have been able in this process to survey an entire medium sized jail in about an hour. We have been able to survey the largest juvenile detention facility in the United States in two hours using this technique. Thus, there is very little disruption: indeed, it provides the respondents something positive to do.

Where the anonymous survey process works most effectively is where the respondents are also able to be "rewarded" for their assistance. Most sites used in Project GANGFACT therefore made use of such rewards. These rewards varied from providing a \$1.00 donation to the inmate's account in an Iowa jail, to providing bags of chips or candy bars to respondents inside juvenile detention centers.

FORMATION OF THE PROJECT GANGFACT TASK FORCE

The Project GANGFACT research task force was formed in 1995 and involved invitations to a number of gang researchers and experts to pledge their support and labor in a unique knowledge development project. It was agreed in advance that this would have to be an unfunded type of research, because in the current overall state-of-the-art gang research the greatest need is for information that will truly help to clarify the facts about gang life in America today. Some of the disagreement in the gang literature today is not theoretical, it is empirical and has to do with what gangs do or do not do, what behaviors or crimes gang members do or do not engage in. It was agreed that to really understand the multifaceted nature of gang life in America today, that multiple social contexts would have to be studied (i.e., boot camps, jails, juvenile facilities, programs, etc). It was agreed that in addition to being a research project, that this would also be a pro bono service project as well: specifically, that we would provide a detailed "site report" reflecting a complete analysis of all data to each and every site that cooperates with our research efforts. The objective of these "site reports" was to provide useful rapid feedback

describing trends and important findings about the site population. The site populations included boot camps, jails, prisons, juvenile correctional facilities, etc.

It was also agreed that to be able to speak effectively to the wide variety of hypotheses that a large task force group might want to test, that a very large national sample would be needed.² It was agreed by the Project GANGFACT research task force members that this study would have as its goal the inclusion of at least five thousand (N = 5,000) self-reported gang members in representative geographical areas of the United States (west, north, south, east). The full goal was not met: while over 10,000 confined persons were surveyed, our gang sample is just over 4,000.

In this type of large scale research there would be hard costs that could not be avoided: travel, lodging, photo duplication, honorariums to the respondents, etc. It was agreed by Task Force researchers that any individual expenses in travel and per diem and time would be donated to this project, that is the researcher would basically pay his or her own way to the extent they were able to do so. No one was to be paid any salary for work. Thus, all time devoted to this project was not reimbursed in any sense. Further, the out of pocket expenses spent on the respondents, involving honorariums (cookies, potato chips, etc) would be expenses that the Task Force members themselves would not be reimbursed for.

So facing a situation where there would be a lot of work, and no income, and additionally perhaps substantial out-of-pocket expenses that would not be reimbursed, Project GANGFACT can be said to represent a true alternative paradigm to traditional funded research.

It is difficult to estimate the amount of labor and effort that went into this project, but is was obviously extensive. Of course, the researchers in their capacities as educators were able to use some small resources involving photo duplication from their respective universities. Outside of this limited assistance, no federal, state, or other government or private foundation support existed for this project. It was, in short, a research team designed to accomplish a goal as an end in itself: not for compensation, but because it needed to be done.

SAMPLING GANG MEMBERS IN MULTIPLE SOCIAL CONTEXTS

One of the goals of the Project GANGFACT research task force was to ensure that gang members were studied in a variety of social contexts. The universe became easy to define when we asked the general question: where could we most likely find some gang members today? The first answer was: custody, those in jail, etc. Thus, at an early stage in the research process various social contexts were identified, contacted, and persuaded to cooperate with our research mission.

The types of social contexts used in the Project GANGFACT task force research therefore consists of the following types of facilities:

- (1) Jails
- (2) Adult prisons
- (3) Boot camps
- (4) Local juvenile detention centers
- (5) Long term juvenile correctional institutions
- (6) Private residential facilities and private correctional facilities, DUI and Work Release centers, etc.

Many of these contexts are sites previously developed by co-principal investigators in previous projects organized and carried out by the National Gang Crime Research Center. Some of these have been sites used by the NGCRC for several years in a variety of research projects. It is not uncommon for sites to be cooperative with NGCRC projects because of the service component that goes hand in hand with NGCRC research projects such as this one, and mostly because of the responsible prior history of NGCRC projects such as this.

SUMMARY

In this chapter we have endeavored to explain why and how Project GANGFACT was carried out. In short, the purpose was to clarify the facts about gang life in the United States today. There are competing explanations and viewpoints on gang life and this project sought to clarify the facts. The factual basis for such an analysis comes from a rigorous methodology that is truly one of the most exceptional undertakings of its kind. Without government or foundation funding of any kind the scholars and researchers involved in this project were still able to interview over 10,000 offenders in 85 different sites in 17 different states, of which N = 4,140 were self-reported gang members. This report provides the preliminary results from this study.

CHAPTER 2:

METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the research methodology for Project GANGFACT. The chapter outlines the research process from beginning to end. Special attention is paid to issues of validity and reliability.

ITEM DEVELOPMENT AND PRETESTING THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

All members of the Project GANGFACT research task force at an early stage in the research process developed specific hypotheses they would explore and test. This meant that every researcher developed and submitted specific questions or items to be included in the survey instrument. These questions in the preliminary item pool were then distributed for review, critiqued, revised and then finally tested in a pretest of the finalized survey instrument. With N = 29 different researchers in this national gang research consortium, obviously there were many different types of hypotheses that would be explored in the research, even though the primary theme examined aspects of gang prevention and gang intervention generally.

The pretesting of the instrument was conducted in a high gang density juvenile correctional institution in the midwest. This is a famous site for the Chicago-school of criminological research. The site staff were very skeptical that the youths could in fact complete the survey, but most were able to complete it in a very short period of time. In fact this facility containing nearly 500 youths in short term detention were completely surveyed in a very short period of time: the researchers were able to get in and out of the facility within a two hour period. Several members of the research task force were present for this pretesting, they made observations, and debriefed some of the respondents (i.e., asking them to report questions they did not understand, words they did not understand, phrases they did not understand, etc) and some of the staff. Through this process the survey instrument was further modified to make necessary changes identified from the pretesting. Actually very few changes had to be made. The pretest sample was known in advance to contain gang members. We expected that there would be some respondents who would not know about some of the detailed issues of gang life: any non-gang member would not be privy to the socialization and training afforded by a gang (i.e., learning its language or subcultural argot, its rules, its code, etc).

After the survey instrument was field tested, we felt comfortable as described in the section on validity below that the instrument was capable of measuring what it sought to measure.

SAMPLING OVER 4,000 GANG MEMBERS

The type of research that samples only from one city, or one state, has historically been a source of confounding and confusing research results in the gang research arena. We felt we needed to capture gang members where they can really be found: on the street, and in custody. Our research strategy was one that therefore focused on a variety of social contexts in order to obtain a sample of 5,000 gang members. Mostly, we sought to have representative national data and therefore we focused our research strategy on multiple states, in large and small jurisdictions.

We did not reach our original goal of N = 5,000 gang members. But we came respectably close in generating a gang member sample of over 4,000.

Figure 1 below shows the type of social context by the sample size of gang members from these sites in twenty states. Thus, some 85 different sites in 17 states were used for data collection in the research reported here.

FIGURE 1

TYPE OF SOCIAL CONTEXT BY SIZE OF GANG SAMPLE

	<u>Self-Reported Gang Member?</u>			
	Missing *****	NO *****	YES *****	Total *****
Louisiana Training Institute	4	40	39	83
Rivarde Training Inst. (Louisiana))	2	20	25	47
Florida Parish Detention Center (Louisiana)	1	11	13	25
Monmouth Co. Jail (New Jersey)	5	147	54	206
Dade Metro Juvenile Detention Center (Miami, Florida)	5	110	48	163
Stockton, California (Juvenile Center)	1	21	23	45
Indian River Juvenile Correctional Center (Ohio)	13	159	133	305
Riverside Juvenile Correctional Center (Ohio)	5	97	66	168
DeKalb County Jail (Illinois)	2	28	6	36
Lincoln Hills Juven. Correctional Center (Wisconsin)	6	77	199	282
Site GA1: Juvenile Correctional Inst. (Georgia)	21	115	96	232
Texas Boot Camp	2	1	46	9

Figure 1: Continued

Site GA2: Georgia Female Juvenile Corr'l. Institution.	3	97	54	154
Site GA3: Juv. Corr. Inst. GEORGIA	9	164	141	314
Lake County, Indiana Juvenile Detention Center	4	19	42	65
Scioto State Juv. Corr. Inst. OHIO	18	27	83	128
Cuyahoga Juv. Corr. Inst. OHIO	14	157	147	318
TICO, Juv. Corr. Institution, OHIO	31	132	103	266
Site GA3: Juvenile Correctional Facility GEORGIA	7	88	41	136
Foothills Main Corr'l. Facility NORTH CAROLINA	7	152	129	288
Audy Home: Chicago Cook County Temporary Juvenile Det. Center	17	124	429	570
Scott Co. Jail IOWA	5	117	45	167
Foothills Camp NORTH CAROLINA	23	97	43	163
Central Prison NORTH CAROLINA	5	86	32	123
Juvenile Residential Programs in ND and MN	1	37	39	77
Parchman Prison Parchman, Mississippi	31	257	52	340

Figure 1: Continued

Fresno, California Juv. Det. Center	0	19	88	107
Secure Facility for Convicted Juvenile Felons in Southeast U.S.	4	66	49	119
Circleville Juv. Corr. Institution OHIO	9	89	65	163
Mohican Village Juv. Corr. Inst. OHIO	3	79	85	167
Maumee Juv. Corr'l. Inst. OHIO	1	72	52	125
Chatauga Corr'l. Center NORTH CAROLINA	0	28	4	32
Metro Nashville Detention Facility (CCA) ³ Nashville, TENN.	22	285	71	378
Paint Creek Juv. Corr. Center OHIO	2	15	16	33
Cook County Jail Chicago, ILLINOIS	39	195	182	416
Secure Facility for Convicted Female Adult Felons in the Southeast U.S.A.	6	196	15	217
Secure Facility for Pretrial Adults in the Southeast U.S.A.	3	130	23	156
Nashville City Jail CJC (Tennessee) (Max Security Unit)	20	233	39	292
McLean Co. Jail ILLINOIS	4	96	57	57

Figure 1: Continued

State Female Prison (Texas)	0	14	17	31
S. Texas Co. Jail	0	27	9	36
Medium Security Jail Nashville, Tennessee	2	144	29	175
Greene Corr'l. Center North Carolina	3	73	20	96
New Hanover Corr'l. Ctr. NORTH CAROLINA	0	24	16	40
Sandhills Youth Inst. North Carolina	0	18	17	35
Harnett Corr'l. Ctr. North Carolina	4	114	29	147
Wayne Corr'l. Center North Carolina	1	38	12	51
Franklin Corr'l. Center North Carolina	4	77	23	104
Sanford Corr'l. Center North Carolina	1	7	5	13
N.C.C.I.W. (NC25) North Carolina	3	91	15	109
Piedmont Corr'l Ctr. North Carolina	5	63	15	83
NC07 Polk Corr'l. Inst. North Carolina	10	79	48	37
Johnston Corr'l Inst. North Carolina	4	32	5	41
Durham Corr'l. Ctr. North Carolina	5	22	10	37
A secure pre-trial juvenile detention facility located in the Southeast U.S.A.	0	15	12	27

Figure 1: Continued

A secure facility for convicted juveniles in the Southeast U.S.A.	0	54	66	120
A secure facility for convicted juvenile felons in the Southeast U.S.A.	0	57	63	120
A secure facility for convicted juvenile felons in the Southeast U.S.A.	10	52	53	115
Minimum Security Jail Units in Nashville, Tennessee	4	113	17	134
A Secure pre-trial Juv. Det. Center in the Southeast U.S.A.	6	63	25	94
Tulare Co. Juv. Det. Center Tulare Co., California	0	7	45	52
Caucteret Corr.Ctr. North Carolina	5	56	17	78
A secure Co. Juv. Det. Center Located in the Southeast U.S.A.	3	12	10	25
St. Bernard's Parish Juv. Det. Center Louisiana	0	5	5	10
Hampden Co. Corr'l. Center, Ludlow, Mass.	1	3	5	9
NC37, Eastern Corr'l. Inst., North Carolina	0	14	1	15
Independence Hall, Juv. Facility, Ohio	2	8	12	22
Freedom Center, OHIO	1	12	4	17

Figure 1: Continued

NC19, Vance Corr'l. Center, N. Carolina	0	3	1	4
NC20, Umstead Corr'l. Center, N. Carolina	2	6	3	11
NC21, Warren Corr'l. Inst., N. Carolina	1	18	3	22
NC16, Person Corr'l. Center, N. Carolina	0	4	4	8
NC15, Orange Corr'l. Center, N. Carolina	0	0	3	3
NC27, Black Mountain Corr'l. Ctr. for Women N. Carolina	1	21	0	22
NC26, Raleigh Corr'l. Center for Women N. Carolina	0	14	1	15
NC28, Wilmington RFW (Halfway House) N. Carolina	0	7	1	8
NC35, Martin Corr'l. Center, N. Carolina	0	4	3	7
NC12, Halifax Corr'l. Center, N. Carolina	0	10	2	12
NC13, Granville Corr'l. Center, N. Carolina	0	2	0	2
Co. Jail in Texas (Anon.)	1	31	10	42
Jail Lock-up, Texas (Anon.)	0	3	19	22
State Corr'l. Facility (Texas)	1	41	16	58
Juvenile Halfway House (Texas)	2	25	13	40

Figure 1: Continued

Central Juvenile Hall Los Angeles, California	4	107	286	397
Los Padrinas Juv. Hall Downey, California	0	112	296	408
TOTAL MISSING	441			
TOTAL "NO"	5,585			
TOTAL "YES"	4,140			
TOTAL OVERALL NATIONAL SAMPLE	10,166			

In all contexts a saturation sampling technique was sought. This meant everyone in the social context was asked to participate in the research. Sometimes incentives were used, and this meant upwards of 90 percent of the populations in these contexts cooperating. Our sample of gang members therefore includes juveniles and adults. But, overall, mostly an offender population sampled while in custody.

INTERNAL CONTROLS ON DATA QUALITY

A number of precautions and safeguards were undertaken during the survey process to ensure the highest possible quality in the data collected.

1. Covert Observation. During the actual collection of data at some sites there was the opportunity for covert observation. This involved several of the jail or juvenile correctional sites where it was possible to watch the inmates completing the questionnaires on closed circuit television or through observation areas. Thus, in some jail sites it was possible for the researchers to hand out pencils and surveys and then in a control room watch the inmate behavior in their cell areas on the security video monitors. In no case did we see collaboration or any systematic tampering (i.e., one inmate filling out more than one questionnaire). There was no evidence of any collective fraud on the part of inmates in completing the questionnaires. As in other settings, this was presented as a "very personal" survey. Almost all inmates and others surveyed in other sites were remarkably cooperative. In most sites, for example, there was always at least one researcher present at all times inside each classroom while the questionnaires were being filled out.

2. Overt Observation. Overt observation was the rule of thumb in all sites, as one or more of the principal researchers were on hand at all sites to watch and observe the process of data collection. This also afforded the opportunity of introducing another methodological safeguard to evaluate the quality of our data collection. Gender is a specific forced-choice item on the questionnaire, but it was also a variable coded during overt observation immediately after collecting the questionnaires. In all the jails, in the west coast site, and in Chicago sites, we took an additional overt observation precaution during the data collection process. This entailed physically marking all of the physical source documents with a code for gender. Thus, all male and female respondents could then be assessed in terms of attempts at deception with regard to gender. This code assigned by the researchers as an observation taken during a close social contact (i.e., collecting the survey instruments one at a time) was then able to be compared with the respondents forced-choice response. A random response pattern or a fraudulent response pattern could possibly be evident in a case where the overt observation of gender did not match with the self-reported gender in the response to the question inside the survey about gender. Thus, lying about gender was seen in only a couple cases and where it was detected the entire

survey instrument was not used. Thus, a few cases were eliminated for obvious attempts at deception.

3. Zero Tolerance for Data Entry or Transcription Errors. All survey data stored electronically for purposes of computerized statistical analysis were cross-checked against source documents (i.e., the survey instruments). The data was checked and re-checked and contains no validity threat from transcription errors in the data reduction process. Most of the data entry was performed by one of the Ph.D. researchers or a Ph.D. candidate statistical typist. Some of the data was keyed to disk by highly trained advanced students serving as interns to the National Gang Crime Research Center and their work was thoroughly checked.

4. Few Unusable Survey Instruments Detected. In most of the sites and social contexts used for data collection, a saturation sampling method was used: everyone in the site was asked to complete the questionnaire. Small honorariums were used in some of the sites, and in these sites we would could casually check the surveys to ensure they were fully completed before giving out the honorariums. In very few instances were unusable questionnaires returned. This is far less than one percent and typically involved someone who would check every response to every question, or some similar way of showing non-cooperation. This was a voluntary action to participate in the research, and for the most part a very large majority of the persons at all sites participated and provided high cooperation. The most hostile reaction the gang members had to the survey was the question we had about their expected life expectancy: at what age they expected they would die.

However, we got the distinct impression that most respondents including those in custody were highly motivated to complete the questionnaires, in one sense because this provided an interesting distraction from the boredom of routine regular activities. In only rare instances, then, did we obtain "tainted" survey instruments: those what were obviously fraudulently completed, or not capable of being interpreted, that is for the most part non-cooperative. Thus, no tainted data is included in our analysis because these very few cases where the respondent was less than cooperative their survey instruments were discarded.

5. An Acceptable Level of Trust Was Established.

While our approach was essentially the same with everyone regardless of the social context, in the jail and secure contexts extra efforts were made to provide an adequate introduction and explanation to the respondents. At least one or more of the researchers were typically on hand in the correctional environments studied, where they approached each cell-house area or living area and explained in detail the purpose of the survey research. In the correctional settings, it was not uncommon for joking comments to be heard from the respondents about criminal justice officials, or critical comments towards the criminal justice system generally. Friendly dialogue was common in all social contexts, because the researchers often took time after the survey to answer verbal inquiries, and listen to concerns and issues of the respondents. While the survey asks for no name, and its printed title is "THE 1996 ANONYMOUS NATIONAL YOUTH SURVEY", and while we explained verbally that we did not want their names because this was a very personal type of questionnaire; it was not uncommon in some instances for respondents to still write-in their names and provide other unsolicited information. Several offered to become paid informants, or desired personal interviews such as this respondent from a midwestern site: "I can tell you a lot more about the _____ gang, please ask Officer Smith if you can talk to me in private.". Such messages of "snitches" willing to sell their souls were common in all sites across the nation.

In nearly all research sites or settings, one or more of the co-principal investigators were always present, along with one or more research assistants who were always on hand in each room or area, and to ensure the privacy of the responses the respondents were told that their teacher or program supervisor would never actually see or touch the surveys. Thus, we collected all surveys directly from the respondents in and out of the correctional settings. A large number of students and volunteers assisted Project GANGFACT in 17 different states.

We feel on the basis of the above procedures respectful of the respondents in their social

settings regarding the privacy of their responses, and based on our observations of the process of data collection, that a sufficient level of trust was established with respondents to get relatively honest answers.

We have only one caveat that all criminological researchers should be recognizing themselves: offenders have the tendency to over-report their positive attributes and under-report their stigmatizable attributes, and the kind of gang members we are studying are more often than not offenders. Regardless of social context this tendency operates in all areas of research on real offenders, and gang offenders are no different. We also recognize, and this tendency works to our methodological advantage, that offenders are more likely to honestly report the deviance of their friends and associates than their own deviance. Thus, many of the questions or focal areas of our research ask them about "others", i.e., their gang.

6. High Cognition on the Meaning of the Survey Items Implies Clearly We Are Measuring What We Purport To Measure. A large number of respondents, across social contexts but particularly those in custody, had the tendency to write notes and memoranda style comments in the margins of the survey instrument on a variety of issues. These are highly emotive comments implying clear cognition of the true meaning of the survey items or questions. Several examples of this kind of "running" commentary and shared written communication from respondents is helpful to review here to illustrate our assumption regarding this aspect of the strength of our methodology.

Not one survey respondent returned the survey instrument and claimed not to understand the questions. Not one written comment indicated a lack of understanding of the meaning of the question. These were, after all, very concrete questions.

7. Built-in "Lie Tests". In the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) full form of 566 true or false questions, a "lie scale" exists by being able to compare responses to a question early in the form with a similar question latter in the form. When someone intentionally engages in deceit, they often forget what they lied about before. Thus, it is possible to identify clear inconsistencies in this way.

Similar provisions were adopted for the present research methodology by building in such "lie tests" or tests of inconsistency into the survey instrument questions. Thus, like the MMPI once scored, our present survey instrument once analyzed provides the basis for identifying deceptive response patterns --- those that are clearly inconsistent or suggestive of deceptive responses.

The first test is one where we could capture any respondent who was paranoid enough to lie about present age and age at time of first arrest. One of the questions in the survey instrument asks "At what age were you FIRST arrested for any crime? When I was _____ years old". Another item in the survey instrument asks "How old are you today? I am _____ years old." A respondent who would engage in early intentional deceit in a response pattern to the survey instrument could therefore be detected by comparing these two items. Deceitful responses would be evident whenever the value of the age for first arrest exceeded the value of present age. A simple computer check allowed for directly testing for this type of systematic deception. In other words, a deceptive respondent might give the age of 17 for current age and give the age of 20 for age at time of first being forced to have sex later in the item order of the survey instrument. The results of this test were no detected deception of this blatant nature.

Several other hypotheses were tested to evaluate the validity of the data. These consisted of matched-pair items that were very similar in nature, that is these questions basically asked the same thing, but with the item phraseology being slightly altered. Most of these matched pair variables measuring the same thing were intermixed throughout the survey. By using contingency table or crosstabulation analysis, the relationship between these paired variables had better be statistically significant by the Chi-square test because one similar variable should significantly different a second similar variable if the respondents are being honest with us. We found these tests very significant with Chi-square values reaching very strong levels. Had these matched-pair lie tests not been significant, then we would have had to conclude that large scale

lie behavior threatened the validity of the data.

A related type of validity test is that of internal consistency in terms of logically expected results. If the expected internal logical consistency is above 95 percent, then this could be considered a measure of the rigor of the methodology in a very large national sample. We can illustrate this with Table 1.

Table 1 uses two different questions from the Project GANGFACT survey. The logic here should be obvious regarding these items. Where a sample of N = 8,959 responses were available, what we find here is that only 4.7 percent of the responses are inconsistent with the logical expectation of internal consistency.

The 4.7 percent "inconsistency" is calculated by taking the 262 respondents who indicated they "Believe in God", but are on "Satan's side" (a logical inconsistency), and adding to it the 166 respondents who indicated they "do not believe in God", but are on "God's side" (another logical inconsistency). These N = 428 respondents with inconsistent answers constitute only 4.7 percent of the overall national sample.

The vast majority of the respondents (95.3%) show logical consistency in the pattern of their answers in regard to the test made in Table 1.

Table 1

The Distribution (N) of Believe in God by Being on the Side of God or Satan

Which best describes you:	Which Side Are You On?	
	God's Side	Satan's Side
I BELIEVE IN GOD	8268	262
I DO NOT BELIEVE IN GOD	166	263

Chi-square = 2510.8, p < .001

In Table 1, such a check on internal logical consistency can be made in the overall sample through cross-tabulation of two similar items. The "inconsistency" in Table 1 would be anyone who claims to believe in God but then indicates they are on Satan's side, as well as anyone who claims to not believe in God who then claims to be on God's side. We would not want to argue that generally in the offender population anyone is going to always get the full truth about anything. But the "inconsistency" in Table 1 accounts for only 4.7 percent of the sample. This inconsistency is remarkably low given the large sample size (N = 8959) for this test.

In short, much attention in this research during the instrumentation phase was paid to the matter of structuring a variety of opportunities for the respondent to be deceptive or deceitful in a way that could be easily detected by data analysis. We know it is not customary for researchers when investigating such offender populations as included in the present research to do this, but we did feel that it was necessary to speak to this issue in as much as this was a large scale investigation involving an assortment of known offender groups.

OTHER ISSUES OF VALIDITY

As previously alluded to much attention to detail and many precautions were undertaken during the research process that were designed to enhance validity by protecting against threats to validity. These protective measures used will be described here. We conclude that the validity of the research reported here is higher than average for social research of the type conducted here.

We begin by recognizing that generally in social research, and all criminal justice or criminological research, that the term validity is defined as the extent to which the researchers

have measured what they purport to measure. Therefore, the ultimate assessment of validity goes directly to the issue of whether or not the survey instrument captures and effectively differentiates the population at-risk to gangs, whether it can effectively identify subgroupings within the gang population (i.e., specific gangs), and whether the questions about gang life, economic issues, and other related factors or variables really measure what they say they measure. We further note that the ambiguity in language in the survey instrument was reduced during a field or pretest of the survey instrument. We further note that there were few who did not understand the questions in the survey that they were predicted to understand.

Obviously, we did not assume that non-gang members would understand much about the detailed dynamics of the economic infrastructure and financial aspects of gang life. We did, however, predict that gang members would both understand the meaning of such questions and be able to report their experience and beliefs about these specific aspects of gang life. We therefore report that in terms of the construct validity of the survey instrument itself that gang members clearly did understand and had little difficulty in providing responses to the nearly 200 variables in the survey instrument.

The validity issue of the length of the survey is a moot issue we feel. Our survey instrument is long, but generally can be completed in about 30 minutes by most respondents. The structure of the social settings in which the data was collected were such that no "pressure" existed to rapidly complete the questionnaires. The respondents in all social contexts had more time available to them than was needed for the actual completing of the anonymous questionnaire. Normally, about an hour was set aside, and few needed this much time. In some settings, the respondent could take as much time as needed. Thus, by the nature of the precautions taken during the implementation of the research, we rule out any fatigue or "length of survey deterioration" factor as a threat to the validity of this research.

Concurrent of criterion validity means examining a measurement in relationship to some other variable it should be highly predictive of. The most important aspect of the current research was defining who was or who was not a gang member. The way in which validity controls were implemented in the present research design therefore asked different versions of the same question for several variables. This also meant being able to induce much quality control: for example, making sure that someone who in one question reports they have ever joined a gang, and who in another variable indicates the exact name of the gang in an open-ended "fill in the blank" type of question (i.e., "What gang did or do you belong to? _____"), and who then indicates the type of alliance or nation status. Thus, any "Gangster Disciple" would in our sample have to also indicate a membership in the "Folks" nation. We found very little discrepancy between such variables, and therefore believe that our basic measures that differentiate gang members and non-gang members are very accurate. These are also, for the most part, "brand name" gangs: gangs common to the social contexts from which they were sampled (Crips, Bloods, and Sureno sets on the west coast, etc). One of the ways in which we were able to use a "criterion" validity approach was our access to probably the best and most current national directory of gangs in America today --- the National Geographic Guide to Gangs in the United States. This is a large computer file maintained by the National Gang Crime Research Center, it is updated from numerous sources (law enforcement, corrections, etc) every year and has monitored the gang proliferation problem for five years in a row. For a sample listing of this information useful in validating gang names for gang members, see the companion volume to An Introduction to Gangs (3rd and expanded edition, 1995): National Gang Resource Handbook: An Encyclopedic Reference (1995, Bristol, Indiana: Wyndham Hall Press). Thus, official sources providing names of numerous gangs in America were used to cross-check the self-disclosed data from respondents in the present research. As the analysis will reveal, the gang members in the present study are for the most part very well known gangs. Thus, for our most important variable of focus (gang membership), we were able to ascertain the validity of the self-reported gang membership by examining it in relationship to another of other validity control items (name of gang, gang nation alliance, type of rank held in the gang, etc). We did not

encounter any cases that were impostors: only a gang member in such a gang would know the type of leadership positions in its unique hierarchy.

The present research can rule out a threat to the internal validity of the design based on history. The reason this is true is that all the data was collected in a short period of time during 1996 (Spring to fall, 1996) covering about a six month period. The hidden benefit of not being a federally funded type of research project is that also there were few if any obstructions to the research process, and that the results could be reported in a relatively short time frame as well. Thus, the findings are very much reflective of the current social reality (i.e., we did not have to wait a couple years to report our findings). For the same reasons, maturation was not a threat to the validity of our research design, because as stated all data collected occurred in a short period of time nationally in all sites, sometimes simultaneously.

The issue of testing as a threat to validity is common to all surveys on known offenders and all self-report surveys. Completing surveys in some of the contexts was a common expectation, particularly among students and youths in juvenile correctional settings. Even the jail inmates had much experience in completing such questionnaires and "surveys". A number of precautions were taken to ensure the validity of the research design by always having researchers on-site during all data collection, typically several members of the larger team were present to assist with data collection. Mostly this involved explaining to the potential respondents that this was a completely anonymous survey, it did ask very personal questions, and that was the reason we did not want anyone's name, and that the "we" consisted of: mostly university professors.

Wherever possible we tried to off-set the disruptiveness of having unknown persons intruding on their social contexts distributing surveys and pencils by offering some type of consumable amenity as a small reward or honorarium for completing the questionnaire. Thus, in most contexts this was viewed as a pleasant distraction. For these and other reasons discussed in the report we do not feel that testing was a major threat to the validity of the present research.

As discussed above as well, the pretesting or field testing of the survey instrument was designed to eliminate any ambiguity in words, phraseology, expressions, and writing.¹ These are forced-choice questions that are not double-barrelled questions, they are pinpointed to specific issues or measurements of background and behavioral experience, beliefs, and attitudes. We posit that the validity of the present study is therefore acceptable for studies of its kind regarding any threat to validity from instrumentation. Another reason that we can rule out instrumentation as a major threat to the validity of our research is that a number of our variables are direct replications of previous research found to be acceptable and reported in the literature --- as is discussed at appropriate points in this report, where such literature is specifically cited.

One of the strengths of the present research regarding validity is how we overcame the potential threat to validity from differential selection of subjects. In gang research, as is common in criminal justice and criminological research on offenders generally, the common situation is to have only one social context to study the human aspect of interest. In the present research, as explained earlier, the plan in advance was to develop and use multiple social contexts for purpose of data collection. Thus, gang members were studied in a large number of social contexts where we could reasonably assume we could find them: in adult correctional settings, in juvenile correctional settings, in community programs, in probation caseloads, work release centers, boot camps, etc. Further, the geographic representation of the sample was intended to be able to examine variations across a large span of the United States: including data collection sites in the west (northern and southern California), in the north (North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin), the midwest (Indiana, Iowa, Illinois, Ohio, etc), the south (Texas, Mississippi, Tennessee, etc), and the east coast (Massachusetts, New Jersey, Florida, North Carolina). A complete list of states is

No respondents were used from the pre-testing. The national sample of gang members was completely developed after the pretesting.

provided in the site cross-reference table (Figure 1). Therefore in a comparative assessment our present research is stronger than most in this regard to taking precautionary measures to ensure that the threat to validity in terms of differential selection of subjects included a broad cross-section (i.e., across different social contexts) and geographical spectrum. Our analysis can therefore speak to issues of comparison not capable in much previous gang research (i.e., comparing west coast Crips/Bloods with midwest People/Folks, etc). The issue of mortality for validity is of minimal concern to the present study and is therefore not a major threat. This was, after all, a "snapshot" survey design: we only sought out a cross-section of data; this was a multi-state multi-context cross-sectional survey research design. It was not intended to be a longitudinal design, with follow-up measurements. The only way in which mortality might therefore negatively impair on the research design would be if our sampling was limited to only one type of social context, or if we only used one site for each type of social context. The fact is we used multiple social contexts and for some of these (i.e., jails, juvenile correctional facilities) we used multiple sites within these social contexts as well. Thus, if someone "missed out" from such a site, chances are this is minimal in terms of not being able to capture the social reality of these social contexts. After all, within the specific social context sites, the research plan called for a "saturation" sampling method: everyone in the jail, the prison, the juvenile center, etc, was asked to complete the questionnaire. Very few persons refused to complete the questionnaire. We tried to structure our data collection in correctional settings where we did not interfere with court calls or visiting, thus we often had to be at the jail late at night on some occasions, and almost always on the weekends, requiring travel and overnight stays in various cities for some of the researchers. Through previous research experience the researchers knew how to structure the data collection process to be as minimally disruptive to the security and other concerns of correctional facilities. We do know that with a long survey instrument such as that used in the present research project that there may be "item mortality", this is not a matter of "attention deficit disorders", it is a matter of simply losing the respondent at some later point in the survey instrument, thus resulting in some cases missing data for those items towards the end of the survey instrument. The present research is, therefore, not unlike other similar survey research designs in having the common problem of some missing data on the many variables measured.

Finally, the issue of regression as a threat to validity is viewed as minimal in the present research and not a major threat. Measurement error was not a major problem, given the fact that among gang members our variables designed to elicit the nature of their economic experiences in and associated with gang life were questions or items or variables that are both replicable and having little if any ambiguity. No cognitive bias exists in this regard to the variables used in the research. We did not simply include extreme cases: such as those highly cooperative youths on a street corner who might suddenly become very interested in a research project when a person of higher social class and social power arrives on the scene to offer aid and assistance --- material and psychic benefits in nature. The fact is our gang analysis covers the complete gang risk continuum as the analysis will reveal.

The gang member respondent was particularly prone to write lengthy and unsolicited comments in the margins of the surveys. This highly affective arousal signaled clearly that the respondents understood all too well the meaning of the questions. Sometimes this running commentary of unsolicited remarks directed feedback to the researchers in various ways, explaining subtle nuances, some of which will be discussed in this report at appropriate points in the presentation of results.

These were questions that gang members clearly understood, enough so that often such members would strike up conversations and seek out attention from the researchers at almost all the sites. The typical gang member respondent was very curious that anyone would ask such specific questions about gang life today. Thus, it was not uncommon for the researchers to stay around the site for additional time spent answering direct questions from the youths, this was particularly true in the juvenile correctional setting.

To recap, in many of the common threats to the internal validity of research such as that

reported here (history, maturation, testing, instrumentation, differential selection of subjects, experimental mortality, statistical regression), the precautions taken in the research design, the scope and extent of the research effort (i.e., covering several states, different social contexts, and a large sample), render these threats to be viewed as minimal.

RELIABILITY

The issue of reliability is the matter of the "quality" of the data. The informed reader will recognize that the term reliability in research means basically "do we get the same results with repeated measures". Over time it is possible, indeed probable, that "gang life" and the gang problem itself can, could and might change. For example, the gang problem has expanded and proliferated in recent years in the United States. In another sense, the meaning of reliability in the type of social research conducted here often means "would different researchers going to the same places using the same questions get the same results". We argue, by the nature of the methodological rigor and level of effort in the present research design, that this would in fact be the case to a high degree. In other words, when we issue what are called "site reports" or rapid information summaries back to the host sites that provided access for data collection, that our data truly does reflect the social reality of their environment. Most who have received these site reports agree with us in regard to the critical issues: specifically, gang density, and the scope and extent of the gang member problem in their populations.

This is not to say that the problem may not escalate or deteriorate in the years ahead. That is not the nature of our research purpose to predict the future. Rather our intent is limited to the nature of our research methodology --- a cross-sectional survey design using large samples --- of simply describing the current situation in these various social contexts. Given the rapid feedback, that is little time delay arose between time of data collection and the reporting of findings, we also argue that our research has high reliability in terms of the volatility of such data: ours was recently collected, and quickly reported. Our generalizations are to the present, not the future --- as we recognize the gang problem is a dynamic and not a static problem.

But the trained researcher will also recognize that the methodological matter of reliability is really the simple and testable issue of whether the same measurement techniques used in different research settings or at different points in time produce the same results. We can give and test an example of this aspect of reliability. Different questions at different points in the item order of the survey produced almost identical results. These are discussed in the chapter describing the descriptive findings on our gang member sample.

However, if this measurement is lacking in the area of reliability this would come out if multiple sites were chosen to study the issues of gang prevention and gang intervention. That is, the hypothesis of logical inference is that in the same city, among the same gangs, there should be no difference in this factor if we asked the same question in different social settings. Indeed, social settings that are indeed mutually exclusive: that is, one could not exist or be found in both simultaneously.

Our research was structured in a way to enhance both validity and reliability. Thus, in some jurisdictions we surveyed all facilities that existed in the area. This includes all juvenile correctional institutions in the State of Ohio. This includes most of the prisons in North Carolina. This includes all juvenile correctional facilities, short and long term, in the State of Tennessee. Thus, in different geographical areas we had sites that were in some respects representing the "universe" of that particular state. As correctional inmate research goes, there are few studies that exceed the level of effort represented in the present project.

As there were many researchers in 17 states carrying out the same type of data collection in similar types of facilities (jails, prisons, juvenile institutions, etc), to enhance reliability the Project required a standardized presentation when meeting directly for the first time with the confined population. This standardized presentation explained that it was a national project, that a variety of researchers were involved associated with various university and other groups, and

that no names were needed: it was a completely anonymous survey. The researchers on-site collected the surveys directly from the inmates. The researchers in most cases also directly handed out rewards to the inmates for their cooperation.

OTHER ISSUES OF VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY: FOR IMPROVING FUTURE RESEARCH

No replication problems materialized in the present research, as these were variables or items (i.e., survey questions) used in the prior literature. However, in some small selected instances of paving new grounds in the area of the economic life of gangs, and other factors included in some of the sites (i.e., sexual abuse, family life, etc) in this comprehensive survey, we felt that some improvements could be made in terms of the structure of such questions. These are reported as they appear in the presentation of results, and in their interpretation at relevant points in this report. We also provide suggestions for improving the validity and reliability of these measurements for purposes of future research. We recognize that there is no such thing as the "perfect" model of social research on anything, but that improvements can always be made.

The present research project was clearly an ambitious undertaking. We do, therefore, discuss ways to improve the validity and reliability of future research efforts such as that reported here. These discussions and references are made in the body of this report where relevant. Thus, we fairly and fully alert other researchers to these concerns.

We have a number of recommendations for improving research on gangs. We discuss these issues in greater detail in our conclusions section.

TYPES OF GANGS REPRESENTED IN THE SAMPLE OF OVER 3,500 GANG MEMBERS

The full list of gangs represented in this large nation sample includes several hundred different gangs most of whom fall into the Crip, Blood, People, and Folks classification system. This sample therefore includes over 200 members of the Gangster Disciples gang in Chicago, for example. A large variety of different sets of Crips and Bloods are represented in the sample as well. The types of gangs cut across the ethnic and racial spectrum as well (white, Black, Latino, Asian). These are, for the most part, the more serious types of gangs of interest to the criminological researcher. These include gangs such as the Aryan Brotherhood, and a variety of different factions of Vice Lords from the midwestern United States (Insane Vice Lords, Conservative Vice Lords, Unknown Vice Lords, Mafia Insane Vice Lords, Traveller Vice Lords) and literally all types of disciples (Gangster Disciples, Black Disciples, Maniac Latin Disciples, etc).

WHY WE KNOW THE GANG MEMBERS ARE IN THE GANGS THEY PURPORT TO BE MEMBERS OF

For most of our sites used in Project GANGFACT we used a unique methodological tool developed by the National Gang Crime Research Center. It involves a comparison of the symbols, logos, signs and expressions known to be used by the gang a person purports to be a member of. This was one of our additional validity control devices.

SUMMARY

In this chapter we have provided full details about the research methodology. Given the attention to detail regarding validity and reliability, and the large size of the national sample developed, the authors assert that the methodological rigor gives this study strong grounding.

We conclude that the validity and reliability of the data are acceptable for surveys of this type and nature.

CHAPTER 3:

Descriptive Statistical Results With a Comparison of Gang Members and Non-Gang Members

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a full descriptive statistical analysis of the national sample developed for Project GANGFACT. By way of introduction, some comments are in order here to describe how this chapter is structured for purposes of the presentation of results.

The presentation of results here roughly parallels the order of the items as they appeared on the survey instrument itself. However, the gang-specific items are those considered meaningful only in relationship to those respondents who were in fact gang members. These gang-specific items are presented towards the end of the discussion of results. Finally, for each variable we report here whether there was any significant difference in comparing gang members and non-gang members.

The Vast Majority Believe They Will Find a Good Job and Support a Family

The survey asked the true/false question "I believe that I will be able to find a good job and eventually support a family". In the national sample some 90.6 percent (N = 9081) responded "true" that they do in fact believe they will find a good job and be able to eventually support a family. While only 9.4 percent (N = 941⁴) responded "false", implying they did not believe they would lead this type of normal life.

The comparison of gang members and non-gang members is not significant for this variable. Thus, there was no significant difference comparing gang members and non-gang members on this factor.

The Super Predator Personality

The survey included the question "I get what I want even if I have to take it from someone" where the response modes were: always, usually, sometimes, rarely, and never. The frequency and percentage distribution for this variable was as follows:

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
N	682	788	2587	2282	3702
%	6.8	7.8	25.8	22.7	36.9

Thus, about 14.6 percent indicated that "always" or "usually" they try to "get what I want even if I have to take it from someone". There is a large amount of variation in this variable within this offender population as seen in the distribution.

The comparison of gang members and non-gang members on this item is significant (Chi-square = 695.8, $p < .001$), where 8.8 percent of the non-gang members indicated "always or usually", compared to 22.3 percent of the gang members).

Being Bullied While in School

The survey asked "were you ever bullied by anyone in school". The results showed that some 37.5 percent (N = 3757) reported that they had in fact been bullied while in school. Over half (62.5%, N = 6261) reported that they had not been bullied while in school.

The comparison of gang members and non-gang members on this factor was not significant.

Age First Bullied in School

The survey asked the follow-up question if the person had been bullied while in school: "at what age were you first bullied by someone in your school". This data ranged from a low of 5

years old to a high of 21 years old. The mean, or arithmetic average, was 9.7 years of age for this variable⁵.

Being a Bully in School

The survey asked "did you ever bully someone in school". The results in this offender population showed that about half (47.1%, N = 4721) did in fact report being a bully while in school. Thus, about half (52.9%, N = 5294) reported not being a bully in school.

The comparison of gang members and non-gang members on this factor was significant (Chi-square = 657.1, p < .001, where 36.1 percent of the non-gang members were bullies, compared with 62.5 percent of the gang members).

Age First Bullied Someone Else in School

The survey asked the follow-up question if the person had been a bully while in school: "at what age did you first bully someone else in school". This data ranged from a low of 5 years of age to a high of 24 years old. The mean, or arithmetic average, was 11.4 years of age for first bullying someone else in school⁶.

Two-Thirds Believe Bullying Can Lead to Gangbanging

The survey asked "do you think bullying in school can lead to gangbanging". About two-thirds (70.4%, N = 6990) of the respondents did express the belief that bullying in school can lead to gangbanging. Thus only 29.6 percent (N = 2938) did not believe that bullying behavior in school leads to gangbanging.

The comparison of gang members and non-gang members on this factor was not significant.

Current Age of the Respondents in the Sample

The survey asked "how old are you today? I am ___ years old". The results showed a range between a low of 9 years of age to a high of 73 years of age. But some trends are evident here. About half of the sample (50.4%, N = 4953) were under 18 years of age. Over two-thirds (72.5%, N = 7130) were 25 years of age or under. Only about one out of ten were over the age of 35. The mean, or arithmetic average, for the age variable was 22.2 years of age for this sample. The gang member only subsample showed a mean of 18.6 years of age. Thus, gang members tended to be younger than the non-gang members in confinement.

Gender of the Respondents in the Sample

The gender of the respondents in the sample mirrors the same proportions of the confined offender population itself⁷. Some 88.6 percent (N = 8903) were males. Only 11.4 percent (N = 1151) were females. Still, there are few studies reported anywhere that can use a sample of over one thousand confined females.

There was a significant difference regarding gender (Chi-square = 86.0, p < .001). Some 44.1 percent of the males were gang members, compared to 29.5 percent of the females.

Race of the Respondents in the Sample

The racial breakdown for the sample is provided below. The race of the respondents in the sample shows just over half are African-Americans. Just over a fourth are white or Caucasian.

<u>Overall Sample</u>			
<u>Racial Category</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>% Gang Members</u>
African-American	5109	52.3	41.6
White/Caucasian	2881	29.5	32.1
Hispanic/Latino/Mexican	995	10.2	66.3
Asian/Chinese	135	1.4	67.4
Native American Indian	240	2.5	45.8
Arab-American	66	.7	44.2
Other	350	3.6	51.9

There is a significant difference in this distribution by ethnicity and race in terms of the percentage who are gang members (Chi-square = 394.4, $p < .001$).

About Half Attend Church, About Half Do Not

The survey asked "which best describes you: ___ I rarely if ever attend church ___ I often attend church". About half (55.1%, N = 5429) indicated they rarely if ever attend church. The other half (44.9%, N = 4419) indicated they often attend church.

There was a small significant difference comparing gang members and non-gang members on this factor. Some 46.7 percent of non-gang members indicated they often attend church, compared to 42.0 percent of the gang members (Chi-square = 22.0, $p < .001$).

Gang Crime: Gang or Self Interest?

This is one of the areas in the gang literature where different viewpoints clearly prevail and no consensus exists. It is a complicated question, but it is still a worthwhile area of inquiry, and so the survey addressed this issue directly. The survey asked "do you think most gang members get arrested for crimes they committed for their gang or for crimes they committed for themselves".

The results for this are mixed, with 56.6 percent (N = 5399) of the offender sample believing most gang members get arrested for crimes they committed for their gang. Thus, some 43.4 percent (N = 4143) believed that most gang members get arrested for crimes they committed for themselves.

There was a small difference in this factor comparing gang members and non-gang members (Chi-square = 19.3, $p < .001$). Some 58.7 percent of the non-gang members believed most gang members get arrested for crimes they committed for their gang, while 54.1 percent of gang members felt that most gang members get arrested for crimes they committed for their gang.

Risk Avoidance Behavior

The survey included the item "I am careful to avoid activities in which I might be injured" and included the response modes of always, usually, sometimes, rarely, and never. Obviously those responding "rarely" or "never" are basically saying that they have some element of risk seeking behavior, while those answering "always" or "usually" are basically saying they try to avoid risky behavior. The results are provided here:

	<u>Always</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>
<u>N</u>	2241	1989	3158	1415	1210
<u>%</u>	22.4	19.9	31.5	14.1	12.1

Thus, as seen in the above distribution for the item, about a fourth seem to fit the profile of "risk seekers" by rarely or never avoiding such risky activities.

There was a fairly strong difference on this factor comparing gang members and non-gang members (Chi-square = 454.8, $p < .001$). Among non-gang members some 20.7 percent indicated "rarely or never" avoiding such risks, compared to 33.3 percent of the gang members who "rarely or never" avoided such risks.

Need Fulfillment on Demand

The survey included the item "it is alright to demand that my needs be met" and included the response modes of always, usually, sometimes, rarely, and never. The results for this variable were as follows:

	<u>Always</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>
<u>N</u>	1866	1445	3822	1410	1433
<u>%</u>	18.7	14.5	38.3	14.1	14.4

The comparison of gang members and non-gang members was significant on this factor (Chi-square = 158.2, $p < .001$). Some 29.3 percent of the non-gang members indicated it is alright to demand their needs be met "always or usually", compared to 38.5 percent (always or usually) among gang members.

About a Fifth Have Been Forced to Have Sex

The survey included the question "were you ever forced to have sex that you did not want to have". Most (80.9%, N = 8029) indicated they have never been forced to have sex. About a fifth (19.1%, N = 1900) indicated they have been forced to have sex.

There was no difference on this factor comparing gang members and non-gang members.

Most Come From Mother-Centered Households

The survey asked an important question about family structure for this national offender population. The item was this: "which statement below best describes your family: ___ mother, father, and siblings ___ mother, myself, and siblings ___ father, myself, and siblings". The results showed that 38.6 percent (N = 3675) fit the pattern of the intact family (mother, father and siblings). The single largest group (52.8%, N = 5022) reported the mother-centered household (mother, myself, and siblings). While a very small percent (8.6%, N = 814) reported a father-centered household (father, myself, and siblings).

There was a small significant difference comparing gang members and non-gang members on this factor. Some 41.7 percent of the non-gang members came from the "intact model" of family (mother, father, and siblings) compared to 34.5 percent for gang members (Chi-square = 49.1, $p < .001$).

Age First Ever Forced to Have Sex

The survey asked "if you were ever forced to have sex, how old were you the first time it happened. When I was ___ years old". The results showed a range between a low of 2 years of age to a high of 48 years of age. Some trends are very evident here though. Among those who did experience being forced to have sex, the vast majority (89.5%) first experienced this abuse under the age of 17. In fact, 93.9 percent were in the age range of 18 or under. The mean, or arithmetic average, age for this variable was 11.9 years of age⁸.

Age The Last Time They Were Forced to Have Sex

The survey asked "if you were forced to have sex, how old were you the last time it happened? When I was ___ years old". The results showed a range between a low of 2 years old to a high of 56, with a mean or average value of 15.1 years of age for this factor. Some trends are noteworthy though: Some 91.5 percent indicated the age range of 26 years of age or younger. Among those who had ever joined a gang, the mean was somewhat lower (13.7 years of age).

The Perception of Being in the Underclass

Sometimes it seems that researchers who use the methodology of "hanging out" with gang members often hear what they want to hear, or see what they think is a theory in motion, and from this macro level economic oppression theories about the cause of gangs get momentum with little actual empirical evidence. This survey included the true/false question "I feel that I am not a part of legitimate opportunities in my city or town and am cut out of good possibilities". It measures the essence of what is implied by the underclass concept. Some 56.0 percent (N = 5286) answered "false". Some 44.0 percent (N = 4150) answered "true". Clearly, this issue is not as pervasive as some ethnographers would have us believe. As a "theory" it is shown here to have little more discriminating power than some of the "off the cuff" approaches of pure suppression.

The comparison of gang members and non-gang members on this factor showed a small but significant difference. Some 41.0 percent of the non-gang members felt a part of the underclass compared to 47.7 percent for gang members (Chi-square = 41.5, $p < .001$).

The Crack Cocaine Selling Controversy

One of the current debates in the gang literature is about whether gang members do or do not sell crack cocaine. Some recent federal research discounted the extent of gang involvement in the sales of crack cocaine, blaming the mass media for portraying gang members in a bad light.

Admittedly, the research was flawed by involving only the secondary analysis of police arrest records which were not designed for research and therefore had a problem of validity and reliability, but the issue has persisted, so we tested it directly in this large national sample. The Project GANGFACT survey included the question "have you ever sold crack cocaine". About half of the offenders have sold crack cocaine (50.2%, N = 4952), and about half (49.8%, N = 4916) have not sold crack cocaine.

The test for comparing gang members with non-gang members in this large national offender population shows a very strong significant difference: among non-gang members 38.3% reported having sold crack cocaine, among gang members some 66.0% reported having sold crack cocaine (Chi-square = 720.3, $p < .001$). So we believe this issue is now finally seeing the light of day from research involving true primary data collection on gang members. Further, the thesis from a previous National Gang Crime Research Center study called Project GANGECON that gangs and gang members have greater command and control or access to the underground economy where crack is available is also supported by the findings of the present research. Obviously these findings also tend to debunk the assertion by other researchers about the low level of involvement of gangs or gang members in the sale of crack cocaine.

About a Third Have Completed High School or the GED

The survey asked "did you complete high school or get your GED". Most (65.3%, N = 6397) indicated they had not completed high school or the GED. Some 34.7% (N = 3403) did indicate they had completed high school or the GED.

The comparison of gang members and non-gang members on this factor was significant. Some 42.1 percent of the non-gang members had obtained these minimal educational credentials (high school or GED) compared to only 24.9 percent among gang members (Chi-square = 304.1, $p < .001$).

A Fifth Have Fired a Gun at a Police Officer

In an urban environment when someone fires a gun at a police officer, the police officer may never see the event, the police officer may only hear "shots fired". When the shots are stray and never hit their target, again it is unlikely that this type of unseen offense would ever be reported as such. This is why we were not surprised to see a high rate for this offense.

The survey asked "have you ever fired a gun at a police officer". Some 18.7 percent (N = 1841) indicated they had in fact fired a gun at a police officer. Most (81.3%, N = 8010) indicated they had not fired a gun at a police officer.

Gang members were significantly more likely to have reported firing a gun at a police officer in this research (Chi-square = 755.3, $p < .001$). Only 9.3 percent of the non-gang members reported ever firing a gun at a police officer, compared to 31.4 percent among gang members.

The Brady Bill Has Had Little Effect on Criminals

The survey asked "since March of 1994 has it been harder or easier for you to buy illegal guns", where the response modes were: harder, easier, about the same. Only 14.9 percent (N = 1205) indicated it has been harder since the Brady Bill to buy illegal guns. Some 38.4 percent (N = 3112) indicated it has been easier since the Brady Bill to buy illegal guns. And 46.7 percent (N = 3785) indicated no effect one way or the other (i.e., about the same difficulty today as before the Brady Bill).

There was a significant difference on this factor comparing gang members and non-gang members and the difference fits the previous gang research trend (see the study on gangs and guns carried out by the National Gang Crime Research Center: Project GANGGUNS, 1994) where generally gang members have a greater command of the underground economy and greater access to illegal and underground sources for such items. Some 33.0 percent of the non-gang members felt it was easier to get illegal guns since the Brady Bill, compared to 44.5 percent of the gang members (Chi-square = 120.9, $p < .001$).

The Deterrent Value of Prosecuting Juveniles as Adults

The survey asked "if more juveniles who committed violent crimes were tried in court as adult offenders, would this stop you as a juvenile from committing a violent crime". Some 52.4 percent (N = 4932) of the overall national sample said "no", that there would be no deterrent value in prosecuting juveniles as adults. Yet some 47.6 percent (N = 4474) reported "yes", that there would be some deterrent value in prosecuting juveniles as adults.

The comparison of gang members and non-gang members was significant on this variable (Chi-square = 187.6, $p < .001$). Some 53.7 percent of the non-gang members indicated that being tried as an adult would stop them from committing a violent crime as a juvenile; compared to only 39.3 percent among gang members. Generally, this is consistent with previous research (Project GANGECON, 1995; Project GANGPINT, 1995) showing the "combative personality syndrome" among gang members: they simply are a little bit more "hard core" in some respects.

The Suppression Value of Prosecuting Gangs as Organized Crime Groups

The survey asked "if gangs were investigated and prosecuted as if they were organized crime groups, would this put some gangs out of business". The results showed that 55.1 percent (N = 5266) did not believe some gangs could be put out of business by prosecuting them as organized crime groups. Still, some 44.9 percent (N = 4292) of the national sample felt that if gangs were investigated and prosecuted as if they were organized crime groups that this would in fact put some gangs out of business.

This factor was significant in comparing gang members and non-gang members (Chi-square = 522.2, $p < .001$). While 55.1 percent of the non-gang members felt that prosecuting gangs as an organized crime group could put some of the gangs out of business, only 31.4 percent of the gang members actually believed this.

Almost All Believe in God

The survey sought to be able to identify those who believed in God and those who were atheists (i.e., did not believe in God). The survey therefore asked "which best describes you: ___ I believe in God ___ I do not believe in God". The vast majority of the respondents in the national sample (93.1%, N = 8998) indicated they do in fact believe in God. Only 6.9 percent (N = 665) indicated they do not believe in God.

There was a small difference between gang members and non-gang members on this factor (Chi-square = 17.9, $p < .001$). Some 94.0 percent of the non-gang members indicated they believe in God, compared to 91.8 percent of the gang members.

The Few But Hardcore Followers of Satan

Some of the earlier research from the NGCRC identified this as a strong potential factor in explaining certain aspects of criminal conduct. The Project GANGFACT survey therefore included a way to identify those who were basically "followers of Satan". This is not equivalent in our appraisal to "devil worshipers" as a collective identity. It is an individual trait in the belief system of the individual offender. The survey asked "which best describes you: ___ I'm on God's side ___ I'm on Satan's side". Again, consistent with the strong internal validity of the data collected for Project GANGFACT (i.e., in comparison with the preceding item) the vast majority (94.0%, N = 8519) reported they were on "God's side". A small but hardcore⁹ group (6.0%, N = 547) reported they were followers of Satan.

There was a significant difference on this variable comparing gang members and non-gang members (Chi-square = 84.9, $p < .001$). Some 4.0 percent of the non-gang members indicated they were on the "Satan's side", compared to 8.7 percent of the gang members.

Involvement in Organized Drug Dealing

The survey asked "have you ever been involved in organized drug dealing". Some 55.0 percent (N = 5343) reported that they had in fact been involved in organized drug dealing. Some

45.0 percent (N = 4372) indicated they had no such prior involvement in organized drug dealing. A very significant difference emerged here in comparing gang members and non-gang members (Chi-square = 1162.0, p < .001). Some 40.2 percent of the non-gang members reported having been involved in organized drug dealing, compared to 75.3 percent of the gang members.

Organized Drug Dealing: Individual Versus Gang Reasons

A follow-up question for those who indicated they had ever been involved in organized drug dealing was included in the survey: "if yes, which best describes the drug dealing: ___ I did it for myself, ___ I did it for my gang". There is little room for doubt here any "why". Some 91.0 percent of those who had ever been involved in drug dealing reported they had done so "for myself". Thus, only 9.0 percent "did it for my gang".

One further necessary statistical distinction must be made here: controlling for those who were in fact gang members. So, among those who had ever been involved in organized drug dealing and who had ever joined a gang, some 87.9 percent reported having done so "for myself", while only 12.1 percent reported having done so "for the gang". The explanation that seems to emerge here is that argued previously in the NGCRC national study called Project GANGECON, where the gang seemed to function as a kind of "trade union guild" for criminal offenders: if they wanted the illegal income opportunity from selling drugs, the gang was perfectly able to provide them with that opportunity, and here we see that it is in most cases a voluntary activity for individual gain. The profile is consistent with the longstanding "income oriented crime" pattern: the person is seeking personal benefit.

Number of Close Friends and Associates Who Are Gang Members

As a concurrent validity item, and as a strong predictor of gang membership itself, gang research requires addressing this particular issue that has figured so prominently in the literature. The survey used the standard NGCRC item: "how many of your close friends and associates are gang members? ___ 0 ___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 or more". The results definitely distinguish between two types of persons quite clearly. This distribution is presented below.

	0	1	2	3	4	5 or more
N	3750	312	390	431	233	4068
%	40.8	3.4	4.2	4.7	2.5	44.3

As seen in the above distribution, just under a half of the national sample reported having 5 or more such close friends and associates who were gang members. This coincides with good fit to the proportion who are in fact self-reported gang members themselves.

And, yes, obviously this factor was very significant when comparing gang members and non-gang members (Chi-square = 3480.2, p < .001). Among non-gang members only 18.7 percent indicated having five or more close friends and associates who were gang members, compared to 77.4 percent for this variable among gang members. This also reinforces the validity of our measurement of "gang membership" in the research reported here.

Was Parental Interaction Supportive of Drugs, Guns and Violence?

The survey included the item¹⁰: "in our conversations, my parent(s) often show favorable attitudes toward drugs, crime, and violence" where the response modes included: strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree, and strongly disagree. The results for this variable are provided here:

	N	%
Strongly Agree	524	11.1
Agree	498	10.5
Uncertain	499	10.5
Disagree	696	14.7
Strongly Disagree	2525	53.2

Thus, in the national sample of confined youths and adults, half strongly disagreed with the idea that their parents were supportive of drugs, guns, and violence.

The test comparing gang members and non-gang members on this variable showed a small difference (Chi-square = 17.4, $p = .002$). Among non-gang members some 17.6 percent indicated a response of "strongly agree" or "agree to this item"; compared with 22.4 percent among gang members.

Did Their School Tolerate Drugs, Guns, and Gangs?

The survey included the item: "my school does not take it too seriously when I get involved in drugs, guns, and gangs" where the response modes included: strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree, and strongly disagree. The results for this variable are provided below.

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Strongly Agree	781	16.9
Agree	677	14.6
Uncertain	710	15.3
Disagree	829	17.9
Strongly Disagree	1638	35.3

The test comparing gang members and non-gang members on this variable showed a small difference (Chi-square = 25.0, $p < .001$). Some 25.8 percent of non-gang members gave a response of "strongly agree" or "agree" to this item; compared to 32.9 percent among gang members.

Half Report They Know Active Gang Members Who Work in the Field of Criminal Justice

The survey asked "do you know of any members of the law enforcement community (police officers, correctional officers, parole officers, probation officers) who are active gang members". This is the "mole" factor that has surfaced in some cities regarding police corruption. Half of the respondents (52.0%, $N = 2457$) indicated they knew such active gang members who worked in the field of criminal justice. The remainder (48.0%, $N = 2264$) did not know anyone who was an active gang member who worked in such criminal justice positions.

The test comparing gang members and non-gang members on this variable was significant (Chi-square = 166.1, $p < .001$). Some 30.0 percent of non-gang members knew such "gang moles" who worked in criminal justice occupations (police, correctional officers, etc), compared to 53.0 percent among gang members.

Over Half Believe Early Intervention Could Discourage Children From Joining Gangs

The survey asked "do you think that early intervention in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade could help discourage children from joining gangs". Some 61.2 percent ($N = 2928$) agreed that such early intervention could possibly discourage children from joining gangs. Still, 38.8 percent ($N = 1856$) did not believe in the effectiveness of such early intervention regarding the prevention of gang joining behavior.

The test comparing gang members and non-gang members on this factor produced a weak difference (Chi-square = 35.7, $p < .001$). Some 68.7 percent of non-gang members felt such early intervention would be effective, compared to 58.8 percent among the gang members themselves.

Duration of Confinement for the Respondents

The survey asked "how long have you been locked up this time only? Since: Month _____ of 19 ____". This variable was converted at the coding stage into months of confinement. Data from $N = 6580$ respondents was available for this variable. The duration of confinement for the

national sample ranged from zero months (presumably for someone who was just recently confined in a jail or juvenile detention center) to 100 months¹¹. The mean, or average, was 13.8 months¹².

Number of Disciplinary Reports

The survey asked "how many disciplinary reports have you had while in this facility. ___0 ___1 ___2 ___3 ___4 ___5 or more". The distribution for this variable was as follows:

<u>Number of Disciplinary Reports While in The Facility</u>						
	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>>= 5</u>
<u>N</u>	3548	927	625	588	391	1861
<u>%</u>	44.7	11.7	7.9	7.4	4.9	23.4

This factor was also very significant in comparing gang members and non-gang members (Chi-square = 581.3, p < .001). To give some indication of the greater risk of disciplinary problems among gang members consider this finding: while among non-gang members 55.9 percent (N = 2328) had no such disciplinary reports while in the facility, only 31.9 percent (N = 1138) of the gang members had no disciplinary reports while in the facility.

Physical Fights While Incarcerated

The survey asked "have you been in a physical fight with anyone while in this facility". Some 57.8 percent (N = 5048) reported "no", that they had not been in a physical fight while in their facility. Some 42.2 percent (3679) did report being in a physical fight with someone while confined in the facility they were surveyed in. Thus, a lot of physical fighting appears to go on in correctional facilities among the confined population.

This factor was significant comparing gang members and non-gang members (Chi-square = 639.6, p < .001). While 30.0 percent of the non-gang members reported being in a physical fight while incarcerated, some 57.3 percent of the gang members reported being in a fight. Obviously, gang behavior carries over into the correctional setting.

Aggressively Starting a Fight While Incarcerated

The survey asked "did you start a fight or attack someone while in this facility". About three-fourths (77.7%, N = 6739) reported that they had not started a fight or attacked someone while incarcerated. Some 22.3 percent (N = 1930) did report having started a fight or attacking someone while incarcerated.

This factor was significant in comparing gang members with non-gang members (Chi-square = 645.3, p < .001). Some 11.9 percent of the non-gang members had started a fight or attacked someone compared to 35.0 percent among gang members.

About A Fifth Carried A Homemade Knife While Incarcerated

The survey asked "have you carried a homemade weapon (knife, etc) while in this facility". Some 81.0 percent (N = 7026) reported they had not carried a homemade weapon while incarcerated. About a fifth of the respondents (19.0%, N = 1651) reported that they had in fact carried a homemade weapon (knife, etc) while incarcerated.

This factor was significant in the comparison between gang members and non-gang members (Chi-square = 345.6, p < .001). Some 11.9 percent of the non-gang members reported carrying such a weapon compared to 28.0 percent among gang members.

About A Fifth Have Threatened Correctional Staff While Incarcerated

The survey asked "have you threatened any facility staff member or officer while in this facility". Most (80.8%, N = 6991) reported that they had not threatened any correctional staff while incarcerated. However, about a fifth (19.2%, N = 1657) reported that they had in fact threatened correctional staff while incarcerated.

This factor was significant in the comparison between gang members and non-gang members

(Chi-square = 470.3, $p < .001$). While 10.8 percent of the non-gang members had threatened staff, some 29.5 percent of the gang members had made such a threat.

Attempting to Smuggle Drugs into the Correctional Facility

The survey asked "have you tried to smuggle in any illegal drugs while in this facility". Most of the incarcerated respondents (85.0%, $N = 7287$) reported that they had not attempted to smuggle in illegal drugs while incarcerated. But some 15.0 percent ($N = 1282$) did report attempting to smuggle in illegal drugs while incarcerated.

This factor was significant in the comparison of gang members and non-gang members (Chi-square = 384.6, $p < .001$). While 8.0 percent of the non-gang members had tried to smuggle in illegal drugs, some 23.4 percent of the gang members had tried to do so.

Do Gangs Use Religion as a "Front" For Their Meetings While Incarcerated?

The survey asked "do gangs use religion as a front in order to conduct their business in this facility". About two-thirds (70.5%, $N = 4930$) reported that gangs do not use religion as a front for their meetings, etc, while incarcerated. Still, some 29.5 percent ($N = 2065$) did in fact report that gangs use religion as a front in order to conduct gang business while incarcerated.

There was a weak difference in comparing gang members and non-gang members on this factor (Chi-square = 7.06, $p = .008$). Some 27.9 percent of the non-gang members, compared to 30.9 percent of the gang members, felt that gangs use religion as a front in order to conduct their business inside correctional institutions.

Do Gangs Try to Corrupt Correctional Staff to Bring in Drugs?

The survey asked "do gangs seek to influence staff members to bring in drugs/contraband in this facility". About two-thirds (68.8%, $N = 4795$) reported that gangs do not seek to corrupt correctional staff for this purpose. However, some 31.2 percent ($N = 2170$) did report that gangs seek to influence correctional staff to bring in drugs/contraband.

There was a small difference in comparing gang members and non-gang members on this factor (Chi-square = 30.0, $p < .001$). While 27.8 percent of the non-gang members indicated that gangs seek to adversely influence staff for the purpose of smuggling in drugs/contraband, some 34.0 percent of the gang members reported this.

Does a "Zero Tolerance" Approach Discourage Gang Recruitment Behind Bars?

The survey asked "do you think that a zero tolerance approach to gang activity within a correctional facility affects gang recruitment". The results are not too encouraging, perhaps a "negative tolerance approach" is what would be more meaningful in a correctional context, because 63.0 percent ($N = 4322$) of the incarcerated respondents did not think that a zero tolerance approach to gang activity affects gang recruitment. Still, over a third (37.0%, $N = 2539$) did express the belief that a zero tolerance approach would affect gang recruitment.

There was a significant difference in comparing gang members and non-gang members on this factor (Chi-square = 58.9, $p < .001$). Generally, non-gang members were more likely to feel a zero-tolerance approach is effective. Some 41.6 percent of the non-gang members, compared to 32.6 percent of the gang members, felt that a zero tolerance approach in a correctional facility would affect gang recruitment.

Are Gangs in Adult Prisons and Juvenile Institutions Connected?

The survey asked "is there a connection between adult prison gangs and juvenile institutional gangs". Some 46.1 percent ($N = 2847$) felt "no". But 53.9 percent ($N = 3329$) did feel there was a connection between gangs in adult prisons and those in juvenile institutions.

There was a significant difference in the comparison of gang members and non-gang members on this factor (Chi-square = 187.6, $p < .001$). While some 44.4 percent of the non-gang

members felt there was a connection between adult prison gangs and juvenile institutional gangs, some 62.1 percent of the gang members believed the connection existed.

Over A Fourth Report Their Parents Served Prison Time As Well

The survey asked "have any of your parents ever served time in prison". Some 30.1 percent (N = 2389) reported that they did in fact have a parent who had served prison time. Some 69.9 percent (N = 5550) reported "no": no parent had previously served prison time.

There was a significant difference in the comparison of gang members and non-gang members on this factor (Chi-square = 285.4, p < .001). Some 22.1 percent of the non-gang members indicated they had a parent who had been in prison, while some 39.8 percent of the gang members reported having a parent who had done so.

Parent Involvement in Early Life With Teachers/School

The survey included the item: "my parent(s) took time to come and meet my teachers when I was in school", where the response modes were: always, usually, sometimes, rarely, never. The results were as follows:

	<u>Always</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>
<u>N</u>	1595	831	1186	487	555
<u>%</u>	34.3	17.9	25.5	10.5	11.9

There was a very weak difference in the comparison of gang members and non-gang members on this factor (Chi-square = 10.8, p = .028). The difference, though, appears that gang members had better parents in this regard¹³. When examining the combined categories of "rarely and never": some 23.5 percent of the non-gang members reported that their parents rarely or never took time to come and meet their teachers while in school, compared to 20.5 percent among gang members.

Physically Violent Parents in the Home Environment

The survey included the item: "my parent(s) were physically violent in my home" where the response modes were: always, usually, sometimes, rarely, never. The results were as presented below.

	<u>Always</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>
<u>N</u>	301	317	904	823	2267
<u>%</u>	6.5	6.9	19.6	17.8	49.2

There was a weak difference on this factor in comparing gang members and non-gang members (Chi-square = 15.1, p = .004). Some 12.2 percent of the non-gang members indicated their parents were physically violent in the home "always or usually", compared to 15.1 percent for gang members.

Parental Supervision in the Home Environment

The survey included the item: "my parent(s) knew where I was and who I was with" where the response modes were: always, usually, sometimes, rarely, never. The results were as follows:

	<u>Always</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>
<u>N</u>	805	1025	1486	784	526
<u>%</u>	17.4	22.2	32.1	16.9	11.4

There was a significant difference on this factor comparing gang members and non-gang members (Chi-square = 198.6, p < .001). The trend suggests gang members had parents who did not keep track of their kids. When combining the categories of "rarely or never" this trend emerges the strongest. Some 22.8 percent of the non-gang members reported that their parents "rarely or never" knew where they were or who they were with, compared to 36.0 percent among gang members.

Self-Reported Gang Membership

We come now to the matter of being able to provide a more precise picture describing the gang member population. It is based on the self-report item regarding whether they have ever joined a gang. The survey asked the question "have you ever joined a gang". In this national sample of confined offenders 57.4 percent (N = 5585) indicated they had never joined a gang. But 42.6 percent (N = 4140) have joined a gang. Those who have joined a gang constitute the gang sample which will be analyzed in all gang specific questions from the survey. This gang specific analysis follows here.

Gang Specific Variables

The remaining variables described are those variables in the survey that are meaningful only when answered by gang members. The rest of the variables described in this chapter are therefore analyzed only in regard to the responses from self-reported gang members. In other words, this is the gang sample in the national offender sample.

Age First Joined a Gang

The survey asked a series of follow-up question to those who had reported having ever joined a gang. The question for age first joined a gang was this: "at what age did you first join? When I was ___ years old". The results showed a range between a low of one year of age (presumably for someone who was literally born into a gang family) to a high of 39 years of age. Some trends here, however, are clear: 87.4 percent had joined before their 16th birthday; 97.6 percent had joined when they were 18 years of age or under; three-fourths (77.8%) had joined on or before the age of 14; nearly half (45.0%) were in the gang on or before the age of 12! The mean, or average, age at time of first joining a gang was 12.7 years of age for this national sample.

Gangs Represented in the National Sample

The survey did ask the respondent to write in the name of the gang he/she had joined. The "results" here was a list 14 pages long, single spaced. It includes many of the larger "brand name" gangs in the USA today: Gangster Disciples, Vice Lords, Latin Kings, various Crip and Blood sets, etc. This information is not of meaningful value here and is therefore not analyzed. It will be used for subsequent analysis in gang profiling by the NGCRC.

Gang Nation Alliances

The survey did ask the respondent whether they were affiliated with Crips, Bloods, Peoples/Brothers, Folks, Surenos, Nortenos, or other. Some 23.4 percent indicated Crips. Some 9.1 percent Bloods. Some 11.8 percent Peoples/Brothers. Some 26.0 percent Folks. Some 7.7 percent Surenos. Some 2.2 percent Nortenos. And 19.8 percent "other". The "other" category contains skinheads, Aryan Brotherhood, motorcycle gangs, etc.

About Two-Thirds Are Still Active Members in the Gang

The survey asked "are you currently a member of any gang". This showed that 65.0 percent (N = 2627) were still active in their gang. Some 35.0 percent (N = 1412) therefore indicated they were no longer active members in their gang. An additional follow-up question identified the name of the gang the respondents currently belonged to, but again a rather lengthy and detailed list emerged. Suffice it to say, it includes many of the larger "brand name" gangs in the USA today.

Many Have Tried to Quit the Gang

The survey asked "have you ever attempted to quit the gang". Some 44.8 percent (N = 1787) indicated that they had in fact attempted to quit the gang. Thus, over half (55.2%, N = 2204) have not tried to quit the gang.

Over Half Have Held Some "Rank" in Their Gang

The survey asked "have you ever held rank or any leadership position in the gang". Some 59.8 percent (N = 2386) indicated that they had held some rank or leadership position in their gang. Some 40.2 percent (N = 1602) indicated they had not held any rank or leadership position in their gang.

A follow-up question was included in the survey that asked the name of the "title of your rank" in the gang. This information was examined as a part of the validity checking of the data and for additional later gang profiling purposes¹⁴. Some gangs with a corporate structure, like the Gangster Disciples, have "business like" titles of rank: area coordinator, assistant coordinator, treasurer, etc. Others have more military-style titles of rank: First Lt., Commander, General, etc. Others have a royalty-style leadership infrastructure in terms of titles: King, Prince, Overseer, Queen, regent, etc. Some emulate government titles: President, Governor, representative, Sgt. at Arms, etc. Some mix in religious symbolism as well. Just as some show little sign of formal organization. As a rule, this report is not intended to analyze this type of narrative information, as it would require a content analysis and would be meaningful only in relationship to the hypotheses of the co-principal investigator who designed the question. This report is intended to provide an analysis of the quantitative variables available from Project GANGFACT.

Over Half Report Their Gang Has a Special Language Code

The survey asked "does your gang have a special language code". Some 59.3 percent (N = 2366) reported that their gang does in fact have such a special language code. Thus, some 40.7 percent (N = 1624) reported that their gang lacks a special language code.

Examples of such special language codes are well known to those who study gangs. For example, "Growth and Development" is a coded expression meaning "Gangster Disciple. For example, "LOVE" as used by a Crip in L.A. means "Let Our Vision Educate". Such gangs often have specialized linguistic greetings as well as an assortment of slang or subcultural argot terms for activities (i.e., selling drugs = slanging), persons (often for boundary maintenance: terms to refer to "neutrons", "claimers", the opposition gangs, etc), and objects (guns, drugs, etc).

About Two-Thirds of Gang Members Report Their Gang Has Written Rules

The survey asked "does your gang have written rules for its members". Some 67.9 percent (N = 2711) reported that their gang does in fact have such written rules for its members. Thus, about a third (32.1%, N = 1279) reported that their gang lacks written rules.

The Journal of Gang Research regularly provides "gang profiles" which provides numerous examples of these kind of internal written rules for gang members. For other examples, see An Introduction to Gangs (Knox, 1994).

Most Are Adult Driven Gang Organizations

The survey asked "does your gang have adult leaders who have been in the gang for many years". Some 84.3 percent (N = 3367) reported that their gang does have such adult leaders who have been in the gang for many years. Only 15.7 percent (N = 629) indicated their gang is not an adult-driven organization.

Half Report Committing a Crime For Financial Gain With Their Gang

The survey asked "have you ever committed a crime for financial gain with your gang". Some 58.5 percent (N = 2344) reported that they had committed a crime for financial gain with their gang. Some 41.5 percent (N = 1663) reported not having done so.

Over Half Report Their Gang Holds Regular Weekly Meetings

The survey asked "does your gang hold regular weekly meetings". Some 58.6 percent (N = 2311) reported that their gang does in fact hold such regular weekly meetings. Thus, some 41.4 percent (N = 1633) indicated that they gang does not hold such regular weekly meetings.

A Fourth Report Their Gang Requires Regular Weekly Dues

The survey asked "does your gang require its members to pay regular weekly dues". Some 27.9 percent (N = 1097) reported that their gang does require paying such regular weekly dues. But nearly three-fourths (72.1%, N = 2840) reported that their gang does not require such regular weekly dues.

Dedicated Soldiers or A Collection of Misfits?

The survey asked "which best describes you: __ whatever the gang expects of me I do __ I do what I want regardless of what the gang expects me to do". The results show that a fourth (22.8%, N = 853) fit the profile of dedicated soldiers: they do what the gang expects of them. But three-fourths (77.2%, N = 2893) suggested the gang functions more like a collection of misfits in that the respondents indicated "I do what I want regardless of what the gang expects me to do".

The Importance of Making Money in Decisions to Join the Gang

The survey asked "how important was the chance to make money in your decision to join a gang", where the response modes included: very important, important, not important. A fourth (25.3%, N = 998) indicated making money was "very important" in their decision to join a gang. Some 29.0 percent (N = 1143) reported that making money as "important" in their decision to join a gang. Still, some 45.8 percent (N = 1806) reported that this was "not important" in their decision to join a gang.

The Importance of Protection in Decisions to Join the Gang

The survey asked "how important was seeking protection in your decision to join a gang" where the response modes included: very important, important, not important. Some 16.3 percent (N = 647) indicated that protection was very important in their decision to join a gang. Some 24.5 percent (N = 973) reported that protection was important in their decision to join a gang. But some 59.2 percent (N = 2354) reported that protection was not important in their decision to join a gang.

Getting Into the Gang: Recruits Versus Volunteers

We are not aware inside the language systems of modern American gangs of any linguistic distinction between members that are recruited as opposed to those who volunteer to join the gang on their own, however this is obviously an important feature of understanding gangs from a systems perspective. The survey asked "did someone ask you to join the gang (were you recruited) or did you ask to join your gang" where the response modes were: __ I was recruited into the gang __ I asked to join the gang. Some 54.5 percent (N = 2046) indicated that they were recruited into the gang. Some 45.5 percent (N = 1711) indicated that they asked to join their gang.

Drug Dealing Income That Goes Back to the Gang

The survey asked "of all the drug dealing you have done since joining a gang, what percent of the total money went back to the gang". The results for this variable showed a range between a low of zero percent to a high of 100 percent. The mean, or average, was that 33.1 percent of the drug dealing income goes back to the gang.

Drug Dealing Money That is Kept and Spent as Individual Income

As a follow-up to the preceding question, the survey asked "about what percent of the total money were you able to keep and spend as ordinary income". The results showed a range between a low of zero percent to a high of 100 percent. The mean, or average, was that 74.0 percent of the drug dealing income was able to be spent as individual disposable income.

Paranoid Delusions: Beliefs That Some Outside Force/Organization Could Remotely Control Their Gang

The survey asked the gang members "do you feel that some outside person/organization or force controls the actions of your gang". About a fourth (28.5%, N = 1099) did express such a paranoid delusion. Some 71.5 percent (N = 2762) did not believe that some outside person/organization or force controls the actions of their gang. We feel compelled to mention here that just because a fourth are very paranoid does not mean someone really is not trying to manipulate them.

Four-Fifths of the Gang Members Would "Bail Out" Given The Right Social Opportunities

The survey included the vignette-style item "if you were offered a second chance in life, with a clean slate, and if you are given the opportunity to finish your education and/or receive job training while working with a person that truly cares about you and your needs, would you be willing to quit the gang and start your life over again". Some 79.6 percent (N = 2986) indicated they would quit the gang life under this situation. Still, about a fifth (20.4%, N = 763) would still not quit gang life if these social opportunities were provided.

About A Fourth Say They "Drifted" Into Gang Life Because of the Absence of Other Opportunities

The survey included the retrospective scenario question "if there had been other activities available to you to participate in (for example: sports, music, art, drama, YMCA, Boy's Club, church activities, etc), do you think you would have still joined a gang". The response modes for this item include: Yes, No, and Not Sure. Some 28.5 percent (N = 1124) indicated "no", that if these social opportunities had been available they would not have joined a gang, suggesting that about a fourth "drift into" gangs. Some 34.7 percent (N = 1368) indicated "yes", that even if these social opportunities had existed they would have still joined their gang. Finally, some 36.8 percent (N = 1453) were "not sure" if they would have still joined a gang if these opportunities had been available.

Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Modern Gangs

The survey asked "which best describes your gang: __ Consists only of members who represent one racial or ethnic group __ Consists mostly of one racial or ethnic group, with some members who are from other racial groups __ Consists of a variety of racial and ethnic groups on an equal basis". Some 30.9 percent (N = 1107) indicated that their gang "consists only of members who represent one racial or ethnic group". Some 30.2 percent (N = 1083) indicated that their gang "consists mostly of one racial or ethnic group, with some members who are from other racial groups. Thus, 61.1 percent (N = 2190) of the gang members suggest their gang is for the most part homogeneous with respect to race or ethnicity. Still, some 38.9 percent (N = 1396) reported that their gang "consists of a variety of racial and ethnic groups on an equal basis", suggesting a new trend towards heterogeneity in modern gang life.

Age at Joining the Gang in an Institution

The survey asked "how old were you when you first joined the gang in the institution" where the response modes include: 12-13 years old, 14-15 years old, 16-17 years old, and "I did not first join the gang in the institution". Some 27.8 percent (N = 1046) indicated they first joined the gang in the institution when they were 12 to 13 years old; some 15.5 percent (N = 582) when they were 14 to 15 years old; some 8.9 percent (N = 334) when they were 16 to 17 years old; and 47.8 percent (N = 1794) indicated "I did not first join the gang in the institution".

Four Fifths Report That Their Gang Has Sold Crack Cocaine

The survey asked "has your gang ever sold crack cocaine". Some 82.4 percent (N = 3217) reported "yes", that their gang has in fact sold crack cocaine. Some 17.6 percent (N = 685) reported that their gang has not sold crack cocaine.

Over A Third Have Parents Who Do Not Know They Are Gang Members

The survey asked "do your parents know you are a member of a gang". Some 64.8 percent (N = 2512) reported that their parents did in fact know they were a member of a gang. Still, some 35.2 percent (N = 1365) indicated that their parents did not know they were a member of a gang.

Most Have Female Members in Their Gang

The survey asked "are there female members of your gang". Some 83.3 percent (N = 3277) reported that there are in fact female members in their gang. Only 16.7 percent (N = 656) reported no female members in their gang.

Half Report Females Can Be Leaders in Their Gang

The survey asked "are there any female leaders in your gang". Some 45.7 percent (N = 1774) reported that there are in fact female leaders in their gang. Similarly, half (54.3%, N = 2105) reported that there are no female leaders in their gang.

Crime by Gang Members: 1/4th For the Gang, 3/4ths For Personal Benefit

The survey asked "of the crimes that you committed, were these mostly for the benefit of the gang or were they for your own personal benefit" where the response modes were: __ For the benefit of the gang __ For my personal benefit. Some 25.8 percent (N = 913) indicated they committed crimes mostly for the benefit of their gang. About three-fourths (74.2%, N = 2624) indicated they committed crimes mostly for their own personal benefit.

Half Claim Ties to Real Organized Crime

The survey asked "has your gang established any relationship with real organized crime (i.e., Italian Mafia figures)". Half (50.1%, N = 1857) claimed such ties to real organized crime. Half (49.9%, N = 1853) indicated their gang has established no such relationship to real organized crime figures.

Over Two Thirds Believe Their Gang Has Kept its Promises To Them

The survey asked "do you think your gang has kept the promise(s) it made to you when you first joined". Some 71.3 percent (N = 2560) expressed the belief that their gang has kept its promises to them. Still, some 28.7 percent (N = 1030) felt that their gang has not kept the promise(s) it made to them when they first joined. Such a sentiment could figure prominently in explaining a propensity for gang defection.

Two separate narrative variables were also collected in follow-up to this question: "list two areas where promises made at the time you first joined the gang where you want your gang to improve". Money, love, protection, power, and respect were some of the most frequently cited individual "areas". This is not a full listing, and as stated earlier this report focuses exclusively on summarizing the quantitative findings only.

Total Male Members in Their Neighborhood Set of the Gang

The survey asked "in your gang set, how many total members in your own neighborhood are males". The results ranged from a low of zero to a high of 11,000, with a mean of 201.0 such members. A second item measuring number of female members produced a range between zero to a high of 7,000 with a mean of 77.9 such female members.

A Fourth Have Made False "911 Calls" In Connection With Gang Activities

The survey asked "have you ever personally made false 911 calls to the police emergency telephone number in connection with your gang activities". About a fourth (24.6%, N = 938) reported having made such false 911 calls. About three-fourths (75.4%, N = 2869) indicated they have not made such false 911 calls in connection with their gang activities.

Over A Fourth Report That Shooting at a Police Officer Would Bring Them More Status in Their Gang

The survey asked "which best describes you: ___ Shooting at a police officer would be really stupid because of the heat it would bring upon my gang ___ Shooting at a police officer would bring me more status and "rep" in my gang". Some 70.5 percent (N = 2333) indicated that "shooting at a police officer would be really stupid because of the heat it would bring upon my gang". Still, over a fourth (29.5%, N = 977) indicated "shooting at a police officer would bring me more status and "rep" in my gang".

Over Half Report That The Gangs That Exist Inside Correctional Institutions Are Basically the Same Gangs That Exist on the Street

The survey asked "are the gangs that exist inside correctional institutions (detention centers, jails, prison, etc) basically the same as the same gangs that exist on the street". Some 61.0 percent (N = 2277) reported that the gangs inside correctional institutions are basically the same gangs that exist on the street. Some 39.0 percent (N = 1458) rejected this view.

A Third of the Gang Members Have Never Met The Top Leader of Their Gang

The survey asked "have you ever met face-to-face with the top leader of your gang". Some 67.5 percent (N = 2511) reported that they had in fact met face-to-face with the top leader of their gang. Still, a third (32.5%, N = 1208) reported having never met face-to-face with the top leader of their gang.

Two-Fifths of the Gang Members Think They Will Someday Be the Top Leader of Their Gang

If ever there was any doubt about the extent to which gang members had a firm grasp on reality, this finding may substantially clarify the issue; or alternatively, it may tell us something about their true "aspirations". The survey asked "do you think you will ever be the top leader of the gang you are in". Obviously, in some gangs answering "yes" to this would be tantamount to heresy. Thus, 60.9 percent (N = 2158) said "no": they do not expect to ever be the top leader of the gang they are in. But 39.1 percent (N = 1388) did indicate that they would someday be the top leader of the gang they were a member of.

Has Gang Membership Affected Their Religious Beliefs?

The survey asked "has your gang membership affected your religious beliefs in any way". Some 58.9 percent (N = 2218) indicated "no": that their gang membership has not affected their religious beliefs. But about a fifth (21.6%, N = 814) indicated that their gang membership has in fact affected their religious beliefs. Finally, some 19.5 percent (N = 733) felt that "maybe" their gang membership has affected their religious beliefs.

Only A Fourth Actually Believe Their Gang is Helping Their Racial or Ethnic Group to Overcome Society's Prejudices

The survey asked "do you feel that the gang which you belong to is aiding your race or ethnic group to overcome society's prejudices". Some 42.5 percent (N = 1577) indicated "no": that they do not feel their gang is aiding in the process of overcoming such prejudices. About a fourth (24.7%, N = 918) responded "yes": that they do believe their gang is helping their ethnic/racial group to overcome societal prejudices. Finally, about a third (32.8%, N = 1216) were simply "not sure".

A Third Report Compulsion As A Possible Motive to Commit Crime

The survey asked "has anyone in your gang (i.e., leaders, etc) ever told you to perform an act that you felt was wrong". Some 63.4 percent (N = 2367) said "no": they have not been compelled to do anything they felt was wrong. Still, some 36.6 percent (N = 1366) indicated "yes": that they have in fact been told by gang leaders to perform an act that they felt was wrong.

The Source of Gang Nicknames

The survey asked "which best describes how you got your current nickname: __ I picked the nickname myself __ My gang friends picked the nickname for me". Some 40.3 percent (N = 1393) indicated that they were able to pick the nickname for themselves. The majority (59.7%, N = 2063) indicated that their gang friends picked the nickname for them.

The Meaning of Their Nicknames

The survey asked "the meaning of my nickname is based on: (check one): __ Physical characteristics (e.g., "Red" for my hair color or "Tiny" for my size), __ Behavioral characteristics (e.g., "Maniac" for being outgoing or "Tough Guy" for rep) __ Take Off On Given (e.g., "Di" for Diane or "J.J." for Jim Jones) __ Other". Some 22.0 percent (N = 710) indicated that the meaning of their nickname could be traced to physical characteristics. The largest single group (35.4%, N = 1144) indicated that the meaning of their nickname could be traced to behavioral characteristics. Some 11.8 percent (N = 381) indicated the meaning of their nickname was a "take off on a given". And the remainder (30.9%, N = 998) indicated some other unclassified meaning.

Most Get Their Nicknames Before Being Incarcerated

The survey asked "at what point did you get your current nickname: __ Before being locked-up in an institution __ At the time being locked-up in an institution __ After being locked up in an institution". Some 80.8 percent (N = 2768) indicated they got their nickname before being locked up in an institution. Some 12.0 percent (N = 412) indicated they got their nickname at the time of being lock-up in an institution. And only 7.2 percent (N = 245) indicated they got their nickname after being locked up in an institution.

Few Indicated Their Father Encouraged Them to Join a Gang

The survey included the true/false item: "My father encouraged me to join a gang". Some 9.7 percent (N = 367) indicated that their father did in fact encourage them to join a gang. Most (90.3%, N = 3410) indicated that their father did not encourage them to join a gang.

Fewer Indicated Their Mother Encouraged Them to Join a Gang

The survey included the true/false item: "My mother encouraged me to join a gang". Only 6.9 percent (N = 260) indicated that their mother encouraged them to join a gang. Most (93.1%, N = 3508) indicated that their mother did not encourage them to join a gang.

Half Feel Their Parents Would Be Embarrassed About Their Gang Membership

The survey included the true/false item: "my mother and father would be embarrassed if they knew I was in a gang". Some 55.5 percent (N = 2007) indicated that they did feel their parents would be embarrassed if the parents knew they were in a gang. Still, some 44.5 percent (N = 1612) indicated their parents would not be embarrassed to know they were in a gang.

Joining A Gang Because of Significant Others Who Were In A Gang

The survey included the item: "I joined a gang because I knew someone that was a member of one, for instance, a friend, a brother, or an uncle", where the response modes were strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree, and strongly disagree. The results for this variable are provided here:

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Strongly Agree	975	26.4
Agree	1046	28.3
Uncertain	436	11.8
Disagree	508	13.7
Strongly Disagree	730	19.8

If They Wanted To, Could They Quit The Gang?

The survey included the item: "If I wanted to, I could quit my gang", where the response modes were: strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree, and strongly disagree. The results for this variable are provided here:

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Strongly Agree	1378	37.4
Agree	829	22.5
Uncertain	497	13.5
Disagree	367	10.0
Strongly Disagree	617	16.7

Do Gang Members Feel Loved and Protected?

The survey included the item: "I feel protected and loved by being in a gang" where the response modes included: strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree, and strongly disagree. The results for this variable are provided here:

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Strongly Agree	926	25.1
Agree	1065	28.9
Uncertain	615	16.7
Disagree	510	13.8
Strongly Disagree	568	15.4

Do They Feel Gang Fighting is Normal Behavior in Their Neighborhood?

The survey included the item: "in my neighborhood, gang fighting is normal behavior for someone like me" where the response modes included: strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree, and strongly disagree. The results for this variable are provided here:

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Strongly Agree	1009	27.2
Agree	1125	30.3
Uncertain	467	12.6
Disagree	550	14.8
Strongly Disagree	561	15.1

Fighting With Rival Gang Members While in Custody

The survey asked "have you fought with any rival gang members while in this facility". Some 40.0 percent (N = 1498) did report having such fights with rival gang members while in custody. Some 60.0 percent (N = 2250) therefore reported not fighting with rival gang members while in custody.

Over A Third Report Having Used "Legal Letters" to Communicate With Fellow Gang Members

The survey asked "have you ever used legal letters to communicate with fellow gang members". Legal letters in correctional institutions are not subject to staff screening and can be sealed by the sender. Some 37.8 percent (N = 1377) reported having used this ploy to communicate with other gang members. Most (62.2%, N = 2268) have not engaged in this behavior while in custody.

Two-Fifths Report Forcible Sex Involving Females

The survey asked "have you known males in your gang who forced females to have sex". Some 39.1 percent (N = 1324) reported they were knowledgeable of such forcible sex, making this apparently a lot more common than has been previously documented. Still, some 60.9 percent (N = 2060) did not know of such cases of forcible sex.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This chapter has provided a quick overview or glimpse of the data from Project GANGFACT. The chapter had very limited goals:

- (1) provide descriptive statistics on all variables,
- (2) compare gang members and non-gang members on certain variables, and
- (3) summarize additional "gang specific" variables that were designed for gang members only, and these too were described in this chapter.

The most pertinent findings from this chapter have to do with the comparison of gang members and non-gang members. It is therefore useful to summarize these findings here. The comparison made is between confined gang members and their counterparts inside the confined offender population who have never joined a gang.

Here are some of the major differences that emerged in comparing gang members with non-gang members:

- * Gang members were significantly more likely to respond that they always or usually "get what I want even if I have to take it from someone".
- * Gang members were significantly more likely to be bullies in school.
- * Gang members were less likely to regularly attend church.
- * Gang members were significantly less likely to avoid situations involving the risk of personal injury.
- * Gang members were significantly more likely to want to demand that their needs be met.
- * Gang members were more likely to come from a mother-only household.
- * Gang members were more likely to perceive themselves as part of the underclass.
- * Gang members were significantly more likely to sell crack cocaine.
- * Gang members were significantly less likely to have completed minimal educational credentials (high school degree or GED).
- * Gang members were significantly more likely to report having fired a gun at a police officer.
- * Gang members were significantly more likely to report it has been easier since the Brady Bill went into effect to acquire illegal guns.
- * Gang members were significantly less likely to see the deterrent value of prosecuting juveniles as adults.
- * Gang members were significantly less likely to agree with the suppression value of prosecuting gangs as organized crime groups.
- * Gang members were less likely to believe in God, and more likely to claim they were on "Satan's side".
- * Gang members were significantly more likely to have been involved in organized drug dealing.

- * Gang members were significantly more likely to have close friends and associates who were gang members.
 - * Gang members were significantly more likely to get disciplinary reports while in custody.
 - * Gang members were significantly more likely to report engaging in fights while in custody.
 - * Gang members were significantly more likely to report starting a fight or attacking someone while in custody.
 - * Gang members were significantly more likely to report carrying an improvised weapon (knife, etc) while in custody.
 - * Gang members were significantly more likely to report having threatened a staff person while in custody.
 - * Gang members were significantly more likely to attempt to smuggle drugs into the correctional facility.
 - * Gang members were more likely to report that gangs do seek to influence staff members to bring in drugs/contraband into the correctional facility.
 - * Gang members were less likely to see the value of a "zero-tolerance" approach in preventing gang recruitment.
 - * Gang members were significantly more likely to report that a connection exists between prison gangs and juvenile institution gangs.
 - * Gang members were significantly more likely to have a parent who has served time in prison.
 - * Gang members were significantly less likely to report having adequate parental supervision as children.
- Finally, we can summarize some of the variables that were meaningful only in reference to someone who had ever joined a gang.
- * Two-thirds (65%) were still active in gang life.
 - * Many (44.8%) have tried to quit gang life.
 - * Over half (59.8%) have held some "rank" in their gang.
 - * Over half (59.3%) have a special language code in their gang.
 - * Two thirds (67.9%) have written rules in their gang.
 - * Four-fifths (84.3%) report their gang has adult leaders who have been in the gang for many years.
 - * Half (58.5%) have committed a crime for financial gain with their gang.
 - * Half (58.6%) report regular weekly meetings in their gang.
 - * A fourth (27.9%) report weekly dues are paid in their gang.
 - * We believe we have settled the controversy about whether gangs are highly organized or loose knit groups: they are in many ways highly organized as social aggregations, but the members function in a psychological loose fashion: three-fourths claimed that they do what they want regardless of what the gang expects them to do.
 - * Decisions to join the gang: a fourth (25.3%) indicated that making money was very important; 16.3 percent felt that seeking protection was very important.
 - * Do they join or are they recruited: about half and half, 54.5 percent were recruited, and 44.5 percent volunteered to join the gang.
 - * The gang gets about a third of the proceeds from drug sales income of its gang members; the estimate therefore being that two-thirds to three-fourths of all illegal drug sale money being disposable income for the "sales force" of the individual gang members.
 - * Paranoia about the super structure of control: a fourth (28.5%) felt that some outside person/organization or force controls the action of their gang.
 - * Most (79.6%) would quit gang life given the right circumstances of being given a "second chance in life".
 - * Four-fifths (82.4%) report that their gang has sold crack cocaine. This should settle the

issue about whether gangs or gang members do or do not engage in the illegal sale or distribution of crack cocaine.

- * About third (35.2%) have effectively concealed their gang involvement from their parents.

- * Most (83.3%) of the gangs have female members.

- * About half (45.7%) of the gangs do have female members in a leadership capacity; although, we would not assume this is in a top leadership role, but is probably a more supportive or middle-management role.

- * About a fourth (25.8%) indicated the crimes they committed were mostly for the benefit of the gang; about three-fourths (74.2%) indicated most of their crime was committed for their own individual benefit.

- * About half (50.1%) claimed their gang does have ties to real forms of organized crime.

- * About two-thirds (71.3%) felt that the gang has kept its promises to them.

- * A fourth (24.6%) have made false 911 calls to the police emergency telephone number in connection with gang activities.

- * Most (70.5%) felt that shooting at a police officer "would be really stupid because of the heat it would bring upon my gang", yet 29.5% felt that shooting at a police officer would bring them status and more reputation in their gang.

- * Over half (61.0%) reported that the gangs that exist inside correctional institutions are basically the same gangs that exist on the street.

- * A third (32.5%) report they have never met the top leader of their gang.

- * A new twist on unrealistic expectations: Two-fifths (39.1%) felt they would someday be the top leader of the gang they are in.

- * A fifth (21.6%) felt gang membership has affected their religious beliefs.

- * A third (36.6%) report the compulsion theory of crime: having been told by their gang to perform an act they knew was wrong.

- * Over half (59.7%) indicated they their nicknames were picked for them by their gang friends; most (80.8%) got their nicknames before they were incarcerated.

- * Few indicated that their father (9.7%) or their mother (6.9%) actually encouraged them to join a gang.

- * Half (55.5%) indicated their parents would be embarrassed to learn of their gang involvement.

- * About half (59.9%) agreed or strongly agreed with the idea that if they wanted to they could quit the gang.

- * About half (54.0%) agreed or strongly agreed that they feel protected and loved by their gang.

- * About half (53%) report knowing active gang members who work in criminal justice (i.e., "moles" for the gang).

- * Over a third (40%) have fought with rival gang members while in custody.

- * Over a third (37.8%) have used "legal letters" to communicate with fellow gang members.

- * About two-fifths (39.1%) have known males in their gang who forced females to have sex.

Further and more detailed analysis of these variables are reported in the remaining chapters of this report.

CHAPTER 4:

Model 1 of the STG/Gang Classification System For Adult and Juvenile Correctional Populations

INTRODUCTION

In a recent issue of American Jails, the magazine of the American Jail Association, several researchers from a previous national gang research project of the National Gang Crime Research Center argued for the merits of a gang or STG classification system in correctional institutions.¹⁵ Behind bars a gang is also called a security threat group or a disruptive group or a security risk group. The idea is that if a classification system could reduce the injuries to other inmates and staff from the known risk of gang members, then this should be adopted as a policy and procedure inside juvenile and adult correctional institutions in the U.S. today.

In this chapter we provide Model 1 of the STG/gang classification system. This is not our final statement on the issue. This is a first salvo in attack on the gang violence problem that plagues the American correctional system today.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STANDARDS AND POLICIES REGARDING CLASSIFICATION

Historically, there is only are three organizations that speak to the issue of standards for correctional management today: (1) the American Correctional Association (ACA), (2) the American Jail Association, and (3) the National Juvenile Detention Association. Of these, the ACA plays a more prominent role because of its power in certifying and accrediting correctional most institutions. The ACA has adopted numerous policies, procedures, guidelines, and standards on what to do and how correctional institutions in the U.S. should be managed and run. But the ACA has no standard, no guidelines, no recommended policies or procedures for the handling of gangs or security threat groups (STGs), just as the ACA has no such policies or procedures recommended for the abatement or prevention of racial conflict behind bars.

This might be construed as a classic case of "social lag": where policies lag behind the onset of a new problem brought on by social change, were it not for the fact that the ACA was a recipient of over half a million dollars for studying the gang problem behind bars¹⁶. So we must conclude that ongoing risks to the life and limb of inmates and correctional officers alike can be attributed to one thing: the fear of change itself.

Currently, there are some correctional facilities in the United States that do take gang membership into account in their inmate classification system. But nowhere will anyone find a policy operable in American correctional institutions today where the risks to staff and other inmates is systematically reduced by a valid classification system. One of the reasons for this is that such a system has not been developed, neither by the National Institute of Corrections nor by any other federal agency that may have responsibility for the development of this knowledge.

EXPLANATION OF THE MODEL 1 GANG/STG CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

In the Model 1 gang/STG classification system, there are six different levels of classification for risk or threat. Each of these are explained below. Overall in the total national sample we were missing data on only a small percentage of the variables used in these calculations, so the model was able to be effectively applied to the vast majority of the national sample. Further, we have not differentiated between juvenile and adult contexts. In the analysis that follows the same system of classification is applied to the entire national sample which consists of juveniles and adults.

Level 0 consists of anyone who has never joined a gang and who has no close friends and associates who are gang members. This is the basic "non-gang involved" offender. In Illinois today, the Illinois Department of Corrections in response to an enormous public outcry about

"gang control" in Illinois prisons, has now sought to convert one of its facilities to a "gang free" facility. To do this, it would need to include anyone classified as a level zero, plus anyone who has truly "dropped their flag" who had previously been in a gang. Someone who has previously been in a gang but who has, for example, become an informant or who has defected from the gang, is technically not considered a level zero gang threat because of their extensive knowledge about gang operations (i.e., such a person would be a Level 3 explained below). The Level 0 classification included N = 3,333 of the respondents (36.8%).

Level 1 consists of those who have never joined a gang, but who may have between 1 to 4 close friends and associates who are in a gang. This is, in other words, a low level gang associate. This person maintains a tie to gang life, but it is not a strong association. The Level 1 classification included N = 818 respondents (9.0% of the confined sample).

Level 2 consists of those who have never joined a gang, but who have 5 or more close friends and associates who are gang members. This is a high level gang associate. This person maintains strong ties to gang life, even as a non-gang member. The Level 2 classification included N = 955 respondents (10.5% of the confined sample).

Level 3 is a person who has at one time joined a gang, but who has quit the gang life. This is the basic inactive gang member. We do recognize that those who have cooperated with authorities in terms of helping prosecute members of the same gang deserve a lower threat rating. However, the current data is not amenable for adjustment regarding this factor. We recognize that someone who has cooperated with authorities is going to be a lower risk than someone who has simply claimed to have "walked away" from their gang. The Level 3 classification included N = 1,412 respondents (15.6 percent of the confined sample).

Level 4 is someone who has joined a gang, is still an active member, but who has never held any position of rank or leadership in the gang. This is the basic "active gang member soldier". This is the typical cannon fodder of the modern American gang. The Level 4 classification included N = 912 respondents (10.1% of the confined sample).

Level 5 is someone who has joined a gang, is still active in the gang, and who has held a position of rank or leadership in the gang. This is the basic "gang leader": it includes not only the top leaders, but the middle management, the henchmen so-to-speak of the modern American gang. The Level 5 classification included N = 1,629 respondents (18.0% of the confined sample).

THE MEANING OF THE RISK/THREAT VALUES ASSIGNMENT IN MODEL 1

The Model 1 gang/STG classification system is based on an additive index approach. It is therefore a scale that has a range of possible scores from an absolute low value of "zero" to an absolute high value of "five". There are six categories. It is easy to interpret the level of the gang threat/risk analysis made here.

(1) The lower the gang/STG threat rating level, the lower the risk of gang violence/disruption/threat inside correctional populations.

(2) The higher the gang/STG threat rating level, the higher the risk of gang violence/disruption/threat inside correctional populations.

Model 1 is a system of classification based on known prior or current behavior of inmates. Further it is one that this chapter will show appears to have some empirical support, if the policy interest is that of preventing and reducing the threat from gang members behind bars. Is it not arbitrary in the global sense because theoretically anyone at a level 5 can "work their way down" the scale of risk or threat. It is a fair system of classification because it relies entirely on behavior.

CAN MODEL 1 CONSISTENTLY DIFFERENTIATE DISCIPLINARY VIOLATIONS?

The first test we will subject Model 1 to is the simple question of whether it consistently and significantly differentiates the disciplinary code behavior of the confined population studied here. The variable we will be using is the question from the Project GANGFACT survey: "how many

disciplinary reports have you had while in this facility". This variable had a range between 0 to 5 or more. For the purposes of this test it is satisfactory to create a bivariate variable from this factor: (1) whether the inmate has had no disciplinary reports, and (2) whether the inmate has had one or more such disciplinary reports. This is, therefore, how the disciplinary report variable was recoded for the purposes of testing Model 1 here¹⁷.

Our hypothesis, then, is that the lower the Model 1 gang/STG classification scale score, then the lower the rate of disciplinary problems inside correctional institutions. Conversely, the higher the Model 1 gang/STG classification scale score, the higher the rate of disciplinary problems for these confined offenders. Further, to be a "consistent" classification system, the rates of disciplinary problems should vary in an increasing fashion up the scale of the classification system. Table 2 presents the evidence of this first test.

Table 2
Distribution (N) for
Whether Confined Offenders Report One or More Disciplinary
Reports While in Custody
By Their Respective Model 1 Classification Scale Scores

Had One or More Disciplinary Reports While in Custody?		Model 1 Gang/STG Scale Scores					
		0	1	2	3	4	5
NO		1654	274	282	448	269	389
YES		888	356	460	763	514	1066
% Yes		34.9	56.5	61.9	63.0	65.6	73.2

Chi-square = 692.0, p < .001

What Table 2 shows is a steady upwards progression of the probability of disciplinary problems at any level of the gang/STG scale. Further, the most remarkable difference in Table 2 is between the category of totally "non-gang associated inmate" and any level of gang involved or STG involved inmate! Only 34.9 percent of the Level zero inmates had disciplinary reports while in custody. Once we start up the ladder of the gang/STG risk or threat ladder, the numbers jump dramatically and continue to escalate consistently, until the problem "doubles" at the high end of the Model 1 classification system.

We can conclude with strong evidence that in fact the recent efforts in some states to create a "gang free" correctional environment is truly a needed innovation in the management of modern American correctional institutions.

Further, Table 2 provides evidence that the Model 1 gang/STG classification system does in fact significantly and consistently differentiate disciplinary problems among inmates in custody.

THE ISSUE OF INMATE SAFETY: COULD THE MODEL 1 GANG/STG CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM PREVENT SIGNIFICANT INMATE VIOLENCE?

It is well known in the field of corrections that persons in custody, whether juvenile or adult, present the greatest risk to themselves. That is inmates, not surprisingly, are prone to engage in fights. In the confined context everything takes on higher and greater meaning. A slight insult becomes, in the correctional environment, a symbolism of far greater importance than the act itself: sometimes inmates die as a result. Whether a gang/STG classification system reduce this problem is the thrust of the analysis undertaken here.

First and foremost, correctional institutions are mandated under law to provide for the safety and well-being of those confined. The issue raised here therefore gains increased importance as

courts have had an aggressive tendency to micro-manage correctional systems along the same lines of concern. The intrusion of the judicial branch of government into the executive function of government (i.e., corrections), would appear unnecessary with regard to inmate safety if a gang/STG classification system could systematically reduce the threat or risk of violence to inmates from other inmates (e.g., in particular gang-involved inmates, whom it will be argued pose a greater security threat).

The statistical issue here is whether the Model 1 gang/STG classification system can consistently and significantly differentiate fighting behavior among inmates. The variable we will use here from the Project GANGFACT survey is this: "have you been in a physical fight with anyone while in this facility". Table 3 presents the results of this test.

Table 3

**Distribution (N) for
Whether Confined Offenders Report Being in a Physical Fight
With Other Inmates While in Custody
By Their Respective Model 1 Classification Scale Scores**

Have You Been In A Physical Fight With Anyone While in Custody?	Model 1 Gang/STG Scale Scores					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
NO	2118	444	466	673	359	536
YES	706	261	349	614	481	987
% Yes	25.0	37.0	42.8	47.7	57.2	64.8

Chi-square = 761.8, p < .001

Table 3 shows the most "peaceful" correctional climate, defined here as a low rate of fighting between inmates, would be if those classified as Level One in the Model 1 classification system were kept physically separate from the other Levels. Only a fourth (25.0%) of the Level One group report being in a physical fight with other inmates. Similarly, one could assume with a high level of probability that fighting will occur among the Level 5 group, because the risk of fights more than doubles among the Level 5 group (64.8%).

As seen in Table 3, again, we find strong consistent evidence supportive of the value of the Model 1 gang/STG classification system. As we go up the scale of the gang/STG classification system we find a steady progression in the level of risk or threat of inmate fighting behavior. The issue seems abundantly clear to us: this health risk can be prevented by proper use of a gang/STG classification system. The wrongful death suits that family members file against correctional administrators could be significantly reduced if such a system were in place.

Some may question our intentions regarding the importance of reducing the threat of violence among inmates as a radical issue. We respond that we neither began this analysis nor have concluded this analysis with regard to any issue other than that of the primary topic of interest: the empirical issue of whether a gang/STG classification system, if implemented, could result in the operation of a safer correctional facility.¹⁸

Based on the results of Table 3, again we conclude with additional evidence that there appears to be strong support for the value of implementing a gang/STG classification system. Our data does permit estimation of the number of inmate-against-inmate assaults that could have been prevented if such a classification system had been in place. This particular analysis is beyond the scope of the present report, but may appear as a result of the individual initiative of scholarly work of the co-principal investigators that were involved in Project GANGFACT in a future work.

INMATE AGGRESSION: COULD THE MODEL 1 GANG/STG CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM HELP PREVENT INMATE ATTACKS ON OTHER INMATES?

Inmates provoke other inmates an age-old lesson in the history of corrections work. Some inmates are more predatory than others. Some inmates start fights just for the value of seeing what happens: will the offended victim "fight back"? If not, perhaps the aggressor inmate can benefit from ongoing exploitation of the victim. Sadly, but truly, some of these encounters escalate into violence levels far beyond the initial provocation. Inmates die routinely as a result of such inmate-versus-inmate aggressive attacks, involving the starting of fights or simply attacking another inmate.

The variable used from the Project GANGFACT survey is this: "did you start a fight or attack someone while in this facility". We feel this effectively measures violent inmate aggression. The test for whether a gang/STG classification system, if implemented, could reduce this problem is provided in Table 4.

Table 4

**Distribution (N) for
Whether Confined Offenders Report Starting a Fight
or Attacking Other Inmates While in Custody
By Their Respective Model 1 Classification Scale Scores**

Did you start a fight or attack someone while in custody?	Model 1 Gang/STG Scale Scores					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
NO	2568	593	642	958	551	863
YES	237	105	171	321	286	655
% Yes	8.4	15.0	21.0	25.0	34.1	43.1

Chi-square = 786.5, p < .001

Clearly, Table 4 shows again that the Model 1 gang/STG classification system significantly and consistently differentiates this behavior of inmate against inmate aggression. Those at the Level 5 have five times the rate of aggressive attacks than those inmates in the Level 0 category!

We would like to draw attention to one fact compelling fact that emerges here, as illustrated in Table 4, is that with the rapid onset of the gang problem inside modern American correctional facilities, there may be a hidden blessing in disguise: the ability to identify risk behaviors among the inmates may today be much more clear cut and quantifiable than ever before. The hope, therefore, is that inmate aggression could be more effectively controlled given the implementation of a gang/STG classification system. If the bad news is that we see a steady upward progression in the risk of inmate violence, the higher we go on the gang/STG classification system in Table 4, then the good news is that theoretically this violence could be significantly prevented given proper standards, policies, and procedures that took such factors as gang membership or STG "risk" or "threat" into account in the classification systems in American correctional institutions today.

COULD THE MODEL 1 GANG/STG CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM EFFECTIVELY IDENTIFY THE DIFFERENTIAL RISKS OF WHICH INMATES WOULD CARRY IMPROVISED WEAPONS WHILE IN CUSTODY?

Every security chief in every jail, in every juvenile facility, and in every prison thinks they know instinctively who is most capable of carrying an improvised weapon. The weapon of choice for most persons in the confined population is the "shank": the homemade knife. Such weapons are deadly, often have the size and length of a sword, and can be fashioned out of metal

parts from the most unsuspecting sources. A low level of technology is involved in the production of edged weapons behind bars: all one needs is the piece of metal, scrape it against the abundantly available concrete for sharpening, and fashion a "handle" out of tape or cloth.

Currently in the United States, about half of all prison wardens (47.6%) report that prison gangs have resulted in an increase in improvised weapons production among inmates (Journal of Gang Research, 1996, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 43-44, "Gangs in Corrections: A Special Report"). It is a major management issue for the safety of inmates and staff.

The issue, though, is whether the Model 1 gang/STG classification system could significantly and consistently differentiate weapons carrying behavior among inmates. If so, then there would seem to exist substantial public interest in the implementation of a gang/STG classification system.

The question from the Project GANGFACT survey that is used to test this issue is this: "have you carried a homemade weapon (knife, etc) while in this facility". The results of this test in relationship to the Model 1 gang/STG classification system is provided in Table 5.

Table 5

**Distribution (N) for
Whether Confined Offenders Report Carrying a
Homemade Weapon (Knife, etc) While In Custody
By Their Respective Model 1 Classification Scale Scores**

Have you carried a homemade weapon (knife, etc,) while in custody?	Model 1 Gang/STG Scale Scores					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
NO	2555	587	664	998	636	977
YES	258	110	152	281	201	532
% Yes	9.1	15.7	18.6	21.9	24.0	35.2

Chi-square = 455.6, p < .001

In short, Table 5 seems to provide the strongest evidence yet that the Model 1 gang/STG classification system could reduce the threat of violence inside American correctional institutions today. Clearly, as seen in Table 5, there is a steady and increasing statistically significant function in weapons carrying behavior among inmates in relationship to the gang/STG classification system.

Table 5 shows that the Level 5 inmate has four times the rate of risk associated with carrying a deadly weapon behind bars than the rate compared to the Level 0 group. Clearly, violence can be prevented in the inmate population by the use of this kind of screening for risk classification system would appear to be a conclusion that would be supported by the research reported here.

COULD THE MODEL 1 GANG/STG CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM EFFECTIVELY CLASSIFY INMATES WHO THREATEN CORRECTIONAL STAFF MEMBERS OR CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS?

By the latest estimate from prison gang research (Journal of Gang Research, 1996, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 31), which surveyed adult state correctional administrators in all 50 states, some 37.2 percent of these facilities are now reporting that gang members have been a problem in terms of threats against staff. In about one out of five adult state correctional institutions (18.7%), gang members have also been a problem in terms of actual assaults on staff. Gang threats against staff are no longer a small matter affecting a minority of correctional facilities in the United States. In some states these threats have escalated into the assassination of correctional officers.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons now has its equal share of the national gang problem as well. As in the importation process of adding significant numbers of gang members, increasing their density in the inmate population, in state correctional systems in the 1970's through

prosecution; the federal prison system now has more than its fair share of gang members due to effective prosecution of gang members for violation of federal statutes.

Our test of the Model 1 gang/STG classification system for this factor is based on the Project GANGFACT survey question: "have you threatened any facility staff member or officer while in this facility". Table 6 presents the results of this test.

Table 6
Distribution (N) for
Whether Confined Offenders Report Having Threatened
Any Staff Member or Officer While Incarcerated
By Their Respective Model 1 Classification Scale Scores

Have you threatened any facility staff or officer while in custody?		Model 1 Gang/STG Scale Scores					
		0	1	2	3	4	5
NO		2603	595	652	980	644	936
YES		200	100	158	294	196	569
% Yes		7.1	14.3	19.5	23.0	23.3	37.8

Chi-square = 632.4, p < .001

Table 6 shows, again, the steady upward progression of the threat of violence to correctional staff and officers: the higher the gang risk/threat classification, the higher the likelihood of such a threat to staff or officers. Another way of interpreting Table 6 would be this: someone who must work as a staff person or as a correctional officer today has 5.5 times higher the likelihood of being threatened by Level 5 (37.8%) than by Level 0 inmates (7.1%).

CAN THE MODEL 1 GANG/STG CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM IDENTIFY THOSE INMATES WHO WOULD ATTEMPT TO SMUGGLE DRUGS INTO THE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY?

Here we put the Model 1 gang/STG classification system to one more test: can it effectively distinguish another common but major risk to the safety and security of a correctional facility --- those inmates who would attempt to smuggle in illegal drugs. This test is based on the project GANGFACT survey question: "have you tried to smuggle in any illegal drugs while in this facility". Table 7 provides the results of this test.

Table 7
Distribution (N) for
Whether Confined Offenders Report Having Attempted
to Smuggle in Illegal Drugs Into Correctional Facilities
By Their Respective Model 1 Classification Scale Scores

Have you tried to smuggle in any illegal drugs while in custody?		Model 1 Gang/STG Scale Scores					
		0	1	2	3	4	5
NO		2617	599	698	1065	640	1058
YES		146	89	98	206	199	442
% Yes		5.2	12.9	12.3	16.2	23.7	29.4

Chi-square = 508.5, p < .001

Table 7 shows that only 5.2 percent of the inmates in the Level 0 group tried to smuggle in illegal drugs, compared to 29.4 percent among the Level 5 group.

Table 7 shows, once again, that attempts by inmates to smuggle in illegal drugs into the correctional facility is also a factor that is significantly differentiated by the Model 1 gang/STG classification system. The analysis does, however, reveal that there is really not much difference in regard to drug smuggling by categories 1 and 2. But with that exception noted, the trend here, as in the other tests, remains true: the higher the threat/risk score, the greater the observed attempts at smuggling in illegal drugs into the facility.

Gang Fights Behind Bars: Would Model 1 Minimize The Damage?

The survey included the question "have you fought with any rival gang members while in this facility". The question is applicable, therefore, only to Model 1 Levels 3, 4 and 5. Table 8 presents the results of this test.

Table 8

**Distribution (N) for
Whether Confined Offenders Report Having
Fought With Rival Gang Members While In Custody
By Their Respective Model 1 Classification Scale Scores**

Have you fought with any rival gang members while in custody?		Model 1 Scale Scores		
		3	4	5
NO		951	482	754
YES		318	359	751
% Yes		25.0	42.6	49.9
Chi-square = 182.4, p < .001				

As seen in Table 8, gang fighting behind bars is significantly differentiated by the Model 1 classification of gang risk. Gang fighting, on the streets or in custody, is usually very predictable: it is deadly in its consequence. Table 8 shows that at the low end of this scale, a fourth (25.0%) of those in Level 3 can be expected to fight with rival gang members in custody. However, this risk doubles for those in the Level 5 group (49.9%)

Could Model 1 Prevent Security Breaches Such as Using Legal Mail to Communicate With Fellow Gang Members?

This is a modern scam arising from the onset of the rights of prisoners to have uncensored letter communications with their attorneys. The survey included the question "have you ever used legal letters to communicate with fellow gang members". Table 9 provides the result of this test.

Table 9

**Distribution (N) for
Whether Confined Offenders Report Having
Used Legal Letters to Communicate With Fellow Gang Members
By Their Respective Model 1 Classification Scale Scores**

Have you used legal letters to communicate with gang members?		Model 1 Scale Scores		
		3	4	5
NO		939	516	741
YES		288	302	738
% Yes		23.4	36.9	49.8
Chi-square = 199.7, p < .001				

Table 9 clearly shows that this type of security breach is also a factor significantly differentiated by the Model 1 gang classification system. Some 23.4 percent of the Level 3 group have engaged in this behavior, compared to a half of those in Level 5.

THE FINE-TUNING ADJUSTMENTS FOR THE AGE OF THE OFFENDER

No distinction has been made in the analysis reported in this chapter regarding sentenced offenders and persons awaiting trial, nor has any distinction been made between juvenile and adult offender inmates. The age of the offender is certainly the most important factor for adjustments or fine-tuning of any classification system. Those who work in juvenile corrections often disregard the developments in the adult system. So in as much as our data environment does allow us to make adjustments for age, this section will provide that test for Model 1.

We assert that the analysis conducted holds up regardless of these distinctions. Further, the more well defined the population, the greater the stability a classification system may have in terms of being able to prevent gang-related violence and disruption or threats to such a facility. The reason this is true is that all screening for risk applications must be "adjusted" or fine-tuned to a local population for best results. Regardless, we assert that even the Model 1 classification advanced here could apply equally well with improved levels of safety for inmates and staff that is currently afforded by outdated systems of classification that predate the onset of the gang problem in the American offender population today.

Now comes the test. Does Model 1 hold up when examining juveniles and adults as separate management categories?

For the purposes of this test, we defined the juvenile as anyone 17 years of age or under. We defined the adult as anyone 18 years of age or older.

The results of this age-norming (juveniles versus adults) test are summarized in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2

**PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTIONS OF VARIOUS MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS
ALONG THE GANG RISK SCALE SCORE CONTINUUM
CONTROLLING FOR AGE OF THE CONFINED PERSON**

% Who Have Had >=1 Disciplinary Reports While in Custody?	Gang Risk Scale Score Categories					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
JUVENILES	41.9	61.5	63.9	67.9	67.9	75.3
ADULTS	32.5	46.4	54.6	56.2	56.8	67.9
% Who Have Been in a Fight						
JUVENILES	37.0	39.0	43.9	50.5	56.8	64.6
ADULTS	20.7	31.4	40.9	43.2	57.1	64.4
% Who Started A Fight or Attacked Someone						
JUVENILES	14.0	17.2	22.5	25.2	34.5	42.8
ADULTS	6.3	9.2	18.5	24.1	32.4	43.0

As seen in Figure 2, the validity and reliability of the Model 1 gang/STG classification still holds up when fine-tuning the analysis to consider the difference between the juvenile and the adult correctional populations. Admittedly, there are some differences in baseline risks for institutional adjustment in comparing juveniles and adults. However, Model 1 holds up equally well for both populations as what Figure 2 shows.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter has a clear message for correctional administrators. The message is this: the rising gang density among confined persons requires new management tools to effectively address a wide range of problems affecting the safety and security of the modern American correctional institution. The time may be right for a "gang free" type of correctional institution in all state correctional systems. It is not a "contamination" issue, it is an issue of simple risk management.

Model 1 of the gang/STG classification system has been presented in this chapter. We have also adjusted the analysis to be able to examine the juvenile corrections population and the adult corrections population. Model 1 still holds up when examining the age categories (juveniles versus adults) of the confined population.

Some of the authors had consulted with both juvenile and adult correctional facilities in the development of this gang/STG classification system. It is expected that further differentiation and refinement will be made in future analyses. For example, we expect to be able to create models that are sensitive to the adult local detention or jail environment (Model J1), to the adult prison environment (Model P1), to the juvenile detention center environment (Model JD1), and to the state juvenile (long term or adjudicated population) correctional environment (Model JC1). There are many "refinements" that can be made to this classification system based on the data generated from Project GANGFACT. The analysis presented in this chapter has provided only the basic overview of the model gang/STG classification system.

Correctional managers who are interested in benefiting from this model gang/STG classification system need the more detailed information and implementation procedures that is not reported here. Thus, correctional managers who are interested in the use of Model 1 are advised to contact the National Gang Crime Research Center for further information.

CHAPTER 5:

THE FEMALE GANG MEMBER

INTRODUCTION

It is rare for researchers to have large national samples of confined females generally, just as it is rarer to find large samples of female gang members. Project GANGFACT was able to collect data in 17 states and surveyed over 1,000 females in custody. The female gang sample developed in the present research is more than sufficient in size to begin systematically testing a number of concepts that others have only had the opportunity to theorize about.

The first part of this chapter examines gender differences among gang members. In this analysis the goal is to ascertain the commonalities and differences with regard to gender among those who are self-reported gang members. This is the basic comparison of the female gang member and the male gang member on a wide range of variables.

The second part of this chapter undertakes the analysis of comparing gang members and non-gang members within the female confined population. This is the basic comparison of female non-gang members and female gang members.

The third part of this chapter tests the Model 1 gang/STG classification system on the confined female population.

PART 1: Comparing Male Gang Members With Female Gang Members.

In this section the analysis undertaken is that which studies only those who are self-reported gang members. Such persons have at one time in their life "joined a gang". Non-gang members do not enter into this analysis. The analysis examines gang members for the purpose of comparing male gang members with female gang members.

NON-SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN COMPARING MALE GANG MEMBERS AND FEMALE GANG MEMBERS

Most of the comparisons made between male gang members and female gang members were not statistically significant. This means that in regard to such non-significant factors, there is a convergence or commonality by gender within the gang member population. As there are a large number of such non-significant factors, we have grouped these into three general categories: 1. Beliefs and Attitudes, 2. Behavior and Background Variables, and 3. Gang Life Variables.

1. Beliefs and Attitudes

There was no significant difference comparing male gang members and female gang members on the following variables that tend to measure beliefs and attitudes:

- * Whether they believe they will be able to find a good job and eventually support a family.
- * Whether they support or reject the notion that "I get what I want even if I have to take it from someone".
- * Whether they believe that bullying in school can lead to gangbanging.
- * Whether they feel it is "alright to demand that my needs be met".
- * Whether they do or do not feel that "I am not a part of legitimate opportunities in my city or town and am cut out of good possibilities" (i.e., the belief about being a part of the underclass).
- * Whether it has been harder, easier, or about the same since March of 1994 to buy illegal guns.
- * Whether they think shooting at a police officer would bring heat on their gang or whether it would bring them status and rep.
- * Whether the meaning of their nickname is based on physical or behavioral characteristics, a "take off on given", or other meaning.

- * Whether or not any of their parents have ever served time in prison.
- * Whether or not they report that their parent(s) were physically violent in their home.
- * Whether or not they report that their parent(s) knew where they were and who they were with.

2. Behavior and Background Factors

There was no significant difference comparing male gang members and female gang members on the following variables that tend to behavior and experiential background factors:

- * Whether they ever bullied anyone in school.
- * Whether they rarely or regularly attend church.
- * Whether they are or are not careful to avoid activities in which they might be injured.
- * Whether they have or have not ever sold crack cocaine.
- * Whether they have or have not completed high school or obtained their GED.
- * Whether or not they have ever been involved in organized drug dealing.
- * Whether they have had any disciplinary reports while in custody.
- * Whether or not they have started a fight or attacked someone while in custody.
- * Whether or not they have carried a homemade weapon (knife, etc) while in custody.
- * Whether or not they have threatened any facility staff member or officer while in custody.
- * Whether or not they have tried to smuggle in any illegal drugs while in custody.

3. Gang Life Variables

- * Whether they think gangs can be put out of business if they were investigated and prosecuted like organized crime groups.
- * How many of their close friends and associates are gang members.
- * Whether they are still a current member of a gang.
- * Whether they have ever attempted to quit the gang.
- * Whether or not their gang has written rules for its members.
- * Whether or not their gang has older adult leaders who have been in the gang for many years.
- * Whether or not they have ever committed a crime for financial gain with their gang.
- * Whether or not their gang holds regular weekly meetings.
- * Whether or not their gang requires its members to pay regular weekly dues.
- * Whether or not the chance to make money was important in their decision to join a gang.
- * Whether they would quit the gang if they had a true "second chance" to start their lives over.
- * Whether they think they would have still joined a gang if there had been youth activities available to them (for example: sports, music, art, drama, YMCA, Boys' Club, church activities, etc).
- * Whether their gang is racially homogeneous or heterogeneous with regard to race and ethnicity.
- * Whether their gang has ever sold crack cocaine.
- * Whether or not their parents know they are gang members.
- * Whether they report their gang has established any relationship with real organized crime groups.
- * Whether they think their gang has kept the promise(s) it made to them when they first joined.
- * Whether they report that the gangs that exist inside correctional institutions are basically the same gangs that exist on the street.
- * Whether they think they will ever be the top leader of their gang.
- * Whether or not gang membership has affected their religious beliefs in any way.
- * Whether or not they feel that the gang which they belong to is aiding their race or ethnic group to overcome society's prejudices.

- * Whether or not anyone in their gang (i.e., leaders, etc) has ever told them to perform an act that they felt was wrong.
- * Whether or not their father encouraged them to join a gang.
- * Whether or not their mother encouraged them to join a gang.
- * Whether or not their parents would be embarrassed to learn they were in a gang.
- * Whether or not they joined a gang because they knew someone that was a member of a gang (for instance a friend, a brother, or an uncle).
- * Whether or not they think they could quit the gang if they wanted to.
- * Whether or not they feel protected and loved by being in a gang.
- * Whether or not they believe that in their neighborhood gang fighting is normal behavior.
- * Whether or not they felt that their school did not take it too seriously when they got involved in drugs, guns, and gangs.
- * Whether or not they know of any members of the law enforcement community who are active gang members.
- * Whether or not they think that early intervention in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade could help discourage children from joining gangs.
- * Whether or not they report that gangs use religion as a front in order to conduct gang business in the institutions they are locked up in.
- * Whether or not they report that gangs seek to influence staff members to bring in drugs/contraband.
- * Whether or not they have ever used legal letters to communicate with fellow gang members.
- * Whether or not they think that a zero tolerance approach to gang activity within a correctional facility affects gang recruitment.
- * Whether or not they report that there is a connection between adult prison gangs and juvenile institutional gangs.

Thus, on a large number of attitudinal, behavioral, and gang life variables (as detailed above) there were no significant differences on these factors comparing male gang members with female gang members.

SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN COMPARING MALE GANG MEMBERS AND FEMALE GANG MEMBERS

Some of the factors examined were in fact statistically significant in comparing male gang members and female gang members. These unique differences by gender among the gang member population are described here. These results are provided in Table 10.

Table 10

Distribution (N) of Factors That Were Significant in Comparing Male and Female Gang Members

Were you ever bullied by anyone in school?		<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
	NO	2387	173
	YES	1349	147
	% Yes	36.1%	45.9%
		Chi-square = 12.2, p < .001	

Age Category:

<= 17	2443	220
>= 18	1258	86
% >= 18	33.9	28.1

Chi-square = 4.39, p = .036

Table 10: Continued

Ethnicity/Race:

AFRICAN-AMERICAN	1877	146
WHITE/CAUCASIAN	821	73
HISPANIC/LATINO/MEXICAN	584	50
ASIAN/CHINESE	78	11
NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN	96	7
ARAB-AMERICAN	18	8
OTHER	153	16

Chi-square = 23.2, p = .001

Do gang members get arrested for crimes they commit for their Gang or for themselves?

GANG	1914	195
SELF	1668	115
% Self	46.5%	37.0%

Chi-square = 10.3, p = .001

Were you ever forced to have sex that you did not want to have?

NO	3151	139
YES	559	186
% Yes	15.0	57.2

Chi-square = 352.8, p < .001

Which best describes your family:

MOTHER, FATHER, AND SIBLINGS	1245	100
MOTHER, MYSELF, AND SIBLINGS	2022	172
FATHER, MYSELF, AND SIBLINGS	305	40
% FATHER, SELF, AND SIBLINGS	8.5%	12.8%

Chi-square = 6.68, p = .035

Have you ever fired a gun at a police officer?

NO	2531	257
YES	1200	64
% Yes	32.1%	19.9%

Chi-square = 20.5, p < .001

If juveniles were tried in court as adult offenders for violent crimes, would this stop you as a juvenile from committing a violent crime?

NO	2232	170
YES	1404	149
% Yes	38.6%	46.7%

Chi-square = 8.05, p = .005

Which best describes you:

Table 10: Continued

I believe in God	3366	278	
I do not believe in God	281	37	
% I do not believe in God	7.7%	11.7%	
Chi-square = 6.41, p = .011			

Which best describes you:			
I'm on God's side	3120	259	
I'm on Satan's side	280	38	
% I'm on Satan's side	8.2%	12.7%	
Chi-square = 7.22, p = .007			

Which best describes your role in organized drug dealing:			
I DID IT FOR MYSELF	2400	186	
I DID IT FOR MY GANG	302	53	
% I did it for my gang	11.1%	22.1%	
Chi-square = 25.0, p < .001			

Have you ever held rank or any leadership position in the gang?			
NO	1436	152	
YES	2204	161	
% Yes	60.5%	51.4%	
Chi-square = 9.95, p = .002			

Does your gang have a special language code?			
NO	1500	108	
YES	2138	209	
% Yes	58.7%	65.9%	
Chi-square = 6.19, p = .013			

Which best describes you?			
Whatever the gang expects of me, I do	752	87	
I do what I want to do regardless of what the gang expects me to do	2668	209	
% I do what I want to do	78.0%	70.6%	
Chi-square = 8.54, p = .003			

How important was seeking protection in your decision to join a gang?			
Very important	561	79	
Important	852	115	
Not Important	2213	121	
% Not Important	61.0%	38.4%	
Chi-square = 61.5, p < .001			

Table 10: Continued

Did someone ask you to join the gang (were you recruited) or did you ask to join your gang?

I was recruited into the gang	1849	183
I asked to join the gang	1578	116
% I asked to join the gang	46.0%	38.7%

Chi-square = 5.83, p = .016

Do you feel that some outside person/organization or force controls the actions of your gang?

NO	2542	202
YES	980	105
% Yes	27.8%	34.2%

Chi-square = 5.65, p = .017

How old were you when you first joined the gang in the institution?

12-13 years	934	104
14-15 years	519	57
16-17 years	306	23

I did not first join the gang in the institution

1662	117	
% who did not join in the institution	48.5%	38.8%

Chi-square = 13.7, p = .003

Are there female members of your gang?

NO	629	20
YES	2960	292
% Yes	82.4%	93.5%

Chi-square = 25.5, p < .001

Are there any female leaders in your gang?

NO	2023	70
YES	1519	236
% Yes	42.8%	77.1%

Chi-square = 133.1, p < .001

Have you ever personally made false "911" calls to the police emergency number in connection with your gang activities?

NO	2639	210
YES	832	96
% Yes	23.9%	31.3%

Chi-square = 8.31, p = .004

Table 10: Continued

Have you ever met face-to-face with the top leader of your gang?

NO	1121	75
YES	2258	236
% Yes	66.8%	75.8%

Chi-square = 10.6, p = .001

At what point did you get your current nickname?

Before being locked up	2511	243
At the time being locked up	392	15
After being locked up	223	20
% Before being locked up	80.3%	87.4%

Chi-square = 12.4, p = .002

In our conversations, my parent(s) often show favorable attitudes toward drugs, crime, and violence.

STRONGLY AGREE	368	40
AGREE	366	38
UNCERTAIN	341	45
DISAGREE	502	42
STRONGLY DISAGREE	1771	129
% Strongly disagree	52.8%	43.8%

Chi-square = 13.6, p = .009

Have you been in a physical fight with anyone while in this facility?

NO	1441	161
YES	2013	140
% Yes	58.2%	46.5%

Chi-square = 15.6, p < .001

Have you fought with any rival gang members while in this facility?

NO	2021	208
YES	1394	92
% Yes	40.8%	30.6%

Chi-square = 11.8, p = .001

Have you known males in your gang who forced females to have sex?

NO	1902	147
YES	1161	147
% Yes	37.9%	50.0%

Chi-square = 16.5, p < .001

Table 10: Continued

Model 1: Gang/STG

Classification

Scale Scores:

Level 3	1303	99
Level 4	806	95
Level 5	1503	111
% Level 5	41.6%	36.3%

Chi-square = 12.4, p = .002

PART 2: Comparing Female Non-Gang Members With Female Gang Members. This type of analysis is useful in the present research because of the large sample size of incarcerated females. Over a thousand females are represented in this confined offender national sample from 17 different states. It is within this female inmate population that we can now compare the female gang member with the female non-gang member.

NON-SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN COMPARING FEMALE NON-GANG MEMBERS AND FEMALE GANG MEMBERS

There were several factors that were not significant in comparing female non-gang members with female gang members. These include the (1) beliefs and attitudes, and (2) behavior and experiential background factors. These non-significant differences are summarized below.

Beliefs and Attitudes

Several variables measuring beliefs and attitudes were not significant in the tests comparing female non-gang members with female gang members. Among these variables for which no significant differences emerged were the following:

- * Believing that they would find a good job and eventually be able to support a family.
- * Whether they think that bullying in school can lead to gangbanging.
- * Whether they think that most gang members get arrested for crimes they committed for their gang or for crimes they committed for themselves.
- * Whether or not they feel they are a part of the legitimate opportunities in their city or town or are cut out of good possibilities (i.e., the underclass question).
- * Whether or not they think that early intervention in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade could help discourage children from joining gangs.

Behavior and Experiential Background Factors

Several variables measuring behavioral and experiential or background factors were not significant in comparing female gang members with female non-gang members. Included in this list were the following findings:

- * Whether they were ever "bullied" by anyone in school.
- * Whether they were ever forced to have sex that they did not want to have.
- * Whether or not in their conversations with parent(s), the parent(s) often showed favorable attitudes toward drugs, crime, and violence.
- * Whether or not their school did not take it too seriously when they got involved in drugs, guns, and gangs.
- * Whether or not their parent(s) took time to come and meet their teachers when they were in school.
- * Whether or not the parent(s) were physically violent in the home.

SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN COMPARING FEMALE NON-GANG MEMBERS AND FEMALE GANG MEMBERS IN THE CONFINED OFFENDER POPULATION

There were a number of factors that were significant in comparing gang members versus non-gang members in the confined female offender population. Literally all of the factors of

institutional adjustment produced significant differences along the lines of this comparison. The results providing the significant differences are provided in Table 11.

Table 11

**Distribution (N) of Factors That Were Significant
in Comparing Female Non-Gang Members With
Female Gang Members in the Confined Offender Population**

I always get what I want even if I have take it from someone.	GANG MEMBER?	
	NO	YES
ALWAYS	20	43
USUALLY	30	46
SOMETIMES	150	104
RARELY	167	68
NEVER	405	64
% Always or Usually	6.4%	27.3%

Chi-square = 152.9, p < .001

Did you ever "bully" someone in school?		
NO	536	120
YES	234	201
% Yes	30.3%	62.6%

Chi-square = 98.1, p < .001

Race/Ethnicity:		
AFRICAN-AMERICAN	351	146
WHITE/CAUCASIAN	308	73
HISPANIC/LATINO/MEXICAN	39	50
ASIAN/CHINESE	2	11
NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN	20	7
ARAB-AMERICAN	11	8
OTHER	16	16

Chi-square = 77.2, p < .001

Which best describes you:		
I rarely if ever attend church	356	176
I often attend church	406	145
% I often attend church	53.2%	45.1%

Chi-square = 5.94, p = .015

I am careful to avoid activities in which I might be injured.		
ALWAYS	249	40
USUALLY	171	52
SOMETIMES	210	119
RARELY	79	65
NEVER	62	47
% Never	8.0%	14.5%

Chi-square = 71.8, p < .001

Table 11: Continued

It is alright to demand
that my needs be met

ALWAYS	118	83
USUALLY	120	60
SOMETIMES	285	111
RARELY	116	41
NEVER	131	28
% Always	15.3%	25.6%

Chi-square = 26.7, $p < .001$

Which statement best
describes your family:

MOTHER, FATHER, AND SIBLINGS	311	100
MOTHER, MYSELF, AND SIBLINGS	366	172
FATHER, MYSELF, AND SIBLINGS	44	40
% Father,Myself,and Siblings	6.1%	12.8%

Chi-square = 19.6, $p < .001$

Have you ever sold
crack cocaine?

NO	529	119
YES	244	205
% Yes	31.5%	63.2%

Chi-square = 94.9, $p < .001$

Did you ever complete your
high school degree or get
your GED?

NO	381	252
YES	386	67
% Yes	50.3%	21.0%

Chi-square = 79.6, $p < .001$

Have you ever fired a gun
at a police officer?

NO	740	257
YES	29	64
% Yes	3.7%	19.9%

Chi-square = 75.8, $p < .001$

Since March of 1994 has it
been harder or easier for
you to buy illegal guns?

HARDER	80	39
EASIER	159	130
ABOUT THE SAME	255	127
% Easier	32.1%	43.9%

Chi-square = 10.9, $p = .004$

Table 11: Continued

If more juveniles who committed violent crimes were tried in courts as adults, would this stop you as a juvenile from committing a violent crime?

NO	276	170
YES	431	149
% No	39.0%	53.2%

Chi-square = 18.1, p < .001

If gangs were investigated and prosecuted as if they were organized crime groups would this put some gangs out of business?

NO	254	212
YES	483	111
% No	34.4%	65.6%

Chi-square = 88.5, p < .001

Which best describes you:

I BELIEVE IN GOD	738	278
I DO NOT BELIEVE IN GOD	28	37
% I do not believe in God	3.6%	11.7%

Chi-square = 25.8, p < .001

Which best describes you:

I'M ON GOD'S SIDE	708	259
I'M ON SATAN'S SIDE	23	38
% I'm on Satan's side	3.1%	12.7%

Chi-square = 35.2, p < .001

Have you ever been involved in organized drug dealing?

NO	519	77
YES	247	243
% Yes	32.2%	75.9%

Chi-square = 174.0, p < .001

How many of your close friends and associates are gang members?

0	507	25
1	23	5
2	34	8
3	31	17
4	15	15
5 OR MORE	107	232
% 5 or more	14.9%	76.8%

Chi-square = 414.2, p < .001

Table 11: Continued

How many disciplinary reports have you had while in this facility?

0	351	88
1	86	28
2	43	33
3	38	34
4	30	15
5 OR MORE	75	78
% 5 or more__	12.0%	28.2%

Chi-square = 70.1, p < .001

Have you been in a physical fight with anyone while in this facility?

NO	560	161
YES	136	140
% Yes__	19.5%	46.5%

Chi-square = 76.3, p < .001

Did you start a fight or attack someone while in this facility?

NO	640	205
YES	62	96
% Yes__	8.8%	31.8%

Chi-square = 84.4, p < .001

Have you carried a homemade weapon (knife, etc) while in this facility?

NO	655	224
YES	45	73
% Yes__	6.4%	24.5%

Chi-square = 65.8, p < .001

Have you threatened any facility staff member or officer while in this facility?

NO	641	205
YES	60	93
% Yes	8.5%	31.2%

Chi-square = 82.7, p < .001

Have you tried to smuggle in any illegal drugs while in this facility?

NO	649	228
YES	37	70
% Yes	5.3%	23.4%

Chi-square = 70.1, p < .001

Table 11: Continued

Do gangs use religion as a "front" in order to conduct their business in this facility?

NO	357	204
YES	102	87
% Yes	22.2%	29.8%

Chi-square = 5.56, p = .018

Do you think that a "zero tolerance" approach to gang activity within a correctional facility affects gang recruitment?

NO	240	180
YES	192	96
% No	55.5%	65.2%

Chi-square = 6.51, p = .011

Is there a connection between adult prison gangs and juvenile institutional gangs?

NO	206	105
YES	189	178
% Yes	47.8%	62.8%

Chi-square = 15.0, p < .001

Have any of your parents ever served time in prison?

NO	537	165
YES	127	128
% Yes	19.1%	43.6%

Chi-square = 62.7, p < .001

My parent(s) knew where I was and who I was with.

ALWAYS	123	26
USUALLY	109	27
SOMETIMES	112	42
RARELY	47	30
NEVER	29	16
% Rarely or never	18.0%	32.6%

Chi-square = 17.4, p = .002

Age Category:

<= 17	196	220
>= 18	544	86
% <= 17	26.4%	71.8%

Chi-square = 186.3, p < .001

Part 3: Testing the Model 1 Gang/STG Classification System on the Confined Female Population

The purpose of this section is to examine how well the Model 1 gang/STG classification system works when applied to the confined female population. Figure 3 provides the results of this test.

Figure 3

The Model 1 Gang/STG Classification Results for the Confined Female Population

Had one or more disciplinary reports.

	Gang Risk Scale Scores					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
NO	256	42	35	28	35	23
YES	154	44	51	57	46	75
% Yes	37.5	51.1	59.3	67.0	56.7	76.5

Chi-square = 67.3, p < .001

Been in a fight in custody?

NO	393	70	58	54	55	47
YES	70	22	33	38	33	58
% Yes	15.1	23.9	36.2	41.3	37.5	55.2

Chi-square = 93.8, p < .001

Start a fight or attacked someone?

NO	442	81	72	67	68	59
YES	26	11	21	25	20	46
% Yes	5.5	11.9	22.5	27.1	22.7	43.8

Chi-square = 114.6, p < .001

Carried a homemade weapon while in custody?

NO	453	78	79	74	71	69
YES	13	13	15	18	16	33
% Yes	2.7	14.2	15.9	19.5	18.3	32.3

Chi-square = 90.1, p < .001

Threatened any facility staff?

NO	446	81	71	72	68	56
YES	19	10	23	20	19	47
% Yes	4.0	10.9	24.4	21.7	21.8	45.6

Chi-square = 134.8, p < .001

What Figure 3 shows is that while a strong differentiation is made between the extreme categories of the Model 1 scale scores, that category 4 is not yielding observed risk factors higher than category 3. This is a good example of where some fine-tuning could come in handy to smooth out the distribution of observed risks. It could involve, perhaps, collapsing categories 3 and 4 into one category. Clearly, we do not get consistent results throughout the distribution that was reported for a predominantly confined male sample in the earlier chapter examining this classification system. We have alluded to some other factors we take into account in actual implementation of such a classification system, one of these is gang tenure: number of years in the gang. We believe if such additional factors were taken into consideration that a Model F1 (confined female) could be developed. But, clearly, the Model 1 needs refinement to be applied to confined females.

Other results in this chapter help explain why the Model 1 was not consistent across all dimensions for the confined female population. Primarily it is the base rate problem: females apparently engage in less violence behind bars than do their male counterparts.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The goal of this chapter has been to learn more about the female gang member. Three types of analysis were therefore conducted: (1) comparing male gang members with female gang members, (2) comparing female non-gang members with female gang members, (3) and examining the Model 1 gang/STG classification system for confined females.

In the comparison of male gang members with female gang members some of the factors that were not significant included aspects of what is called the "inmate culture": (i.e., number of disciplinary reports received, starting a fight or attacking someone, carrying a homemade weapon (knife, etc), threatening staff or officers, trying to smuggle in any illegal drugs, using "legal letters" to communicate with fellow gang members, etc). In these respects there is a tendency towards "convergence" in the comparison of female and male gang members. Still, other aspects of violence behind bars were significant, and female gang members appeared less violent in some respects (being in a physical fight or fighting with rival gang members while incarcerated).

A number of factors involving beliefs and background or experiential variables were not significant in comparing male and female gang members, along with a large number of variables about gang life itself.

We can now summarize those variables that were significant in comparing male gang members with female gang members.

Females gang members were significantly less likely than male gang members to:

- * to be 18 years of age or older (i.e., adults)
 - * believe most gang members get arrested for crimes they commit for themselves.
 - * to have fired a gun at a police officer.
 - * to have held rank or any leadership position in the gang.
 - * to report that they do what they want to regardless of what the gang expects them to do.
 - * to claim that seeking protection was not important in their decision to join a gang.
 - * to have volunteered to join the gang.
 - * to disagree with the idea that parental conversations were favorable towards drugs, crime, and violence.
 - * to report being in a physical fight with anyone while incarcerated.
 - * to report being in fights with rival gang members while incarcerated.
 - * to reach the category 5 in the Model 1 gang/STG classification system.
- Female gang members were significantly more likely than male gang members to:
- * be bullied by someone while in school.
 - * to have been forced to have sex they did not want to have.
 - * being in a father-only (father, self and siblings) household.
 - * to stop committing violent crimes if they were juveniles tried as adults.

- * to claim they do not believe in God.
- * to claim they are on Satan's side, not God's side.
- * to claim that their involvement in organized drug dealing was something they did for their gang, not for their personal benefit.
- * to report their gang has a special language code.
- * to believe that some outside person/organization or force controls the actions of their gang.
- * to report they joined the gang while incarcerated.
- * to report that there are female members and female leaders in their gang.
- * to make false "911" calls in connection with their gang activities.
- * to report that they have personally met face-to-face with the top leader of their gang.
- * to report they got their gang nicknames before being locked up.
- * to report that they have known males in their gang who forced females to have sex.

In part two of the analysis in this chapter, the comparison of female gang members with female non-gang members showed that some factors were not significant including the following: beliefs about whether they would eventually find a good job, beliefs about whether bullying in school can lead to gangbanging, beliefs about whether most gang members get arrested for crimes they commit for the gang or for themselves, beliefs about being a part of the underclass, and beliefs about the value of early intervention to discourage children from joining gangs. Several background factors were also not significant, including these variables: whether they had been bullied while in school, whether they had ever been forced to have sex, whether parental conversations showed favorable attitudes toward drugs, whether their school did not take it too seriously when they got involved in drugs, whether their parents took time to meet their teachers when in school, and whether the parents were violent in the home.

The comparison of female gang members with females who were not gang members (see Table 11) produced a number of significant differences. These are summarized in terms of "attitudes", "family life", and "behavior" below.

Attitudes and beliefs:

- * Gang members had a higher percentage who asserted that they always get what I want even if I have to take it from someone.
- * Gang members had a higher percentage who are never careful to avoid activities in which they might be injured.
- * Gang members had a higher percentage who always want to demand that their needs be met.
- * Gang members believed that it has been easier since the Brady bill to get illegal guns.
- * Gang members were less likely to be deterred as a juvenile from committing a crime of violence if juveniles were tried as adults.
- * Gang members were less likely to see the suppression value of prosecuting gangs as organized crime groups.
- * Gang members were less likely to believe in God.
- * Gang members were more likely to claim they were on Satan's side.
- * Gang members were more likely to report that gangs use religion as a front for their operations inside a correctional institution.
- * Gang members were less likely to believe that a zero-tolerance approach within a correctional facility would affect gang recruitment.
- * Gang members were more likely to believe that a connection exists between adult prison gangs and juvenile institutional gangs.

Family life:

- * Gang members were more likely to have a father-only family (father, myself, and siblings).

- * Gang members were more likely to report having a parent who has served time in prison.
- * Gang members were more likely to report parents who rarely or never knew where they were or who they were with.

Behavior:

- * Gang members were more likely to be a bully in school.
- * Gang members were less likely to attend church regularly.
- * Gang members were more likely to have ever sold crack cocaine.
- * Gang members were less likely to have completed high school or get the GED.
- * Gang members were more likely to have fired a gun at a police officer.
- * Gang members were more likely to be involved in organized drug dealing.
- * Gang members were more likely to have "5 or more close friends and associates who are gang members".
- * Gang members were more likely to get disciplinary reports inside the correctional institution.
- * Gang members were more likely to be in a physical fight while inside the correctional institution.
- * Gang members were more likely to start a fight or attack someone while inside the correctional institution.
- * Gang members were more likely to carry a homemade weapon (knife, etc) while inside the correctional institution.
- * Gang members were more likely to threaten correctional staff or officers while inside the correctional institution.
- * Gang members were more likely to attempt to smuggle in illegal drugs while inside the correctional institution.
- * Gang members were more likely to be in the juvenile category (i.e., 17 years of age or under).

With regard to the Model 1 gang/STG classification system, the results in Figure 3 clearly suggested the need for more refinement before it could be used on confined females as a distinct group.

CHAPTER 6:

A Comparison of Juvenile and Adult Gang Members

INTRODUCTION

The analysis of the differences, if any, between juvenile and adult gang members could help us understand more about the dynamics of gang life in the U.S. today. The present research is unique in having the capability for such a large scale analysis that is also national in scope. The reason that the present research has such a unique capability for this type of analysis is that the research project intentionally sampled both juvenile and adult correctional facilities. Thus, a large sample exists for both juvenile and adult gang members for the analysis reported here.

DEFINING THE GANG MEMBERSHIP VARIABLE: MUST BE AN ACTIVE GANG MEMBER

The first analysis undertaken for testing the differences between juvenile and adult gang members was one that used the standard self-report variable "have you ever joined a gang". While the findings using this measure of gang membership were comparable to the findings reported in this chapter, this chapter uses a more restrictive operational definition of gang membership.¹⁹ By restricting our analysis in this chapter to those who are active gang members, it is our belief that the methodology for the age-graded comparison is improved.

The technical procedure for this more restrictive way of defining gang membership was this: (1) first selecting the subset in the sample who had ever joined a gang, and (2) secondly selecting from this the further subset who indicated by a second measurement that they were currently active members of a gang.

DEFINING THE JUVENILE AND ADULT VARIABLE

The operational definition of juvenile and adult status in the present analysis is an arbitrary one. It is a parameter established by the researchers. It is not necessarily a legal definition.

Thus, our definition of "juvenile" in the present analysis is basically anyone who is 17 years of age or under. Conversely, our definition of adult is anyone 18 years of age or older.

FINDINGS

Table 12 provides the results that were significant in comparing juveniles and adults who were active gang members. Some 32 factors are shown in Table 12 to have significance in this comparison ($p < .05$). However, it is noteworthy that most of these tests do not show strong results.

For convenience in presentation, due to its length, Table 12 is presented at the end of this chapter.

Among the stronger results that emerge from Table 12 are the following differences in comparing juvenile and adult active gang members:

- * Adults were more pessimistic about whether they would be able to find a good job and eventually support a family.
- * Adults were more likely to report that their gang has a special language code.
- * Adults placed less importance on "seeking protection" as a reason for joining the gang.
- * Juveniles were more likely to report having joined the gang in the 12-13 year old age range.
- * Adults were more likely to feel protected and loved by being in a gang.
- * Adults were more likely to have carried a homemade weapon (i.e., knife, etc) while in custody.
- * Adults were more likely to report that gangs seek to influence staff members to bring in drugs/contraband into correctional facilities.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A number of weak to moderately significant relationships emerged in the analysis reported in this chapter. The chapter had the goal of comparing two groups: (1) active juvenile gang members, and (2) active adult gang members. Juveniles were those who were 17 years of age or under. Adults were those 18 years of age or older.

Active adult gang members were more likely to:

- * be pessimistic about whether they would be able to find a good job and eventually support a family.
- * to report having held a position of rank or leadership in their gang.
- * to report that their gang has a special language code.
- * to not view "seeking protection" as a reason for joining the gang.
- * to be in gangs that are homogenous with respect to race and ethnicity.
- * to feel protected and loved by being in a gang.
- * to report that gangs seek to influence staff members to bring in drugs/contraband into correctional facilities.

A number of other factors were shown in Table 12 to be significant, but these are for the most part rather weak relationships.

The vast majority of the other variables in the research were just not significantly differentiated by this age factor. Thus, we see that there is a lot more in common between younger and older gang members than differences.

Table 12

Factors Significant in the Comparison of Juvenile and Adult Active Gang Members

I believe that I will be able to find a good job and eventually support a family.

	Juvenile	Adults
FALSE	133	139
TRUE	1696	572
% True	92.7%	80.4%

Chi-square = 80.7, $p < .001$

I get what I want even if I have to take it from someone

ALWAYS	222	118
USUALLY	265	90
SOMETIMES	635	205
RARELY	380	137
NEVER	340	164
% Always	12.0%	16.5%

Chi-square = 19.9, $p = .001$

Which best describes you:

I RARELY IF EVER ATTEND CHURCH	1048	449
I OFTEN ATTEND CHURCH	759	250
% I often attend church	42.0%	35.7%

Chi-square = 8.15, $p = .004$

Table 12: Continued

It is alright to demand that my needs be met.

ALWAYS	428	222
USUALLY	311	120
SOMETIMES	718	238
RARELY	220	69
NEVER	152	62
% Always	23.4%	31.2%

Chi-square = 19.3, p = .001

Were you ever forced to have sex that you did not want to have?

NO	1517	553
YES	304	152
% Yes	16.6%	21.5%

Chi-square = 8.13, p = .004

I feel that I am not a part of legitimate opportunities in my city or town and am cut out of good possibilities.

FALSE	959	313
TRUE	824	380
% True	46.2%	54.8%

Chi-square = 14.8, p < .001

Have you ever sold crack cocaine?

NO	580	173
YES	1248	539
% Yes	68.2%	75.7%

Chi-square = 13.5, p < .001

Have you ever fired a gun at a police officer?

NO	1198	399
YES	627	311
% Yes	34.3%	43.8%

Chi-square = 19.5, p < .001

Have you ever attempted to quit the gang?

NO	1263	545
YES	548	164
% Yes	30.2%	23.1%

Chi-square = 12.7, p < .001

Have you ever held rank or any leadership position in the gang?

NO	688	208
YES	1097	491
% Yes	61.4%	70.2%

Chi-square = 16.8, p < .001

Table 12: Continued

Does your gang have a special language code?			
NO	748	193	
YES	1054	510	
% Yes	58.4%	72.5%	
			Chi-square = 42.5, p < .001
Does your gang have written rules for its members?			
NO	554	167	
YES	1250	538	
% Yes	69.2%	6.3%	
			Chi-square = 12.2, p < .001
Does your gang require its members to pay regular weekly dues?			
NO	1291	435	
YES	492	258	
% Yes	27.5%	37.2%	
			Chi-square = 21.9, p < .001
Which best describes you:			
WHATEVER THE GANG EXPECTS OF ME, I DO		384	208
I DO WHAT I WANT REGARDLESS OF WHAT THE GANG EXPECTS ME TO DO		1334	450
% I do what I want to do		77.6%	68.3%
			Chi-square = 21.8, p < .001
How important was seeking protection in your decision to join a gang?			
VERY IMPORTANT	311	116	
IMPORTANT	493	117	
NOT IMPORTANT	1007	466	
% Not important	55.6%	66.6%	
			Chi-square = 33.4, p < .001
If you were offered a second chance in life, with a clean slate, and if you are given the opportunity to finish your education and/or receive job training while working with a person that truly cares about you and your needs, would you be willing to quit the gang and start your life over again?			
NO	413	205	
YES	1294	451	
% Yes	75.8%	68.7%	
			Chi-square = 12.2, p < .001

Table 12: Continued

Which best describes your gang:			
CONSISTS ONLY OF MEMBERS OF ONE RACIAL OR ETHNIC GROUP	465	234	
CONSISTS MOSTLY OF ONE RACIAL OR ETHNIC GROUP, WITH SOME MEMBERS WHO ARE FROM OTHER RACIAL GROUPS	525	197	
CONSISTS OF A VARIETY OF RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS ON AN EQUAL BASIS	667	214	
%Only one racial group	28.0%	36.2%	Chi-square = 16.5, p < .001
How old were you when you first joined the gang in the institution?			
12-13 years	602	133	
14-15 years	278	69	
16-17 years	98	75	
I did not first join the gang in the institution	740	374	
% 12-13 years	35.0%	20.4%	Chi-square = 85.1, p < .001
Has your gang ever sold crack cocaine?			
NO	197	109	
YES	1590	579	
% Yes	88.9%	84.1%	Chi-square = 10.6, p = .001
Do your parents know you are a member of a gang?			
NO	520	166	
YES	1267	517	
% Yes	70.9%	75.6%	Chi-square = 5.66, p = .017
Have you ever met face-to-face with the top leader of your gang?			
NO	580	170	
YES	1125	482	
% Yes	65.9%	73.9%	Chi-square = 13.7, p < .001

Table 12: Continued

Do you feel that the gang which you belong to is aiding your race or ethnic group to overcome society's prejudices?

NO	709	258
YES	420	218
NOT SURE	599	178
% Yes	24.3%	33.3%

Chi-square = 22.7, $p < .001$

My mother encouraged me to join a gang.

FALSE	1631	598
TRUE	110	67
% True	6.3%	10.0%

Chi-square = 9.96, $p = .002$

My mother and father would be embarrassed if they knew I was in a gang.

FALSE	773	355
TRUE	894	275
% True	53.6%	43.6%

Chi-square = 18.2, $p < .001$

I feel protected and loved by being in a gang.

STRONGLY AGREE	489	227
AGREE	550	180
UNCERTAIN	293	73
DISAGREE	91	99
STRONGLY DISAGREE	188	70
% Strongly Agree	28.5%	34.9%

Chi-square = 26.2, $p < .001$

In my neighborhood, gang fighting is normal behavior for someone like me.

STRONGLY AGREE	555	230
AGREE	571	172
UNCERTAIN	198	55
DISAGREE	209	107
STRONGLY DISAGREE	180	96
% Strongly Disagree	10.5%	14.5%

Chi-square = 25.9, $p < .001$

Table 12: Continued

Do you know of any members of the Law Enforcement Community (Police officers, Correctional officers, Parole officers, Probation officers) who are ACTIVE gang members?

NO	743	235
YES	920	406
% Yes	55.3%	63.3%

Chi-square = 12.1, $p < .001$

How many disciplinary reports have you had while in this facility?

0	442	219
1	166	60
2	126	55
3	171	52
4	106	29
5 or more	606	217
% 5 or more	37.4%	34.3%

Chi-square = 15.6, $p = .008$

Have you carried a homemade weapon (knife, etc) while in this facility?

NO	1225	403
YES	473	253
% Yes	27.8%	38.5%

Chi-square = 25.4, $p < .001$

Have you threatened any facility staff member or officer while in this facility?

NO	1183	409
YES	515	248
% Yes	30.3%	37.7%

Chi-square = 11.9, $p = .001$

Do gangs seek to influence staff members to bring in drugs/contraband in this facility?

NO	1157	352
YES	486	287
% Yes	29.5%	44.9%

Chi-square = 48.2, $p < .001$

Table 12: Continued

Have any of your parents ever served time in prison?

NO	842	411
YES	646	230
% Yes	43.4%	35.8%

Chi-square = 10.4, p = .005

CHAPTER 7:

AN ANALYSIS OF GANG ORGANIZATION AND ITS IMPACT ON GANG LIFE

INTRODUCTION

That gangs vary in the nature of their organizational sophistication is now accepted doctrine (Knox, 1995). That variation exists in terms of the organizational sophistication of gangs therefore has put to rest the controversy of whether gangs were "loose knit groups" or "highly organized groups". Previous research that looked at the gang as a social organization (Project GANGECON; Project GANGPINT) has showed that considerable variation exists in terms of organizational complexity and sophistication when it comes to modern American gangs. The truth is not an absolute truth: (1) gangs are informal, or (2) gangs are formal. Some gangs are "loose knit", and not much more complex than a pick-up basketball gang. But some gangs are highly organized, indeed some of the more sophisticated gangs today are in many respects formal organizations. The "truth" therefore seems to be that there is natural variation in this variable of organizational complexity in American gangs today.

The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to examine the differences in gang organization in terms of its impact, if any, on gang life.

DEFINING GANG MEMBERSHIP FOR THE ORGANIZATIONAL SOPHISTICATION TEST: MUST BE ACTIVE GANG MEMBERS

Just as in the preceding chapter comparing juvenile and adult gang members, the present chapter uses the same operation definition for gang member. Thus, two separate questions must be used to achieve this definition: (1) has the person ever joined a gang, and (2) is the person still an active member of a gang. This, we feel, is more restrictive and provides a more conservative method of testing the issue of organizational sophistication in its impact, if any, on gang members who belong to these groups and organizations. We recognize, in advance, that such groups and organizations may be informal or formal in various ways.

THE VARIATION IN ORGANIZATIONAL SOPHISTICATION IN MODERN AMERICAN GANGS: Scaling Organizational Complexity

Five variables in the survey were used to create a formalization scale, an additive index of organizational formality, for the gangs studied in this research project. The variables used in the creation of this scale were:

- (1) Whether the gang has a special language code.
- (2) Whether the gang has written rules for its members.
- (3) Whether the gang has adult leaders who have been in the gang for many years.
- (4) Whether the gang holds regular weekly meetings.
- (5) Whether the gang requires its members to pay regular dues.

The procedure for the first stage of this inquiry in understanding how gang infrastructure may help understand gang member behavior begins with the creation of the additive scale of gang organizational complexity presented in Table 13. This scale assigns a value of "1" if the gang member answers "yes" to any of the five above measures. Thus, the range of values here varies between an absolute low of zero to an absolute high of 5.

Table 13

Distribution (N and %) for Gang Organizational Complexity Scale Scores

<u>Scale Value:</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
0	108	4.1
1	260	9.9
2	456	17.4
3	679	25.8
4	702	26.7
5	422	16.1
TOTALS	2627	100.0%

As seen in Table 13, the variation in the extent to which gangs are "informal" or "formal" can be quantified. It may not represent a true "normal curve", for as seen in Table 13, when we examine the distribution for the gang organizational complexity scale scores there is enormous variation here. It does distinguish between "truly informal" gangs (Score = 0 in Table 13) and "highly organized" gangs (Score = 5 in Table 13). But, obviously, there is a great deal of variation in between these two extremes of organizational complexity.

INFORMAL VERSUS FORMAL GANG ORGANIZATIONS

One way to address the issue of organizational complexity with little argument is to create two contrasting categories based on the data presented in Table 13. Thus, "More Informal Gangs" were measured in this chapter as represented categories 0 through 3 in Table 13. Hence, "More Formal Gangs" are represented in categories 4 and 5 in Table 13. This basically breaks the sample into two somewhat comparably sized categories, again for purposes of testing the organizational complexity hypothesis.

By collapsing the categories in Table 13 into two contrasting samples, one towards the informal end (Levels 0 through 3) and one towards the formal end of organizational life (Levels 4 and 5), a simple bivariate analysis is allowed for assessing the impact, if any, of this factor on gang life in modern American today.

What this scaling tends to do is establish a measure of the extent of formalization in gang organization. It establishes, therefore, a useful dichotomy for the purposes of this analysis: (1) somewhat more informal gangs, and (2) somewhat more formal gangs. The thrust of the inquiry is, of course, related to this very same differentiation. Thus, in the analysis that follows we are able to compare "more informal" gangs with "more formal" gangs.

FINDINGS

Table 14 describes the variables that were significant in relationship to the informal versus formal classification. It is important to note that the analysis reported in Table 14 is limited to that portion of the national sample who are active gang members. The measure of active gang members relies on affirmative responses to two separate survey items: (1) have you ever joined a gang, (2) are you currently a member of any gang.

Table 14 is, overall, very consistent in the type of differentiation it produces in the comparison of informal and formal gangs. The summary of findings below will focus on the stronger differences that emerged in the analysis reported in Table 14.

The level of organizational sophistication in a gang impacts on its member's behavior in several strong ways:

- * Selling crack cocaine jumps from two-thirds (65.3%) among members of informal

gangs up to three-fourths (77.0%) among members of formal gangs.

- * Having ever fired a gun at a police officer jumps from a behavior manifested among under a third (30.7%) of the members of informal gangs up to almost half (46.7%) of the members of formal gangs.

- * Being involved in organized drug dealing is also a factor that increases when we move up the scale of formality in gang organization (74.3% for members of informal gangs compared to 86.3 percent among members of formal gangs).

- * Having ever held any position of rank or leadership in the gang increases dramatically when we go up the scale of organizational sophistication: about half (54.1%) of the members of informal gangs held such positions, compared to 77.0% among members of more formalized gangs.

- * Having ever committed a crime for financial gain with their gang is also a factor influenced by the organizational sophistication factor: about half (58.0%) of the members of informal gangs had done so, compared to 73.6 percent of the members of more formal gangs.

- * Clearly there is a significant loss of autonomy when one joins a more formalized gang. This is evident by the survey item that asked "which best describes you: __ Whatever the gang expects of me, I do __ I do what I want regardless of what the gang expects me to do". About four-fifths (79.7%) of the members of informal gangs felt they could "do what I want", compared to about two-thirds (67.3%) of the members who indicated this who belonged to more formal gangs.

- * The possible motivation of joining the gang as an income-producing opportunity in the underground economy is shown to be a factor significantly different when we compare members of more informal versus more formal gangs in Table 14. Asked "how important was the chance to make money in your decision to join a gang", half (50.2%) of the members who belonged to informal gangs indicated this was "not important", while a third (32.8%) of the members of more formal gangs indicated this was not important.

- * Those gang members who expressed the somewhat paranoid belief that "some outside person/organization or force controls the actions of their gang" was also significant in comparing informal versus formal gangs. A fourth (24.2%) of the members of informal gangs felt this "outside control" affected their gang, compared to 36.0 percent among members of more formalized gangs.

- * More organized gangs tend to be more likely to sell crack cocaine is another finding of Table 14. Thus, if researchers were studying an area that lack more organized gangs their research would not be generalizable to the larger national picture about gangs is clear from this finding. Some 82.9 percent of the members of more informal gangs indicated that their gang has sold crack cocaine, but this increases to 92.5 percent among members of more formal gangs.

- * The role of female gang members is also significantly impacted by this factor of informal versus formal gang organization. There is more opportunity apparently in the more organized gangs. First, some 84.6 percent of the members of informal gangs had female members, compared to 92.5 percent among members of formal gangs. Secondly, 39.6 percent of the members of informal gangs had female leaders in their gang compared to 59.8 percent among members of more formal gangs.

- * The crimes committed by gang members are also importantly shaped by whether they are members of informal versus formal gangs. About three-fourths (78.6%) of the members of informal gangs indicated their crimes were committed mostly for their own personal benefit not for the benefit of the gang, but this drops to 65.4 percent among members of more formal gangs.

- * Asked if their gang has made any connection with real organized crime, about half (46.9%) of the members of informal gangs claimed this, compared to two-thirds (65.5%) of the members of more formal gangs.

- * The perception of opportunity for advancement in the gang, specifically the response of gang members to the question "do you think you will ever be the top leader of the gang you are in", is also a factor significantly differentiated by the informal versus formal classification.

Predictably, members of the more formalized gangs expressed more "open opportunity" for advancement to the top position. Only 37.6 percent of the members of informal gangs felt they would ever be able to rise to the top of their gang leadership structure, compared to 55.7 percent among members of more formalized gangs.

* Morale or solidarity is higher among members of more formal gangs is another finding in Table 14. This emerges in the analysis of the survey question "I feel protected and loved by being in a gang". Some 25.8 percent of the members of informal gangs strongly agreed with this statement, compared to 36.1 percent of the members of more formal gangs. * Members of formal gangs were more likely (64.3%) to report that they know persons in law enforcement who are active gang members; this was somewhat lower among members of informal gangs (53.0%).

* Institutional adjustment was clearly affected by knowing if the inmate was a member of an informal gang versus a formal gang, and the direction of impact was also very predictable: members of more formal gangs pose a higher risk. We are suggesting this factor be taken into account in developing gang risk/threat classification systems. Table 14 shows that members of more formal gangs were more likely to (1) fight with rival gang members while incarcerated, (2) report that gangs use religion as a "front" for conducting their business behind bars, (3) report that gangs seek to influence correctional staff/officers to bring in illegal contraband and drugs, (4) report that they have used "legal letters" as a method of communicating with fellow gang members, and (5) report that there is a connection between adult prison gangs and juvenile institutional gangs.

Table 14

**Factors Significantly Differentiated by
the Informal Versus Formal Classification
For Analyzing the Gang as a Social Organization
Among A Large National Sample of Active Gang Members**

			<u>Informal</u>	<u>Formal</u>
Did you ever bully someone in school?				
	NO		550	337
	YES		922	771
	% Yes		62.6%	69.5%
			Chi-square = 13.5, p < .001	
Do you think bullying in school can lead to gangbanging?				
	NO	483	299	
	YES	996	817	
	% Yes	67.3%	73.2%	
			Chi-square = 10.3, p = .001	
Which is your racial group?				
	AFRICAN-AMERICAN	664		606
	WHITE/CAUCASIAN	290		205
	HISPANIC/LATINO/MEXICAN	316		155
	ASIAN/CHINESE	45		23
	NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN	44		33
	ARAB-AMERICAN	7		9
	OTHER	63		44
			Chi-square = 35.2, p < .001	

Table 14: Continued

Were you ever forced to have sex that you did not want?				
	NO	1231	865	
	YES	242	240	
	% Yes	16.4%	21.7%	
			Chi-square = 11.6, p = .001	
I feel that I am not a part of legitimate opportunities in my city or town and am cut out of good possibilities.				
	FALSE	767	532	
	TRUE	671	560	
	% True	46.6%	51.2%	
			Chi-square = 5.30, p = .021	
Have you ever sold crack cocaine?				
	NO	515	256	
	YES	970	859	
	% Yes	65.3%	77.0%	
			Chi-square = 41.9, p < .001	
Did you ever complete high school or get your GED?				
	NO	1202	834	
	YES	275	266	
	% Yes	18.6%	24.1%	
			Chi-square = 11.7, p = .001	
Have you ever fired a gun at a police officer?				
	NO	1025	593	
	YES	456	520	
	% Yes	30.7%	46.7%	
			Chi-square = 68.7, p < .001	
Have you ever been involved in organized drug dealing?				
	NO	376	151	
	YES	1090	953	
	% Yes	74.3%	86.3%	
			Chi-square = 55.3, p < .001	
IF YES (to above question) Which best describes the drug dealing:				
	I DID IT FOR MYSELF	940	740	
	I DID IT FOR MY GANG	121	143	
	% I did it for my gang	11.4%	16.1%	
			Chi-square = 9.42, p = .002	

Table 14: Continued

Type of Gang Alliance the
Gang Member Belongs to:

CRIPS	368	209
BLOODS	131	90
PEOPLES/BROTHERS	156	148
FOLKS	253	373
SURENOS	163	62
NORTENOS	44	14
OTHER	231	118

Chi-square = 127.9, $p < .001$

Have you ever held rank
or any leadership position
in the gang?

NO	658	254
YES	777	852
% Yes	54.1%	77.0%

Chi-square = 142.2, $p < .001$

Have you ever committed
a crime for financial
gain with your gang?

NO	607	295
YES	841	824
% Yes	58.0%	73.6%

Chi-square = 67.0, $p < .001$

Which best describes you:
WHATEVER THE GANG
EXPECTS OF ME, I DO

277	343
-----	-----

I DO WHAT I WANT
REGARDLESS OF WHAT
THE GANG EXPECTS ME TO DO
% I Do What I Want

1094	708
79.7%	67.3%

Chi-square = 48.2, $p < .001$

How important was the chance
to make money in your
decision to join a gang?

VERY IMPORTANT	311	400
IMPORTANT	405	341
NOT IMPORTANT	724	363
% Not Important	50.2%	32.8%

Chi-square = 93.7, $p < .001$

Table 14: Continued

How important was seeking protection in your decision to join a gang?

VERY IMPORTANT	219	219	
IMPORTANT	359	268	
NOT IMPORTANT	881	620	
% Not Important	60.3%	56.0%	
			Chi-square = 10.5, p = .005

Do you feel some outside person/organization or force controls the actions of your gang?

NO	1077	696	
YES	345	392	
% Yes	24.2%	36.0%	
			Chi-square = 41.1, p < .001

Has your gang ever sold crack cocaine?

NO	243	82	
YES	1186	1021	
% Yes	82.9%	92.5%	
			Chi-square = 50.9, p < .001

Are there female members of your gang?

NO	222	82	
YES	1227	1024	
% Yes	84.6%	92.5%	
			Chi-square = 37.4, p < .001

Are there any female leaders in your gang?

NO	855	438	
YES	562	653	
% Yes	39.6%	59.8%	
			Chi-square = 100.6, p < .001

Of the crimes that you committed, were these mostly for the benefit of the gang or where they for your own personal benefit?

FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE GANG	277	341	
FOR MY PERSONAL BENEFIT	1022	643	
% For my personal benefit	78.6%	65.3%	
			Chi-square = 50.3, p < .001

Table 14: Continued

Has your gang established any relationship with real organized crime (i.e., Italian Mafia figures)?

NO	710	365
YES	629	694
% Yes	46.9%	65.5%

Chi-square = 82.3, p < .001

Do you think your gang has kept the promise(s) it made to you when you first joined?

NO	313	194
YES	976	851
% Yes	75.7%	81.4%

Chi-square = 11.0, p = .001

Have you ever personally made false "911" calls to the police emergency telephone number in connection with your gang activities?

NO	1074	743
YES	323	341
% Yes	23.1%	31.4%

Chi-square = 21.6, p < .001

Are the gangs that exist inside correctional institutions (detention centers, jails, prison, etc) basically the same as the gangs that exist on the street?

NO	525	341
YES	840	718
% Yes	61.5%	67.7%

Chi-square = 10.1, p = .001

Do you think you will ever be the top leader of the gang you are in?

NO	788	455
YES	475	573
% Yes	37.6%	55.7%

Chi-square = 75.0, p < .001

Table 14: Continued

Has your gang membership affected your religious beliefs in any way?

NO	862	575
YES	245	268
MAYBE	279	223
% Yes	17.6%	25.1%

Chi-square = 23.2, $p < .001$

Do you feel that the gang which you belong to is aiding your race or ethnic group to overcome society's prejudices?

NO	584	403
YES	334	325
NOT SURE	460	328
% No	42.3%	38.1%

Chi-square = 13.0, $p = .001$

Has anyone in your gang (i.e., leaders, etc) ever told you to perform an act that you felt was wrong?

NO	957	653
YES	419	413
% Yes	30.4%	38.7%

Chi-square = 18.3, $p < .001$

My father encouraged me to join a gang.

FALSE	1271	928
TRUE	122	140
% True	8.7%	13.1%

Chi-square = 12.0, $p = .001$

My mother encouraged me to join a gang.

FALSE	1311	954
TRUE	79	111
% True	5.6%	10.4%

Chi-square = 18.9, $p < .001$

Table 14: Continued

I joined a gang because I knew someone that was a member of one. For instance, a friend, a brother, or an uncle.

STRONGLY AGREE	344	337
AGREE	373	276
UNCERTAIN	170	102
DISAGREE	215	126
STRONGLY DISAGREE	263	208
% Strongly agree	25.2%	32.1%

Chi-square = 20.2, p < .001

If I wanted to, I could quit my gang.

STRONGLY AGREE	471	312
AGREE	318	211
UNCERTAIN	214	144
DISAGREE	147	123
STRONGLY DISAGREE	228	251
% Strongly Disagree	16.5%	24.1%

Chi-square = 24.3, p < .001

I feel protected and loved by being in a gang.

STRONGLY AGREE	353	378
AGREE	423	320
UNCERTAIN	244	133
DISAGREE	181	118
STRONGLY DISAGREE	166	97
% Strongly agree	25.8%	36.1%

Chi-square = 37.1, p < .001

In my neighborhood, gang fighting is normal behavior for someone like me.

STRONGLY AGREE	407	391
AGREE	440	318
UNCERTAIN	167	98
DISAGREE	191	134
STRONGLY DISAGREE	169	110
% Strongly agree	29.6%	37.2%

Chi-square = 17.6, p < .001

Table 14: Continued

In our conversations, my parent(s) often show favorable attitudes toward drugs, crime, and violence.

STRONGLY AGREE	138	166
AGREE	164	113
UNCERTAIN	149	114
DISAGREE	231	145
STRONGLY DISAGREE	675	497
% Strongly agree	10.1%	16.0%
Chi-square = 20.3, p < .001		

My school does not take it too seriously when I get involved in drugs, guns, and gangs.

STRONGLY AGREE	205	234
AGREE	215	162
UNCERTAIN	229	125
DISAGREE	275	171
STRONGLY DISAGREE	427	335
% Strongly agree	15.1%	22.7%
Chi-square = 31.7, p < .001		

Do you know of any members of the Law Enforcement Community (Police officers, Correctional officers, Parole officers, Probation officers) who are ACTIVE gang members?

NO	629	361
YES	710	651
% Yes	53.0%	64.3%
Chi-square = 30.2, p < .001		

How many disciplinary reports have you had while in this facility?

0	417	251
1	145	84
2	109	77
3	128	101
4	72	67
5 OR MORE	426	416
% 0	32.1%	25.2%
Chi-square = 27.4, p < .001		

Table 14: Continued

Have you been in a physical fight while in this facility?

NO	549	362
YES	829	687
% Yes	60.1%	65.4%
Chi-square = 7.22, p = .007		

Did you start a fight or attack someone while in this facility?

NO	866	576
YES	506	470
% Yes	36.8%	44.9%
Chi-square = 18.9, p < .001		

Have you carried a homemade weapon (knife, etc) while in this facility?

NO	1003	651
YES	364	390
% Yes	26.6%	37.4%
Chi-square = 32.2, p < .001		

Have you threatened any facility staff member or officer while in this facility?

NO	986	630
YES	384	407
% Yes	28.0%	39.2%
Chi-square = 33.6, p < .001		

Have you fought with any rival gang members while in this facility?

NO	766	496
YES	599	548
% Yes	43.8%	52.4%
Chi-square = 17.5, p < .001		

Have you tried to smuggle in any illegal drugs while in this facility?

NO	1041	703
YES	324	332
% Yes	23.7%	32.0%
Chi-square = 20.6, p < .001		

Table 14: Continued

Do gangs use religion as a "front" in order to conduct their business in this facility?

NO 991
YES 341
% Yes 25.6%

631
384
37.8%
Chi-square = 40.3, p < .001

Do gangs seek to influence staff members to bring in drugs/contraband in this facility?

NO 944
YES 377
% Yes 28.5%

584
429
42.3%
Chi-square = 48.3, p < .001

Have you ever used "legal letters" to communicate with fellow gang members?

NO 793
YES 538
% Yes 40.4%

494
530
51.7%
Chi-square = 30.0, p < .001

Do you think a "zero tolerance" approach to gang activity within a correctional facility affects gang recruitment?

NO 924
YES 333
% Yes 26.4%

651
331
33.7%
Chi-square = 13.7, p < .001

Is there a connection between adult prison gangs and juvenile institutional gangs?

NO 486
YES 686
% Yes 58.5%

236
681
74.2%
Chi-square = 56.2, p < .001

Table 14: Continued

Have you known males in your gang who forced females to have sex?

NO	803	517
YES	439	424
% Yes	35.3%	45.0%

Chi-square = 21.1, $p < .001$

SUMMARY

The findings in this chapter are very consistent: the member of the more formalized gang tends to be a more "hard core" individual generally, more committed to the gang, and with more excuses for his/her conduct as a gang member. Generally, as well, the member of the more formalized gang tends to represent a higher threat and engages in more serious conduct (i.e., crime, violence, etc) than the member of less organized gangs.

Consistent with the formalization theory that the more organizationally sophisticated gang would claim greater resources and criminal sophistication as well, this also emerged in the analysis in this chapter.

Members of more gangs that are more organizationally sophisticated appear to have significantly different behavioral experiences than those gang members who belong to more informal types of gang organizations.

Further, once these gang members are incarcerated, the member of the more organizationally sophisticated gang is going to clearly represent a more significant security risk in terms of fighting, smuggling, etc in the facility.

More than anything this chapter has helped advance our understanding of gangs in America along the dimension of organizational formality. It will therefore help to integrate previous incongruous findings or claims in the gang literature and explain these divergent generalizations about gang life (i.e., what gangs do or do not do), for it is clear that researchers who limit themselves to the study of less formal gangs²⁰ are going to have a predictable set of findings.

CHAPTER 8:

TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF FAMILY FACTORS AMONG GANG MEMBERS: A LARGE SCALE EMPIRICAL ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

The goal of this chapter is to provide an analysis of ten different family factors in relationship to gang issues. In this research project (Project GANGFACT), several of the co-principal investigators had developed hypotheses involving aspects of family life. The analysis reported here addresses ten different family factors in terms of the impact, if any, on the life of gang members.

Therefore, this chapter seeks to increase our understanding of the role, if any, that family plays in the behavior of gang members.

DELIMITING THE FOCUS TO GANG MEMBERS

Chapter 3 presented the descriptive findings for the variables used regarding family life. That analysis also reported the differences, if any, in comparing gang members and non-gang members. This chapter examines the gang member population: those who report having ever joined a gang. By restricting our analysis to self-reported gang members the analysis will seek to determine whether family dysfunction is a factor that helps us to better understand the variation in behavior and beliefs among gang members. The hypothesis guiding the analysis in this chapter is that greater risks and more "severe" forms of gang behavior will be found among those gang members from dysfunctional family backgrounds.

While many previous authors have raised the "family" hypothesis in relationship to gang involvement, few have had the benefit of the large sample developed by Project GANGFACT. There were $N = 4,140$ self-reported gang members who constituted the gang member sample for the analysis reported here.

Thus, the analysis here about family in relationship to gang activity is limited to a large national sample ($N = 4,140$) of self-reported gang members. We are not concerned with non-gang members in the analysis reported in this chapter. This chapter examines the variability of family factors within the gang member population and how these help us to better understand gang member behavior.

CREATING AN ADDITIVE INDEX OF FAMILY DYSFUNCTIONALITY

Ten different family factors that are analyzed in this chapter. These have been previously described in chapter 3. These ten family factors will be used in the development of an additive index measuring family dysfunction.

With ten such factors about family life it was possible for the researchers to develop a scale measuring family dysfunction. The procedure for doing this was that of assigning an arbitrary value of "1" for certain responses to items that are measures of the different aspects of family dysfunction. Thus, with ten different factors, the range of possible scores on the family dysfunction scale therefore varies between an absolute low of "zero" (where we would assume a rather high level of family functioning exists, i.e., little or no family dysfunction) to an absolute high of "ten" (where we would assume this is a very high level of family dysfunction).

Thus, in the family dysfunction scale developed here, the higher the scale score the higher the extent of family dysfunction. A low score on the family dysfunction scale means an individual came from a family environment that is more traditional and which is capable of a higher amount of social control. A high score on the family dysfunction scale means the individual could have come from a family that is criminogenic.

Below we describe the ten factors, each of which represents a different aspect about family life, and how these factors are used in the family dysfunction scale.

(1) Non-intact family structure: the survey item asked the respondents "which statement best describes your family: ___ Mother, father, and siblings ___ Mother, myself, and siblings ___ Father, myself, and siblings". This is, therefore, a measure of family structure. Any response other than the intact unit of "mother, father, and siblings" was coded as a non-intact family structure. Any respondent with a non-intact family structure gained one point on the family dysfunction scale.

(2) Parental knowledge of gang membership: obviously, this and some other items are applicable only to those who have at some point in their life joined a gang. The survey asked the respondents "do your parents know you are a member of a gang"? A response of "no" to this question was basically concealment of gang membership from parents and could be interpreted as a situation where parental knowledge would bring about censure or disapproval from a legitimate source of social control, suggesting of course that the family was functioning in a way that was healthy. A response of "yes" to this question implied the parent was clearly aware of the gang membership of their child, and it was this response that earned one point on the family dysfunction scale.

(3) Father encouraged the child to join a gang: the survey asked the direct true/false question: "my father encouraged me to join a gang". Anyone who answered "true" to this item earned one point on the family dysfunction scale.

(4) Mother encouraged the child to join a gang: the survey included the true/false item "my mother encouraged me to join a gang". While rare, this strange behavior does occur. Further it is still not today classified as a sanctionable form of child abuse under any state laws that we are aware of. So any answer of "true" to this item earned one more point on the family dysfunction scale.

(5) Parents would not be embarrassed to learn their child was a gang member: this factor is a surrogate measure of the role of social control in the family upon the gang member. The survey included the item: "my mother and father would be embarrassed if they knew I was in a gang. ___ True ___ False". An answer of "false" to this item would measure a lack of existing social control by the family in terms of sanctioning such gang behavior. Thus, a response of "false" to this item earned the respondent one more point on the family dysfunction scale.

(6) Parents who show favorable attitudes towards drugs, crime, and violence: the survey included an item measuring this factor of family life that by its face value must be presumed to be dysfunctional or perhaps even criminogenic in nature. The survey item measuring this factor was this: "in our conversations, my parent(s) often show favorable attitudes toward drugs, crime, and violence" where the response modes included the strongly agree to strongly disagree continuum. A response of "strongly agree" or "agree" to this item earned the respondent one additional point on the family dysfunction scale.

(7) A parent who has served time in prison: the survey asked the question "have any of your parents ever served time in prison". An affirmative answer earned the respondent one point on the family dysfunction scale.

(8) Parents who did not take time to come and meet with teachers when the youth was in school: the survey included the item "My parent(s) took time to come and meet my teachers when I was in school", where the response modes included: always, usually, sometimes, rarely, never. An answer of "rarely" or "never" earned the respondent another point on the family dysfunction scale.

(9) Parents who were physically violent in the home: the survey included the item "My parent(s) were physically violent in my home". The response modes for this item included the categories: always, usually, sometimes, rarely, and never. The categories of "always" and "usually" earned the respondent one possible additional point on the family dysfunction scale.

(10) Lack of parental supervision: the survey included the item "my parent(s) knew where I was and who I was with" where the response modes included: always, usually,

sometimes, rarely, and never. The responses of "rarely" or "never" earned the respondent one point on the family dysfunction scale.

Each of these ten family factors were used to generate an additive index. The index purports to measure family dysfunction. Using the above items, and the scoring procedure described, it was possible for a respondent to have a family dysfunction scale score between a low of zero and a high of ten. The higher the score on the family dysfunction scale the higher the extent of family dysfunction.

THE FAMILY DYSFUNCTION SCALE DISTRIBUTION

Table 17 presents the results of the above effort to create an additive index which is presented as a family dysfunction scale. Family dysfunction is not known to have a bell shaped curve, and the distribution we obtained for a large national sample of gang members with respect to family dysfunction is also shown in Table 17 to clearly not represent a normal "bell shaped" curve. Table 17 is based on a large sample of persons who are self-reported gang members.

Note, for example, that on the higher end of the family dysfunction scale (i.e., scores of 8, 9 and 10), that this extreme measure of family dysfunction appears to be somewhat rare. The "ideal type" of a really bad or dysfunctional family would be represented by such a very high score on the family dysfunction scale. Less than one percent of the sample of gang members had such extremely high levels of family dysfunction (i.e., scores of 8, 9 or 10 on the family dysfunction scale).

Table 17

**Frequency and Percentage Distribution of
the Family Dysfunction Scale Scores
Among A Large National Sample of Self-reported Gang Members**

Family Dysfunction Scale Scores:	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
0	286	6.9
1	800	19.3
2	975	23.6
3	976	23.6
4	630	15.2
5	276	6.7
6	126	3.0
7	48	1.2
8	15	.4
9	6	.1
10	2	.033

Similarly, we find that the "ideal type" of the so-called "good" or very functional family on this scale, when applied to gang members, is also somewhat rare in as much as only 6.9 percent of this sample of gang members could qualify for such a designation (i.e., family dysfunction scale score of "zero").

But there is still considerable variability in the family dysfunction scale scores as seen in Table 17. In fact, we can evenly divide the national sample of gang members at the "cut off point" of 2 or 3 in terms of scale scores. Those with family dysfunction scale scores of 2 or under account for 49.8 percent of the sample of gang members. Those with family dysfunction scale

scores of 3 or higher account for half of the sample (50.2%).

Given the nature of the distribution in Table 17, the most directly useful analysis would be to divide the scale scores into two distinct groups: low scores and high scores. Low scores on the family dysfunction scale therefore reflect scores of the range of zero to two. High scores are going to reflect scores between three to ten.

What this particular breakdown allows us to do is to now go back to the data with this composite measure of family dysfunction to see if it reveals any consistent pattern of impact among a large sample of self-reported gang members. The hypothesis, certainly is that the low dysfunction group will show a lower risk or threat rating than that of the high family dysfunction group.

RESULTS OF THE BIVARIATE ANALYSIS

The bivariate analysis undertaken and reported here examines the low/high condition of family dysfunction in relationship to beliefs and behavior among a large national sample of self-reported gang members. By conceiving of family dysfunction as a "varying condition" made up of a number of family factors (N = 10), and then creating two groups based on the distribution of family dysfunction scale scores (low family dysfunction = scale scores of 2 or under; high family dysfunction = scale scores of 3 or higher), some very interesting insights emerged from our analysis. This approach helps us to better understand the factor of family dysfunction and how it impacts on gang members.

Table 18 summarizes the results of this line of inquiry. We will briefly describe some of the stronger effects that are revealed here regarding the impact of family dysfunction on gang members. For convenience, Table 18 is provided at the end of this chapter.

We are not commenting on all such findings in Table 18. We are providing commentary only on those stronger effects that emerged in Table 18.

Generally, as a rule of thumb in profiling gang members for the risk of violence, **the gang member from the more dysfunctional family is going to pose a greater threat of violence.** There are several different findings in Table 18 that support this thesis. These include the following:

- * There is a statistically higher likelihood of the offender firing a gun at a police officer if the gang offender comes from a dysfunctional family. While 24 percent of those gang members from "low" levels of family dysfunction had fired a gun at a police officer, the risk of this event rises to 38.7 percent among gang members who come from a "high dysfunction" family environment.

- * Those gang members from the more dysfunctional families were more likely to exhibit a personality trait of the super predator: the percentage who express the attitude that they always get what they want even if they have to take it from someone is higher (13.4%) among those from the more dysfunctional families.

- * Those gang members from the more dysfunctional families were less likely to be victimized by bullies and more likely to be in the role of the bully, than compared to gang members from less dysfunctional families.

This violence and threat carries over into the context of the correctional institution once gang members are incarcerated. As a general rule of thumb in profiling gang members, those **gang members from the more dysfunctional family environments pose the greater risk to institutional security.** There are a number of findings in Table 18 that support this thesis. These include the following:

- * Those gang members from the more dysfunctional family environment were more likely to have disciplinary reports while incarcerated (72.9%) than compared to gang members from less dysfunctional families (62.4%).

- * Those gang members from the more dysfunctional family environment were more likely to get into physical fights while incarcerated (62.6%) than compared to gang members from less dysfunctional families (51.1%).

* Those gang members from the more dysfunctional family environment were more likely to have started a fight or attacked someone while incarcerated (41.7%) than compared to gang members from less dysfunctional families (27.3%).

* Those gang members from the more dysfunctional family environment were more likely to carry improvised or homemade weapons (knife, etc) while incarcerated (34.7%) compared to gang members from less dysfunctional families (20.1%).

* Those gang members from the more dysfunctional family environment were more likely to have threatened correctional staff members or correctional officers while incarcerated (37.9%) than compared to gang members from less dysfunctional families.

* Those gang members from the more dysfunctional family environment were more likely to have engaged in fights with rival gang members behind bars (47.4%) than compared to gang members from less dysfunctional families (31.2%).

* Those gang members from the more dysfunctional family environment were more likely to have used "legal letters" to communicate with fellow gang members (44.1%) than compared to gang members from less dysfunctional families (30.2%).

Generally, as a rule of thumb in profiling gang members, the gang members from the more dysfunctional family backgrounds are going to find gang life more satisfying. This is very consistent with theoretical expectations: the gang becomes an alternative social institution for them. There are several different findings in Table 18 that support this thesis. These include the following:

* Those gang members from more dysfunctional families are more likely to report that they feel protected and loved by being in a gang (29.2%) compared to those who are not from high dysfunction families (20.3%).

* Those gang members from the more dysfunctional families are more likely to report that their gang has kept its promises to them (76.1%) than compared with those gang members who are not from highly dysfunctional families (65.9%).

Generally, as a rule of thumb in profiling gang members, the gang members from the more dysfunctional family backgrounds are more likely to report being involved in drug crimes. There are several different findings in Table 18 that support this thesis. These include the following:

* Gang members from the more dysfunctional families were more likely to report having personally sold crack cocaine (69.7%) than those gang members who were not from highly dysfunctional families (62.2%).

* Gang members from the more dysfunctional families were more likely to report having been involved in organized drug dealing operations (79.2%) than those gang members who were not from highly dysfunctional families (71.4%).

* Even when they are confined inside a correctional institution, gang members from the more dysfunctional families were more likely to report having tried to smuggle in illegal drugs into the correctional facility (30.7%) than those gang members who were not from highly dysfunctional families (15.0%).

* Similarly, while confined in correctional institutions, those gang members from the more dysfunctional families were more likely to report that gangs seek to corrupt correctional staff/officers for the purposes of bringing in drugs or contraband (38.7%) than those gang members who were not from highly dysfunctional families (28.6%).

Generally, as a rule of thumb in profiling gang members, those gang members from the more dysfunctional family environments are more highly committed to gang life. In other words, they are more highly integrated into it as a way of life and as a deviant type of human adaptation. It is, generally, a more "hard core" profile that emerges among the gang member from a dysfunctional family environment. There are several different findings in Table 18 that support this thesis. These include the following:

* Those gang members from the more dysfunctional family environment are more likely to report having five or more close friends and associates who are also gang members (82.6%)

than are those gang members from less dysfunctional family backgrounds (72.2%).

* Those gang members from the more dysfunctional family environment are less likely to have ever tried to quit gang life (39.9%) than compared to those gang members from less dysfunctional family backgrounds (49.8%).

* Those gang members from the more dysfunctional family environment are more likely to remain active gang members (71.8%) than compared to gang members from less dysfunctional family backgrounds (58.0%).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined the issue of family dysfunction in terms of its effect on gang members. The analysis undertaken in this chapter had the benefit of a very large national sample of self-reported gang members (N = 4,140). There were ten (10) family factors examined to create a family dysfunction scale (see Table 17). The family dysfunction scale was used to create two relatively equal groups: those gang members with low levels of family dysfunction, and those gang members with high levels of family dysfunction. The analysis revealed a number of statistically significant findings in Table 18 along these lines.

The results of the analysis were overwhelmingly consistent throughout: the gang member from the more dysfunctional family environment was the gang member who posed a greater threat of violence, was the more hard core gang member generally, who was more satisfied with and more highly committed to gang life, and who represented a greater security risk inside the correctional climate.

The trend in the data was very suggestive of the gang as an alternative social institution for the gang member who found his family life wanting. The same human being who was a bully and who was sexually abused as a child was the same human being who was likely to be a more dedicated gang soldier in later life. The more dysfunctional the family, the more the gang member thought of the gang as an opportunity for recognition (i.e., may labor under the delusion they may be the top leader of their gang some day).

The more dysfunctional the family background, the more deadly the gang member produced.

Sadly, we could reasonably extrapolate these findings in another frightening way: it may very well be that if gangs do discover it, they could induce greater ferocity by modifying their intake screening process. In other words, the "ideal soldier" is in fact one from a highly dysfunctional family environment. Such a person will sacrifice more for the gang. Such a person will do more for the gang. Such a person will be more satisfied with gang life. Because such a person has little else in terms of social institutions to benefit from as a human being with normal human needs for attention, recognition, appreciation, and a sense of belonging. The person from the more dysfunctional family environment may identify totally and completely with the gang as the primary social institution to the exclusion of all other possible influences from legitimate sources of social control (i.e., family, church, community, etc).

Table 18
Factors Significantly Differentiated by the
Family Dysfunction (Low versus High) Scale
Among A Large National Sample of Gang Members

	<u>Family Dysfunction</u> <u>Scale Classification</u>	
	<u>LOW</u>	<u>HIGH</u>
% who believe they will be able to find a good job and eventually support a family.	92.1%	88.9%
	Chi-square = 8.75, p = .003	

Table 18: Continued

% who always get what they want even if they have to take it from someone.	7.6%	13.4%	Chi-square = 65.4, p < .001
% who were ever bullied while in school.	39.3%	34.8%	Chi-square = 8.78, p = .003
% who were bullies while in school.	59.4%	65.6%	Chi-square = 16.5, p < .001
% who were <= 17 years old	64.2%	68.6%	Chi-square = 8.80, p = .003
% who rarely if ever attend church	55.6%	60.2%	Chi-square = 8.77, p = .003
% who are never careful to avoid activities in which they might be injured.	13.3%	16.7%	Chi-square = 24.4, p < .001
% who were ever forced to have sex that they did not want to have.	16.0%	21.2%	Chi-square = 17.7, p < .001
% who have ever sold crack cocaine.	62.2%	69.7%	Chi-square = 25.1, p < .001
% who completed high school or got their GED.	27.3%	22.5%	Chi-square = 12.9, p < .001
% who have ever fired a gun at a police officer.	24.0%	38.7%	Chi-square = 102.0, p < .001
% who report it has been easier since March of 1994 to buy an illegal gun.	42.1%	46.9%	Chi-square = 9.34, p = .009
% who do not believe in God.	5.9%	10.3%	Chi-square = 26.3, p < .001

Table 18: Continued

% who self-describe themselves as being on Satan's side.	6.0%	11.4%	Chi-square = 34.8, p < .001
% who have been involved in organized drug dealing.	71.4%	79.2%	Chi-square = 33.4, p < .001
% with five or more close friends and associates who are gang members.	72.2%	82.6%	Chi-square = 78.2, p < .001
% who are still active gang members.	58.0%	71.8%	Chi-square = 85.3, p < .001
% who have ever tried to quit the gang life.	49.8%	39.9%	Chi-square = 40.0, p < .001
% who have ever held rank or any leadership position in their gang.	56.2%	63.2%	Chi-square = 20.4, p < .001
% who report that their gang has a special language code.	56.3%	62.1%	Chi-square = 13.9, p < .001
% who report that their gang has adult leaders who have been in the gang for many years.	82.1%	86.2%	Chi-square = 12.8, p < .001
% who report having committed a crime for financial gain with their gang.	51.7%	64.8%	Chi-square = 70.9, p < .001
% who report that their gang holds regular weekly meetings.	55.9%	61.0%	Chi-square = 10.2, p = .001
% who report that their gang requires its members to pay regular weekly dues.	24.6%	30.8%	Chi-square = 18.9, p < .001

Table 18: Continued

% who self-describe themselves "whatever the gang expects of me, I do".	19.4%	25.9%	Chi-square = 22.6, p < .001
% who report that the chance to make money was "very important" in their decision to join a gang.	22.2%	28.1%	Chi-square = 26.5, p < .001
% who would quit the gang if they were offered a true second chance in life.	83.3%	76.1%	Chi-square = 30.4, p < .001
% who would have still joined a gang even if there had been other activities available for them to participate in (for example: sports, music, art, drama, YMCA, Boys' Club, church activities, etc).	31.4%	37.6%	Chi-square = 23.6, p < .001
% who first joined the gang at 12-13 years of age.	24.2%	31.1%	Chi-square = 23.3, p < .001
% who report that their gang has ever sold crack cocaine.	79.3%	85.2%	Chi-square = 23.1, p < .001
% who report that there are female members in their gang.	80.9%	85.5%	Chi-square = 15.0, p < .001
% who report that of the crimes they committed, these were mostly for the benefit of the gang.	22.3%	28.9%	Chi-square = 19.6, p < .001
% who claim that their gang has established ties to real forms of organized crime.	46.4%	53.2%	Chi-square = 16.8, p < .001

Table 18: Continued

% who believe that their gang has kept the promise(s) it made to them when they first joined.	65.9%	76.1%	Chi-square = 46.1, p < .001
% who have ever personally made false "911" calls to the police emergency telephone number in connection with their gang activities.	19.5%	29.1%	Chi-square = 46.5, p < .001
% who feel that shooting at a police officer would bring them more status and "rep" in their gang.	24.9%	33.3%	Chi-square = 27.8, p < .001
% who think they will ever be the top leader of their gang.	31.2%	45.8%	Chi-square = 79.3, p < .001
% who feel that their gang membership has affected their religious beliefs.	18.3%	24.4%	Chi-square = 21.1, p < .001
% who feel that the gang which they belong to is aiding their race or ethnic group to overcome society's prejudices. ²¹	21.3%	27.6%	Chi-square = 20.4, p < .001
% who responded "strongly agree" that they feel protected and loved by being in a gang.	20.3%	29.2%	Chi-square = 61.4, p < .001
% who "strongly agree" that in their neighborhood, gang fighting is normal behavior.	21.3%	32.1%	Chi-square = 83.0, p < .001
% who "agree" or "strongly agree" that their school did not take it too seriously when they got involved in drugs, guns, and gangs.	27.9%	37.1%	Chi-square = 68.3, p < .001

Table 18: Continued

% who know of any members of the law enforcement community (police officers, correctional officers, parole officers, probation officers) who are ACTIVE gang members.	46.8%	58.3%	Chi-square = 48.0, p < .001
% who have had one or more disciplinary reports while incarcerated.	62.4%	72.9%	Chi-square = 45.3, p < .001
% who have been in a physical fight with anyone while incarcerated.	51.1%	62.6%	Chi-square = 50.8, p < .001
% who have started a fight or attacked someone while incarcerated.	27.3%	41.7%	Chi-square = 85.2, p < .001
% who have carried a homemade weapon (knife, etc) while incarcerated.	20.1%	34.7%	Chi-square = 99.0, p < .001
% who have threatened any facility staff member or officer while incarcerated.	19.7%	37.9%	Chi-square = 147.0, p < .001
% who have fought with rival gang members while incarcerated.	31.2%	47.4%	Chi-square = 101.5, p < .001
% who have tried to smuggle in any illegal drugs while incarcerated.	15.0%	30.7%	Chi-square = 128.1, p < .001
% who report that gangs use religion as a "front" in order to conduct their business inside correctional institutions.	25.8%	35.2%	Chi-square = 36.8, p < .001

Table 18: Continued

% who report that gangs seek to influence staff members to bring in drugs/contraband inside correctional institutions.

28.6% 38.7%
Chi-square = 40.7, $p < .001$

% who have ever used "legal letters" to communicate with fellow gang members.

30.2% 44.1%
Chi-square = 74.3, $p < .001$

% who have known males in their gang who have forced females to have sex.

33.1% 43.8%
Chi-square = 39.9, $p < .001$

% who are at the "Level 5" dimension of the Model 1 Gang/STG Classification System.

34.8% 47.3%
Chi-square = 97.1, $p < .001$

CHAPTER 9:

THE SUPER PREDATOR: THE MOST VIOLENT OF THE VIOLENT CRIMINAL OFFENDERS OPERATING THE UNITED STATES TODAY

INTRODUCTION

In the study of crime, an idea has existed over the years that some offenders are more active than others and that a small number of offenders may account for a disproportionate amount of crime or violence in a given jurisdiction. Wolfgang, et al, (1972) used the term "chronic recidivists" to describe how a relatively small group of delinquents accounted for more than their fair share of delinquent acts²². What it means is that there are some differences inside the offender population that make some offenders more criminally active than others.

Combining this conception of the "very active" criminal offender with gang involvement gives rise to the notion of the "super predator": someone who is able to maximize their effectiveness at crime or violence by the advantages of a group or organizational affiliation. This chapter examines the super predator concept.

THEORETICAL DEFINITION OF THE SUPER PREDATOR

In theory, the super predator is not easily deterred by prevention or intervention. Trouble with a capital "T" begins early in life for the super predator. This may take the form of early delinquency, bullying behavior, or coming from a criminogenic family (i.e., a rare family situation of high dysfunction where crime and delinquency may in fact be encouraged by other family members or parents).

The super predator, like the "chronic recidivist" or chronic offender, is responsible for a significantly larger amount of crime and violence than most other offenders. In theory, the super predator comes in all ethnic and racial groups, although it is mostly a male phenomenon²³. In theory the super predator begins his career in crime or violence at an early age and remains active in crime a longer time over the human life span.

As the theory goes, and as we are clearly indicating it is just a theory that has surfaced in some policy circles about gang crime, if the super predators in a given jurisdiction were somehow extracted from the opportunity to commit crime, that a substantial positive effect might result in terms of reduced crime for that same jurisdiction.

There has been no known large scale research on the super predator to our knowledge. So, while in theory the super predator accounts for a small percentage of the overall offender population, it remains an unknown parameter at this point. Therefore the concept of "super predator" remains mostly a theoretical concept. There has been no gang research that specifically addressed this issue. Until now.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE SUPER PREDATOR

There are probably a large number of attitudinal factors that distinguish the super predator from other offenders, but it is the domain of behavior and experience that must be the primary area for defining the super predator. While gang involvement provides an advantage for the super predator, it is possible to conceive of some super predators who are not gang members. Yet where gangs do exist and operate and account for a significant proportion of the offender population in any jurisdiction, this gang density factor can be expected to propel the super predator into gang life. The super predator flourishes in a gang organization.

Our operational definition of the super predator builds upon the knowledge developed from previous chapters in this report. Thus, the operational definition of super predator is: (1) someone who has at some point in their life (typically at an early age) joined a gang, (2) who

remains an active gang member, (3) who comes from what might be regarded as a family that is somewhat dysfunctional in nature, and (4) whose criminal and violent behavior further distinguishes this person from other offenders by its severity. The fourth element of the definition was operationalized in this research by one variable: whether the offender had ever fired a gun at a police officer.

These four separate elements of the operational definition were able to be used to identify a subset of offenders. The issue of this chapter is to test whether this subset of offenders truly does have a magnified level of threat in regard to other factors in comparison with other offenders.

The measurement of these four operational components was based on existing variables that have been previously reported in this research. The first component reflects someone who separates from other offenders by being a self-reported gang member (i.e., someone who answers "yes" to the question "have you ever joined a gang?"). The second component of continuity in gang involvement comes from a second question in the Project GANGFACT survey (i.e., someone who answers "yes" to the question "are you currently a member of any gang?"). The third component comes from the "high dysfunction" definition explained in the previous chapter about family and gang involvement (someone with a high family dysfunction profile). The fourth component comes from another variable in the Project GANGFACT survey (i.e., someone who answers "yes" to the question "have you ever fired a gun at a police officer?"). Someone must meet all four of these criteria to be considered a super predator.

IMPLEMENTING THE SUPER PREDATOR DEFINITION

Using the four components of the operational definition of the super predator, we found that only N = 627 of the offenders in our national study fit the profile of the super predator. This was truly a small group, overall. This group designated as super predators accounted for only 6.2 percent of the national sample (N = 10,166) of offenders we surveyed in 17 states.

VALIDATING THE SUPER PREDATOR DEFINITION

The survey included the item: "I get what I want even if I have to take it from someone" where the response modes included the following categories: always, usually, sometimes, rarely, and never. Our operational definition of the super predator significantly differentiates this attitudinal or personality factor in a large national sample of offenders. The results of this test are provided in Table 19.

Table 19

**Test of the Super Predator Definition
Using a Large National Sample (N = 10,041)
of Confined Offenders in 17 States**

I get what I want even if I have to take it from someone.	SUPER PREDATOR?	
	NO	YES
ALWAYS	536	146
USUALLY	671	117
SOMETIMES	2396	191
RARELY	2192	90
NEVER	3621	81

Chi-square = 499.3, p < .001

As seen in Table 19, the distribution of the results of the attitudinal question regarding a predatorial predisposition is shown to be very significant (Chi-square = 499.3, p < .001). In fact,

only 12.8 percent of those who were not classified as super predators gave a response of "always" or "usually" to this factor. However, some 42.0 percent of those classified as super predators gave a response of "always" or "usually".

We conclude that the behavioral measurements used to define the super predator are satisfactory by being able to also significantly differentiate this attitudinal or personality factor related to the same phenomenon. But much remains to be done to show that the super predator can in fact account for a disproportionate share of the crime or violence problem. The remainder of this chapter will therefore address itself to testing this issue about the super predator.

THREE FOURTHS OF SUPER PREDATORS WERE BULLIES IN SCHOOL

The survey included the question "did you ever bully someone in school? ___ Yes ___ No". Table 20 demonstrates that a strong difference exists in regard to bullying behavior in early life when comparing the super predators with other confined offenders. The key finding here is that 75.9 percent of the super predators were bullies in school, compared to under half (45.2%) of the other confined offenders who were not classified as super predators.

Table 20

**Distribution (N) of Bullying Behavior in School
Comparing Non-Super Predators and Super Predators
in a Large National Sample of Confined Offenders
From 85 Facilities in 17 States**

Did you ever "bully" someone in school?	SUPER PREDATOR?	
	NO	YES
NO	5145	149
YES	4251	470
% Yes	45.2%	75.9%
Chi-square = 219.4, p < .001		

SUPER PREDATORS TEND TO BE YOUNGER

The age distribution was used for testing this issue regarding the super predator. The test involved here basically amounts to comparing juvenile versus adult age categories. Table 21 provides the results of this test. The findings show that among the non-super predators about half (49.2%) were underage or juveniles (i.e., 17 years of age or under), that among the super predators nearly two-thirds (67.3%) are juveniles. Thus, the super predator tends to be a younger offender. This may have dramatic implications for the criminal justice system as these offenders mature and matriculate through the criminal justice system and work their way into the adult correctional system.

Table 21

**Distribution (N) of Age Categories (Juvenile Vs. Adult)
Comparing Non-Super Predators and Super Predators
in a Large National Sample of Confined Offenders
From 85 Facilities in 17 States**

Age Category:	SUPER PREDATOR?	
	NO	YES
<= 17 years	4546	402
>= 18 years	4685	195
% <=17	49.2%	67.3%
Chi-square = 73.4, p < .001		

SUPER PREDATORS ARE NOT DETERRED BY RISK OF INJURY

The survey included the item "I am careful to avoid activities in which I might be injured", where the response modes available included these options: always usually sometimes rarely never. Theoretically, the super predator is not deterred by the risk of injury or harm to himself. Table 22 shows this assumption to be generally correct.

Table 22
Distribution (N) of Injury Avoidance Behavior
Comparing Non-Super Predators and Super Predators
in a Large National Sample of Confined Offenders
From 85 Facilities in 17 States

I am careful to avoid activities in which I might be injured.	SUPER PREDATOR?	
	<u>NO</u>	<u>YES</u>
ALWAYS	2164	77
USUALLY	1928	61
SOMETIMES	2950	208
RARELY	1292	123
NEVER	1055	155
% Rarely or Never	24.9%	44.5%

Chi-square = 169.0, p < .001

As seen in Table 22, when it comes to being deterred by the risk of injury, about a fourth (24.9%) of the non-super predators fit the profile of "rarely or never" avoiding such activities that may involve injury. While almost half (44.5%) of the super predators fit this profile of rarely or never avoiding an activity just because it may involve the risk of injury.

SUPER PREDATORS MORE LIKELY TO DEMAND NEED FULFILLMENT

The survey included the item "it is alright to demand that my needs be met" where again the response modes included: always, usually, sometimes, rarely, and never. Someone who responds "always" or "usually" is basically demanding that their needs be fulfilled.

Table 23 provides the results of this test. As seen in Table 23, about a third (32.0%) of those offenders who were not super predators did in fact "always" or "usually" feel it is alright to demand that their needs be met. Yet this rises to half of the population (50.6%) for the super predators.

Table 23
Distribution (N) of Demanding Need Fulfillment
Comparing Non-Super Predators and Super Predators
in a Large National Sample of Confined Offenders
From 85 Facilities in 17 States

It is alright to demand that my needs be met.	SUPER PREDATOR?	
	<u>NO</u>	<u>YES</u>
ALWAYS	1654	212
USUALLY	1343	102
SOMETIMES	3617	205
RARELY	1351	59
NEVER	1391	42
% Always or Usually	32.0%	50.6%

Chi-square = 127.7, p < .001

A FOURTH OF SUPER PREDATORS WERE SEXUALLY ABUSED

We often wonder when we hear of young children committing outrageous acts of violence what "demons" drive these persons to do what they do. Sexual abuse in the background of offenders is likely to provide one such source of psycho-social fuel for subsequent acts that greatly offend the public. However, there has been little such research along these lines. The present research has the benefit of a large scale national sample of offenders.

Table 24 compares the two groups (non-super predators versus super predators) of offenders on the issue of whether they have ever been sexually abused. As seen in Table 24 there is a somewhat higher likelihood of admitted sexual abuse in the background of super predators (26.8%) when compared to the vast majority of other offenders who are not super predators (18.6%).

Table 24

**Distribution (N) of Prior Sexual Abuse
Comparing Non-Super Predators and Super Predators
in a Large National Sample of Confined Offenders
From 85 Facilities in 17 States**

Were you ever forced to have sex that you did not want to have?	<u>SUPER PREDATOR?</u>	
	<u>NO</u>	<u>YES</u>
NO	7586	443
YES	1737	163
% Yes	18.6%	26.8%
Chi-square = 25.1, p < .001		

**FAMILY STRUCTURE: SUPER PREDATORS MORE LIKELY TO COME FROM
MOTHER-ONLY FAMILY ENVIRONMENT**

The survey included a question that measured the family structure that the offenders in this national sample grew up in. It is, therefore, their family structure of orientation. While the problem of non-intact families is pervasive in the offender population, it appears to be significantly worse among super predators. This is shown in Table 25.

Table 25 shows that in the vast majority of the offender population (who are not super predators) that while approximately half (51.7%) come from mother-only families, that this rises to two-thirds (68.1%) among the super predators.

Table 25

**Distribution (N) of Family Structure
Comparing Non-Super Predators and Super Predators
in a Large National Sample of Confined Offenders
From 85 Facilities in 17 States**

Which statement below best describes your family?	<u>SUPER PREDATOR?</u>	
	<u>NO</u>	<u>YES</u>
MOTHER, FATHER, AND SIBLINGS	3553	122
MOTHER, MYSELF, AND SIBLINGS	4620	402
FATHER, MYSELF, AND SIBLINGS	758	66
% Mother, Self, and Siblings	51.7%	68.1%
Chi-square = 85.6, p < .001		

THE SUPER PREDATOR IS MUCH MORE LIKELY TO SELL CRACK COCAINE

The survey included the question "have you ever sold crack cocaine? ___ Yes ___ No". Among the vast majority of the offenders (who were not super predators) some 47.8 percent did report having sold crack cocaine. However, this rises to an amazing 84.5 percent among super predators. This difference is very strong and significant (Chi-square = 314.9, p < .001).

ANTI-CRIME LEGISLATION (i.e., the Brady Bill) HAD LITTLE IMPACT ON SUPER PREDATORS

The survey provided the first large scale national evaluation of the effects that the Brady Bill had on the criminal population, juvenile and adult. The survey included the question "since March of 1994 has it been harder or easier for you to buy illegal guns?". Our analysis shows that the offender population was not severely hampered in terms of this legislation. Further it had almost no effect on the super predator. The results of this analysis are provided in Table 26.

Table 26

**Distribution (N) of Impact of the Brady Bill
Comparing Non-Super Predators and Super Predators
in a Large National Sample of Confined Offenders
From 85 Facilities in 17 States**

Since March of 1994 has it been harder or easier for you to buy illegal guns?	<u>SUPER PREDATOR?</u>	
	<u>NO</u>	<u>YES</u>
HARDER	1163	42
EASIER	2771	341
ABOUT THE SAME	3559	226
% Easier	36.9%	55.9%
		Chi-square = 94.1, p < .001

Table 26 shows that just over a third of most offenders (36.9%) reported it has been easier for them to acquire illegal firearms since March of 1994, but that this easier access increases to 55.9 percent among super predators.

SUPER PREDATORS ARE MUCH LESS LIKELY TO BE DETERRED BY TOUGHER PROSECUTION

In anecdotal material, fearlessness or inability to be deterred by tough sanctions is often an attribute of the super predator. A super predator is said to not fear imprisonment or what "the system" can do. The super predator is said to be less concerned with consequences and risks.

The survey included a question that helps us provide an assessment of this matter. The survey posed the scenario: "if more juveniles who committed violent crimes were tried in court as adult offenders, would this stop you as a juvenile from committing a violent crime". The results showed that among the vast majority of offenders (those who are not super predators) about half (48.7%) would in fact be deterred from committing a violent crime. However, this drops to under a third (30.2%) for the super predators (Chi-square = 79.4, p < .001). Thus, the super predator is significantly less likely to be deterred by this type of "tough" sanction.

Thus, the super predator would be regarded as a clear exception to most theories of crime which view the decision-making process in the etiology of crime as being a rational, calculating, utilitarian style where the offender calculates the risks and benefits of the act before engaging in it. Our data provides another example of this in regard to beliefs about the value of gang suppression by the means of prosecuting gangs as organized crime groups.

The survey included the question "if gangs were investigated and prosecuted as if they were organized crime groups, would this put some gangs out of business". Nearly half (46.2%) of the overall offender population (i.e., those who are not super predators) felt that this more formidable prosecution strategy could put some gangs out of business. However, among the super predators only a fourth (25.2%) felt this type of tougher prosecution approach could put some gangs out of business (Chi-square = 104.5, $p < .001$).

ATHEISM MORE LIKELY IN THE SUPER PREDATOR

The survey included the question "which best describes you: ___ I believe in God ___ I do not believe in God". Table 27 provides the results of comparing the overall offender population (those who are not super predators) with the sample of super predators on this issue. As seen in Table 27 a significant difference emerges here. The super predator is twice as likely (14.9%) to be an atheist than are most other offenders (6.3%).

Table 27

**Distribution (N) of Belief in God
Comparing Non-Super Predators and Super Predators
in a Large National Sample of Confined Offenders
From 85 Facilities in 17 States**

Which best describes you:	<u>SUPER PREDATOR?</u>	
	<u>NO</u>	<u>YES</u>
I BELIEVE IN GOD	8487	511
I DO NOT BELIEVE IN GOD	575	90
% I do not believe in God	6.3%	14.9%

Chi-square = 65.5, $p < .001$

THE SUPER PREDATOR IS FOUR TIMES MORE LIKELY TO CLAIM TO BE ON SATAN'S SIDE

Again, the researchers are not applying any label to the super predator that these same individuals did not themselves insist upon. The survey included the question "which best describes you: ___ I'm on God's side ___ I'm on Satan's side". As a validity factor that can now be used with the preceding finding, we find much consistency in the responses of the super predator group. Table 28 provides the results of comparing most offenders (those who are not super predators) with the super predator group.

Table 28

**Distribution (N) of Following God or Satan
Comparing Non-Super Predators and Super Predators
in a Large National Sample of Confined Offenders
From 85 Facilities in 17 States**

Which best describes you:	<u>SUPER PREDATOR?</u>	
	<u>NO</u>	<u>YES</u>
I'M ON GOD'S SIDE	8073	446
I'M ON SATAN'S SIDE	438	109
% I'm on Satan's side	5.1%	19.6%

Chi-square = 193.0, $p < .002$

Thus, Table 28 shows that the super predator is significantly more likely to report that he is on Satan's side. About a fifth (19.6%) of the super predators claimed that they were on Satan's side, compared to only 5.1 percent among the rest of the overall offender population. When someone tells you they are serving the devil, you should probably believe them when they meet the rare criteria of being a super predator.

NINE OUT OF TEN SUPER PREDATORS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN ORGANIZED DRUG DEALING

The survey asked the question "have you ever been involved in organized drug dealing". Many have assumed that the "super predator" is involved in organized drug dealing, but few have had hard research evidence to back up such an assertion. We believe the present analysis will now vindicate those who have worked drug investigations and who have asserted that the super predator plays a prominent role in the narcotics trade in the United States today.

Table 29 provides the results of comparing the general offender population with the super predator group on the issue of whether these persons have ever been involved with organized drug dealing. As seen in Table 29, about half (52.5%) of all ordinary offenders have in fact been involved with organized drug dealing. But among the super predators this involvement with organized drug dealing skyrockets to 91.7 percent!

Table 29

**Distribution (N) of Involvement in Organized Drug Dealing
Comparing Non-Super Predators and Super Predators
in a Large National Sample of Confined Offenders
From 85 Facilities in 17 States**

Have you ever been involved in organized drug dealing?	SUPER PREDATOR?	
	NO	YES
NO	4321	51
YES	4777	566
% Yes	52.5%	91.7%
Chi-square = 359.2, p < .001		

THE SUPER PREDATOR IS MUCH MORE LIKELY TO KNOW "GANG MOLES" WHO WORK IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

The survey asked "do you know any members of the law enforcement community (police officers, correctional officers, parole officers, probation officers) who are ACTIVE gang members". Among the general offender population (i.e., those who are not super predators) under half (44.8%) reported knowing such "gang moles". However, 70.4 percent of the super predators knew such "gang moles" (Chi-square = 133.9, p < .001).

SUPER PREDATORS CONTINUE THEIR CAREERS ONCE LOCKED UP INSIDE CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS

From what we can tell, the super predator is an offender who views confinement in a correctional institution as little more than a slight nuisance in terms of being a sanction that was designed to interrupt their criminal careers. Being in custody constitutes less of an obstacle for their lifelong pursuits. Six different factors of institutional adjustment demonstrate this trend, the results of which are provided in Table 30.

As seen in Table 30, for all six factors of institutional adjustment, the super predator is in

all instances going to be a problem for correctional managers. The super predator behind bars does not stop his activities completely, as violence, threats, and smuggling drugs into the correctional institution now come to surface as new pursuits in a continued career pattern.

While about half (53.2%) of the overall offender population (those who are not super predators) had one or more disciplinary reports while incarcerated, about four-fifths of all super predators tend to get one or more such disciplinary reports behind bars (81.9%).

Fighting behavior is found in two-fifths (39.5%) of the general offender population, but in three-fourths (77.5%) of the super predator group.

About a fifth (19.6%) of the general offender population end up starting a fight or attacking someone behind bars, compared to over half (56.7%) of the super predators.

Again, a sixth of the general offender population (16.6%) engage in the behavior of arming themselves with improvised weapons while incarcerated, compared to half (50.8%) of the super predators.

An eighth (12.6%) of the general offender population once incarcerated attempt to smuggle in illegal drugs, compared to nearly half (45.2%) of the super predators!

Finally, a sixth (16.5%) of the general offender population try to intimidate their keepers by threatening staff members or correctional officers, compared to nearly half (53.5%) of the super predators!

As seen in Table 30, all of these are rather strong significant ($p < .001$) findings.

Table 30

**Distribution (N) of Six Institutional Adjustment Factors
Comparing Non-Super Predators and Super Predators
in a Large National Sample of Confined Offenders
From 85 Facilities in 17 States**

	<u>SUPER PREDATOR?</u>		
	<u>NO</u>	<u>YES</u>	
Had one or more disciplinary reports while presently incarcerated?			
	NO	3444	104
	YES	3919	473
	% Yes	53.2%	81.9%
			Chi-square = 178.9, $p < .001$
Have you been in a physical fight with anyone while presently incarcerated?			
	NO	4911	137
	YES	3207	472
	% Yes	39.5%	77.5%
			Chi-square = 335.4, $p < .001$
Did you start a fight or attack someone while presently incarcerated?			
	NO	6478	261
	YES	1587	343
	% Yes	19.6%	56.7%
			Chi-square = 447.1, $p < .001$

Table 30: Continued

Have you carried a homemade
weapon (knife, etc) while
presently incarcerated?

NO	6732	294
YES	1347	304
% Yes	16.6%	50.8%
Chi-square = 421.7, p < .001		

Have you tried to smuggle
in any illegal drugs while
presently incarcerated?

NO	6960	327
YES	1012	270
% Yes	12.6%	45.2%
Chi-square = 462.0, p < .001		

Have you threatened any
facility staff member or
officer while incarcerated?

NO	6710	281
YES	1333	324
% Yes	16.5%	53.5%
Chi-square = 496.7, p < .001		

OVERALL PROFILE SUMMARY OF THE SUPER PREDATOR

Based on the analysis reported in this chapter we can now provide an overall profile summary of the "super predator" based on a large scale national sample that is also very recent (i.e., collected in 1996) and therefore not dated.

* More likely to have the attitude "I get what I want even if I have to take it from someone".

* Younger, thus also less likely perhaps to have completed high school degree or the GED.

* More likely to have been a bully in school.

* More likely to engage in activities in which they might be injured.

* More likely to "demand" that their needs be fulfilled.

* More likely to have been sexually abused.

* More likely to have been from a mother-only family.

* More likely to have sold crack cocaine; as nine out of ten have been involved in organized drug dealing.

* Less likely to be deterred by stiff prosecution measures.

* Less likely to believe in God, more likely to purport to be on Satan's side.

* More likely to know an active gang member who works in a criminal justice capacity.

* More likely to continue their behavior behind bars: more disciplinary reports, more fighting, more weapons carrying, more attempts to smuggle illegal drugs into the institution, and more threats against facility staff or officers.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

At first glance the concept of "super predator" may appear to some as just another "label" that stigmatizes the offender population. It is similar to the issue of "monsters" in the gang arena. Gang members cry out that they do not want to be regarded as "monsters". But thousands of

victims and those who work in criminal justice know that there are such persons who really exemplify by their conduct a designation to that effect. In human history there have been such "monsters": gangsters, serial killers, etc.

So the idea of super predator is not presented here as another way to add a negative label to gang members. The way the present research defined the super predator illustrated that it truly is a very small segment of the overall offender population in the United States (6.2 percent). Thus, it bears repeating here that the overwhelming majority of most offenders in the United States (93.8%) are not defined as super predators in the analysis reported here.

This chapter tends to demonstrate with strong evidence that this small group constituting only about 6 percent of the offender population definitely accounts for a disproportionately high amount of crime and violence.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

OVERVIEW

We come, now, to a summation of what we found in this national gang crime research project. We will not provide a synopsis of all of our findings, as the executive summary of research findings provided in the front matter of this report serves this function. We reserve this final chapter for interpreting some of our findings in a more general regard which may be of interest to criminologists and other gang researchers.

First, we found that it is possible to carry out large scale national gang research without foundation or government funding of any kind. It took a lot of individual sacrifices on the part of the 29 co-principal investigators involved to bring this research to fruition. Some small costs were able to be borne by the National Gang Crime Research Center. Still, none of the co-principal investigators were paid for the labor and efforts they provided on this research project.

Secondly, we found that we contributed to the accumulation of knowledge about gangs. This is particularly true in relating the findings of this research project to previous large scale gang research projects carried out in recent years by the National Gang Crime Research Center (Project GANGGUNS, Project GANGECON, Project GANGPINT, etc). The compatibility of the present findings lends additional credibility to our results.

Thirdly, we believe we are in the unique position of being able to offer some viable and long-needed recommendations based on the findings of this large scale national research.

OUR BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

This research involved surveying 10,166 confined offenders, consisting of both juveniles and adults, from 85 correctional facilities in 17 different states. About two-fifths of this confined sample were self-reported gang members: they had joined a gang at some time in their life . Based on a variety of validity measures we are certain we are measuring gang membership. Our sample of gang members is over 4,000 in size and include most of the well known, as well as a lot of the lesser known, gangs operating in the United States today.

The kind of gangs and gang members we studied are not of the "Spanky and Alfalfa" or "playgroup" variety. These are criminal gangs and their members. These are the types of gang members most likely to come to the attention of the criminal justice system. These are, therefore, the types of gangs and gang members most suitable for analysis if the purpose is to make recommendations for national policy.

THE LACK OF A NATIONAL UNIFORM DATA REPORTING SYSTEM ABOUT GANG INVOLVEMENT IN AMERICAN CRIME

The issue of having a national uniform data reporting system to better inform the public, and scholars, about gang involvement in American crime is an issue needing urgent attention from the United States Congress. It is also an issue of justice and properly informing the public about the true scope and extent of gang crime in the United States today.

Justice cannot be realized in a state of ignorance, nor in a state where the truth is withheld from the population. For many years in communist countries, there were no "crime statistics" other than those a bureaucratic authoritarian regime wanted to "cook" for a "public relations dish". During recent years, some police departments and other criminal justice agencies (particularly correctional institutions) have engaged in basically the same behavior: denying the gang problem exists. Gang denial by local authorities is, more often than not, a politically motivated policy.

Even in 1997, no American citizen can effectively get a straight answer from his or her federal elected officials on one basic question: **"what percentage of the persons arrested in**

the latest Uniform Crime Report maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation were gang members, and what were the largest gangs represented among those arrested in my area?".

Such basic information about gang crime and gang violence is not being maintained in a way subject to routine reporting today by federal agencies best able to do so. In the absence of any such definitive data on gangs, criminologists and gang researchers can be said to provide an enormous service to their society when they devote scholarship to this topic of academic inquiry.

Lacking systematic data such as that which might be provided by a small enhancement to the Uniform Crime Report system maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, it is possible that this has substantially hampered, or perhaps even contributed to misleading, social policy development on the gang problem.

American citizens, even as we close out the 20th Century, still have no reliable statistical basis to effectively formulate public policy about gangs. There is absolutely no information about gangs in the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting system. This is a serious weakness in crime reporting in America, because the FBI's Uniform Crime Report does not capture two vital statistics that are crucial to understanding crime in violence in a large proportion of American cities today.

The present researchers are strongly recommending that the United States Congress require by law that the FBI's Uniform Crime Report be enhanced to include two new data elements: (1) was the arrestee a gang member?, and (2) if the arrestee was a gang member, which gang. Until this needed social change is accomplished, giving the necessary "base line" data on the true scope and extent of gang crime and gang violence in the United States today, it is reasonable to assume that the gang problem will continue to increase. The reason for this assumption should be clear: without any systematic "hard data", American citizens who want to do something to curtail the gang problem, or who want to implement gang prevention initiatives in their jurisdictions, are going to be just as uninformed about the threat represented by gangs and gang members as if they had to rely on "official statistics" from a dictator in the Soviet Union (i.e., prior to the fall of communism).

Neither interested citizens, nor scholars studying gangs, can get "straight talk" from federal agencies today on the gang problem in the United States today because there are no systematic uniform crime reporting statistics to disseminate!

It is further possible to hypothesize that American cities will not be able to make effective progress in curtailing the gang problem until such needed improvements are made to the FBI's Uniform Crime Report. Why is this so? First, without any systematic, valid, reliable way of tracking the gang problem, neither policy makers nor the public have any way to engage in dialogue on a "common ground" regarding gang crime and violence statistics. Currently no such government based statistical monitoring system is in place. Secondly, the development and implementation of prevention and intervention programs will certainly be affected by the fact that they were created in a state of statistical ignorance and were not based on a true empirical assessment of the local gang problem. And thirdly, without such regular yearly national statistical reporting on crime and violence committed by gang members there will be severe limitations on the ability of criminal justice agencies to deal effectively with the gang problem in terms of a strategic plan.

In as much as the gang problem in the United States today is a problem that crosses political boundaries, where gang members routinely cross interstate lines, it is unreasonable to assume that local jurisdictions can effectively respond to the threat of gang crime and gang violence and develop their own statistical reporting systems. It is also unreasonable to assume that independent researchers will be able to provide the necessary systematic ongoing data necessary for the formation of a coherent, factually-based policy to deal with the gang problem.

It seems reasonable to predict that the gang problem is not going to disappear on its own accord. All evidence over the past decade is suggestive of a steady, persisting increase in the gang problem nationwide. The one tool that could help in the fight against gangs --- a yearly

statistical monitoring system such as the FBI's Uniform Crime Report --- is not currently being used. We are urging Congress to put an end to this informational black-out on gang crime by legislatively requiring an enhancement to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting system.

BUILDING CONSENSUS THROUGH DIVERSITY

One of the more problematic areas in gang research today is the lack of consensus on trends and generalizations made by gang researchers. Several examples of this lack of consensus and over-generalization are worth discussing here. For it is our assertion that we can build consensus through the kind of research like that reported here which has a strong dosage of diversity built into it.

One of the most popular approaches for publishers of gang books today is the anthology or collection of readings, sometimes called "readers", where the only diversity is that of basic "findings": the researchers or experts are lined up to present what often amounts to diametrically opposing viewpoints on the social reality of gangs. Some authors will say gangs do X, Y and Z; while some other authors will deny that gangs or gang members are involved with X, Y and Z. Obviously, in the context of fundamental disagreement about basic issues of gang life, it is not realistic to assume that policy makers can effectively implement sound initiatives. For who is the policy maker to believe when consensus is sorely lacking among the "experts"?

There is an ever-increasing pressure for policy makers in the United States, and elsewhere, to "do something" about the gang problem. The "gang issue" has become a political issue, owing to the fact that about two-thirds of all American communities, regardless of size or geographical location, are today reporting some degree of a gang problem in their jurisdiction. However, today a policy maker can pick at random three gang experts and probably get three totally different recommendations about what to do about a single problem. How can this be? The explanation has to do with a lack of "facts" about gang life.

It is not simply the variation in philosophical orientations that gang experts have which accounts for the lack of consensus on or about "what to do" about the gang problem. It is not the size or color of the soapbox someone may stand on that accounts for the variance in conclusions. Nor is it the stubborn defensive personality syndrome sometimes associated with those who make their living by teaching in a university environment. The lack of agreement among gang experts, regardless of their discipline or lack of discipline, about "what to do" about gangs is more often than not an outgrowth of the lack of "hard research data" upon which analogous viewpoints might be built. When scholars lack the information on the basic parameters of gang crime and gang violence in the United States it is easy to understand how this cacophony arises among the "experts".

The development, implementation, and reporting of Project GANGFACT in the present report provides an alternative to the traditional manner of investigating the facts about gang life in the United States today. It begins with the necessary ingredient of diversity: diversity not just in the gender and race of the scholars, but diversity in the points of view, and diversity in the fields of expertise (sociology, criminology, special education, law enforcement, corrections, social work, health care, etc) represented by the researchers.

Large scale research involving a large number of professional investigators (N = 29 in Project GANGFACT) on a national scale provides a mechanism for increasing consensus among the "experts" today. Such is the model illustrated in the present study. So much is still basically "unknown" about gang life in America, that we should not expect meaningful consensus on gang matters to develop for some time. We need only point out that researchers willing to carry out large scale quantitative gang research without federal or foundation funding are a rare breed. Fortunately, more than a few of these sincere and dedicated professionals are associated with the National Gang Crime Research Center, and were able to organize and pursue gang research as an end in itself: believing that generating useful facts about gang life may have intrinsic scholarly value.

Large scale national gang research projects like Project GANGFACT are difficult to accomplish. While a new 1997 project is currently underway by the National Gang Crime Research Center promises to be an even larger study, the fact remains that too much is riding on the gang problem to leave it to a bunch of volunteers. We feel that the time is long overdue for effective and honorable federal leadership on this matter.

One would be on very shaky ground to argue that currently, or at any time in the recent past decade, that American citizens and American communities have had the benefit of effective federal leadership on dealing with the gang problem. The gang problem has been allowed, by the winds of neglect over the last decade, to spread like a devastating forest fire that seems, now, almost out of control. The time has come for Congress to provide this leadership in terms of legislation that would require the enhancement of the FBI's Uniform Crime Report. The FBI's Uniform Crime Report tracks information about persons arrested in the United States. We are recommending that Congress mandate that the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting system include two new data elements: (1) was the person arrested a gang member, yes or no, and (2) if yes, what gang. This would provide new, and very basic, information about the scope and extent of gang member involvement in crime in the United States today: something that currently does not exist.

The proposal we make is a recommendation of hope in a context today where trust has been shattered by the ever present problem that divides and tears at the very fabric of society: gang violence. Simply stated, the "hope" we share is that with sufficient knowledge developed on the gang problem there could be substantial convergence towards a more coherent and effective national strategy to address the gang problem in the United States today.

IF NOT CONSENSUS, THEN ACCOUNTABILITY

This may very well be a taboo topic among "gang experts" who are on the public payroll as researchers, advisors, or in any role that may shape or influence public policy. But the fact remains that accountability now affects every field of career specialization. Physicians are accountable and monitored in such things as unnecessary surgery. Public school teachers are accountable for the rise in test scores among their students. But where, we ask, is the accountability of gang experts advising on national, state, or local policy?

Say, for the sake of argument, that there are really only three well-articulated major plans for dealing with gangs --- call these Plan A, Plan B, and Plan C --- and only Plan C really works (while Plan A is in reality a plan that would create more gang crime, and Plan B would have a placebo or null effect), but a gang expert eager to be paid for his advice recommends Plan A. Assume further that the federal, state, or local government do indeed implement Plan A, and the plan backfires: the gang problem does not subside or dissipate, but rather the gang problem increases and escalates. Can we hold the gang expert accountable? No, not under current ways of thinking about the issue.

What "guarantees" do criminologists or other gang experts offer today? Probably none when it comes to policy formation.

The larger issue here is this: if we can get three recommendations on what to do about the same problem from three different gang experts, then in this situation of a lack of consensus on "what to do", should such experts be held accountable for their recommendations on policy?

This may border on intellectual heresy, but we believe that no social science profession should be exempt from accountability to the society that trains and sustains them. So if the elected officials cannot demonstrate effective leadership, by statute enhancing the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting system to cover the gang problem through the inclusion of two new items of information ("is the arrestee a gang member, and if yes which gang does the arrestee belong to", information that most gang members readily volunteer or which is known to the arresting officers in most jurisdictions), then we recommend greater accountability for those gang experts advising on policy to deal with the gang problem. Such an enhancement to the Uniform Crime Reporting system could bring about more consensus in a relatively short time frame. However, if

consensus is not on the horizon, then accountability is going to be a necessary prerequisite to effectively deal with the modern American gang problem.

Why would "accountability" be an issue at all among those who study, analyze, and advise about crime problems? This is easy to explain.

There have been a number of persons who, over the years, have advised on gang problems and whose experiments on society have simply gone "awry". Let us be brutally honest: their efforts to decrease the gang problem have actually increased the gang problem. And when we are dealing with an issue that overlaps with something as serious as crime and violence, there is another issue that today must be taken seriously but which may not have been a salient issue before. This new issue is found in legal liability.

Let us review a couple of these "Frankenstein" experiments on gangs and gang members.

The typical Frankenstein experiment has the profile of non-professional training, but where the experimenter is not lacking on ideological zeal or perhaps in political influence. Typically the experimenter in this case is someone who is not trained in criminology and or the wider social sciences who lacks an appreciation of the variety of theories of human behavior which might justify an expectation from a given intervention. When someone lacks theoretical grounding, it is not surprising at all to find that more than some of these experiments on "juvenile delinquency" and "gang prevention/intervention" have not simply just "failed", by having a null effect, but rather they have increased the scope, extent, or severity of the problem itself.

We want to point out that there are three logical possibilities when it comes to experimenting on society or any community regarding the gang problem. The first, "success", is easy to understand: the experiment goes as planned, and the gang problem decreases or in the ideal world disappears. Then there is the second possibility: "failure", failure typically means, "well, we did our best, but we have a lot of excuses (not enough government money, too many regulations and restrictions, etc), and there was no significant decrease (nor a significant increase) in the gang problem". Failure means null effect. We have been endeavoring here to point out that there is something worse than failure when we are experimenting on crime and violence: it is the situation where, perhaps even with plausibly good but atheoretical intentions, someone experiments on a gang crime problem and the gang crime problem actually increases in severity.

The fundamental question: has this third scenario (i.e., "backfired and gone awry") ever happened in the area of gangs or gang members? Yes, indeed. And, unfortunately, we have every reason to believe it continues today unchecked in some important ways. All it takes for the third scenario is something that is not a scarce resource: poor judgement in government spending.

There are numerous examples of these "third scenarios", dating back to the mid-1960's and continuing to the 1990's.²⁴ What the 1990's has that the 1960's did not have is a public prone to file civil liability law suits. Our prediction is, that while it has not happened yet, it will happen. In fact, it could be facilitated.

In the traditional field of education, social services, and community development, accountability is technically easier to achieve because there is little room for the "third scenario" (i.e., a program that backfires). If the program is designed to increase employment, there is little prior probability that such a social service job placement program could significantly decrease the employment prospects of its clients. If the program involves education, then there is not a serious probability of decreasing literacy. But when the "program" involves the possibility of a crime or violence outcome, then any experimental manipulation of the community certainly carries with it a possible scenario where crime increases rather than decreases. No one talks about the situation where "expert advice" has possibly increased crime or violence. This remains a taboo topic.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the present research there are two primary recommendations. These are presented below.

Recommendation # 1: There is a need for the United States Congress in 1997 to pass new legislation for the sole purpose of modernizing the FBI's Uniform Crime Report (UCR). There have been few modifications to the UCR over the years, an example including the fact that American society discovered the social policy importance of understanding "bias crimes". But one crime pattern has significantly affected every state and currently impacts on two-thirds of all cities and communities, large or small, throughout the United States. It is the gang crime and gang violence problem.

The lack of information on gangs and gang members has been an impediment to educating parents, school teachers, and community groups on the dangers of gang life today. The lack of reliable national statistics has created a lack of consensus on what direction our national social policy should take on the gang crime problem. Thus, the lack of "hard data" --- as might be available through the FBI's Uniform Crime Report on all persons arrested in the United States --- has immobilized us as a society from developing a coherent, logical, factually-based strategy to address the problem of gangs.

To begin serious attempts to reverse the problem of gang crime and gang violence in the United States today is going to require the collection of systematic crime data. There is only one logical possibility here for this purpose: the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting system.

It is our firm recommendation to Congress that the Uniform Crime Reporting system maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation be upgraded, effectively immediately, for the one small enhancement designed to capture two new variables on all persons arrested in the United States: (1) is the arrestee a gang member, and if yes (2) which gang does the arrestee belong to.

If this information were available now, thousands of communities throughout the United States could have a more objective basis for the formulation of localized gang intervention and gang prevention initiatives in their jurisdictions.

Recommendation # 2: The research reported here built upon prior research in terms of developing a classification system for dealing with gang members or Security Threat Group (STG) members in the correctional environment. The results are very promising. There is a need for correctional administrators, for juvenile and adult institutions, short term and long term, to reconsider the issue of safety and security in light of such a classification system. It is clear that the problem of gang violence is a growing threat inside correctional facilities throughout the United States today. It is also clear that a gang or STG classification system, based on our research, is capable of significantly reducing or preventing some of the gang/STG problems inside the confined (pretrial and adjudicated) population.

We are urging correctional administrators to review these findings and work towards implementing local versions of such a gang/STG classification system, with the goal towards improving the safety and security of the facility.

ENDNOTES:

1. The National Gang Crime Research Center, Inc is incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in the State of Illinois.
2. In some sites "unique" items were included as add-ons to the survey. These additional unique items represent hypotheses developed by specific co-principal investigators that go above and beyond the scope of the present report. These unique items were those not included in the national item pool, but which were used only at certain local sites. Subsequent publications and reports may be expected based on these additional types of unique information collected as a part of Project GANGFACT.
3. This is a secure facility in Nashville, TN for adult convicted felons serving sentences of six years or less.
4. Please note here, and throughout all analyses reported here, that the "total N" for any specific variable or question may not in all instances add up to the total national sample of N = 10,166 because of the common survey problem of missing data. Our procedures followed the common style of handling missing data by excluding it from any analysis. For example, missing data is not taken into account in the calculation of percentages.
5. The gang member only subsample showed no difference: a mean of 9.6 years of age for this variable.
6. The mean for the gang member only subsample was identical (11.37).
7. Here we are referring to the total confined population in the U.S., not just the adult prison population. Our sample includes the adult prison population, but also includes jails and a great many juvenile detention facilities (short term and long term). Thus, 11.5 percent for females is higher than the prison inmate female proportion, but when figuring in the juvenile population (where a higher proportion of females are incarcerated than compared to the adult system) the female representation in the current sample tends to closely mirror the parameter in the overall confined population.
8. The gang member only subsample was not much different: a mean of 11.3 years of age.
9. The evidence seems to be it is a more "hard core" group. We come to this conclusion having examined some of the variables for this subgroup. For example, in the national sample 49.3 percent reported being a bully in school, while 66.1 percent of the "followers of Satan" group had been a bully in school. While the national sample showed 20.3 percent had fired a gun at a police officer, some 46.2 percent of the "followers of Satan" had fired

a gun at a police officer. There were a number of other such factors where the "followers of Satan" profiled as a more "hard core" type.

10. The item order shifts here. Prior to this variable, all factors analyzed in this chapter were questions in direct sequential item order as they appeared on the survey. However, the key variable is question # 28A regarding having ever joined a gang. Subsequent questions pertain only to gang members. Some questions towards the end of the survey, such as this item and the others that could be answered by non-gang members as well, were items with smaller "sample sizes" in terms of useable responses. Some items in this category were used only at certain sites as they were items added to a newer and expanded version of the instrument used.

11. For coding purposes, less than one percent fit this profile of having over 100 months of confinement and were typically the "lifers" in adult prison settings. Anyone with 100 or more months was arbitrarily coded as "100 months" of confinement.

12. The mean for the gang member only subsample was no different: 14.0 months.

13. Of course, another way to interpret this finding is that gang members may have been more combative and disruptive in school thereby requiring parent conferences or parental visits, etc. This seems a more viable explanation given the fact that, for the most part, gang members do not seem to come from more intact and highly functional family environments.

14. The value of this narrative item comes in having a sufficiently large subsample for a specific gang (i.e., Gangster Disciples, etc) where we can then select that group and examine the infrastructure of the gang in terms of the "titles" of authority that exist in that gang as a unit of social organization.

15. See: "A Security Threat Group Analysis", George W. Knox, Thomas F. McCurrie, James G. Houston, Edward D. Tromanhauser, and John A. Laskey, pp. 28-34, Volume X, Number 4, September/October, 1996, American Jails.

16. The ACA received the grant from the National Institute of Corrections, along with an additional supplement, to carry out its version of an assessment of the gang problem in corrections. The report was a waste of money: it absurdly estimated that only 6 percent of the prison inmate population in the United States were gang members, and therefore empirically trivialized the threat of gang violence in correctional institutions.

17. For the record, the uncoded, or raw version of the same question ("How many disciplinary reports have you had while in this facility") produced an even stronger Chi-square value (Chi-square = 883.0) than that of the test case created here.

18. Further, speaking only for the NGCRC staff, it has been the policy of the NGCRC to not provide expert witness testimony for inmates or their survivors who bring suit against correctional institutions or other government agencies; an even more long-standing NGCRC policy is to not provide expert witness testimony in cases involving active gang members regardless of the merits of the case. The NGCRC staff have provided testimony in cases where clear evidence exists that the person can no longer be considered an active member of the gang (i.e., through cooperation with authorities in the prosecution of the same gang).

19. The analysis using the self-report question "have you ever joined a gang" produced almost identical types of findings. However, the strength of what were already significant relationships increased slightly by using the more restrictive definition of gang membership: "are you currently a member of any gang". The reason for this, we believe, is that the latter eliminates those cases that have "dropped out of gang life", quit the gang, etc.

20. Gang researchers who study only the low ranking most youthful members of gangs who are the most "accessible" to ethnographic studies will similarly face a formidable barrier to validity in gang research is a necessary implication of the findings of this analysis.

21. We interpret this "yes" response to the item, for gang members, as a measure of moral neutralization. Obviously, gangs thrive on and under conditions of racial or ethnic rivalry or conflict. Gangs increase racial polarization generally by the fear they instill.

22. See: Marvin E. Wolfgang, Robert M. Figlio, and Thorsten Sellin, 1972, Delinquency in a Birth Cohort, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

23. Some N = 39 of the super predators in the present analysis are females.

24. We are not going to describe in horrid detail the case of Rev. John Fry's effort to add cash and resources to the coffers of the Black Stone Rangers in the mid-1960's, giving instant rise to a new "super gang" which became entrenched and institutionalized because of this federally-sponsored "organizational development" experiment, and existing today in

the form of the Black P. Stone Nation gang, still "run" by the same gang leader: Jeff Fort. Nor will we waste time here describing some 1990's federally funded programs that sponsored "gang summit meetings" (i.e., a chance for gang members from different states to "meet each other"), nor the infamous program in Minneapolis (with DHSS funding) that gave out cellular phones and beepers to active gang members "so they could stay in touch with the program". Anyone seriously interested in documenting the history of a train of abuses on American communities, mostly minority communities, under the guise of "federal aid" should contact the National Gang Crime Research Center for further references or information.