

**An Assessment of Gang Presence and Related Activity  
at the County Level:  
Another Deniability Refutation<sup>1</sup>**

by

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**ABSTRACT**

*Action to address real and perceived problems stemming from gangs and gang-like collectives began in the South Carolina Midlands region during the Fall of 2001 when the Greater Columbia Community Relations Council issued a "Call for Community Response to Youth Violence and Gang Activity." Tremendous response to this call resulted in a series of meetings attended by a broad range of stakeholders including elected officials and representatives from the fields of education, juvenile justice, criminal justice and social service agencies, as well as community and religious leaders. A task force titled "Taskforce on Gang-like and Gang-related Activities" was created to address growing concern over gangs in both Richland and Lexington counties. It was the consensus of the taskforce that preventive measures be taken to arrest gang growth, but initiatives should be based on an empirical assessment of gang presence and activities in the two counties. Here, findings from this assessment are presented. In addition to portraying the gang phenomenon in the study area, major issues are addressed, including: definitional concerns, denial, the availability of gang data and migration.*

**INTRODUCTION**

The proliferation of youth gangs since the early 1980s is frequently cited as a primary factor in explanations of increases in several social and delinquency problems, ranging in severity from truancy, vandalism and bullying to property and violent crime (Howell & Decker, 1999; Miller, Ruefle, & Wright, 1997; Curry, Ball & Decker, 1996; Miller & Cohen, 1996). A literal plethora of both federally funded and

independent research projects cite the growth of gangs and the spread of youth violence from metropolitan bases into smaller cities and rural areas in recent years. South Carolina, like virtually every other state, has experienced a rising gang problem; gang presence in the State has been noted in every major recent national gang survey (Egley, 2002; Esbensen & Osgood, 1997; Miller, 2001; National Youth Gang Center, 1997) and confirmed by current research conducted at the state level (Miller, 1997; Small, Limber & Kimbrough-Melton, 2000; Knox, 1998).

The South Carolina State Law Enforcement Division (SLED) began official data collection in 1997 and the overall gang crime statistics reveal a steady climb to 145 gang-related crimes in 2000 from 95 in 1998, a 35% increase (Lewis, 2002). While these numbers command immediate attention to gangs, they also likely underestimate both the extent of their presence and the scope and frequency of behavior because many agencies either do not or have just begun to collect data.

Civic interest groups, educators and government officials, as well as the criminal justice community, have taken notice of the threats gangs pose to quality of life in the Midlands region of South Carolina. Richland County, anchored by the state capital Columbia, and neighboring Lexington County comprise the largest urban area in South Carolina. Situated on the convergence of three major highways, I-26, I-20, and I-77, facilitating access to larger nearby cities such as Charlotte, Atlanta, and Knoxville (a factor in gang-related drug trafficking, see Howell & Gleason, 1999), and with a multiculturally, racially and socioeconomically diverse population, the South Carolina Midlands has the structural properties indicative of gang life.

### ***Are Gangs in the Midlands?***

Although a gang presence in South Carolina has been documented by both national and state studies and is openly acknowledged to varying degrees throughout the three prongs of the criminal justice system and the educational field, a sharp debate over gang presence in the capital region has been highly publicized in the local

press and media. Community acknowledgment of gangs has been a highly politicized issue in numerous places (Lewis, 2002; Mason, Woods & Klein, 2002; National Drug and Safety League, 2001; Smith, 2002) and is a serious matter in that skepticism has been observed as an impediment to potential prevention, intervention and awareness initiatives. Gang presence has implications for quality of education, real estate value, perceptions of police services, fear of crime, and the general safety of citizens.

Within the criminal justice system, there is a general trend of gang awareness by appointed officials (e.g., police chiefs) and denial by elected official (e.g., sheriffs). The national trend doesn't hold in the Midlands as the local sheriffs have begun to address gangs through training and resource allocation while some local chiefs of police have expressed doubt over the degree of gang presence and activity. Former Columbia Police Chief Charles Austin, for example, has publicly noted that the lack of consistent definitions and legal standards specifying gang-related crime makes it difficult to estimate the scope of the problem and legally react (Lewis, 2002). Chief Austin's call for more evidence documenting a gang presence echoes a reluctance to acknowledge gangs in many communities throughout the state, region, and nation. This reluctance is typically referred to as denial and is a major barrier to gang research, along with issues of data collection and definitional matters. These issues were also germane to this research effort and are discussed below.

### ***Issues in Gang Research***

#### **Denial**

Community denial of the presence of gangs significantly hampers effective prevention of gang growth and theoretically enables gang development and solidification. Gang denial may occur at different levels in the community, starting in the home and naturally extending to schools. In as much as quality of schools effect real estate value, the mere perception of gangs can impact local economies.

Gang presence also factors into community decay by increasing fear of crime and lowering quality of life. Groups induce residential flight, which, in turn, negatively impacts neighborhood property ownership, resulting in smaller tax bases. Denial, too often then, becomes a knee-jerk reaction to such a downward spiral, especially in urban underclass settings (Miller, et al., 1997).

Many gang members come from non-traditional and dysfunctional families, typically without positive male role models (Hill, 2001; National Youth Gang Center, 2000). Mothers in these families tend to deny delinquency problems, protect their children from accusations and make excuses for their children more so than mothers in more traditional settings (Howell, 2000; Curry & Decker, 2003; Winfree & Mays, 1996).

Gang researchers have found that gang denial is rooted in a nexus of political, economic, and social reasons. Denial of a community gang problem often begins at the local political level where admission of gang existence and crime necessitates allocating resources (Miller, 2001; Miller & Rush, 1996). The education of the public, school administrators, community leaders, and law enforcement officials is commonly identified as an important first step in countering denial. Various programs serve prevention and intervention functions (e.g., G.R.E.A.T., DARE, Gang-Out) for students and their absence factors into risk versus protective factor equations.

### **Definitions**

The defining of the major terms specific to gangs forms the basis of how a community will address its current or developing gang problem. The exact language specifying the terms “gang”, and “gang-related” and “gang proliferation” affect gang research measurement issues. The inclusion or exclusion of data can either minimize or exaggerate the scope and level of gang presence and activity. The operational defining of gang terms certainly have implications for what, if anything a community will do, with proposed responses being proportionate to the indicated size and seriousness of the problem. Despite considerable

research intended to clarify the primary terms, considerable debate resulting in little progress continues (Battin-Pearson, 1998; Curry et al., 1996; Maxson, 1998; Bursick & Grasmick, 2001).

Disagreement over what constitutes a gang is characterized by broad contrasting definitions of group behavior identifying both criminal and non-criminal activities and law enforcement definitions consistent with prosecution or statistical reporting purposes (Curry & Decker, 2003). The former designation may lead to over-representation and the law enforcement specification may fail to disaggregate youth and gang crime. Perhaps the most salient impediment to reaching definitional consensus gangs results from the maturation process of members and the natural evolution during the life course of gang membership. Individual members moving in and out of gangs, the disruption of gang membership resulting from criminal justice interventions and gang-on-gang violence, as well as attrition attributable to gang prevention programs, all contribute to the ever-changing empirical reality of gangs. In sum, it remains unclear what exactly is being measured by the various operational definitions for gang as employed in the extant gang literature.

Similarly, the term “gang-related” has the potential for inconsistent utilization and begs the questions “How many individuals must be involved in order for a crime to be considered ‘gang-related’?” and “Should delinquent and criminal acts committed by a sole gang member contribute to calculations and thus portrayals of gang-related crime?” While the majority of law enforcement agencies and schools with written policies specify three or more individuals as a requisite factor for gang designation, the more fundamental question of what level of gang involvement constitutes membership frustrates a uniform definition again.

The terms “gang proliferation” and “migration” though often erroneously used interchangeably, denote different empirical realities. Gang proliferation indicates the increase of reported gang presence and problems and gang migration refers to the movement of members within

a gang (Knox, 1998; Knox, Houston, Tromanhauser, McCurrie, & Laskey, 1996), often in reference to gang growth via the establishment of a new “set” (i.e., an additional branch or component of an existing gang). Considerable academic attention has been devoted to determining the basis for gang migration, with expansion for drug trafficking purposes and parental or familial good intent emerging as the leading hypotheses (Maxson, 1998; Maxson et al., 1996; Miller, 2001).

The lack of widespread and standardized definitions thus remains a barrier to effective gang research. Researchers continue to respecify definitions from one study to the next in attempt to come closer to definitional consensus. An important public policy response trend to gang crime in several states has been the introduction of gang legislation intensifying penalties for gang related crime in a manner analogous to hate crime legislation. Such bills establish legal definitions of gang and gang-related crime that, while providing uniformity, may indicate a gang reality inconsistent with empirical analyses. Gang legislation has been introduced in this study’s setting of South Carolina and is currently pending in the South Carolina House of Representatives.

#### **Availability of Gang Data**

Another primary barrier to gang research is the lack of quality data (Egley, 2002; Esbensen & Osgood, 1997; Flannery, 1998). The most fundamental aspect of the data problem is that many agencies simply do not collect gang-specific information. The dearth of gang data in South Carolina is a good example; the State’s official 212-page report of criminal and juvenile justice trends doesn’t include the term gang (McMannus, 2001). The South Carolina Law Enforcement Division has instigated a gang data collection system (GANGNET) only to encounter a number of obstacles. Foremost, gang data is reported differently across agencies frustrating systematic examination. Gang data from a single agency is also difficult to interpret due to the inability to segregate gang crime from non-gang crime. As difficult as gathering data on gang-related crime has proven to be, efforts to develop large characteristic

focused databases are even more problematic. Work on information templates to be used at the site of officer-gang member encounters is not ready for implementation. Data entry would occur by officers completing a questionnaire and incident report on laptop computers. The procedure requires approximately 20 minutes, a prohibitive period that can impact other police services.

Researchers are confronted, then, with data from some agencies and not others and the fact that gang intelligence is often neither reported nor stored in an electronic format. Moreover, gang crime data is sensitive and restricted to those with a need for the information, meaning researchers must typically negotiate access to data sets characterized by troubling levels of missing information. The data that researchers do obtain often reflect the aforementioned definitional problems that render, at best, information allowing partial descriptions of gang realities.

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The primary objectives of this study centered on the determination of whether gangs are present in Richland and Lexington Counties of South Carolina and to characterize the nature of gang activity, especially crime. To answer these questions, original data was collected from law enforcement and school sources; these two sources are broadly utilized and have anchored much of the gang knowledge base (Curry et al., 1996; Howell & Lynch, 2000). Apart from edge ethnography and interview designs involving gang members, gathering data from police and educators with firsthand awareness of gangs in their natural settings of school and criminal contexts is directly germane and thus useful for both basic and applied research purposes.

#### *Questionnaires*

Information on gang presence and activities was gathered via two questionnaires (see Appendices A & B). Separate questionnaires were developed for police and school respondents wherein information was solicited with sensitivity to language. Wording was chosen to encourage revelation of knowledge without assumption of negative connotation

(e.g., use of the descriptor “serious” rather than “violent” crime). Collecting data from two sources allowed cross-referencing of independent responses.

Some close-ended questions requested information that enabled basic description of gang presence and gang characteristics. Other open-ended questions allowed respondents to elaborate and provide additional information not necessarily considered in the gang literature review-based questionnaire construction. The author and graduate students conducted the interviews on-site at agencies with law enforcement respondents and at the Greater Columbia Community Relations Council offices, a neutral setting, with school respondents. The interviews assumed a semi-structured format wherein the predetermined questions were posed in sequence with supplemental information emerging from respondent’s descriptions of gang characteristics and answers to follow-up questions.

### ***Sample***

Given the limited geographic scope and number of law enforcement agencies in the study area, data was collected from every agency rather than by a sampling strategy. Thirteen law enforcement agencies in the two counties each participated in the study, so collected data represents the entire agency population. Respondents representing a range of agencies completed the law enforcement questionnaire. The original research design intended to interview only one officer or administrator from each agency, but a natural series of referrals occurred as respondents typically provided additional knowledgeable contacts both within and across agencies. This snowball respondent pool was further increased by additional interviews conducted with members of law enforcement associations specific or related to gangs (e.g., South Carolina Attorney General’s Gang Task Force, South Carolina Juvenile Justice Officer’s Association). In all, a total of 64 interviews were conducted using the law enforcement questionnaire.

The research design also sought to interview administrators from each school district in the two counties, a total of five districts. Either a district superintendent, a deputy superintendent, or a designee from all but one of the districts participated in one of two group interview sessions, generating a scant total of four respondents originally answering the school questionnaire. The school personnel perspective was supported by an additional 17 interviews with other school personnel currently employed as a teacher, guidance counselor or school nurse in the analysis area, resulting in a total of 21 school interviews.

In all, the research team conducted a total of 85 interviews. Interviews typically lasted between one and two hours. Each respondent was made aware of their human subject rights and signed an informed consent form.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### *Gang Presence*

Data generated from the questionnaire instruments strongly suggest gang presence and activity in both Richland and Lexington Counties. Almost all law enforcement respondents, 92% acknowledged the existence of gangs in their jurisdiction or school.

For all respondents affirmative answers factored in certain definitional criteria: 1) the commission of crime in a group context, 2) a name devoting the collective, and, though variable in degree, 3) the identification of common colors and insignia. Neither the common notion of gang turf (i.e., the claiming of certain territory) nor an identifiable leader were cited as significant factors in gang awareness by either school officials or law enforcement personnel.

School respondents' attention to the gang issue was specific to their respective districts. School resource officers thwart gang life within the schools, so while the actual school property does not become "gang turf" *per se*, the school itself remains a primary social institution for gang presence and growth through recruitment. For law enforcement, the

notion of “turf” is less of a focus than is the locale of suppression initiatives and arrests. However, law enforcement respondents identified various gangs according to neighborhood, community, or school. References to specific gangs often included a designator (e.g., Cayce River Rats and Henley House Boys) indicating a certain area.

Responses to the questionnaires surprisingly did not reflect the aforementioned denial trends. Both law enforcement and school personnel openly discussed their gang realities, with school respondents being consistently more conservative and reserved in their estimations of problems.

Schools are ahead of law enforcement, however, in the Midlands region concerning written policies on gangs. Representatives of the school districts in the study area reported formal written policy, much of which is intended to discourage the symbolism of gang culture through penalties for gang-specific clothing and other representation or display of membership.

Written gang policy across law enforcement agencies in the study was varied. Each of the counties’ Sheriff Departments and the City of Columbia have policies specifying gangs and actively engage in gang prevention and suppression activities including gang specialists. Smaller agencies in the area (e.g., the town police departments of Springdale, Irmo, Swansea, and Cayce) responded that, at the time of the questionnaire, no formal written policy was currently being utilized. This is both understandable and troubling. While the smaller rural agencies reported no gangs in their jurisdiction, thus explaining the absence of gang policy, some of the smaller agencies have a pronounced gang problem.

Some smaller agencies’ jurisdictions cover suburban municipalities that host a disproportionate amount of gang crime and activity. While various taskforces and utilization of county officers facilitate suppression efforts at public events thus indicating effective agency cooperation in combating gangs, it remains pronounced that some agencies actively

engaged in gang-specific policing have yet to develop and adopt formal policy.

### **Characteristics**

Responses enabled identification of the basic descriptive characteristics of gangs in the study area. Gangs in the Midland counties are predominately male with school respondents reporting 88% and law enforcement 92% male membership. While female gangs are comparatively smaller in number of gangs and in gang size, both school and police respondents relayed an observed propensity for violence and volatility more so than male gang members. Some law enforcement respondents reported gangs with both male and female members, but the majority described affiliations between male and female gangs.

Gangs ranged considerably in size, from 6 to 10 members to as many as 30 members. Female gangs rarely have more than 10 members. Responses concerning gang size epitomize the problems specific to definition. Law enforcement knowledge from confidential informants is likely the best source of information on gang size. Officer surveillance, be it by school resource officer or gang investigator, likely does not see entire gangs at a time and membership in a single gang across schools further frustrates size estimation. This is especially an issue with highly organized national gangs (e.g., CRIPS, BLOODS) with sets in separate schools or jurisdictions.

Gang composition by race and ethnicity is often left unaddressed in presence and activities surveys (e.g., Small, 2000) and is a highly sensitive topic. During the 1980s and 1990s, to be a gang member in the United States almost exclusively meant non-white racial status (Moore, 1988; Miller *et.al.*, 1997). More recent attention to hybrid gangs (Starbucks *et al.*, 2001) has contended increasing racial, ethnic and socioeconomic diversity in membership. While over one third (36 %) of youth gangs had two or more racial/ethnic groups represented in a recent national survey (National Youth Gang Crime Center, 2000), the respondents in this study portrayed a considerably more racially

segregated gang population. Gang membership by race was reported by respondents as 79.5% Black, 10% Hispanic, and 10.5% White.

The findings on the racial composition of Midlands' gangs do not follow the national trend of increased gang involvement by whites. Respondents explained that many predominately black gangs will have a token white membership (a trend among local black gangs); so white members dressed in identifiable gang colors may project an exaggerated extent of white involvement in gang participation. The likelihood of this projection is increased by observances of white members representing gang involvement excessively in terms of dress and colors. As minority members in this context, white members at times were described as having a tendency to call attention to their behavior so as to gain the gang's respect, thereby being all the more publicly observed.

Mean responses indicated that the vast majority of gang members were between the ages of 15 and 17 (57%), with 18 to 24 year old members comprising 23% of the population and 15% under 15, an alarming finding regarding early onset of crime. Age distribution varied between the school and law enforcement respondents; school administrators simply are not charged to address the behavior of those over the age of eighteen.

### **Midlands Gangs: A Dichotomy**

Gangs in the Midlands are not monolithic. They vary in size, racial composition, and age and class distribution. While they vary both in membership and activity, gang type was found to be largely dichotomous; they were either highly organized or nontraditional. There are a small number of highly organized gangs that clearly identify with well-known gang nations, most notably the Crips and Bloods or People and Folk. The majority of gangs in the two counties, however, are a hybrid type in several respects. Nontraditional hybrid gangs have disproportionately contributed to gang proliferation in many jurisdictions across the country (Starbuck, 2001), and now are present in the South Carolina Midlands.

Officers believed that these younger gangs tended to be more compositionally diversified in terms of gender, race and social class (i.e., a noticeable increase in gang participation by middle class suburban youth). They also observed that several gangs displayed through dress, language, graffiti, and signals aspects of different and often rival gang nations in a dangerous pattern of mimicry leading to crime.

Some gangs were described as “home-grown” in that they, while variably identifying with gang nations, have organizational structures and practices that are a blend of aspects of gang subculture from more populous regions and their own developed rules and motifs. The result is that several single groups originating around a neighborhood, school or public housing project emerge from the social fabric, the gang’s name often indicating the place.

The trend of hybrid gangs causes identification and reporting problems for local law enforcement. Various youth collectives (e.g., “cliques,” “posses,” and “crews”) mimic the Los Angeles gang style set by Crips and Bloods and the Chicago based gang style represented by the Black Gangster Disciples and the Latin Kings. More troubling is the problem of distinguishing between actual gangs and gang-like collectives, often referred to as “wannabes.” This matter is exacerbated by recent reductions in display of known gang indicators. To minimize police attention, homegrown hybrid gangs engage in nontraditional practices so dress and territory aren’t always reliable identifiers.

In sum, gangs in the study area use the symbolism and terminology of traditional gangs to solidify and legitimize their status but adapt from historical gang traditions and practices. This divergence from traditional patterns adds to the community’s gang challenge. In addition to suppressing socially embedded and nationally affiliated gangs, the emergence of newer first generation gangs, many of which began in the 1990s, pose new problems that may not be responsive to existing prevention and intervention programs.

### **Migration**

Officers reported that it was not uncommon to encounter older gang members that had been in separate, even rival gangs, refuting the popular culture belief of lifetime gang membership. Migration refers to the spread of existing gangs to new locales as opposed to proliferation, which indicates the overall increase of gangs (i.e., the sum of new homegrown gangs and migrant gangs in a jurisdiction). Proliferation was found to be a function of the evolution of “wanna-bes” loosely structured into gangs whose activities progressed from delinquency to more serious property and violent crime. Many of these gangs fail to recruit new members and fade away with the maturation of members from high school to adulthood.

Gang migration accounts for less of the gang population in Richland and Lexington counties than do recently formed or already existing groups. Respondents referred to gang migration as a source of involvement in their districts or jurisdictions, citing in order of importance: 1) gang youth from another city moving into the area with their family, 2) organized gangs expanding their bases for drug trafficking and 3) gang youth sent to South Carolina by family or relatives purposefully to avoid or disrupt gang involvement in their previous, typically metropolitan, environment.

### ***Gang Activity***

Both law enforcement and school respondents provided information enabling a profile of gang-related crime in Richland and Lexington counties. That most gang-related crime occurs off school grounds and that police necessarily respond to all reported and observed crime no doubt accounts for higher levels of gang related crime by law enforcement respondents. Police reported more crime categories with the exception of truancy, of which schools are naturally positioned to recognize.

Established and highly organized gangs with national affiliations were characterized as being far more likely to be involved in violent

crime and drug trafficking. Hybrid gangs are primarily responsible for truancy, vandalism and status offenses. Several gangs, while involved in drug use, were not thought to be active in drug dealing. This is not to say that some gang members are not active in the local drug economy, rather, drug dealing is not a gang enterprise for most Richland and Lexington county gangs.

Many gangs, in fact, were described as having little or no utilitarian outlook. The standard causal correlates of gang life (e.g., unemployment, non-involvement or blocked opportunity for participation in conventional activities and, especially, lack of parental involvement) were cited as contributing to the local gang problem. Being with the gang provided a primary group and sense of belonging according to gang informants as told by police respondents

School personnel and law enforcement officers alike observed that much of the time spent by youth in a gang context is best described as just “hanging out.” Seemingly harmless, simple association with a gang is suggestive of future criminality. Research has consistently found that gang members are more involved in serious and violent delinquent acts than nonmembers.

Respondents also expressed their preferences regarding how the local gang problem should be addressed. Their preferences included, in order of frequency of response, the following: 1) greater parental involvement, 2) the continuation of existing prevention programs (e.g., G.R.E.A.T.) and the implementation of prevention initiatives in school districts with limited attention to gangs or without programs, 3) passing laws and setting policies intensifying the penalties for gang involvement (e.g., school expulsion) and related crimes (i.e., lengthening sentences), 4) increasing police resources allocated to gangs, especially school resource officers, and 5) ensuring the availability of recreational programs as an alternative to gang life. While the respondents were varied on the best strategy to arrest the gang problem, an overwhelming majority of them (87% of law enforcement and 63% of school personnel)

characterized the Midlands gang problem as worsening over the last few years.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

There are clear and important implications from the study. The consistency of responses to items on the questionnaires and the conclusions developed from open-ended follow-up questions during the interviews indicate that:

1. *Gangs are present in Richland and Lexington Counties and should be treated as a community risk factor.*

The levels of gang awareness expressed by both law enforcement and school personnel indicate the presence of gangs. This conclusion is augmented by the very existence of numerous official initiatives and professional organizations focusing solely, or significantly, on youth gangs. The South Carolina Attorney General's Gang Taskforce, the South Carolina Gang Investigator's Association, SLED's ongoing development of a statewide database, the delivery of G.R.E.A.T. and similar prevention programs, and the allocation of police resources and designation of officers as gang specialists all suggest gang existence in the study area. At a minimum, empirical evidence confirms gang presence as a risk factor for both delinquency and crime.

2. *Gangs in Richland and Lexington Counties tend to be either highly organized and affiliated with well known "gang nations" or are hybrid collectives indigenous to the Midlands region.*

A gang dichotomy (organized criminal gang/hybrid youth gang) developed from the data suggests the importance of developing suppression efforts targeting more established, organized gangs. The emergence of hybrid types of gangs presents new challenges. Law enforcement training on gangs is based on the origins and practices of influential nationally affiliated gangs, but newer hybrid gangs vary from traditional gang practices and do not necessarily share the characteristics of older, established gangs. The assumption that hybrid gangs operate

like traditional gangs, then, may lead to less effective gang prevention and response efforts. Accordingly, additional research efforts examining the gang phenomenon in the South Carolina Midlands should address the practices and behaviors of this relatively new gang type. Moreover, the highly individualized nature of hybrid gangs suggests that customized prevention programs may be more effective than with traditional gangs wherein intervention prompts a counterproductive gang solidification effect.

3. *Develop definitional consensus regarding gangs.*

The absence of formal policy on gangs and inconsistent definitions for important gang terms (e.g., “gang,” “gang-related”) frustrate the reporting of gang-related crime and related research efforts. Pending gang legislation would provide definitional consistency but could generate unintended consequences and should be carefully examined.

4. *Gang migration in Richland and Lexington Counties is largely a function of newly arrived youth.*

More so than the expansion of gang-based drug trafficking enterprises, gang migration is often attributable to youth new to the area. Some of these recent arrivals had gang affiliations in their previous locales and have established a gang in their new setting, the Midlands community. Youth that move into neighborhoods or schools with active gangs more often than not join already present gangs, refuting the myth of lifetime membership. More troubling are gang youth who move to areas without gangs and begin to recruit members and develop new gangs. School personnel should be sensitive and attentive, then, to school transferees. Gang migration, coupled with the emergence of hybrid gangs, accounts for the majority of gang proliferation in Richland and Lexington Counties.

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**Appendix A**  
**Law Enforcement Interview Schedule**

1. Does your agency have a set definition of what constitutes a gang?  
Which, if any, of the following criteria factors into the definition?
  - Commits crimes together
  - Has a name
  - Common colors/insignia
  - Claims turf or territory
  - Leader or several leaders
2. Does your agency have a written policy regarding gangs?
3. What resources does your agency have that are allocated to address gangs?
4. Does your agency participate in a formal multi-jurisdictional taskforce or other collaborative effort that focuses on youth gangs?  
If yes, please name:
5. What do you attribute as the main sources of gang involvement in your jurisdiction?
6. Are youth gangs present in your jurisdiction?
7. How many youth gangs have been identified?
8. How large (# of members) are the gangs?
9. Composition of gangs:
  - Gender: male % female %
  - Race/Ethnicity: white %
    - black %
    - hispanic %
    - asian %
    - other %
  - Age Distribution: under 15 %
    - 15-17 %
    - 18-24 %
    - over 24 %
    - Do not know
10. To what extent are older gang members or other adults involved in gang activities?
11. What are the primary activities of youth gangs in your jurisdiction?  
Are there gang-related issues with:
 

	Yes	No
Truancy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vandalism/Destruction of Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Property Crime (Other than vandalism)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drug Related Crime	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dealing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Violent Crime	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Is there a relationship between gangs and drugs in your jurisdiction?

If yes, please describe:

13. Within the last five years, how would you characterize the gang problem in your jurisdiction?
  - Getting worse \_\_\_\_\_
  - Getting better \_\_\_\_\_
  - About the same \_\_\_\_\_
  - Do not know \_\_\_\_\_
14. What should be done to reduce the gang problem?
  - Jobs & job training \_\_\_\_\_
  - Tutoring \_\_\_\_\_
  - Mentoring \_\_\_\_\_
  - Recreation programs \_\_\_\_\_
  - School programs \_\_\_\_\_
  - More police presence \_\_\_\_\_
  - More parental involvement \_\_\_\_\_
  - New laws/ordinances \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
15. Do you feel a gang prevention program is needed in your jurisdiction? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
  - If yes, at what age do you feel such a program would be effective?
    - 6<sup>th</sup> grade \_\_\_\_\_
    - Middle school \_\_\_\_\_
    - High School \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix B**

**School District Interview Schedule**

1. Does your district have a set definition of what constitutes a gang?
  - Which, if any, of the following criteria factors into the definition?
    - \_\_\_\_\_ Commits crimes together
    - \_\_\_\_\_ Has a name
    - \_\_\_\_\_ Common colors/insignia
    - \_\_\_\_\_ Claims turf or territory
    - \_\_\_\_\_ Leader or several leaders
2. Does your district have a written policy regarding gangs? (Request copy when available)
3. What resources does your district have that are allocated to address gangs?
  - Does your district have SROs?
  - How many and who?
4. Does your district participate in a formal multi-district taskforce or other collaborative effort that focuses on youth gangs?
  - If yes, please name:
5. What do you attribute as the main sources of gang involvement in your district?
6. Are youth gangs present in your district?
7. How many youth gangs have been identified?
8. How large (# of members) are the gangs?
9. Composition of gangs:
  - Gender: male \_\_\_\_\_% female \_\_\_\_\_%
  - Race/Ethnicity:
    - white \_\_\_\_\_%
    - black \_\_\_\_\_%
    - hispanic \_\_\_\_\_%
    - asian \_\_\_\_\_%
    - other \_\_\_\_\_%
  - Age Distribution:
    - under 15 \_\_\_\_\_%
    - 15-17 \_\_\_\_\_%
    - 18-24 \_\_\_\_\_%
    - over 24 \_\_\_\_\_%
    - Do not know \_\_\_\_\_
10. To what extent are older gang members or other adults involved in gang activities?
11. What are the primary activities of youth gangs in your district?
  - Are there gang-related issues with:
 

Yes	_____	No	_____
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  - Truancy
 

_____	_____
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- Intimidation \_\_\_\_\_
  - Vandalism/Destruction of Property \_\_\_\_\_
  - Property Crime (Other than vandalism) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Drug Related Crime \_\_\_\_\_
  - Use \_\_\_\_\_
  - Dealing \_\_\_\_\_
  - Serious Crime \_\_\_\_\_
12. Is there a relationship between gangs and drugs in your district?  
 If yes, please describe:
13. Within the last five years, how would you characterize the gang problem in your district?  
 Getting worse \_\_\_\_\_  
 Getting better \_\_\_\_\_  
 About the same \_\_\_\_\_  
 Do not know \_\_\_\_\_
14. What should be done to reduce the gang problem?  
 Jobs & job training \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tutoring \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mentoring \_\_\_\_\_  
 Recreation programs \_\_\_\_\_  
 School programs \_\_\_\_\_  
 More police presence \_\_\_\_\_  
 More parental involvement \_\_\_\_\_  
 New laws/ordinances \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_
15. Do you feel a gang prevention program is needed in your district? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 If yes, at what age do you feel such a program would be effective?  
 6<sup>th</sup> grade \_\_\_\_\_  
 Middle school \_\_\_\_\_  
 High School \_\_\_\_\_

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

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