

ALABAMA PRISON GANG SURVEY

By

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INTRODUCTION

Federal and state prisons and county jails throughout the United States are now infested with gangs. The National Alliance of Gang Investigators Associations stated a few years ago that gangs were “once found principally in large cities, violent street gangs now affect public safety, community image, and quality of life in communities of all sizes in urban, suburban, and rural areas. No region of the United States is untouched by gangs. Gangs have a negative impact on society at all levels in the community causing heightened fears of violence, and increased economic costs” (2005).

The original purpose of the study was to determine gang affiliation by surveying Alabama inmates in the Montgomery County Juvenile Detention Center. The instrument was developed by the National Gang Crime Research Center (NGCRC) for a gang study of youth in the states of Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas. Results of this Alabama study will add to those findings. Categories of question include influences of family, churches, and gangs; criminal and drug experiences, including those of friends; recruitment methods used by gangs; social and monetary assistance from gangs; and, characteristics of school experiences. The original population sample at the detention center was not attainable, so the target population was switched to the Frank Lee Alabama Work Release Institution in Elmore County which houses inmates from throughout the state and was not limited to Montgomery inmates.

DEFINITION OF GANGS

Gangs are defined in many ways, and most definitions have similar components. One thing is certain about defining the term “gang” – most of the gang “experts” and the literature define a gang as a “group” (Knox, 1998). Later, Knox (2000b, p. 7) specifically defined a gang as: “A group is a gang when it exists for or benefits substantially from the continuing criminal activity of its members”. This definition encompasses any group involved in repeated illegal activities, including the Aryan Brotherhood, the Ku Klux Klan, skinheads, and any other extremist group (Knox, 2001b, p. 7). The gang as a group is a common definition that consists of

three or more individuals who engage in criminal activity with the group identifying themselves with a common name or sign (National Institute of Justice, 2002). A precise definition of a gang is elusive as evidenced by the lack of consensus of a definition by those who research and write about gangs, except that it is a group. Even the police who deal with the problems of gang crime and street gangs cannot arrive at a single definition among themselves. The same is true of corrections officials who deal with the major problem of prison gangs. Even gang members themselves cannot agree on what constitutes “the” definition of a gang (Petersen, 2004, p. 157).

In 1996, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) began surveying about 5,000 police officers and arrived at a list of five characteristics listed below that must be met to label a group as a youth gang and not just a youth group (Petersen, 2004, p. 157).

- Members must constitute more than two.
- Members must be between ages of 12 and 24.
- Members must have sense of identity, such as a name, symbols or colors, hand signals, graffiti, and clothing styles.
- Members must have a sense of permanence in a geographical area.
- A gang is involved in criminal activity. Youth groups are not classified as gangs if not involved in crime.

The intent of our literature review is to identify some of the more salient characteristics of criminal prison gangs and show the relationship with street gangs. Violence in both prisons and on the streets is the result of gangs and their attempt to dominate drug trafficking. Camp and Camp stated that over half of the prison violence is caused by a total of three percent of the prison inmates (Petersen, 2004, p.162). The American Corrections Association (ACA) defines prison gangs as security threat groups (STG’s). The ACA states that a gang, or STG, consists of “two or more inmates, acting together who pose a threat to the security or safety staff/inmates, and/or are disruptive to programs and/or to the orderly management of the facility/system (American Correctional Association, 1993). This definition allows a broader identification of threat groups than the traditional street gang definition. The STG definition includes groups that form around political and religious ideology, such as white supremacist and extremist groups. Another definition of a gang (involving youth) is “any cohesive group of adolescents who have a controlling set of norms and a social system specific to that group. The delinquent gang is distinguished from other juvenile groups on the basis of the delinquent product of gang interaction (Manson, 1990).”

PRIOR RESEARCH ON GANGS

In the beginning of the new millennium, the U.S. prison population was at an all-time high and continues that way nine years later (Petersen, 2000). Petersen suggests that prison is not the solution to crime (2000). However, it does deter those individuals from preying on society while they are incarcerated. Has the response to crime been too punitive? Policy makers are beginning to look at alternate ways to reduce crime because of prison overcrowding. A federal judge recently ruled that California must release inmates to reduce overcrowding in the state prison system (CNN, Feb., 2009). With the condition of the economy, especially in California, states will not be building additional prison facilities in the near future. Petersen wants more gang prevention and intervention programs to stem the growing gang

crime problem. He does not offer any suggestions on what these programs might be, but does say that those impacted should help solve the problem of program development. It seems to me that those most impacted by gang crime are the police, since they are the ones who have to put their lives on the line to suppress gang activity, maybe they should determine the policies governing gang program deterrence. His study examined 34 women, not all involved in gangs, and he suggests that they may have the answers.

History of Prison Gangs

Fong wrote in 1990 about the first of prison gangs formed were called the Gypsy Jokers. They were formed in the early 1950's by a group of prisoners in the Washington State Penitentiary at Walla Walla (Delaney, 2004a, p. 72; Tobin, 2008, p. 134). Street gangs are a growing social problem in the United States and prison gangs are a continuation of the street gang membership with the same violent tendencies. According to Fong, over half of the problems and violence experienced by correctional institutions is caused by gangs. Prison gangs are in all 50 states' prisons (p. 72). Danitz in 1998 indicated that the gangs are reaching out to the streets from their cells to control street gang crimes (Delaney, 2004a p. 72). Taking gangs off the streets has exacerbated the problem of gangs in prisons. According to Welling, "today's street gangs are becoming tomorrow's prison gangs" (Delaney, 2004a, p. 72).

Several authors, such as Hay in 1975, Savelli in 2000, Pearson in 1983, and Covey, Menard, and Fanzese in 1992, wrote about gangs and gang crimes as far back as A.D. 1200. During the Middle Ages, gangs in France fought each other, and during the 17th and 18th centuries' gangs in Germany fought (Delaney, p. 35). There are also accounts of gangs during colonial America and during the Revolutionary War. The early days of settling the Wild West also had its share of gangs (Delaney, 2004a, p. 35).

A study in 2006 on "the effect of gang affiliation on violent misconduct among inmates during the early years of confinement" by Griffin, and Hepburn illustrated a linkage between gang affiliation and violence among inmates. The authors wanted to look for types of violent conduct predictors. They suggested better supervision of gang affiliated inmates. Being involved in violent conduct is established early when incarcerated, but few studies have looked into the early periods of confinement (pp. 419-448). Yet, few studies have looked at the predictors of violent misconduct during the first months or years of imprisonment, and none have studied the effects of gang affiliation during this time period. The number of inmates studied was 2,158 who were confined for a minimum of 36 months. As with most research of this type, it was recommended that additional research is needed to determine, what many suspect, a connection between gang affiliation and violence (Griffin and Hepburn, 2006, pp. 448-449).

A journal article in *Mankind Quarterly* by Eisenman (2000), illustrated data from the California Department of Corrections system for adults. He found more Hispanic prisoners than any other ethnic or racial group. Black inmates were second in number. According to Eisenman, data he gathered from the 60,000 inmates revealed that there were more inmates from southern part of the state than the northern part. Other data, from the population of prisoners, reveals some interesting findings. He stated that most prisoners are more likely to come from the southern part of the state than northern California. Gang membership follows the same pattern,

with Hispanics being the largest gang type in the state system and the blacks the second largest.

Joining a Gang

Manson (1990) also illustrated that youth join gangs for several reasons. Some of which include a lack of ties with positive institutions cause youth to seek identification with peers; changes in the family; women working, companionship acceptance, and boredom. He advised that structured proactive recreation organizations can play a strong role in preventing gang activity, but not as a replacement of the family. Fong and Buentello believed that the need for identity and belonging is the main reason for joining a prison gang. But it does not explain characteristics of outside gang structure in the prison (Petersen, 2004, p. 162). Inmates also join gangs based on race and ethnicity and personal interests similar to all groups according to Knox (Petersen, 2004). In various studies between 1987 and 1995, according to Fong, Dilulio, Ralph, and Marquart, social and addiction intervention programs must take place on the street as well as in prisons to actively reduce inmate and youth dependence on gangs (Petersen, p.163).

Leaving the Gang

There seems to be a lot of rhetoric about “once in the gang, always in the gang.” According to Tobin (2008), this is a misconception. Some prison gangs are exited only by a member’s death, but some of the less than hardcore street gang members leave after a penalty of severe beating (p. 82). According to Thornberry, about 50 percent of male gang members leave the gang after one year (Tobin, 2008, p. 82). How then do they leave the gang?

According to Decker and Laruitsen, some members decide to just leave or gradually become less involved. Some reasons are less positive, for example, the result of death, they get tired of all the violence, they grow old or relocate, and sometimes there is a breakdown of the gang (Tobin, p. 83). In some cases, according to Tobin, a gang member may leave without consequences, or after an exit beating ritual. This is called a “jumping out” (Tobin, 2008, p. 83).

To understand prison gangs, it is necessary to understand street gangs. To fully understand street gangs, it is necessary to understand prison gangs (Tobin, 2008, p. 99). Egley, Howell, and Major in 2006, stated that around 60 percent of “gang-problem jurisdictions reported increases in violence and drug sales are the result of returning gang members (Tobin, p. 133).

Proliferation of Prison Gangs

According to Fleisher, Decker, Buentello, and Fong (Tobin, 2008) stated that little is known about prison gangs in the United States. Prison administrators are reluctant to allow researchers into the facilities because of security risks, the extreme secrecy among inmates, and the sometimes the information is difficult to verify (p. 134). However, a few researchers have been successful, for example, Camp and Camp, Fong and Buentello have conducted national and statewide assessments respectively, and Knox and Fong have conducted nationwide assessments of prison inmates and from gang defectors (p. Tobin, 134).

Street Gangs

According to Petersen, the proliferation of prison gangs is attributed to several factors, including increased street gangs tougher law enforcement leading higher importation of street gangs into prisons (Tobin, 2008, p. 135). Street gangs exist in all states and include members from all ethnic, racial, social, and economic levels. Gang problems are a nightmare to some citizens, including police who are the first line of defense in combating gang crimes. Police agency policies dictate the level of tolerance an agency has in a community as well as the definition of what constitutes a gang. For example, in 2003, Sieh wrote about the city of Syracuse, New York, where the police department refused to acknowledge a gang presence in the city a few years ago, but now has a gang task force to deal with gang problems (Delaney, 2006a, p. 4). A group of researchers (Gaes, Wallace, Gilman, Klein-Saffran, and Suppa, 2002) suggested that most studies on gangs deal with street gangs, so they decided to look at the Bureau of Prisons automated data to evaluate the “contribution of prison gang affiliation to violence and other forms of misconduct within prisons (Gaes et al.).” They looked at a measure of hardcore gang members to see whether there were any similarities to street gang research about determining whether the hard core gang members were more violent than peripheral gang members. The authors developed a “threat index model” that represented the threat of gang affiliations within prisons (Gaes et al., 2002).

As stated earlier, there is no single, agreed-upon definition of gangs among the various law enforcement agencies across the United States. Because of this, data pinpointing the exact number of gangs is just as illusive. The National Gang Crime Research Center (NGCRC) also one of the better sources of gang information from its prison surveys since the inception of their surveys in 1991. Since 1995, OJJDP has also been one of the better sources for gang data through its annual youth gang survey. In a 2002 study, almost 2200 police agencies reported approximately 21,500 gangs in the U.S. with over 731,000 members. More likely than not, this number has grown since 2002. Gangs are a problem in many jurisdictions. Over 2300 cities with a population of 2500 or more residents (includes large, medium, and small cities, and suburban/rural county agencies in over 550 law enforcement jurisdictions) reported gang problems (Delaney, 2004a, p. 12).

As an unintended consequence, according to a study by Ralph et al. in 1996, prisons experience street gang members being reunited with the same gangs in prisons that they were involved with on the streets. In addition, the associated gang crime and violence is also being imported into the facilities (Tobin, p. 135). Hagedorn pointed out in 1988 that a popular policy of arrest/prosecute/incarcerate to break up gangs does not work because of the “importation” of street gangs (Tobin, 2008, p. 135). In fact, several researchers since 1991, including Knox, Petersen, Stone and Wycoff, Carlson, Ralph, and Decker, have found that street gang activities control their illicit activities better and with more efficiency on the streets with the associated members in prisons. This is true in both juvenile and adult facilities (Tobin, pp. 135-136). According to Tobin (2008), one of the reasons gangs flourish in prisons is that they become substitute families and tend to soften or help the inmates endure prison. So, even if an inmate was not a gang member before being incarcerated, he or she may join a gang to “alleviate the pains of imprisonment” (pp. 136-137). Ralph and his co-researchers also concluded that prison gangs also suffer another type of deprivation such as safety and personal well-being that results in inmates joining gangs, a conclusion that Fong and Buentello also found in 1991. Researchers also believe that money and power is another one of the main reasons for

joining a prison gang (Tobin, p. 137.).

According to a study by Fong and Buentello in 1991, the following types of incidents and situations are strong indicators of an increasing gang presence in a prison facility: requests for protective custody and transfer; violations for contraband; prison informants; disruptive behavior increase; increase in numbers of gang tattoos; verbal threats and physical assaults on staff; and, inmate extortion. Once the problem is identified and acknowledge, it is important to keep the density of gangs below 17 percent, according to Knox, because that is when gangs become a serious problem. Once identified, Carlson and Knox recommend neutralizing leadership and prevent gang activity and the most common way to do this is what Knox calls "suppression techniques," which include isolation, moving to another facility, intercepting communications, a close scrutiny by facility gang specialists after validation of the gang members (Tobin, 2008, pp. 136-137). According to Delaney (2006b), the problem of prison gangs is not going to go away soon. It is a growing problem, and any that works the field of corrections is well aware of the problem and the growing number of gangs and gang members (p. 53).

A study by Weisheit and Wells (2001) collected data from three National Youth Gang Surveys between 1996 and 1998 that included, county, rural urban and county level data, and data from those that had access to interstate highways between 1996 and 1998. Their focus of gang problems in non-metropolitan counties found that gangs in counties were most likely found in areas with social stability and economic growth. There was not much evidence indicating the gangs migrated into rural areas, and where they did exist at one time, were short lived because they were small in number. Findings suggested that the most consistent indicators of a gang presence in non-metropolitan counties were those reflecting social stability and the composition of the population. Police in rural areas had zero tolerance as a response to gang activity and used strict enforcement policies for suppression of gang activity. There was not much evidence indicating the gangs migrated into rural areas, and where they did exist at one time, were short lived because they were small in number. Most of the problems in these areas consisted of graffiti, gang colors, and self identifying (Weisheit and Wells, 2001).

In another study, Putrow and Vivian (2004) provided baseline data on what Arizona juvenile secure-school treatment staff knew about the juveniles they supervised. They inquired about reasons why the staff at one facility might have more such knowledge than staff at another facility. Putrow and Vivian's questionnaire (2004) consisted of items similar to some of the questions of the NGCRC which was the same instrument we used for this study. These included factors related to juvenile delinquency, such as membership in gangs, school attendance, church attendance, problem solving and judgment skills, level of responsibility, medical issues, family dynamics, relationship with mother and father, family suicide history, impulsiveness, substance abuse history, history of violent behavior, family environment, and substance abuse history.

A San Francisco study (2006) by the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice (CJC) reviewed a proposed preliminary injunction sought by the city attorney against individuals believed to be members or associates of an alleged street gang called, Oakdale Mob. The JJC Center (2006) identified problems encountered with such a suppression technique. The proposed injunction against the Oakdale Mob was an attempt to stop a public nuisance of possession and sales of illegal drug sales and illegal firearms, and assault with a firearm. The Center indicated that gang

injunctions present many problems because of the severe limitations they impose on individual rights. According to the Center, injunctions' may impact innocent people who have not engaged in illegal activities. An injunction is effective when community youth programs are setup to accompany it, otherwise the impact is short-lived.

In another study, Manson (1990) examined why a juvenile might join a gang and the implications of the findings for recreation services for juveniles. Manson states that youth gangs can be traced to the Middle Ages in Europe. In Chicago, youth gangs were researched by Frederic Thrasher as early as 1919. Since the 1920's. Many studies about youth gangs since the 1920's rely on delinquency theories of social disorganization, strain theory, social control, and value conflict (Manson, 1990). They discussed responses to and the prevention of these gang activities. Goldstein and Kodluboy (1998) reported on gangs they examined in the school environment. They discussed effective interventions and possible solutions of preventing youth from joining gangs to counter the problem. They discussed the complexity involved in reaching a consensus on the definition of "gang," gang-member demographics, and a history of gang intervention efforts over the past 50 years. They also discussed the factors in communities and schools that promote and influence youth to join gangs, as well as those that help prevent gang membership. They also examined the process of joining a gang, the types of juveniles prone to gang affiliation, ways they are recruited and initiated, categories of membership, and the codes of member behavior. They reported on the dynamics within marginalized ethnic groups that promote the rise and spread of youth gangs. They believed it was the responsibility of the schools to be the initial institution for gang membership prevention through education and sound preparation for leading productive lives in society.

Joseph and Taylor's research (2003) examined the involvement of Native American youths in gang activities. A survey conducted between 1988 and 1990 found about 15 percent of the 14,000 Native American youth on surveyed reservations reported some level of association with a gang, with just under five percent spending a lot of time with gangs as members. A later study in 2001 identified more than 180 different gangs found in Native American country. Generally, these gangs are less affiliated with Indian gangs and more affiliated with Black and Hispanic gangs in the southwest and Chicago. They have similar experiences of poverty, unemployment, poor family support, drug trafficking, and have financial and emotional needs. The violence around reservations correlates with gangs the same as gangs in prisons. The presence of gangs in and around reservations correlates with a sharp increase in violence. The authors suggested that because law enforcement on reservations is complicated in addition to the geography, there is a lack of control of youth gangs. They recommend a multidisciplinary and holistic approach focusing on Indian ritual and spirituality, family, peers, police, and the tribe to deal with the gang problems of Native Americans (Joseph and Taylor, 2003).

A study by Aiken, Rush, and Wycoff (1992) involved a preliminary inquiry into Alabama youth gang membership. The group consisted of 11 Alabama youth. The findings of this study included similar characteristics to a later study by the authors, such as a fatherless home, alienation toward authority figures. The gang provided the sometimes illusive basic needs of protection, discipline, food, shelter, love, and clothing. As with the 1993 study, trust of fellow gang members was low. Law enforcement agencies were surveyed regarding juvenile gang activities in 46

Alabama cities and towns with populations exceeding 10,000 residents; results showed a gang presence in 74 percent of the communities. "Protection was the most common motive for joining a gang and a lack of other alternatives appeared to be a significant reason for their not leaving" (Aiken et al., 1992).

A subsequent study was conducted by Aiken et al. (1993), similar to the earlier study; it was also a preliminary inquiry of 11 youth members about gang membership in Alabama. They asked about their motivations to join and remain in a gang. They also asked about their attitudes toward authority, including authority within the gang. As with their 1992 study, the authors found characteristics that included a matriarchal life without a positive male figure, a need to join the gang out of need because there was a lack of legitimate opportunity in society. "Many did not trust their fellow gang members, and remained in the gang because there was no better alternative" Aiken et al., 1993).

Armor and Jackson (1995) mailed a questionnaire to Alabama police agencies. Their survey showed there were 7,500 youth involved in 186 gangs. The typical city in Alabama had an average of 45 youth in five different gangs, although larger cities had considerably more youth in gangs. Demographically, 78 percent were black and 22 percent were white, larger cities had the larger number of females at 10 percent. Criminal activities were mostly drug related. There were more attacks on other gangs in larger cities, and equal victimization of citizens in other cities. The preferred method of joining a gang was "jumping in", i.e., beating new members and sending them on specific crime missions (Armor and Jackson, 1995, pp. 29-35). As mentioned previously, "jumping out" is a ritual for leaving gangs.

Bragg (1995) wrote about the chain gangs that the Alabama prison commissioner at the time wanted reinstated. The commissioner at the time, Ron Jones, believed that "prisons should be difficult for inmates." Today, it is common to see inmates along the roads in Alabama picking up debris, but the leg irons are not used as in the past. The purpose of the move to use inmates to clean roadways was to deter crime among youth. Jones' early program involved shackling four inmates together forcing them to work 12 hours a day stooping to pick up debris. Now, they are not shackled and they do not have to stoop. Today, the program serves as a carrot to deter bad behavior within the institution; it encourages good behavior so that inmates can get outside of the institution. The Alabama Department of Corrections also operates a waste disposal service, and can be seen several times a week at the Auburn Montgomery campus picking up waste in a trash bin.

The term GANGFACT is an acronym for Project Gang Field Assessment of Crime Threat. The project sought 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 (Knox, 1991).

THE PRESENT STUDY

In an earlier study by NGCRC (Knox, 1991) the survey research methodology was straight forward, attempting to get information from 87 state facilities in 47 states. Alabama was not included. Our research seeks to fill that void by gathering information on gangs in Alabama. Our research is primarily

descriptive. Previous research covers reasons for joining gangs and population numbers and relationships of prison gangs and street gangs. Our research was to determine whether Alabama inmates with gang affiliation mirrored the other studies by Knox and associates. As with the prior NGCRC studies, the gang member was used as the unit of contact and analysis.

In the past NGCRC studies, the first point of contact was always with the warden or superintendent. We did the same. A request to administer the questionnaire was first made to the Division of Youth Services. After a couple of months, and after review by their legal department, it was decided that the instrument could not be administered at the youth services institution. Subsequently, contact was made by referral to the Frank Lee Alabama work release institution within the department of corrections whose warden indicated that we could conduct the survey at that institution. The warden directed us to the gang specialist of the institution who assisted greatly with the collection of the data. It must be mentioned that the information was provided by individuals who were close to being released from the institution, and who were assigned work release status. One of the study team members and the institution officer administered the instrument. The study team member was also a probation/parole officer, so although it may appear that there was coercion to complete the instrument, cooperation among inmates was very good based on the fact that inmates selected for the study were close to being released and did not want to jeopardize their release standing that by not being cooperative or providing truthful responses. The following methodology was used in the analysis of the data using SPSS.

The larger NGCRC study's goal was to get a broad national sample of gangs in prisons. This in turn, would allow for a direct correlation with street gangs, since the literature is strongly indicative that prison gangs now are representative of street gangs since the members bring the same representation and structure with them when they are incarcerated. Efforts to change gang representation of inmates by prison officials have been very successful. In as much as the sample did finally end up with prison gang data from 47 states being represented, it is apparent that the methodology of the research collection was a good format for the collection of such data. The anonymity of the respondents also allowed successful collection of data because most of the resistance toward masking individual background and behavior was overcome. In addition, the goal of the original study was to get a broad national sample... while our goal was to provide an overview of inmates in a facility-with gang membership representative of the state of Alabama. Since our respondents were allowed anonymity and continuous oversight was provided to all subjects during the data collection period; the resulting information is deemed credible.

State correctional institution surveys that produced a low estimate of gang activity in past years are reluctant to cooperate with new surveys for fear of being compared with another state. Surveys where low estimates were provided about gang density in the past would look like rapid deterioration if the true data were supplied (Knox, 1998). As with the respect shown by the NGCRC toward requests of respondents' anonymity in their survey regarding, our respondents were also given the same respect. Although the NGCRD study solicited institutional control methods implemented for gang control (Knox, 1998), our survey did not; we solicited information about gang influences before being incarcerated.

Sample Size

A total of N = 159 validated survey respondents who were in the institution are included in the analysis reported here because they were on release assignment when the survey was administered. Therefore, 100 percent of those asked to complete the survey did so, although there were some missing items in each of the respondent survey instruments. Several additional inmates did not participate because they were on work release assignment when the survey was administered. Some were non-responsive in some basic or elementary way to the requirement of completing the survey instrument accounting for the missing items for each question. Generally the missing item data ranged from a low of three to a high of 12 items without responses. One case was also eliminated because it represented the entire state, when the unit of analysis sought was the institution level unit of analysis.

Research Design

The survey instrument was provided by the National Gang Crime Research Center (NGCRC) in Peotone, Illinois. All items used in the survey study are items previously used in NGCRC correctional surveys of jails, juvenile correctional institutions, and adult correctional institutions and are the basis of the publication, *GANGFACT* (Knox, 1991).

The instrument was also used for Project *GANGFACT* in 1995 by the Task Force of the NGCRC for a study of over 4000 gang members in 1997 (Knox, 1998, p. 349). The instrument was later used in subsequent study, *GANGMILL*, in 2001 as a follow up to the 1991 and other *GANGFACT* studies. The questionnaire consists of 95 questions dealing with the various influences in the life of a youth, including family, peers, gangs, church, and schools. The last question, number 95, [*"In the box below, draw all the signs and symbols that your gang uses and the names you use, etc. to represent your gang"*] asked for samples of gang graffiti and was not part of the data analysis. Overall, the survey asked for characteristics of criminal history, history of violence, victimization incidents, and bullying, drug activities, and of religiosity family influences on the inmate. Just as Knox used the gang member as the fundamental unit of analysis focusing primarily on data used from his earlier studies in 1997 and 2001, we decided to mimic his base study objectives in an attempt to identify and measure overall consistencies and/or change factors between both national and Alabama groupings; while attempting to determine both behavioral and/or conditional changes since prior studies. Many researchers develop information about gang membership or activities to by gathering data based on opinion information from police chiefs or social workers. Others glean information about gang problems by reviewing local police records, or questioning the community's attitude toward gangs and gang members and/or gang victimization. Because of the theoretical subjectivity of measuring purely opinion information we chose the gang member as the primary unit of analysis for comparison purposes.

FINDINGS and DISCUSSION

First, this is probably obvious, but for the categorical variables (i.e. yes/no, true/false, fight/not fight, etc.), the first category is coded as a 1, the second a 2, and so on. We have run sun chi-squared significance tests from some of the variables, we were briefly concerned, but it turned out to coding issues. For example, one case regarding whether the respondent was a member of a gang was coded as a 3, when there are only two choices, i.e., 1 = respondent is part of a gang and 2=respondent is

not. Discrepancies like that I am coding as missing data. Second, since chi-squared tests are susceptible to sample size, larger samples are more likely to produce better results. For example in the larger 2001 (Knox) study, it was asked whether there were any significant differences in fighting in facilities between gang and non-gang members. The sample size was about 3000 ($\chi^2 = 154.1$ and $p < .001$). In other words, the results were significant at the .001 level or better. Although it is arbitrary the cut off is usually .05 or .1.

We have looked at some of the other chi-squared results and they seem to be showing the same similarities. Some are significant at the .1 level, which is fine though the .05 level would be better. Our results are illustrated below. Our descriptive results are consistent with the larger GAGNGFACT and GAMGMILL studies in terms of percentage.

CONCLUSION

The results that follow are two-fold. The first and the bulk of the findings are descriptive. In other words, we are primarily concerned with describing what is, rather than establishing inference or causation. This is because the research program which considers the gang member as the primary unit of analysis can still benefit from description in order to put theory on firmer ground and eventually move toward causal analysis. However, in connecting this study with its parent studies (i.e., those studies conducted by the NGCRC), we also performed some inferential tests; specifically, chi-squared tests. This will allow us to conclude whether differences we observe between the behavior of gang and non-gang members is likely real and not a result of error and whether the findings of the NGCRC hold up in Alabama. Additionally, it is important to point out that our survey questions are virtually identical to those of GANGMILL (Knox, 2001a), which is a follow up study to GANGFACT (Knox, 1997), and when comparisons are made, they will mostly be in relation to GANGMILL (Knox, 2001a). Finally, when we believe that there are significant differences between GANGMILL and our study, we have tried to point that out.

SUMMARY of DESCRIPTIVE FINDINGS

Age

The age of participants ranged from 16 to 63. The mean age was 29 and the modal age was 21. About 93% were over 18. Thus, unlike GANGMILL, which contained a very large number of minors, our sample is almost exclusively adults.

Sex

All participants were male. In GANGMILL about 10% were female. Accordingly, we do not make any claims regarding female gang behavior (of course, this assumes that male and female gang behaviors are different).

Bully

44% surveyed admitted to being bullies, while 40% said they were bullied. Consistent with GANGMILL a higher percentage of gang members admitted to being a bully than non-gang members. For example, 59% of those who said they are gang members admitted to being bullies, while 40% of non-gang members admitted to being bullies. However, inconsistent with GANGMILL our study finds that gang members admit to being bullied more often than non-gang members. 45% of gang members admit to being bullied, while 39% of non-gang members admitted the

same. These results may be difficult to interpret because it may be the case that gang members and non-gang members have different definitions of bully.

Bullying Leads to Gangs

65% believe that bullying leads to gang-banging. 73% of those who said they are gang members agreed while 63% of non-gang members agreed. The tendency for greater agreement with the statement from gang members is consistent with GANGMILL.

Church

55 percent surveyed say parents attend church. 50% of gang members parents attend while 60% of non-gang members. This is consistent with GANGMILL.

Stolen from Employer

48% admit to having stolen from an employer. This is inconsistent with GANGMILL which suggests that obviously the vast majority would deny such behavior. This could be attributable to the age differences in our samples.

Strong Family

68% believe that family support can prevent gang involvement. This is consistent with GANGMILL. However, inconsistent with GANGMILL, we find gang members thought family was more important than non-gang members. 77% of gang members thought family was important while 64% of non-members agreed.

Adult Supervision

35% report low adult supervision. 51% of gang members report low supervision. 28% of non-gang members report the same. Although consistent with GANGMILL, our findings show greater differences between gang and non-gang members.

Forced Sex

25% have forced someone to have sex with them. This number is much higher than reported in GANGMILL, perhaps in part because are sample is exclusively male or because of the age difference in the samples.

Victim of Forced Sex

22% say they were a victim. This is consistent with GANGMILL.

Incest

25% admit to incest. This is much higher than in GANGMILL. This may also be because of the differences in the sample.

Forcing Youth into Gangs

24% said "yes" to whether it is acceptable to force youth under 13 into gangs. 64% said no and 12% said it was sometimes o.k. In GANGMILL a much larger percentage found it unacceptable. In our study there was not much difference between gang and non-gang members. 61% of gang members found it unacceptable while 68% of non-gang members. This is also inconsistent with GANGMILL.

Referral to Special Education Services

29% have been referred to special education. This is very close to GANGMILL. 43% of gang members and 21% of non-gang members have been referred. We have

a much larger difference than found in GANGMILL.

Good Readers

Consistent with GANGMILL, the vast Majority (77%) consider they are good readers. Not much difference between gang and non-gang members.

Type of School Programming

The vast majority (72%) attended regular class.

Robbed Work

35% admitted to robbing work. This is about 3 times higher than GANGMILL.

Belief in God

82% believe in God, this is slightly lower than GANGMILL (90%). Not much difference between gang and non-gang members.

Best Programs for Preventing Gang Activity

Sports programs were credited with having the best effect (33%). Sports programs had the best effect under GANGMILL as well.

Devil Made Me Do It

60% said the devil had influence. This is consistent with GANGMILL.

Expect to go to Hell

30% believe they will go to hell. This is consistent with GANGMILL. 40% of gang members and 22% of non-gang members believe they will go to hell. This is inconsistent with GANGMILL, which found no difference.

Workplace Violence

31% admit to workplace violence. This is more than twice that of GANGMILL.

Sold Drugs at Work

53% admit to selling drugs at work. Our response is more than twice that of GANGMILL.

Age of First Arrest

The range is 8-54. The mean age of first arrest was 18.

Satanic Worship

13% admitted to worshipping Satan. This is almost twice GANGMILL (7%)

Black Magic and Occult

16% report involvement in black magic or the occult. Slightly higher than GANGMILL (11%)

Satanic Ceremonies

11% report participating in cone of power and 7% admitted to participating in red snapper ceremonies.

Ethnicity responses include: African American 54%; Hispanic 6%; White 26%; Asian 1%; Native American 5%; and, Bi-racial 8%

Victimizing Employer

35% said that they had returned to commit a crime against former employer. This is about three times GANGMILL

Raised Religion included the following: Catholic 12%; Protestant 18%; Muslim

13%; and over half other 56%

The Current Religions they indicated that they belonged to were as follows: Catholic 7%; Protestant 15%; Muslim 15%; other 42%; and 19% indicated no religious affiliation.

Friends Gang Members

About 60% admit to having at least 1 gang member friend

Get out of Gang Program

About 26% would like to be involved in a program that gets them out of gangs. This is slightly higher than GANGMILL

Fighting Behavior (number of fights in past 12 months): No fights were reported by the majority (52%) of the respondents; 48% had between one and five fights in the past year. Specific results are: 1 fight - 11%; 2 fights - 15%; 3 fights - 5%; 4 fights - 7%; and, 10% had five fights.

Times Expelled from School: About one fourth (24%) of the respondents had not been expelled from school and over one fourth (29%) had been expelled up to five times. The percentages of the other respondents being expelled from school are: 1 - 13%; 2 - 11%; 3 - 15%; and, 4 - 8%.

Number of Friends that Use Drugs: More than half of the respondents indicated that they had five or more friends who used drugs; 0 -16%; 1- 13%; 2 - 11%; 3 - 5%; 4 - 4%; 5 or more - 51%.

Sold Crack: 60% sold crack, a lot higher than GANGMILL.

Used Crack: 38% used crack, a lot higher than GANGMILL.

Used Methamphetamine: 32% used; this is about twice as high as GANGMILL.

Sold Methamphetamine: 28% sold meth; a lot higher than GANGMILL.

Firing Gun at Police: 20% admit to firing a gun at the police.

Joined a Gang: 30% said yes, they had joined a gang.

Age Joined: The range is 2-33 years old with a mean age of about 13. About 80% joined before the age of 14.

Current Gang Membership: About 22% say they are current gang members.

Quitting Gang: About 92% said they have never attempted to quit. This is quite different from GANGMILL which reported about half attempted to quit.

Leadership Position: About 27% said they have held rank. This is about 3 times less than GANGMILL.

Initiation Violence: 26% reported initiation violence when they joined a gang.

Special Language: 28% report a special language used by the gangs.

Written Rules: 27% report written rules for their gangs.

Regular Meetings: 19% said yes to having held regular meetings.

Regular Dues: 15% said yes.

Volunteered: 36% volunteered to join gang and were not recruited which is much lower than GANGMILL.

Long-time Adult Leaders: 42% have established adult leaders.

Independence: 23% do what gang expects.

Gang Members' Police Records: 52% have clean records.

Parents' Knowledge: 40% of parents know of gang involvement.

Gang Sells Crack: 36% said yes.

Tattoos: 27% have gang tattoos.

Parental Knowledge Validity Check: 32% say parents know. Lower than when first asked which questions validity.

Give up Gang for Secure Job: 35% would leave the gang which is much lower than GANGMILL.

Intra-gang Violence: 21% said yes.

Violated by Own Gang: 8% said yes, much lower than GANGMILL.

Gang Has Killed Own Member: 17% said yes. This is about half of what is reported in GANGMILL.

Who Could Convince Gang Member to Quit? 55% said a family member.

Could Gang Anonymous Group Convince? 40% said yes.

English Only: 64% said no.

Family Member Also Gang Member: 34% said yes.

Fight Other Gang Members of the Same Race: 42% said yes.

Used Explosives: 18% said yes, a much lower result than GANGMILL.

Easier to Leave Behind Gang or Family: A little less than fewer than 50% said the gang would be easier. This is much lower than GANGMILL.

Held a Legitimate Job: 51% have held a legitimate Job.

Gang Failed to Keep Promises: 27% agreed.

Gangs are a Rip Off; Just Like Other Organizations: 29% agreed.

Validity Check on Volunteering: 75% volunteered.

Respect: 22% have lost respect for gang Leaders

Gang Sold Methamphetamine: 28% said yes.

Counterfeiting (Secret Service Concern): 19% said yes.

Video Piracy: 28% admitted that their gang is involved.

International Connection: 33% said yes.

Incarceration: About 70% say that they have been locked up for more than a year.

Number of Disciplinary Reports: More than half report no reports

Been in Fight While Incarcerated: 28% said yes.

Started Fight: 18% said they started a fight.

Weapons in Facility: 22% admit carrying a weapon.

Threatened Staff: 17% said yes.

Rival Gang Member Fights While Incarcerated: 18% said yes.

Smuggled Drugs Behind Bars: 26% said yes, about 3 times higher than GANGMILL.

Communicate with Gang Members on the Outside: 24% said yes.

Gang Has Helped or Has Sent Money: 29% said yes.

Recruitment: 27% have tried to recruit while incarcerated.
Family Members in Same Gang: 38% said yes.
Parents do not Attend Church (Validity Check): 41% said parents do not attend.
Think They have Killed Someone: 17% said yes.
Shootings: 27% say they have shot someone
Age When First Shot Someone: Range is 10-38 years old. The mean age is 17.

INFERENTIAL TESTS

Do gang members pose unique problems within facilities?

In this section, we performed four separate tests. Three of four findings are consistent with GANGMILL. First, we considered the differences in fighting behavior between gang members and non-gang members. For example, in the larger GANGMILL study, it was asked whether there were any significant differences in fighting in facilities between gang and non-gang members. The sample size was about 3000 ($\text{Chi}^2 = 154.1$ and $p < .001$). In other words, the results were significant at the .001 level or better. Although it is arbitrary, the cut off is usually .05 or .1.

Our results are listed in the tables below. There were 19 gang members who admitted to being in a fight and 18 respondents said no. On the other hand, 18 non-gang members admitted to being in a fight, while 70 said no. This is consistent with the larger study and is significant at the .01 level.

	Physical fight		Total
	1(fight)	2(no fight)	
Gang member			
1 (in gang)	19	18	37
2 (not)	24	70	94
Total	43	88	131
Chi2 = 8.027	Pr = .005		

Our second test looks at who started the fight. Again our results are consistent with GANGMILL. These are reported in the table below. Our chi-squared tests show that there are significant differences between gang and non-gang members.

	Started fight	Did not start	Total
	Gang member		
1(in gang)	14	29	43
2 (not)	9	79	88
Total	23	108	131
Chi2 = 9.95	Pr = .002		

Our third test concerns carrying weapons in the facility. GANGMILL and our study find significant differences between gang and non-gang members. The results can be seen in the table below.

	Carried	Did not carry	Total
Gang member			
1(in gang)	16	27	43
2 (not)	10	79	89
Total	26	106	132
Chi2 = 12.36	Pr = .000		

However, we find no significant differences regarding threats to staff members. These results are below. Accordingly, unlike GANGMILL, we cannot conclude that gang members threaten staff more often than non-gang members.

	Threats	No threats	Total
Gang member			
1(in gang)	8	35	43
2 (not)	12	77	89
Total	20	112	132
Chi2 = .5915	Pr = .442		

Our final test concerns drug smuggling. Consistent with GANGMILL, we find significant differences between gang and non-gang members. The results are below.

	Smuggling	No Smuggling	Total
Gang member			
1(in gang)	17	26	43
2 (not)	15	73	88
Total	32	99	131
Chi2 = 7.9	Pr = .005		

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