Specialized Gang Units:
Form and Function in Community Policing

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Abstract

Between 1980 and the mid-1990s, the number of specialized gang units in American law enforcement agencies appeared to increase substantially. The rise in specialized gang units coincided with the widespread adoption of community policing. In many ways, the increased number of gang units appeared inherently in conflict with the move to community- and problem-oriented policing, since the latter emphasizes decentralization and despecialization. This research examined whether community policing and specialized gang units are complementary or conflicting approaches, either in principle or practice.

The research approach consisted of qualitative examination of police department procedures and practices, and extensive field observation of gang personnel. The research was conducted in two community policing agencies with gang units: Indianapolis, IN, and San Diego, CA. The project included extensive interviews with police leaders and other personnel in each agency to determine the rationale for gang-control policies. Over 500 hours of observation were conducted in the two sites of gang unit activities.

This report describes the missions and functions of the gang units in each jurisdiction and the specific types of activities engaged in by gang units-- documenting the time expended by gang unit personnel on each. The project compared and contrasted the two approaches, but the ultimate objective was to examine whether and how the tactics and strategies of the gang units fit with the community-oriented mission of the two police agencies. The results suggest that gang units can have an important role in modern policing. There is little evidence that specialized gang units conflict with community policing in principle or practice. The use of discriminate strategies and strategic approaches to gangs in both cities appears to reflect the influence of community and problem-oriented policing. Also reflecting the influence of community and problem-oriented policing are the agencies' reliance on data and attention to the mechanisms through which police efforts could be expected to influence of crime and criminality.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Specialized Gang Units: Form and Function in Community Policing

Between 1980 and the mid-1990s, the number of specialized gang units in American law enforcement agencies appeared to increase substantially. The period was marked by an increase in the number of gangs, gang members and violent crime in many jurisdictions across the nation – a trend that appeared to stabilize by about 1995. The rise of specialized gang units coincided with the unprecedented adoption of a new policing paradigm. In many ways, the increased number of gang units appeared inherently in conflict with the move to community- and problem-oriented policing, since the latter emphasizes decentralization and despecialization within law enforcement agencies.

The extent to which specialized units are necessary in police agencies has been widely debated for more than a century. Since at least the 1950s, police leaders have been cautioned about creating specialized units as this organizational configuration increases the complexity of coordinating various police functions. At the same time, specialization is often necessary in large organizations and when specific problems require a clear locus for organizational accountability and specialized skills and training. Surveys of police agencies showed that specialization increased substantially during the 1990s, despite the pressures to generalize and decentralize.

This study was undertaken to examine the extent to which community policing and specialized gang units are complementary or conflicting approaches, either in principle or practice. Police policies, procedures and practices were studied in the police departments of Indianapolis, IN, and San Diego, CA. In the emerging tradition of Systematic Social Observation, the examination of police practices consisted of extensive field observations of gang unit personnel. This report describes the specific types of activities engaged in by gang units, documenting the time expended by gang unit personnel on each, and compares contrasting approaches between departments. The study also examined how the tactics and strategies of the gang unit fit with the community-oriented mission of the police agency.

Organization of Gang Units

While the police departments of Indianapolis and San Diego are both heavily invested in the practice of community policing, these agencies employed two very different approaches to gangs. In San Diego, the gang unit consisted of a centralized uniformed and investigative unit with nearly 45 personnel; additional high-level investigations were coordinated through the department's involvement in a federal task force. In Indianapolis, the police department's approach to gangs combines decentralized tactical units with no particular focus on gangs, and a centralized covert investigative unit comprised of six detectives on a federal task force.

The differing organizational configuration and operational practices of these two gang units reflected differing police *perceptions* of the scope and type of gang problems

manifested in their jurisdiction. In Indianapolis, police viewed gangs as consisting of two distinct types of groups – one, drug trafficking organizations and the other, relatively disorganized street level "hoodlums" with little group dimension. As a result, IPD has not made a sustained investment in developing and maintaining a comprehensive intelligence database of *all* gangs, choosing instead to focus proactive investigations – such as racketeering or trafficking – on the most organized gangs and chronic offenders.

In San Diego, police view the city's long-standing gang problem as consisting predominately of street level violent crime; thus, the department has invested heavily in a comprehensive and reliable intelligence database of individuals and groups. As a result, intelligence information is detailed and current, and thus valuable for retrospective case investigations and proactive intervention with individuals or groups. In addition, gang officers are assigned to teams that focus on specific gangs and personnel develop particular expertise that enhances intelligence gathering, investigations and prosecution.

Influence of community policing and problem solving

Despite the *prima facie* differences in their approach to gangs, both the Indianapolis and San Diego police departments reflect a reliance on uniformed personnel as the front line to address gang problems and this reliance appears to reflect the organizational emphasis on community policing. Both agencies have organizational structures and policies that subordinate specialized units to uniformed personnel. In their gang units or elsewhere in their organizations, neither agency relies predominately on arrests as a measure of effectiveness; this is suggestive of their commitment to community policing. Within their community policing philosophy, the gang units of both agencies are strategic: San Diego's unit is particularly attentive to emerging patterns of gang crime and routinely monitors gang-related activity while Indianapolis focuses its strategic efforts on chronic offenders and well-organized groups.

There is no evidence that gang units in Indianapolis or San Diego engaged in activities that could be classified as preventive – in the traditional use of that term. In other words, police gang units did not try to *prevent* individuals from becoming gang members nor from becoming criminals. Although police advise or assist other agencies in pursuing this objective, gang prevention is considered beyond the mission and functional responsibility of police organizations. This understanding of the police role reflects an evolved understanding of the key elements of problem-oriented policing. Instead of preventing gangs from forming, evidence demonstrated that the two gang units in this study focused primarily on both preventing and controlling criminal activity related to gangs. These preventive and control strategies were not focused on indiscriminate enforcement tactics but reflected a range of strategies, including:

- Using techniques of natural surveillance – drawing upon information provided by informants, citizens and patrol officers – to monitor and identify emerging problems and subsequently strengthen formal surveillance, thus increasing perceptions of risk to potential offenders

- Reducing anonymity associated with gang behavior, by obtaining photographs and detailed information about the routine activities of individual gang members – their associates, hang out locations and vehicles – through recurring contacts

- Employing the concepts of "specific deterrence" by identifying, investigating and clearing gang-related offenses and subjecting case dispositions to enhanced penalties

- Intensifying "specific deterrence" through the strategic use of civil injunctions for turf-based gangs when less coercive measures had not been successful

- Developing sets of strategies that address unique characteristics of different *types* of gangs – using truancy initiatives for juvenile gangs, graffiti abatement for tagger gangs, enterprise investigations for well-organized gangs and civil injunctions for turf-based gangs

- Reducing provocation and opportunity for gang violence by monitoring and dispersing troublemakers; monitoring contact of rival gangs, such as at sporting or musical events; monitoring potential conflict by examining challenges conveyed by graffiti; and reducing notoriety or prestige and avoiding retaliatory violence by suppressing gang names in media coverage

- Improving police effectiveness by prioritizing violent or chronic offenders and/or prioritizing violent gangs, and monitoring recurring and responding to local-based information about emerging problem locations.

These preventive and control strategies represent a major improvement over general deterrence tactics such as zero tolerance, sweeps and crackdowns – broad tactics that are largely indiscriminate in target selection, independent of empirical information and which serve primarily to randomly and temporarily inconvenience gang members, expose police to claims of racial profiling and creative incentives for police corruption and excessive force.

Influence and Integrity of Gang Data

Both Indianapolis and San Diego police departments have developed organizational approaches to gang problems that reflect their organization's perception and interpretation of the local gang problem. The organizational perception is shaped by the organization's emphasis and investment in data collection – gathering information is the primary function of most police gang units, and this function is consistent with the view of gang units as support units and an emphasis in problem-oriented policing on data-driven decisions.

This study has shown that data on gangs primarily reflect the extent of police documentation efforts rather than actual rises and falls in the number of gang members or gangs. Since offenses can only be classified as gang-related when there is reliable information about individual gang members, the integrity of statistics on gang crime is

subject to variations in the amount of police *effort* in gathering and recording intelligence information. In general, when more police effort is dedicated to documenting gang members and quality controls are employed; a database provides a more reliable denominator for estimating the proportion of offenses associated with gang members. When less police effort is employed or such efforts are spread among many individuals, the quality and quantity of data cause the denominator to become unreliable and one cannot reliably calculate the proportion of offenses associated with gangs. The San Diego Police Department has invested substantially and consistently in documenting gang members since the mid-1970s; although it experimented with extensive gang data collection in the mid-1990s, the Indianapolis Police Department no longer emphasizes gang data collection and does not routinely – indeed, cannot – reliably and comprehensively track gang-related crime.

While the integrity of its data distinguished the San Diego approach to gangs from that of Indianapolis, previous police efforts to improve data integrity in Indianapolis suggested that the investment of resources for such efforts are quite large and may not be appropriate for many jurisdictions. Even in San Diego, there was evidence that data were underutilized – data had not been used to empirically evaluate changes in the characteristics or composition of gangs or gang members over time, their contribution to investigative clearances, convictions or sentences, nor to routinely distinguish geographic areas of gangs and conflict over turf.

While it is tempting to use law enforcement data about gangs and gang-related offenses to make comparisons between – or even within – jurisdictions, gang-related data are exceptionally unreliable for this purpose. The data used for counting gang members, gangs and labeling offenses as gang-related are collected and used primarily for purposes of intelligence, investigation and prosecution. While these data may provide information related to the rise and fall of gang membership and activity, these datasets are not interchangeable. Since the data are gathered for other purposes, they typically lack the integrity necessary for reliable counting.

Establishing Need for a Gang Unit

Across the nation, gang-related problems have been addressed through varied organizational configurations – for example, an investigative firearm unit and a repeat or chronic offender unit; a juvenile unit supported by an organized crime or narcotics unit; an intelligence unit supported by tactical patrol units or school resource officers. Among other factors, police organizational responses to gangs are subject to local political and organizational pressures to maintain the primacy of generalist patrol officers – a basic tenet of community policing. But the organizational response is also influenced by estimations of the size of gangs and number of gang members, the extent of group or patterned activity and relationships between gangs and gang members, the characteristics of the gangs including their mobility, age composition, duration of gang membership, access to weapons, and involvement in violent crime and other specific public safety problems.

Local experience and *classification* of gang-related problems should guide the selection of organizational locus and response to gangs; gang problems may be reasonably classified as related to repeat or chronic offenders, accessibility of firearms, juveniles, organized crime, drug dealing or trafficking – or some combination of these. Rarely will gang problems fit within neat boxes in a functional organizational chart and thus local experience should guide organizational approaches to classification.

In jurisdictions where gangs are numerous and troublesome behaviors are related to activities of groups or their interactions, a specialized gang unit can provide a bridge between generalist patrol officers and investigative personnel. Such gang units can increase police effectiveness by distinguishing between different groups, identifying emerging trends and monitoring problems, developing knowledge of individual gangs and their gang members, as well as improving case clearances and outcomes of prosecution. Gang units provide a clear source of "best available" information about gangs and an organizational mechanism for responding to changes in gang behavior. To clarify expectations of gang units, objectives and functions should be developed with care and fully articulated within the police agency and political community to reduce ambiguity about the role of such units.

Conclusion

The greater use of discriminate strategies and strategic approaches to gangs in the Indianapolis Police Department and the San Diego Police Department appears to reflect the influence of community and problem-oriented policing in modern police agencies – including a greater use of data and attention to the mechanisms through which police efforts could be expected to influence crime and criminality. In our view, crime prevention and crime control are reasonable objectives for police in addressing gang problems; preventing the formation of gangs is beyond the mission of contemporary police agencies and we found little evidence that gang personnel attempt to do so.

The functions of gang units have typically been described as comprised of four activities: intelligence gathering, investigations, suppression and prevention. Our study suggests this classification is too narrow; contemporary gang units have a broader mission, in which crime prevention and control are central. As a result of this focus, the functions of gang units can more usefully be classified as follows:

- Directed patrol, comprised primarily of monitoring emerging or problem locations or chronic offenders; often linked to intelligence gathering

- Intelligence gathering, of two types:

    - General intelligence focused on identifying individuals and groups, and monitoring street level gangs and their activities; and

- Case-specific intelligence, often covert, supporting proactive investigations into more well-organized gangs.

- Investigations, of two types, although each leads to arrests, cases cleared and successful prosecution:

  - Reactive investigation of reported serious crimes, usually violent felonies; and,

  - Proactive investigations of specific, often well-organized, gangs or chronic offenders, such as racketeering, enterprise or trafficking investigations.

- Data management and analysis

- Co-production of public safety – with citizens and a range of other inter- and intra-organizational partners – through networking, data sharing, providing support services, collaboration, testifying and developing strategic crime prevention efforts

In contrast to prior conceptualizations of gang units as focused on suppression, we find no group of activities that can be categorized in this way although enforcement is the primary outcome of investigative efforts, these efforts are linked to clearing reported offenses and focus on successful prosecution moreso than the numbers of charges or arrests.

Our study suggests that gang units can have an important role in modern policing. Specialized gang units should be formed and structured to reflect both local experiences and concerns, and organizational structures and strategies should be adopted that contribute to meeting organizational objectives related to preventing and controlling gang problems. These objectives will vary from one jurisdiction to another, based on local experiences with gangs. There is little evidence that specialized gang units conflict with community policing in principle or practice, indeed, gang units, can complement community policing by providing resources to focus on specific problems related to gangs. There is no doubt, however, that gang units – and their fit within community policing – will continue to reflect the organizational tension in law enforcement agencies balancing proactive and reactive approaches to police work.

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Two research assistants – Kathleen Olivares in Indianapolis and Julie Rowland in San Diego – conducted the extensive hours of research observation upon which the findings in this study are based. These observations – from walk-alongs with detectives to long shifts with patrol officers – were alternately characterized by long periods of boredom punctuated by intensely stressful situations. The latter included a late night ride-along with a patrol officer who was the first responder to a tragic double homicide-suicide in Indianapolis. Despite the wide range of encounters and responsibilities, both Kathleen and Julie were professional and dedicated research staff and their efforts are greatly appreciated. We were fortunate to undertake this research parallel to a similar study also undertaken with funding from the National Institute of Justice. That study, lead by Chuck Katz and Vince Webb at Arizona State University, provided a context that stimulated much of our thinking about the intersection of police, gangs and community policing.

We were also fortunate to have advisory guidance on this research provided by three experts on gangs and policing. NIJ formulated an Advisory Committee consisting of Scott Decker, University of Missouri at St. Louis, Cheryl Maxson at University of California at Irvine and Gary French of the Boston Police Department. While we cannot hope to address all of the research interests of this group of experts, their candid views on police and gangs contributed substantially to the shape of our research and the nature of our findings.

During the course of this study, both of the authors left the employment of the Police Executive Research Forum. PERF, however, continued to provide support and resources throughout the course of the project and facilitated the transition of the study. We greatly appreciate the continued interest and support of PERF in this work, particularly the support of Research Director Lorie Fridell.

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CHAPTER I: GANGS AND THE POLICE RESPONSE

Introduction

As recently as the mid-1980s, few police agencies in the United States had specialized gang units (Needle and Stapleton, 1983). At that time, police activities focused on gangs were spread throughout agencies – in juvenile or intelligence units, repeat offender or narcotics units, investigations, community relations and other locations. A mere ten years later, about half of municipal law enforcement agencies in the nation operated a specialized gang unit separate from the rest of the agency (Reaves, 2003; Reaves and Goldberg 1999).

The rising prevalence of specialized gang units mirrored increased specialization in many police departments in recent years (Maguire, 1997) but appeared inconsistent with the advent of community policing, in which despecialization and decentralized are advocated. While many experts recommend that police agencies create specialized gang units to coordinate intelligence information across geographic areas and to collaborate with other agencies (Huff and Shafer, 2002; Spergel, 1990; Huff and McBride, 1990), gang units have been criticized as comprising a political reaction rather than a rational response to empirical evidence of problems (McCorkle and Miethe, 2002, 1998; Meehan, 2000; Katz, 2001; Webb and Katz, 2003; Katz, McGuire and Roncek, 2002; Huff, 1990; Huff and McBride, 1993; Spergel, 1990).

The convergence of these divergent movements during the 1990s – the explosive growth of community policing and the dramatic rise in the number of gangs – contributed to an organizational ambiguity about the objectives, structure and functions of gang units in police agencies. In addition, other conflicting pressures faced police agencies in the 1990s with their gang units: problems with corruption and misuse of authority in gang units, presumably related to police discretion, inadequate supervision and community demands; and anecdotal evidence of effectiveness of zero tolerance policing emerged from New York City, suggesting the value of suppression approaches. Both these phenomenon were accompanied by widespread concern about racial profiling of minorities – an issue with huge implications for controlling gangs, often comprised of minorities. Thus, community policing, increased gangs, police corruption, racial profiling and zero tolerance all created an atmosphere of tension about the need and appropriateness of specialized gang units in police agencies.

This report describes the rise of gang problems in America and the concomitant rise of gang units in law enforcement agencies, placing these phenomena within the broader context of community policing and related pressures on police organizations during the 1990s. The first chapter of this report describes the evolution of gangs and gang units, highlighting the objectives, functions and impact of gang units. The chapter describes why research was necessary to illuminate our understanding of gang unit practices

and their fit within community policing. Subsequent chapters describe the research undertaken, findings and implications for policing.

Growth of Gangs

Nearly a decade of evidence shows that the number of gangs and gang members across the nation is substantial and affects a large number of jurisdictions. Although some large jurisdictions in the nation had substantial gang problems in the 1970s and 1980s, there were few gang data available until the early 1990s. Two key surveys in the early 1990s showed that gangs and gang members were numerous in many jurisdictions throughout the nation (Curry, Ball and Fox, 1994; and Curry, Ball and Decker, 1996). Many of these gangs were associated with the nation's rise in violent crime in the 1980s and much gang activity and violence appeared rooted in street-level drug dealing.

The number of gangs and gang members in the nation appeared to peak in 1996 (see Table I) and the aggregate number of reported gangs and gang members subsequently declined. As recently as 2000, however, nearly 3,000 jurisdictions continued to report gang problems (Egley and Major, 2003). While studies suggest that gangs and gang-related problems have ebbed in some jurisdictions, gangs remain problematic in larger, chronic gang cities such as Los Angeles and Chicago and have not abated in other large cities – those with populations of 100,000 or more. Gangs have been closely associated with serious crime problems (Thornberry et al., 1993; Thornberry

and Burch, 1993; Johnson et al., 1995; Curry, Ball, Fox and Stone, 1992; Howell, 1994; Knox et al, 1996; Klein, 1995; Decker, 1996; Curry, Ball and Fox, 1994; Spergel, 1990, 1995; Needle and Stapleton, 1983).

Table I: Trends in Gang Prevalence in the United States 1970-2001[1]

	1970s	1980s	1992	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Gangs			4,881	8,625	23,388	31,000	30,500	28,700	26,000	24,500	
Gang members			249,324	378,807	664,906	846,500	816,000	780,000	840,500	772,500	
Jurisdictions with gangs	About 400	715		760	2,193	4,824	4,712	3,702 – 4,464	3,911	3,330	3,000

[1] Data in the table were compiled from Miller (2001); the National Youth Gang Surveys from 1996 to 2001, Curry and Spergel (OJJDP 1997); Curry, Ball and Fox, 1994; and Curry, Ball and Decker, 1996.

Growth of Gang Units

Specialized gang units appeared to become more numerous in the nation between 1983 and 1995 but their numbers declined in the late 1990s. Survey data from the 1993, 1997 and 2000 Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) survey and other surveys (reported in Table II) suggested that specialized gang units were common in United States in the early 1990s; in 1993, 76 percent of large police departments reported having a gang unit. By 1997, the proportion had dropped – 56% of all large municipal police departments reported operating a specialized gang unit (Reaves and Goldberg, 1999)[1]; by 2000, slightly less than half of all large municipal police departments (48%) operated a separate and specialized gang unit with one or more employees (Reaves, 2003).

While the LEMAS data appear to suggest that 28 percent of large police departments eliminated their gang unit units between 1993 and 2000, the 1993 survey defined a gang unit as consisting of any number of personnel (Reaves and Smith, 1995) while the 1997 and 2000 surveys specified a gang unit as consisting of "one or more employees." If one assumes that the number of gang units in large police departments remained fairly stable over a four-year period, the data might suggest that 28 percent of large police departments had less than one full-time person assigned to their gang unit. In this

[1] There was no question about gang units in the 1999 LEMAS survey.

interpretation, the appearance of a dramatic decline in the number of gang units is simply an artifact of a change in the wording of the survey question.

Another data source – the National Youth Gang surveys – sheds further light on the rise of gang units and the relative size of their operations (see Table II), but this survey also contains a change in survey wording. In its 2000 survey, police agencies were queried if there were two or more officers assigned full-time to a gang unit; in its 1997 survey, police agencies were queried whether they had "some type" of specialized gang unit. The results of to the question suggested that about 2/3 of police agencies had gang units in 1997 and about 1/3 in the 2000. The implications of the findings in these two different surveys are important as both appear to shed light on the size of gang units in police agencies: the functions of a one-person or half-time person gang unit would vary substantially from the functions of a gang unit consisting of the average 10 members reported by Curry et al (1992).

Table II: Specialized Gang Units in Law Enforcement Agencies

Year data collected	Agencies with gang units	Definition of unit	Data	Publication
2000	48% of large police departments	Separate special unit with one or more full-time employees	LEMAS, 2000	Reaves, 2003
2000	37% of law enforcement agencies with *youth* gang problems	Two or more officers assigned full-time	National Youth Gang Survey, 2000	OJJDP,Egley and Arjunan, 2002
1997	56% of large municipal police departments	Unit must have one or more full-time employees	LEMAS, 1997	Reaves and Goldberg, 1999
1997	66% of police departments; 48% of sheriffs departments	"Some" type of specialized unit	National Youth Gang Survey, 1997	OJJDP
1995	64% of police departments; 50% sheriffs departments		National Youth Gang Survey, 1995	OJJDP
1993	76% of large municipal police departments	Any number of personnel	LEMAS, 1993	Reaves and Smith, 1995
1992	Half of all large law enforcement agencies		National survey, Institute for Law and Justice	BJA, 1997

According to data from the National Youth Gang surveys, specialized gang units do not exist in all law enforcement agencies but become more common as jurisdictions increase in size. In other words, the larger the jurisdiction, the more likely it is to have a specialized gang unit. Since jurisdiction size is also highly correlated with the number of gangs, gang members and gang homicides (Maxson, Curry and Howell, 2003) and research suggests specialized gang units clear more homicides through arrest

(Klein, Gordon, and Maxson, 1986), there appears to be empirically-based rationale for the presence of specialized gang units in large jurisdictions with much gang crime.

Conflicting Pressures in Creating Gang Units

The rise and fall in the number of gang units in law enforcement agencies over the last decade reflected myriad and conflicting decisionmaking pressures on police leaders. Across the nation, police leaders in the late 1980s and early 1990s sought to find the appropriate organizational form and function for addressing gang problems. While there were often substantial political pressures on law enforcement agencies to create gang units, these pressures have been offset by the management challenges inherent with any specialized unit. Thus law enforcement organizations struggled to disentangle and weigh seven key factors in establishing gang units:

- Political pressures for accountability
- Concerns about supervising personnel and potential for corruption
- Difficulty measuring effectiveness
- Concerns about the fit with community policing
- Competing pressures to despecialize and decentralize
- Concerns about relationships with minority communities
- Technological advances

These seven issues appear to comprise the dominant influences on decisions about creating gang units in police agencies. Although these elements are not mutually exclusive – each is related to aspects of the other, each has influenced police organizations in creating and maintaining specialized gang units. The next section of this chapter discusses each of these decisionmaking factors.

Political Accountability. The rapid increase in the number of gang units appeared to reflect the increased number of gangs, gang members and violent crime during the late 1980s and 1990s but a number of studies describing the formation of gang units point to the role of crystallizing events as leading to the creation of a unit. Such events appeared to feature high profile incidents, such as the homicide or shooting of an innocent bystander, often a child. Although the crystallizing event may have been an isolated episode, such incidents appear to have often focused political – and hence police – attention on gang problems. This cause-and-effect underscores the inherent political nature of most police agencies (Reiner, 2000; Weisel and Painter, 1997; Huff, 1990; Meehan, 2000). Some research has suggested that gang units are formed primarily as a political response and police are accused of overreacting to gangs, inflating their numbers to justify funding requests, satisfy political interests or manipulate the public (McCorkle and Miethe 2002, 1998; Zatz, 1987; Jackson and Rudman, 1993; Meehan, 2000; Archbold and Meyer, 1999; Huff 1990; Hagedorn, 1990). Other studies – including

those conducted by Meeker, Parsons and Vila (2002); Vila and Meeker (1999); Spergel (1990); McGarrell and Chermak (2003); Decker and Kempf-Leonard (1991) – suggest that police are conservative in counting gang members and labeling of gang-related offenses, tending to underestimate rather than inflate. Since the primary function of gang units is to collect intelligence information about gangs and gang members – and these data are often co-opted or repurposed to estimate the number and size of gangs – the issue of whether gang units are formed for rational purposes or motivated by political purposes is quite controversial. A range of descriptive research suggests that police agencies are often subject to intense political pressures to respond to gangs – often directed to respond quickly and visibly (Huff and McBride, 1993; Weisel and Painter, 1997; Katz, 2001; Meehan, 2000). Media attention to gang problems, however, has often distorted public and political perceptions of gang problems, exacerbating fearfulness and exaggerating the extent and dangers of gang-related crime (Katz, Webb and Armstrong, 2003; McCorkle and Miethe, 1998, 2002).

Supervising Personnel and Preventing Corruption. Law enforcement agencies have historically disbanded or reorganized their gang units over time to redress concerns or ambivalence about the best way to handle gangs (Weisel and Painter, 1997). The Chicago Police Department was the poster child of reorganizing its gang unit. The unit was initially formed in 1967 as a gang intelligence unit. By the early 1980s, the unit quadrupled from

100 to 400 officers. In the mid-1990s, the unit was reduced from a high of 450 personnel to approximately 100, concomitant with the department's implementation of a community-policing initiative (Weisel and Painter, 1997). In 2000, the police superintendent basically disbanded its 100-person gang unit, redeploying half the unit's personnel to five area commands to work on homicides and half to the department's narcotics unit.

The disbanding of Chicago's unit occurred after the corruption of a gang investigator soured public and political confidence in the police but the dissolution of the unit compromised intelligence information about gangs. After two children were injured by gang gunfire in April 2003, the city's mayor announced that "gangs would have to pay" (Main and Sweeney, 2003) and tactical teams of 30-40 personnel were deployed into gang areas to reduce crime, improve gang intelligence and to "be aggressive."

Other police departments experienced similar reorganizations. In New York, the police department in 2000 consolidated its anti-gang efforts into a single division. Perhaps the most well known reorganization of a gang unit occurred in Los Angeles. An initial investigation of LAPD's CRASH unit in one division (Community Resources Against Street Hoodlums) suggested that the gang unit in the Rampart division had planted evidence and falsely testified against gang members, in addition to other abuses (Deutsch, 2000; Cannon, 2000). The corruption was attributed to lack of supervision over the specialized unit – a problem that has also troubled other proactive law

enforcement units such as narcotics, vice and organized crime. When further investigations of LAPD officers resulted in the reversal of about 100 gang-related convictions because of corruption concerns, the department's police chief disbanded all its specialized gang units and replaced them with anti-gang units under much closer supervision.

Measuring Effectiveness. Despite the widespread adoption of specialized gang units, some researchers questioned whether this organizational approach was more effective than other approaches to gangs by law enforcement agencies (Decker, 2002). While it is difficult to reliably measure the effectiveness of proactive police efforts for many public safety problems, much of the ambiguity about specialized gang units relates to this particular challenge, as there are no standardized and accepted measures of gangs and gang-related problems. While reactive police functions are traditionally captured in reported crimes, cases cleared, arrests made, and calls responded to (Karchmer and Eck, 1998), there is no established metric for determining the effectiveness of proactive police efforts; some evaluations have used clearance rates and changes in gang-related crime, but these measures (discussed subsequently) have some important limitations. As early as the mid-1980s, Klein, Gordon and Maxson (1986) found that specialized investigations of gang-related homicides in the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and the Los Angeles Sheriffs Office (LASO) were more successful than non-specialized investigations. Investigations of gang crimes

require specialized skills to overcome victim and witness fears of retribution; investigative knowledge of gang territories, rivalries, gang members, associates, known locations and histories contributed to more arrests.

In addition to these investigative evaluations, some evaluations of enforcement-oriented approaches of gang units also suggested positive impacts. In the early 1990s, several successful gang suppression efforts were reported. These included the Tri-Agency Resource Gang Enforcement Team (TARGET) in Westminster, CA, Operation Safe Streets (OSS) in Los Angeles County, an initiative of the Sheriff's Department, and Community Resources Against Street Hoodlums (CRASH) in the city of Los Angeles.

An evaluation of the TARGET program showed increases in the arrest and conviction of gang members, and a reduction in gang-related crime (Kent and Smith, 1995). The OSS resulted in a 38 percent drop in gang-related homicides and a 13 percent decrease in gang felony assaults (Freed, 1995). Freed suggested that the success of the OSS program might have been related to its tempered approach – rather than employ indiscriminate enforcement strategies, deputies developed rapport with the community to aid collection of intelligence information about gangs and gang members.

Other evaluations of gang control efforts examined alternative approaches to gangs, including altering traffic patterns in Los Angeles (Lasley, 1998), focusing on chronic offenders and weapons violations in Boston's well-known Operation Ceasefire (Braga, Kennedy, Waring and

Piehl, 2001), truancy and curfew enforcement in Dallas (Fritsch, Caeti and Taylor, 1999) and abatement of gang houses in Chicago (Coldren and Higgins, 2003). All used reported crime as a measure of police effectiveness; in contrast, Miethe and McCorkle (2002) used convictions and sentences to determine that a specialized gang prosecution unit was no more effective than a non-specialized gang unit.

The use of gang-related crime as a metric for measuring effectiveness of specialized gang unit has been challenged. For example, even LAPD's Rampart CRASH unit, later discredited by a corruption scandal, was recognized for reducing gang-related crime by 60 percent (Rampart Independent Review Panel, 2000). Some research suggests police collect and report gang-related crime data in order to manipulate the public and politicians and attract funding (McCorkle and Miethe, 1998, 2002, 1998; Meehan, 2000; Zatz, 1987; Bursik and Grasmick, 1995; Hagedorn, 1990). The integrity of gang-related crime data has also been attributed to poor data management and administrative practices (Spergel, 1995), definitional issues (Decker and Curry, 2000; Decker and Kempf-Leonard, 1991), failure to review gang data for accuracy (Meeker and Vila, 2002; Meeker, Parsons and Vila, 2002) and inconsistencies in complying with departmental policies (Katz, 2003).

Since the definition of gang-related crime is not standardized and the data are essentially unaudited (see, for example, Katz 2003), these data are

subject to methodological weaknesses that may mask substantial differences in quality. An estimated 60 percent of large law enforcement agencies routinely track the number of gang-related crimes within their jurisdiction (Egley and Major, 2003) but agencies have different methods for identifying these offenses. In agencies where "gang-related" is determined by patrol officers and recorded on crime incident reports, officers may not accurately identify gang involvement, resulting in over- or undercounting of the problem. In some law enforcement agencies, offense reports are reviewed and filtered by the gang unit or other specialized units. Definitional issues complicate tracking offenses; research has shown that a simple variation in definition – such as distinguishing between gang-motivated or gang-related offenses – may halve or double the number of offenses reported (Maxson, Curry and Howell, 2003).

While one might anticipate the consistent application of definition and consistent counting practices within a single agency, the reliability of gang-related offenses as a trend measure of gang problems within even a single agency is suspect (Katz, 2003; McGarrell and Chermak, 2003), when data collection tasks are decentralized. Based on a national study of gang-related homicides, Maxson, Curry and Howell (2002) conclude that such offenses – arguably the most accurately recorded gang-related offense – are substantially underestimated by law enforcement agencies. One large police agency, with no centralized approach to collecting information about street level gangs,

officially reported only one gang-related homicide in a baseline year (McGarrell and Chermak, 2003); further investigation showed that more than half of the jurisdiction's 100 homicides were related to groups of chronic offenders.

The difficulty of accurately labeling and counting gang-related offenses may be associated with different factors – including police reluctance to label crimes as gang-related to avoid political overreaction (Huff, 1990). The work of McGarrell and Chermak (2003), however, suggests that the failure to label offenses as gang-related primarily reflects inadequate information or baseline data about gang membership. In contrast to decentralized approaches to collecting gang intelligence, Meeker, Parsons and Vila (2002) found that specialized gang units produced the most accurate information on gangs and gang members – creating a more reliable baseline for accurately identifying, and thus monitoring the amount of, gang-related crime. Even in jurisdictions where gang-related crime can be reliably recorded, impact evaluations may be hampered by the quantity of data. Klein (1995), cautioned:

> Most cities lack sufficient data to conduct rigorous evaluations: [there are not] enough neighborhoods, enough gangs, enough gang violence to control for all the chance factors that can affect results (p. 154).

Although research evaluations could compare different jurisdictions to redress issues of data quantity, such evaluations would be hampered by the wide variation in gangs, settings and responses of law enforcement. These

variations inherently necessitate that each jurisdiction design its own evaluation. Evaluations of police effectiveness will also be influenced by demands for police to respond to public and political perceptions of problems since research suggests that perceptions of crime and fear of gangs are shaped as much by media attention and rare events as by reasonable calculations of risk (Katz, McGuire, and Roncek, 2002; Katz, Webb and Armstrong, 2003).

Community and Problem-Oriented Policing. The debate and drama surrounding the increase in the number of specialized gang units occurred during an unprecedented paradigm shift in American policing as the nation witnessed an extraordinary increase in police commitment to community policing during the 1990s. By the end of the decade, the vast majority of police and sheriff's agencies reported participating in community policing (Hickman and Reaves, 2003). The movement created widespread expectations that police departments would decentralize and despecialize – eliminating special units and putting more generalist officers on the street (Maguire, 1997; Greene, 2001; Zhao, Lovrich and Robinson, 2001).

Indeed, many community-based models to control gangs were extensively funded by federal agencies in the 1990s including the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS). The Comprehensive Gang Initiative was funded in 1993 by BJA to implement a prevention and crime control prototype model in four sites using

problem solving. Additional sites were later added through BJA's Comprehensive Communities program. The adaptable and multifaceted problem-solving approach was developed by the Police Executive Research Forum to help communities address gang problems using four stages (Weisel and Stedman, 1998). In addition, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) funded a national Comprehensive Community-Wide Approach to Gang Prevention, Intervention and Suppressions Program using a model developed by Spergel. In 1994, OJJDP released promising approaches from the model. A major gang initiative funded by COPS in 1996 infused funding for community policing efforts into 15 cities with gang problems. Departments involved in the initiative employed myriad responses, including the development of relational databases, training of patrol personnel about gang problems, coordination of gang unit activities with other agencies such as parole and probation, and other outreach efforts. Each of these grants included an evaluation component, and findings from these evaluations largely suggested positive effects (Decker, 2003; Reed and Decker, 2003).

As early as 1995, Spergel (1995) noted that problem-oriented approaches for gang problems were promising and were growing in popularity; however, some researchers expressed skepticism about their impact on gang problems. Huff (1990) warned that community- and problem-oriented strategies could limit the citywide knowledge of gangs if police

focused on small areas – a concern due to the presumed mobility of gangs. Klein (1998) expressed concerns that problem-oriented approaches to gangs would increase gang cohesion through the use of enforcement in small areas. Other researchers concluded that the gang activities of most police gang units are largely traditional and suppression-oriented, and thus ineffective because they fail to prevent youth from joining gangs and intervene to get youth out of gangs (Curry and Decker, 2003; Decker, 2003b; Greene, 2003).

Despecialization and Decentralization. The rise of community and problem-oriented policing appeared contradictory to the creation of specialized gang units in police agencies during the 1990s. Police managers have long been cautioned about specialization in police agencies, as it increases the complexity of coordinating various police functions. A detailed case study of the London Metropolitan Police reflects the propensity of police agencies to form specialized units when crises occur – "When in doubt, form a special unit and rush about" (Kennedy, 1987). This tendency towards specialization may reflect police responses that are symbolic or rhetorical and divorced from substantive changes in policing practices.

A deeper organizational issue in creating specialized units is the ongoing organizational tension about the appropriate balance between proactive and reactive strategies – a key issue in community policing. This tension has historically been associated with specialized units, as described in the New York Police Department:

> Specialized units [were] trained to handle particular types of crimes, especially those that were drug-related….This reflected a fear that some patrol officers might be tempted to become involved in corrupt activities, such as drug dealing, themselves. In general, community policing initiatives had created a tension between personnel deployment strategies designed to provide maximum visibility of officers and those designed to deal with high-crime areas (Heskett, 1996).

Since measures of police impact and activity related to gangs are indirect and not routinely available, gang control relies heavily on officer discretion, creating concerns about corruption, productivity, equity and difficulties with supervision.

In addition to concerns about corruption and supervision of its gang unit, the Chicago Police Department's reorganization of its gang unit in 2000 was influenced, at least in part, by a desire to decentralize and subordinate specialists to uniformed officers with geographic responsibility as part of its community policing initiative. The scale of the city's gang problems, however, with an estimated 60,000 or more gang members, places the problem on a different scale than most jurisdictions in the nation.

Despite concerns about police specialization, organizational theory literature suggests that specialization is necessary in large organizations in order to handle complex problems that span geographic boundaries, require specialized skills and training and must be coordinated across functional units. Moore (1992), too, acknowledges that forming a special unit is preferable to passively waiting for problems to occur but recommends that special units be

limited to emerging and complex problems that require technical skills. Organizationally, specialized units provide police organizations with flexibility for addressing problems that are volatile. Shifts and assignments for specialized officers can be changed more easily than for generalist personnel, permitting police managers to deploy special units as problems rise and fall, or move. Specialized units also provide an organizational locus for expertise and responsibility for gang-related problems, allowing police managers to establish accountability for specific problems.

Relationships with Minority Communities. The rise in the number of gangs and gang units brought increased attention to the relationship of police with citizens in minority communities – these were the areas where many gang problems appeared deeply rooted. In some jurisdictions, news reports and research studies described police approaches to gang members as heavy-handed – approaches that resulted in abuses of civil rights and undermined police relationships with communities. By the mid-1990s, based on experience and research, police increasingly recognized the limitations of indiscriminate crackdowns as a response to gang-related problems. In many communities, police responses to gang problems illustrated the inherent conflict with public expectations that police control crime *and* that police be efficient, effective and fair. Attentive to charges of racial profiling, the public, politicians and police considered the impact and perceptions about

indiscriminate deterrent practices of police inherent in the broad application of suppression tactics.

Of note, the community policing movement was motivated, in large part, by concerns about the prevalence of crime in low-income minority communities and the equitable delivery of police services to those communities. While many police increased their service in these communities, police tactics – such as zero tolerance and use of force – were initially employed to respond to crime. But such tactics contributed in some cases to deterioration in the relationship between police and minority communities. There is no doubt that some police responses to crime in minority communities unintentionally exacerbated the tensions between police and citizens through the use of indiscriminate practices that were exclusively reliant on high-levels of enforcement for a range of minor offenses. Much contemporary thought suggests that such heavy-handed tactics – touted as having contributed to some reductions in crime – in fact worsened police relations with citizens when more effective and efficient policing tactics were available (Cordner, 1998; Lyons and Scheingold, 2000; Meares and Kahan, 1998). Early advocates of community policing were concerned about the supervision of uniformed officers in exercising discretion within communities, including the opportunity for corruption. The evolution of community policing by the late 1990s, however, brought about a focus on steady shifts and geographic decentralization of police, giving uniform personnel greater

knowledge and responsibility for specific areas. In many ways, these strategies gave primacy to the role of uniformed officers and facilitated police establishing long-term relationships with local citizens and increased police knowledge of local problems. For perhaps the first time in American policing, these organizational changes placed centralized and specialized units in a role subordinate to and supportive of patrol. As much as any other factor, this geographic responsibility has reduced policing willingness to engage in tactics – even though they may produce some short-term effects – that undermine the relationships between police and citizens.

Technological Advances. In recent years, technological advances have played a major role in transforming the gang control efforts of police and have influenced police in becoming more strategic in gang control efforts. Technology permits police to use data that are collected about gang members, to examine the spatial distribution of gang members and the relationship of this distribution to reported crimes and calls for service, and thus prioritize problem areas. Technology also permits police to systematically analyze the locations, activities and associates of gang members – in fact, automated analysis of good quality data may eventually supplant deduction for detectives as such data can be used to identify suspects by moniker, associates or vehicles, and used to focus police attention on locations where suspects may be located. Upon arrival at a crime scene, gang investigators may bring information about gangs or gang members that will facilitate initial

investigations, including rapid identification of suspects, witnesses or vehicles in cases where physical evidence may be scant and witnesses reluctant. Technology provides a tool for police when the scale of problems can be expected to exceed information that even an experienced officer could store and access mentally.

Technological advances have increased the accessibility of data and tools for data analysis and these are widely used to document and examine gang problems. Meeker, Parsons and Vila (2002) described a regional gang database incorporating Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to focus patrols and investigative resources on emerging hot spots, and provide timely and reliable baseline information about gang-related incidents. Kennedy, Braga and Piehl (1997) and Block (2000) described the use of GIS for focusing police resources on gang crimes. Mobile data terminals in police patrol vehicles that provide officers with quick access to gang databases have potential for use in many ways including the integration of digital photo lineups to show witnesses to identify suspects in gang-related crimes. Link analysis, which permits computers to query and identify relationships between elements such as modus operandi, partial suspect information, and vehicles provides a resource to resolve cases that would otherwise remain unsolved – due to the absence of willing witnesses common to gang-related cases. Spatial and temporal analyses permit law enforcement agencies to deploy personnel consistent with the distribution of problems in the community, and

take much of the guesswork out of management strategies by permitting police to develop strategies based on empirical data.

Functions of Gang Units

Since the early 1990s, police departments have been widely encouraged to track the number of gangs, gang members and gang-related crimes (Curry, Ball and Fox, 1994; Curry, Ball and Decker, 1996; Huff and McBride, 1993). Indeed, the gathering of intelligence information – typically also employed as a device to track the rise and fall of gangs, gang members and gang-related crimes – reflects the most common function of specialized gang units in law enforcement agencies. The functional activities of police gang units have often been classified as intelligence-gathering, criminal investigations, suppression, and prevention (Needle and Stapleton, 1983; Huff and McBride, 1993; Klein, 1995; Spergel, 1995; Webb and Katz, 2003) and Spergel (1995) identified an emerging trend toward community-based problem-solving gang control efforts. There have been no estimates of the distribution of such functions among police although the National Youth Gang Survey examined police use of some tactics associated with community-based problem solving.

The prevalence of different functions within gang units was examined in the mid-1990s. Using data from a sample of about 260 police gang units, Klein (1995) reported that most units – 82% – engaged in gathering

intelligence information about gangs and gang members; about 46% engaged in investigations and 40% engaged in suppression. In this landmark description of law enforcement strategies, Klein (1995) did not specifically define "suppression," but used the term to denote indiscriminate tactics applied in a heavy-handed manner by police. Such tactics listed by Klein's respondents included sweeps, intensified patrol, hot spot targeting, directed patrol, selective enforcement, harassment, saturation, special surveillance, zero tolerance, crime suppression, caravanning, and crackdowns. Klein noted that some law enforcement respondents found such "suppression" approaches highly objectionable yet he did not distinguish harassment and zero tolerance from directed patrol or targeting of hot spots.

The definition of suppression is further blurred by an examination of Spergel (1991) who took a broad programmatic approach to classify responses to gangs as consisting of prevention, intervention and suppression. A detailed classification scheme developed by Spergel et al. (1994) further classified gang programs into five categories – suppression, community organization, social intervention, opportunities provision, and organizational change. In this classification scheme, Spergel described "suppression" as including all types of criminal justice responses – intelligence gathering, investigative functions, monitoring and identification of gang members, and even prosecution and adjudication. Spergel, however, distinguished between what he called a "war model" of vigorous and extreme suppression police policies – calling these

uninformed and insensitive suppression – and those that were community-based problem-solving efforts. Spergel's work discussed the police role of suppression although he advocated its integration within broader gang strategies – all focused on preventing, reducing or controlling gang-related violence. Of note, Spergel's work was supported under the auspices of the National Youth Gang Suppression and Intervention Program, funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The model and language continue to be used in OJJDP's Comprehensive Plan, which has been widely adopted across the nation

The distinction in language related to the term "suppression" when used to describe police responses to gangs is not trivial because there is evidence that the language and practices have been widely adopted. Klein noted in 1995 that the notion of suppression was offensive to many police personnel, and implied that indiscriminate practices threatened the constitutional liberties of minorities. In many venues, the term "suppression" has a negative connotation that invokes concerns about equity and fairness in policing, "aggressive policing" implying excessive use of force, and police corruption. Despite these concerns, there was widespread consensus among gang researchers by 2003 that suppression was the primary strategy of law enforcement agencies (Fritsch, Caeti and Taylor, 2003, Greene, 2003; Decker, 2003b). Decker and Curry (2003) defined suppression as

> A strategy that depends on the use of law enforcement and the criminal justice system and incapacitates the offender through criminal

> sanctions. Suppression strategies target individuals after they have broken the law (p. 191).

This conceptualization of suppression appears to draw from the broad definition employed by Spergel (1991) since it includes the retrospective investigation of incidents reported to the police. Under this definition, a wide range of police activities – including surveillance, monitoring of chronic offenders or problem locations and even truancy initiatives and code enforcement and nuisance abatement would be classified as suppression (Greene, 2003).

In contrast to the broad view of suppression, other researchers have used suppression more narrowly as a synonym for enforcement (Huff and McBride, 1993; Webb and Katz, 2003). Webb and Katz (2003) specifically classified intelligence gathering as a "non-suppression function" (p. 27) following the Klein classification. Huff and Shafer (2002) further distinguished suppression from "ultra-suppression," defining the latter as over reliance by law enforcement on reactive, punitive, and illegal approaches typified by LAPD's CRASH unit.

In a national survey of law enforcement agencies, Egley (2000) distinguished between suppression approaches and "moderate" law enforcement policies, asking law enforcement respondents to rank the relative effectiveness of these strategies (as well as prevention and early intervention, community mobilization, opportunities provision and social intervention). In the subsequent survey in 2000, the term suppression is notably absent and

Egley and Arjunan (2002) classified police responses as consisting of investigation, intelligence-gathering and patrol/enforcement. Despite their limitations, these studies comprise what is known about the strategies and tactics of specialized gang units. The functional classification model reflects traditional activities and functions of police officers; it also emphasizes process rather than focusing on the quality and impact of police efforts related to gangs.

Need for Research

As described in this chapter, there are not reliable data about the number of gang members, the number of gangs, variations in types of gangs or the amount of gang-related crime within jurisdictions. Hence, it is not surprising that little is known about the range of organizational configurations and approaches used by police agencies to control gangs. This dearth of information is complicated by different understandings of terms such as strategy and tactic, suppression and prevention, and definitional differences for counting gangs, gang members and gang-related problems. The absence of such standards limits descriptions and comparisons of different police practices and provides no reliable basis to evaluate their effectiveness – such as reductions in the number of gangs or gang members or the frequency and severity of gang behaviors.

As Spergel (1995) pointed out – "a great deal more descriptive and evaluative research is needed to determine the specific nature and effectiveness of these various police community gang problem strategies and programs" (p. 206). Such research is particularly necessary to reflect changes that have influenced the environment of gang control efforts and the operations of police organizations – awareness of racial profiling, improved data and technology, as well as the adoption of community and problem-oriented policing.

There has been little examination of the use and effectiveness of community- and problem-oriented policing in addressing gangs. While some researchers have characterized gang suppression and problem-oriented policing of gang problems as fundamentally different strategies (Decker, 2003; Greene, 2003), there has been little inquiry into how the threat of criminal sanctions relates to a range of anti-gang tactics, including target hardening, civil sanctions and crime prevention. The wide variety of tactics currently employed by police to respond to gangs – from truancy initiatives to nuisance abatement to civil injunctions – suggests that enforcement is not the central mechanism of police in responding to gangs. Thus, the notion of gang units as engaging in four functions – intelligence gathering, investigations, enforcement and prevention – is likely to mask important functions of gang units within the paradigm of community and problem-oriented policing.

In this report, we develop a classification scheme to describe and document gang-control activities in contemporary law enforcement agencies. The classification scheme, developed in consultation with gang unit personnel, contains categories to document the activities of gang personnel and to assess the extent to which these functional activities relate to the specific goals and objectives of the gang unit and those of the police department.

Police practitioners need policy-relevant information about the types and effectiveness of police gang-control efforts. Police agencies need to know if specialized follow-up investigations are the most effective approach to gangs, whether intelligence gathering results in more convictions, and determine the effects of directed patrol efforts in gang hot spots. Unless police agencies can quantify their "expenditure" for each of these functions, it is difficult to assess the impact associated with different approaches.

In the next chapter of this report, we describe the classification scheme and the use of this framework for documenting police activities. The research findings described subsequently in this report reflect on the practices of gang-control efforts by two police departments, providing descriptive information about police activities and how these activities comprise strategic approaches to gangs. This research examines the ways in which police gang-control efforts are integrated with community-policing functions, including observations of the nature and frequency of police contact with gang

members, citizens, and other police. The study also examined the context of the police agency's response – including estimations of the gang problem, an assessment of its origin and evolution, and the political environment in which the agency operates.

CHAPTER II: STUDYING GANG UNITS

To address the need for research described in Chapter 1, a descriptive research study was undertaken by the Police Executive Research Forum to examine the form and function of gang units in two different jurisdictions. The primary purpose of the study was to identify, describe and measure the activities in which specialized gang units engage and to determine the link between these activities and the stated organizational goals and objectives of the police agency. The research approach consisted of a qualitative examination of police department procedures and practices, and extensive field observation of gang personnel. The project also included extensive interviews with police leaders and other personnel in each agency to determine the rationale for gang-control policies. The procedures for data collection are discussed in this chapter.

Approach to Research

This study examined police responses to gang problems, focusing on the context and specific gang-control activities carried out by gang units of law enforcement agencies in San Diego and Indianapolis, IN. The jurisdictions were purposively selected, based predominately on the organization's observed commitment and experiences in community policing. Sites were also selected to reflect contrasting experiences with gangs and contrasting organizational responses to gangs. These differences helped frame

the varied range of approaches law enforcement agencies use to address their local gang problems. To select sites for study, only large agencies with service populations of 250,000 or more were considered. Agencies were required to have a well-established gang unit and a substantial gang problem. Existing data were available to guide the selection process; these data included information in the Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics survey, the 1996 and 1997 National Youth Gang Surveys, the Institute for Intergovernmental Research 1998 National Street Gang Survey Report, and the 1997 Macro/PERF Survey on Community Policing. Preliminary agencies were identified and contacted to verify information about their organizations, elaborate the current nature of their gang problem, and provide preliminary details about the gang unit including functions and activities, number of personnel, and year of formation.[2]

The two departments that were selected for this study differed substantially in terms of their approach to gangs. These differences included the organizational locus of the gang unit, the size of the unit, its visibility and its policing strategy. The San Diego Police Department deployed a fairly large unit serving a dual purpose of investigations and street level enforcement while the Indianapolis Police Department used a covert unit – that operated as a Safe Streets Task Force with the FBI – to engage in high-level investigations.

[2] The project's advisory group guided the site selection process and final selection.

The gang unit of the San Diego Police Department was much larger – 42 personnel compared to 10 in Indianapolis. Although the gang units in both departments were located in investigative divisions, their investigative priorities differed. Gang investigators in San Diego focused on all felony violent crimes that are considered gang-related crimes and they carry investigative responsibility for these cases; gang investigators in Indianapolis initiated proactive and predominately long-term investigations of the most serious gangs – gangs which typically were not considered street-level gangs.[3]

Once the sites were selected, the study focused on documenting the ways in which gang control efforts fit within the overall community-oriented police mission of each agency. The goal was to compare each police organization's policies on gangs with its operational practices related to gangs. The research employed a multi-faceted approach employing interview and observational data collection methods. The study was also informed by an examination of departmental gang policies through documents such as general and special orders, supplemented with interviews with police leaders, and gang unit supervisors and officers.

Police practices of gang control were documented through extensive observations of police activity — the methodology of Systematic Social Observation described by Mastrofski et al (1998). On-site research staff in

[3] While San Diego also participates in a Safe Streets Task Force with the FBI and two gang unit personnel were assigned to that team, the focus on this study was on the police department's in-house Gang Unit.

each city carried out the bulk of observation activities, systematically documenting gang-control activities for a period of three months. Through analysis of this data, researchers were able to document the nature and extent of contact between gang personnel and the community, gang-involved or at-risk youth, and collaboration with other police units, including community policing efforts. Departmental gang practices were further examined through interviews with community leaders.

Research Design

The study consisted of an examination of police responses to gang problems in San Diego and Indianapolis. The purpose of the study was to compare police policy regarding gang control to actual police practices in the context of community policing. The examination of articulated police policy and practice helps facilitate a discussion of the ways in which gang-control personnel incorporate or address the community-oriented mission of the policy agency, and an assessment of the extent to which community policing and gang-control efforts are compatible. In general, the interviews were conducted to learn about the current gang unit and its evolution over time, its goals and objectives, and its strategic approach to gangs.

The study consisted of two phases – examining police policy and examining police practice. The first portion of the study was guided by the following research questions:

- What are the mission and objectives, functions and activities of the gang unit as described by departmental policy and procedure and articulated by police leaders?

- What events and factors led to this approach to address gangs?

- How were priorities established for gang-control efforts?

- What outcomes do police leaders seek?

- What measures are used to determine attainment of these outcomes?

- How does this approach fit within the department's community policing efforts?

The second phase was guided by the additional research questions:

- What discrete tasks comprise the work of gang unit personnel?

- How much time is allocated to these discrete tasks?

The two phases of the study were thus intended to address the extent to which time allocated to tasks was consistent with the mission and objectives of the police agency and the gang unit. In addition, the study also examined police practices related to the nature and extent of gang unit contact with other police personnel, community members, gang members and others. In large part, a major focus of the study was to identify and describe the range of contemporary police practices in addressing gangs; we sought to classify police activities into more discrete categories than the dominant classification scheme consisting of prevention, suppression, investigation and intelligence-gathering.

Examining Police Policy

Police policies set the standard for police operations. Police leaders and others typically use policies to articulate the formal goals and objectives for operational activities. Such policies often describe police gang control efforts and community policing. To obtain knowledge about police policies, written information was collected including general and special orders, mission statements, annual reports, organizational charts, and studies or reports about police activities. Additional descriptive information was also collected, including agency size, population served and economic and political characteristics; general and special orders and mission statements regarding community policing and the gang unit. A Lexus/Nexus search was also conducted to identify any published news articles, reports, court cases and other documentation that contributed to understanding the nature or context of each agency's police gang-control polices.

In addition to reviewing documents, interviews were conducted with the agency's chief executive officer, top assistants and police leaders in each agency to determine the articulated and conceptual rationale for the organization's gang control policy. Interviews were also completed with a small sample of police managers with line level responsibility for some aspect of police operations affected by gang unit activities. These police leaders included homicide, narcotics and investigations commanders, and patrol

commanders with operational responsibility for areas where gang problems were severe.

A purposive sampling procedure was used to interview a wide range of police leaders. The interview process was guided by a semi-structured interview protocol. The majority of interviews were recorded and most lasted one-hour in duration. Research staff completed six interviews of command level police personnel in Indianapolis and seven interviews in San Diego.

Examining Police Practice

Police practices may be consistent with or vary from articulated policies. Observations, views or interpretation of police practices may also vary by source; community leaders, gang unit personnel, and other police officers are likely to have different perceptions about police practices.

To begin the examination of police practices related to gang control, basic information was collected about each department's gang unit and any related gang-control activities carried out by other personnel. Descriptive information was collected about staffing, resources, selection criteria, training opportunities, distribution of assignments within the unit and other practices. In-depth interviews were conducted with personnel in the gang unit having direct line responsibility for gang problems.

Interviews were conducted with a sample of gang unit personnel in San Diego and all gang personnel in Indianapolis to gain insight into the

general operational approach to gangs. All interviews were guided by a semi-structured instrument; most were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed. Interviews typically ranged from one to three hours in length. To elicit open responses, all respondents were assured anonymity. A total of 12 interviews were conducted in Indianapolis – all the personnel in the gang unit – and 18 in San Diego. Due to the size of the SDGU, a sampling procedure was used to insure a wide range of personnel were interviewed. Selection criteria included age, ethnicity, gender, time in department and in gang unit, and team assignment.

In addition to gathering perceptions about police practices from within the police department, we recognized that others are likely to have distinctive perceptions about the nature of the local gang problem and the response of police to gang problems. To shed light on police practices, we identified a limited number of community activists such as heads of neighborhood groups, business organizations or minority groups along with political activists such as elected officials. We identified candidates for these interviews from newspaper articles and referrals from the police department. The sample was purposive, as respondents were selected based upon their knowledge or perceptions of police gang efforts. In general, these individuals were queried regarding their perception of the nature, extent and changes of the local gang problem using a semi-structured interview guide. Individuals were also asked about the nature and effectiveness of anti-gang efforts conducted by the local

police and an assessment of the extent to which community input is sought and incorporated into the police response.

In Indianapolis, seven key community leaders, with substantive knowledge of the local gang problems, were interviewed. These individuals represented members of the local religious community, a high-school principal, a member of the Department of Health (which maintained responsibility for public presentations), and a street gang worker who was a former gang member. Three individuals in San Diego community with substantive knowledge of the local gang problems were interviewed – a youth organizer, religious leader and city councilor.

Developing Observation Protocols

Based on information gathered from interviews, the researchers developed a preliminary typology of activities in which gang unit officers were spending their time. Many of these categories of activities paralleled activity categories employed by Parks et al (1999) in a study of patrol and community policing officers. These similar categories included administration, *en route* (officer travel to a dispatched location), and personal. In contrast to Parks' study, the study in this report focused primarily on specialized personnel with investigative and intelligence-gathering responsibilities. Thus, additional categories of activities emerged from interviews including investigations, such as interviewing witnesses or

suspects; directed patrols, such as monitoring problem locations; and collecting intelligence information about individuals such as license plates, location information or associates.

Some of these activity categories seemed rather broad. To further refine a classification scheme that would form the basis of an observation protocol, informal group discussions were held with personnel in both gang units. In these discussions, officers were asked to estimate the proportion of time spent in each of those activities. A major focus on these discussions was to add detail to our understanding of gang unit functions by describing subsets of activities that might comprise suppression or other gang unit tasks such as case investigations and intelligence gathering.

The discussions yielded additional categories that police described as comprising substantial portions of their time. For example, San Diego detectives reported spending a great deal of time using computers to update records and files – time that was not engaged in investigative searches but best be considered as data maintenance. Similarly, Indianapolis detectives reported that nearly all their time was spent in covert investigative activities, such as surveillance or wiretaps, necessitating the need for further disaggregation of this category.

Based on this information, an observation instrument was developed with some slight modifications to adjust for the differing styles employed in gang control efforts. By including departmental personnel in the development

of the observation instrument, the research staff was also able to address officers' questions and concerns about being closely observed for a period of months. The process helped establish rapport between researchers and police personnel.

Research Procedures

To carefully document and examine the nature and emphasis of police gang-control functions, extensive observations were conducted over a three-month period. This observational period documented the nature and extent in which gang unit personnel participated in identifiable gang control activities such as prevention, investigations, community interaction, intelligence-gathering, or enforcement. Because the Indianapolis gang unit did not include a uniformed component, patrol officers in one police district in Indianapolis were also observed.

An on-site field researcher was hired to conduct the observations of personnel over a three-month period (13 weeks) in each agency. All field researchers were trained by the project staff. To guide the training process, an instruction booklet was developed which modeled the detailed observation instructions used by Mastrofski and Parks (1990). As part of training, project staff accompanied on-site researchers on a sample of ride-alongs. Project staff and the on-site researcher independently recorded their observations using the observation forms, event forms and field journal. After the training

observations, comparisons of data collected were compared in order to ensure inter-rater reliability and to identify inconsistencies, clarify problem areas and misunderstandings.

To establish the observer's relationship within the gang unit and minimize the risk of research subjects altering their behavior during observation, the study design used an extended observation period and repeated observations of officers. Field journals maintained by the observers indicated that behavioral changes due to observation were few. During most of the observations, officers engaged in a range of activities that appeared to reflect lack of concern about the researcher's presence. The view of the research staff was that observed officers proceeded with "business as usual" and were largely oblivious to the observations.

Observation periods consisted of an officer's full shift of duty, beginning with roll call and continuing until sign-off. Each observed officer was ensured of confidentiality for the study through the use of an identification number recorded on all observation forms. Basic demographic information about each officer was collected and matched to each officer's identification number in the database.

In San Diego, a sample of officers was selected from the unit for observation, minimizing the number of "first-time" observations and providing the researcher the opportunity to develop a relationship with subjects and limit any behavioral changes related to the presence of the

researcher. The sample consisted of 20 personnel, including 14 detectives and 6 uniformed personnel – a sampling plan that approximated the department's ratio of investigators to uniformed officers in the unit. The sample was also constructed to reflect variation of demographic factors within the gang unit – race, gender, age, and time in the unit. Given the small population, this sampling strategy ensured that variation of these demographic characteristics was included along with shift assignment and tour of duty by day of week. While prior research has not differentiated these variables in terms of officer activities – and our sample was too small to elucidate any differences by these characteristics – one can articulate differing police behaviors related to time on duty, race and gender. Similarly, it is presumed that differences in tour of duty would also generate differences in officer activities – with weekday evenings early in the week producing much less interaction between police and gangs than later in the week. In fact, the department's shift schedule was developed to fit these variations in gang activity – with times of field interviews being used to approximate active gang times. The research sample was intentionally developed to include the most active gang times – including the majority of weekend shifts during the observation period.

The San Diego sample included six African American, five Latino, and nine Caucasian officers. Five females and 15 males were in the sample; time in the unit ranged from 0-6 years of service, with an average service of

two years. The age of individuals in the sample ranged from 29-53, with an average of 39.

In Indianapolis, the original sample consisted of all personnel in the gang unit – six detectives. Although we anticipated observing these investigators for the entire project period (13 weeks), observations of these personnel over a six-week period showed little variation in their activities over time, and also underscored the one-dimensional approach of the covert investigative unit. From a research perspective, these early observations underscored the recognition that gang units in police agencies are substantively different.

To supplement the observations of the Indianapolis gang detectives, we selected a sample of uniformed officers for observation. This sample was drawn from Neighborhood Resources Officers (NRO), a tactical patrol complement in the North Patrol district, a geographic area that represented many of the gang problems in the city. Officers went into the sampling frame if they were mentioned two or more times for their knowledge of gangs by community policing supervisors, generalist detectives, narcotics detectives and uniformed supervisors in the North district. The resultant sample consisted of five NRO officers who worked different shifts and geographical areas of the North district. Three additional officers were observed when the selected sampling plan could not be followed due to changes in shift assignment, such as sickness or unplanned days off. The total sample for

Indianapolis thus included 14 individuals: one Asian, eight African-American, and five Caucasians. The all-male group ranged from 27-48 years of age, with a mean of 37. Time-in the unit was not computed for this group.

Defining Gang Unit Activities

For this study, an "activity" was defined as a unit of police work. An activity consisted of responding to a call, writing a citation, backing up another officer or any other discrete activity. Importantly, the observation plan permitted recording officers as engaging in more than one activity at a time – for example, searching for a suspect but engaged in radio communication. The latter activity was categorized as a secondary activity.

A preliminary list categorizing activities was developed following interviews with line personnel. During these interviews, officers were asked to describe the activities that occurred each day. A comprehensive but preliminary list of officer activities was crafted for each agency. These lists were discussed with police personnel during focus group-type meetings, and personnel were asked to comment on the categories – categories that were designed to add detail to the more general concepts of enforcement, prevention, intelligence and investigations.

Based on these procedures, the following describes the discrete activity categories in which the behaviors of officers were recorded, including examples of officer activities that result in substantial amount of time for

carrying out the activity. For both Indianapolis and San Diego, ***enforcement activities*** included traffic stops, tickets, consent searches, 4th waiver searches, search warrants, on-scene arrest time, pursuing suspects on foot or by car, or warning individuals or groups. ***Enforcement administration*** consisted of processing arrests, booking and transporting suspects.

In San Diego, two types of investigations activities were developed. One category of investigations (called ***Investigations I)*** included interviewing suspects, victims, witnesses, conducting jail interviews or interviews with individuals to gather information about *specific* offenses as part of follow-up investigations. This category also included conducting surveillance or other undercover work, and wrapping up cases by preparing information for court – known as constructing "DA packets" to support prosecution efforts. These investigative efforts in this category were always related to specific cases under investigation and included the officer's contact with police or others for information related specifically to an offense.

A second category of investigations (known as ***Investigations II***) was included because San Diego officers stated they spent much time examining electronic or manual files (such as moniker or photo files) for links between individuals and leads for specific cases. This activity is distinct from data maintenance, described subsequently.

In Indianapolis, detectives estimated they spent the large majority of their time on Investigations I. Thus, the activity list was disaggregated into the types of investigative activities including:

- ***Interviews*** with suspects, victims, or others related to specific cases – these cases were not investigations of specific criminal offenses but consisted or proactive investigations of particular groups or individuals within groups.

- ***Surveillance*** of specific places or specific persons related to a case.

- ***Covert activity*** for investigative or intelligence-gathering purposes, including buy/bust operations.

- Work on ***wiretaps*** including paper work to establish wiretap and monitoring or reviewing wiretaps related to specific investigations.

- ***Warrant service***, including paper work and other administrative steps to obtain or serve arrest or search warrants.

- ***Case preparation*** for purposes of prosecution of specific cases.

A category labeled ***intelligence gathering*** was used to record face-to-face contacts between police and others – including field interviews – in which information was collected to *generally* assist with investigations, develop sources, informants or contacts, assist in documenting gang membership, provide photographs for files, and build background history on gang members and their activities. This category was distinguished from investigations as intelligence gathering is motivated or related to collecting general information – although the general information may be about specific

individuals – rather than to *specific* case investigations of offenses or proactive investigations.

Communication included communicating via radio or MDT for information on vehicles or individuals. These tasks included running license plates, warrant checks, probation/parole status, obtaining background information, checking the Officer Notification System and other databases.

Officers indicated they spent much time engaged in ***travel*** — moving from one place or area to another specific place or area. This time was viewed as substantively different from ***scanning***, in which officers monitored places and/or people, particularly looking for trouble or general information sources. While scanning did not involve looking for specific people, officers viewed this activity as preventive maintenance or a type of directed patrol. In contrast, officers described one activity as searching, in which they physically looked for specific suspects, witnesses or victims, typically via car or on foot.

In an activity known as ***automated data maintenance***, officers update computer files, reviewing documentation for completeness and accuracy, documenting gang members, entering data or purging records. In contrast, analysis of such data was recorded as Investigations II.

The activity of ***information exchange or networking*** captures officers attending roll calls within their unit, communicating strategic plans, discussing operations and directed patrols. The category also included attending roll calls with area commands or other police meetings, meeting

with other units or personnel from other units, providing informal training to patrol officers or others, reviewing papers and reports, and exchanging information about suspects and others of general nature. If such meetings were strictly about specific cases, this activity was coded as investigations. This activity category also included exchanges with other criminal justice practitioners such as probation/parole officers, school resource officers and social service workers.

A ***court*** activity variable involved testifying in court, meeting with prosecutors on cases, consulting, and providing other assistance with case preparation such as testifying as an expert witness. This variable excluded the preparation of DA packets that culminated investigative efforts recorded in Investigations I.

Calls included responding to calls for service or unit call-outs, handling crime scenes, citizen requests or any general police work. Similarly, ***assists*** included providing backup, support or assistance to other officers, including observing or covering for officer safety, assisting area personnel or detectives.

The activity of ***training*** was used to record any attendance at formal training sessions such as CALGANG or conferences. Since gang officers make presentations to groups, an activity labeled ***presentations*** captured time spent preparing and delivering presentations about gangs to schools, to groups, and at community meetings. Similarly, an activity called ***community***

contacts was developed to record the collection of *general* information on gang-related problems from the community; specific information about gang members or gangs was recorded as intelligence gathering; specific information on offenses under investigation or cases being developed was coded as investigations. This category included informal contact with citizens through community meetings, schools, or other venues.

An activity called ***proactive intervention*** was developed to record any counseling, advising, or service referrals made to gang members or persons at-risk. ***Administrative*** tasks including preparation of reports, letters, activity logs, and other administrative activity including talking with supervisors about work, or with colleagues about general work-related matters. A category called "***other***" was developed to record personal time including coffee and food breaks, restroom, phone calls, and talking with others about non-work related matters.

In addition to recording the amount of time devoted to each of the identified activities, the observer also documented the nature and extent of contact between police personnel and the community, gang-involved or at-risk youth, and collaboration with other agencies and with other police personnel. The purposes of the observation component of the research were multiple:

- To observe and document the nature and prevalence of specific activities of the gang unit, adding detail to general categories that have been previously been used to describe gang control efforts;
- To understand the decisions or motivations behind officer actions;

- To observe management practices of the gang unit;
- To observe how the gang unit personnel interact with personnel from other units, the community (including victims or complainants, and offenders or suspects) and the criminal justice system or affected institutions (such as schools, anti-gang or juvenile programs, recreation programs, and others); and,
- To identify key community groups and individuals involved in addressing each city's gang problem.

The bulk of the observations occurred during routine ride-alongs with uniformed gang personnel and walk-alongs with detective personnel. In addition to ride-alongs, on-site project staff attended unit roll calls, multi-agency task force meetings, community meetings and other meetings in which gang-control activities or planning were carried out.

Data Collection Procedures

The observation protocol consisted of three data collection instruments: the observation log for activities, an event log and a field journal.[4] Each instrument is described subsequently and included in the appendix. These nested instruments were designed to collect a variety of information about the sequence and extent of activities, the nature of the activities, officers' decision making processes, internal/external contacts and the field observer's assessment of the events and activities during each observation. The instruments were field tested twice during site visits at each

[4] These instruments were modeled after those used in Parks et al (1999).

study site and revisions were made to insure that the measures were comprehensive but practical for each location.

An observation log was the primary data collection instrument. This log was developed to record the type and length of all activities that police personnel engaged in during their shifts. This log was designed to capture the amount of time that police personnel devoted to various activities and the extent to which multiple activities were undertaken simultaneously. The observer recorded the time of all activities and events that occurred during each shift. All activities were noted, including receipt of radio transmissions, observations of problem locations, transit time, interaction between police personnel, and interaction with the community, interaction with gangs, official police action, personal time and so forth. In addition, all substantive gang control activities such as enforcement actions, interactions with community members, and investigations were documented sequentially in the observation log and expanded upon in the event log. To assist with this documentation effort, field personnel were provided with a digital stopwatch to record start-and-stop times.

The observation log also served as a mnemonic device for the descriptive field journal log, completed after each observation. Because events often transpired rapidly, observers were provided with a small hand-held recorder to make notes of event details that were difficult to record in writing.

Observers were also provided with small portable reading lamps to assist in note taking during evening observations.

An event log was developed to gather detailed information about specific events that occurred during the observation period. For purposes of this study, events were defined as consequential activities occurring during an officer's duty shift. These consequential activities included all activities in which the officer interacts with others – victims, suspects, community members, and other police officers. Events also included significant activities without interaction, such as surveillance or assessment of problem location for a substantive period of time. Events did not include personal or administrative time such as travel, unless these activities included an activity of consequence. The event log also served as a mnemonic device for the descriptive field journal log.

Using the event log, field researchers recorded descriptive information about the nature of the event, noting key elements of the event in its entirety and then specifically in the following general categories.

- Event Summary — A brief description of the critical elements of an event from start to finish.

- Event Location, Attributes, Characteristics – Information about the nature of the event and where it occurred, such as outdoors on public property, and lighting.

- Involved Parties — The observer recorded all involved parties on the scene during an event including specific gangs, police personnel, community organizations, school officials, victims, and suspects, as well as demographic characteristics of the individuals. The names of individuals were not recorded.

- Nature of contact with involved parties — the observer provided a written description about the nature of contact between involved parties, commenting on the extent to which officers collaborated or shared information with police colleagues and others.

- Officer actions — the observer recorded how the officer action was initiated such as through self-directed behavior or supervisor-directed, and described the actions taken by the officer.

- Officer decision making — through a short debriefing, the observer gathered and recorded information about officer decisions.

- Researcher perspective — the observer recorded their personal opinion of events, noting any special or explanatory conditions.

In addition to the observation log, a daily journal was maintained by the field research to record experiences and observations of the gang unit and individual officers during the shift. During the beginning of each observation, field researchers met with the appropriate shift commander to learn about key events that occurred since the field researcher's previous observation. Any documentation associated with key events was attached to the journal, such as memoranda or news clips. The field researcher also attended roll call for the gang unit and details of each roll call were included in the field journal.

The journal was written at the conclusion of each observation. To structure the daily journal, field researchers were provided a standardized list of questions and procedures. The researcher used activity and event logs and other field notes to assist in the development of the narrative. In the log, the researcher described the course of events during each shift sequentially, taking care to note the nature of any related incidents that may have affected gang

control efforts. This detailed log explained the context in which an individual officer's activities were carried out, and helped provide a robust description of the actual practice of gang-control efforts. This narrative story of the observation also served as a validation tool for comparison with the observation and event logs.

To maintain quality control, observation logs, event logs and field journals were reviewed weekly and entered into a database to ensure completeness and to identify and correct any problems with data collection. The frequency of this review allowed for problems to be identified and addressed immediately. In addition, field observation personnel were observed twice during the data collection period to monitor and review compliance with data collection procedures.

Data Management and Quality Control

All data recorded through observations were collected and maintained in electronic versions. Interviews with police personnel and community leaders were tape recorded and professionally transcribed by a court reporter. Following transcription, interviews were reviewed, key concepts identified and summaries were developed to assist in the drafting of site reports. Some individuals preferred not to be recorded and staff maintained field notes as an alternative method. These interviews were subsequently summarized and typed to maintain an electronic file.

Paper copies of all hand-written observation logs, event logs and field journals along with any hand-written notes were submitted to PERF on a weekly basis. All data were reviewed for completeness and consistency throughout the observational period and the field researchers maintained routine contact with the project staff.

All empirical data were collected from these instruments and entered into SPSS while non-quantifiable data were reviewed to assist in the development of the final report. Two SPSS databases were created to assist in the evaluation of the data. The first database utilized information from the observation logs. One of the key variables in this database were time sequences for all activities and events documented for each observation. The counting process yielded a useful classification scheme with quantifiable documentation of officer activity expended on different activities. The second database utilizes information from the event logs. This data also provided an accounting of time sequences for substantial activities the officer was involved in and captured a wide range of variables about each event – such as people involved, event location and characteristics, and police responses.

Consistent with the research protocol, descriptive field journals were maintained by the field research staff as a means of documenting the context in which observations occurred. A total of 79 daily logs were collected from each research site.

Full shifts were observed in each department, although the length of shifts varied. Uniformed and investigative personnel in San Diego worked a ten-hour shift; while Indianapolis investigators worked an eight-hour day and uniformed personnel worked 10 hours. Personnel from both cities, however, were subject to overtime and occasionally; a shift and its related observation were terminated due to scheduled time off, or other conditions. Generally, an observation consisted of an officer's entire shift.

In Indianapolis, 196 hours of observation were conducted and 41 percent of the observation time was of investigative personnel. In San Diego, a total of 316 hours of observation were conducted – 62 percent of the time was comprised of observations of investigative personnel.

CHAPTER III: THE CONTEXT OF GANG PROBLEMS AND GANG UNITS

This chapter describes the police departments of the two study sites – San Diego and Indianapolis – providing a context for understanding the gang problems in these jurisdictions and the organizational response of the agencies to these problems. As such, this chapter is descriptive, highlighting the distinctive features of the jurisdictions and police organizations. The chapter describes the evolution of problems related to gangs and the formalized departmental responses to gangs in the form of policies and articulated police practices. The chapter also evaluates the qualitative data gathered through extensive interviews and describes policies in the respective jurisdictions. Since the study sites were selected in part because of their differences, the distinctions between the two agencies are marked. This provides a fascinating comparison of different manifestations of gang-related problems and contrasting organizational approaches to gangs.

Indianapolis

As the capital city of Indiana, Indianapolis is located in Marion County near the center of the state. Indianapolis is home to a variety of universities including the University of Indianapolis and Indiana University-Purdue at Indianapolis. The city is also known for the Indianapolis 500, a drag race held

each Memorial Day. Approximately 810,000 people live in the county while about 350,000 reside within the city limits of Indianapolis.

Indianapolis has historically enjoyed a modest crime rate, however, the city's crime spiked in the 1990s, with homicides exceeding 100 per year. The crime trend reversed by 1997 and the city's homicides dropped dramatically from 130 in 1998 to 83 in 2002 but the decline in crime lagged behind that of other urban cities in the nation. Of note, the police department's homicide unit reported only one of the jurisdiction's 96 homicides in 1999 as gang-related, and only one homicide of the 83 that occurred in 2002 as gang-related.[5]

Table III – Part I Crime Trends in Indianapolis, 1990 to 2001

Year	Part I Crimes
1990	32,922
1991	36,291
1992	36,128
1993	33,777
1994	36,012
1995	36,807
1996	38,242
1997	36,284
1998	33,690
1999	30,399
2000	27,265
2001	28,048

[5] But the city reported more than 50 gang-related homicides in the National Youth Gang Survey, and McGarrell and Chermak (2003) reported that 60% of homicides in Indianapolis (Marion County) were related to "groups of known chronic offenders" in 1997 or 1998. This inconsistency in reporting is described later in this report.

Consistent with the rise in crime, electoral politics took a role in the police department's response to crime. A highly politicized city, Indianapolis features an unusual government structure. Since 1970, the city has operated as a unified city-county government, known as Unigov, managed by a mayor-council form of government that includes 29 elected council members.

Indianapolis had a strong law enforcement advocate as mayor in the early 1990s. Stephen Goldsmith, elected in 1991, served two terms as mayor and developed a national reputation for privatization in government. During his tenure, Goldsmith claimed city spending was reduced and more police officers were put on the street – largely through redeployment. Prior to his election as mayor, Goldsmith had served as Marion County District Attorney for 13 years. Goldsmith was active in politics and his reputation in Indianapolis led to his role as chief domestic policy advisor to the Bush campaign. He later served as special advisor to President Bush on faith-based and not-for-profit initiatives.

Following Goldsmith's tenure, a new mayor was elected in November 1999. Bart Peterson was the first Democrat to be elected in the city in 32 years. Of note, he ran on a strong pro-police platform and widely articulated plans to hire 200 new police officers – 50 in each year of his four-year term. The increase in authorized strength was intended to balance the redeployment and reorganization that had taxed many parts of the police department during Goldsmith's tenure – especially non-uniformed units such as investigations.

Although the police department is organized under the direction of a Public Safety Division, Goldsmith had taken an active role in the day-to-day management of the police department and there are some indications that the period was turbulent in the organization. For example, because command positions in the Indianapolis Police Department are appointed ranks and not civil service, dozens of ranking personnel lost their appointments during Goldsmith's tenure, and were effectively demoted to their civil service rank. The role of politics in the police department also contributed to the short tenure of police chefs during the period. Four different individuals served as chief during Goldsmith's tenure: Paul Annee from 1986-91, James Toler from 1992-95, Donald Christ 1995-96, and Michael Zunk 1997-2000. When Peterson was elected, he selected Jerry Barker as chief in early 2000, and Barker was still serving as chief in 2004.

Indianapolis Police Department

The adoption of community policing in Indianapolis in the early 1990s is widely credited to the leadership of the jurisdiction's mayor at the time – Goldsmith. To facilitate this change, he brought in leading police scholars including Larry Sherman, George Kelling and David Kennedy – all of who were involved in reshaping the organization. The primary result of this reorganization appears to have been decentralization of many parts of the department, including narcotics and other investigative units. Goldsmith's

plan to put more officers on the streets resulted in a reshuffling of personnel that moved most of the department's covert specialized units out of the downtown headquarters building and relocated them to the department's training academy in east Indianapolis, approximately seven miles away from the main headquarters.

The department's formal move to community policing can be traced to about 1992 and the concepts of community policing are emphasized throughout the police organization. The terminology of community policing is prominently featured in public remarks made by the police chief and mayor, in the police department's annual report and on its web site. The department's mission statement reflects the concept of community, partnership and problem-solving:

> Central to the Indianapolis Police Department mission is community policing. This law enforcement philosophy and organizational strategy places the police and the community in a problem-solving partnership to address law violations and to develop strategies for meeting the public safety concerns of neighborhood residents beyond individual crime incidents. This team approach to law enforcement makes the officer more accessible to the citizens and empowers residents to reclaim their neighborhoods from criminals.

A key part of the early community policing effort was the department's involvement with the federal Weed and Seed program funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. That program coincided with the department's efforts to decentralize and put more responsibility and accountability on district commanders for neighborhood level problems.

The commitment to community policing is not entirely visible from the department's organizational chart. The department is separated into two major divisions: the decentralized patrol operations consisting of five patrol districts and centralized operations that include administration and criminal investigations divisions. Most department personnel are assigned to the five patrol districts consisting of 86 square miles. These districts serve as neighborhood headquarters for the department's decentralization efforts.

Although the department is not highly civilianized – about 122 of the 1,300 employees are civilians – the role of civilians has expanded in recent years to support community policing. In the early 1990s, the department created a non-sworn position of public safety officer. Public safety officers assist with evidence collection, collision investigations and transporting prisoners. The new position was intended to assist officers in community policing efforts by freeing additional time. The district headquarters are also staffed by decentralized investigative personnel and criminologists – civilian employees who analyze crime patterns to support patrol and investigative functions.

Gangs in Indianapolis

The onset of gangs in Indianapolis is a fairly recent event, and gangs are not considered to be deeply entrenched in the community. Although there are some long-established neighborhood gangs, the city's most troublesome

gangs emerged with the onset of the crack cocaine market in the mid-1990s – contributing to the rise in violent crime. Much of the crack market and its gang involvement may have emanated from Chicago, approximately 185 miles northwest and easily accessible by interstate highway. Indeed, several gang names in Indianapolis are derived or linked to major Chicago gangs, including the Black Gangster Disciples and Vice Lords. Police personnel report that all gangs in Indianapolis align themselves with one of two gang alliances with roots in Chicago – the Folk and People nations. Even the handful of California-derived street gangs in Indianapolis align with the two Chicago gang nations. Gangs from Detroit and St. Louis are also perceived to have influenced the local gang scene in their efforts to expand drug markets into the Indianapolis area.

As early as the mid-1980s, there was some evidence of gangs in Indianapolis and the department originally tasked youth detectives with monitoring them. By 1987, the department had formed a task force with other local law enforcement agencies. During the evolution of gangs, leadership of the city and police department expressed some ambivalence about labeling of the gang problem. According to interviews with police officers and departmental reports, dispatchers and officers were instructed not to use the term "gang" over the radio but to instead refer to problems as "youth disruption" or "youth problem." By 1996, the department defined gangs as: "a group of people who form an allegiance, to the exclusion of others, for

common purposes and engage in violent, unlawful, anti-social or criminal activity."[6] Police personnel consider many of the city's gangs to be groups or collectives of neighborhood hooligans rather than full-fledged gangs; they describe the locally-based groups as disorganized in contrast to the well-organized gangs in Chicago.

As recently as 2000, the gang unit commander noted:

"We have tried to stay away from the 'gang' label. We call them chronic offenders."

The department's current definition is consistent with state statutes, which defines gangs "as groups with at least five members who either promotes, sponsors, participates or assists in or requires as a condition of membership or continued membership the commission of a felony or acts that would be a felony if committed by an adult." [7]

The ambivalence or caution about labeling gangs is reflected by the department's experience in designating gang-related crimes. The department's homicide unit classified only one of its homicides in 2001 as gang-related while a separate analysis of homicides in the city has shown that about 60 percent of all homicides involved suspects or victims who were described as being part of a "group of known chronic offenders" (McGarrell and Chermak, 2003).

[6] Indianapolis Police Department, Anti-Gang Initiative Proposal, June 1996.
[7] See IPD website at http://www6.indygov.org/ipd/cid/safestreets/safestreets.htm

There were no empirical data about the extent and evolution of gangs in Indianapolis until the gang unit began systematically collecting data about gang members and gangs around 1990. Today, the gang unit collects information about gang members and maintains these records in a computer within the gang unit. Although the department reports annual statistics on gangs – such as the number of confirmed gangs (sets) and gang members, and their race, gender and age distribution – data on gangs are used primarily as an intelligence file and its descriptive statistics show the data are not reliable or complete for purposes of accurately describing or tracking the scope of the gang problem. No data are routinely maintained on gang-related crime.

When the department began to collect data on gang members in 1990, there appeared to be about 850 gang members. By 1995, the number had increased to 1,744 gang members in an estimated 80 gangs and about half of all identified gang members were juveniles. By 1996, the number of confirmed gang members increased to 2,422, and the number of gangs to 198 (Kramer et al., 1997). The increase in the number of identified gang members in Indianapolis was resulted from increased documentation by overtime police officers supported with funding from a federal grant. During the one-year anti-gang grant from the Office of Community Oriented Policing (COPS) in 1996-1997, patrol officers on grant-funded overtime pay substantially increased their contribution of gang contact cards, increasing the gang member database by 40 percent and the number of gangs by 150 percent. By 1999, the police

department's estimate of gangs had dropped to 93 gangs and about 2,051 documented gang members and associates. The decline was attributed to purging data about gang members with whom there had been no further contact by law enforcement. By 2002, the department reported 60 gangs with about 2,000 members.

The number of documented gangs and gang members in Indianapolis continued to ebb and flow (see Table IV) in succeeding years, primarily reflecting changes in the emphasis placed on patrol officers to submit gang contact cards that are used to track the numbers. As a covert unit, the department's gang unit does not routinely collect these data and the department has relied upon patrol officers to submit this information. While gang unit officers have conducted outreach with patrol, attending roll calls and informing officers about the value of this information and how to complete contact cards, participation by patrol appears to have been sporadic.

Table IV
Indianapolis Gangs and Gang Members
Source: National Youth Gang Survey and IPD

	Gang members	Gangs
1990	850	N/A
1995	1,746	80
1996	2,066	198
1997	2,377	198
1998	2,600	190
1999	2,051	93
2000	2,093	215
2001	2,200	210
2002	2,000	60

Although the counts of gang members appear unreliable and thus descriptive information is not necessarily representative, data suggest that most gang members in the city are African American – about 68%. Of note, however, 31 percent are white and police report rising involvement of Hispanics and Asians in gang activity. Most gang members in the jurisdiction are adults, with 83 percent aged 18 years or older.

The gang unit describes most Indianapolis gangs as involved in narcotics and structurally disorganized and non-territorial. Gang members appear to change loyalty from one gang to another and back. These disorganized gangs have not been the focus on the gang unit in Indianapolis; instead, the gang unit has focused on a limited number of more organized groups in the jurisdiction. Of its gangs, police had labeled 14 as serious, well-organized and showing consistent involvement in narcotics trafficking and violent crime.

Evolution of Gang Unit

As gang problems emerged in Indianapolis, they were initially handled through the juvenile bureau of the Indianapolis Police Department – an organizational response that tracked the experience of many other jurisdictions where gangs appeared to be predominately juvenile. A formal gang unit was formed by the police department in 1987. Known as the Metro Gang Task Force, this group combined personnel from the Marion County

Sheriff's Office and the IPD. It also included two FBI agents and deputies from the Johnson County Sheriff's Office. From its formation until 1996, the task force appears primarily to have focused on education, serving as a speakers' bureau for educating civic groups, schools and parents about gang problems. The unit also focused on short-term investigations, using undercover buys of narcotics to arrest identified gang members.

In the early 1990s, police personnel became increasingly aware that gangs in Indianapolis were becoming more numerous, more violent and more criminally active. In October 1993, a teenage girl was shot and killed by the Ghetto Boys gang and this public incident contributed to subsequent changes in the gang unit.

In 1996, the gang unit was reorganized to focus on "suppression" strategies. Although it retained its centralized structure, the gang unit was tasked to work directly with beat officers in the city's patrol districts to identify and investigate gang-related crimes. It is not clear how much retrospective investigation occurred; there is no indication that the gang unit has ever handled an investigative caseload or tracked case clearances. When reorganized in 1996, however, major changes did occur in the gang unit. The gang unit became the lead unit and thus the organizational locus of a decentralized anti-gang effort by patrol officers. This decentralization basically replicated and expanded the department's experience with Weed and Seed, a neighborhood-based federally-funded effort launched in 1995 that had

successfully targeted three communities with high crime, violence, and drug trafficking.

The reorganization of the gang unit was supported by the one-year federal grant from the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) – the grant described previously for its role in increasing the number of identified gang members in the jurisdiction. The $500,000 grant supported different gang strategies in different police districts. Primarily, the grant supported overtime pay to officers whose tactics included high visibility, extensive traffic stops, searches of targeted gang members, gun and narcotics seizures and intelligence gathering. Of note, police in one district worked closely with citizens during the grant period and this district produced the greatest reduction in crime.

The decentralized anti-gang effort supported by the grant resulted in the designation of a gang officer within each district to serve as a liaison providing training, expertise to investigations, and assistance. The grant also provided extensive amount of training to personnel throughout IPD – particularly gang unit personnel and crime analysts. As mentioned previously, the grant also contributed to the doubling of the number of identified gang members, substantially expanding the department's gang intelligence database.

As the COPS anti-gang initiative came to a close in 1997, the primary focus of the gang unit became proactive and covert investigations of highly

organized street gangs, leaving street level enforcement and intelligence gathering to uniformed personnel; follow-up investigations were assigned to generalist district investigators and centralized investigative units, such as homicide and narcotics. This combination of centralized and decentralized units was consistent with the department's community policing efforts and the department sought to institutionalize successes achieved under the Weed and Seed and Anti-Gang Initiatives.

The approach of the Indianapolis Police Department to gangs was influenced by a wide variety of federal funding for anti-gang programs in the mid-1990s, especially Weed and Seed and the COPS grant. Another funding initiative launched in 1998 had a further impact on the department's approach to gangs. In 1998, the department became a site for Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (SACSI), funded by the National Institute of Justice. Directed by the federal U.S. Attorney for Indianapolis, the SACSI effort was designed to make extensive use of data and analysis to guide a strong multi-agency partnership to address gun-related violence. Modeled after Boston's well-known Ceasefire project, the SACSI funding in Indianapolis led to the formation of the Indianapolis Violence Reduction Partnership (IVRP). IVRP consists of a partnership between local and federal law enforcement agencies, local government, the academic community, courts and corrections. The primary objective of IVRP has been to employ problem-solving strategies to analyze and respond to the city's problems with violent

crime. The IPD gang unit is one part of the multi-agency IVRP and the unit has taken a role in its operations and attends and participates in routine meetings.

The IVRP influenced operations of gang unit and clarified divergent views of the gang unit's function. One of the earliest tasks of IVRP was to assess gang involvement in homicides in Indianapolis and Marion County. Since only one homicide had been classified as gang-related in 1998, the IVRP was instrumental in clarifying the definition of "gang-related." As McGarrell and Chermak (2003) noted, the homicide unit uses a restrictive approach to labeling homicides as gang-related and so classifies only homicides that are motivated by the gang such as retaliation. This classification effectively eliminates all homicides that involved gang members as suspects or victims, or where the motive of the crime may have been unclear. An additional analysis of homicides in 1995 by the gang unit indicated gang involvement in 34 homicides.

IVRP also led to the development of the Violence Impact Program Enhanced Response (VIPER) program, an initiative designed to identify and target chronic violent offenders in the jurisdiction. VIPER represents a major component of the police department's response to gangs as its database – managed by a sergeant in the gang unit – has identified and routinely monitors the most violent felons in Indianapolis. About 20 percent of VIPER subjects are confirmed gang members. The VIPER list was developed by identifying

offenders with two or more arrests for violent crimes by level of the severity of their offenses. The most prolific and violent offenders are then classified as VIPERs.

The federal funding initiatives in Indianapolis to address gangs and related violence have not been limited to grants. Although the federal government had traditionally not been involved in local law enforcement, in 1993 it launched its Safe Streets Violent Crimes Task Forces, creating multijurisdictional task forces to focus on violent gangs and drug-related violence in communities. These task forces were intended to increase the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies by involving the FBI in the local enforcement efforts, for example, subjecting chronic offenders to federal charges.

There are numerous benefits to participation in this type of task force – jurisdictional issues are mitigated, particularly when gangs may operate across several law enforcement jurisdictions; long-term, resource-intensive investigations may be sustained, such as cases involving Racketeering (RICO) and Continuing Criminal Enterprise (CCE); and the department gains experience in using sophisticated investigative techniques, which utilize wiretaps, surveillance, or other technologies, and in developing complex cases that result in federal charges which carry more severe sanctions. Perhaps most importantly, the FBI reimburses local law enforcement agencies for overtime of officers assigned to the task force.

To some degree, the department's sustained involvement with the FBI keeps personnel focused on long-term investigations, and insulates the unit from the organizational tendency to divert gang personnel to address other emerging problems, and from public and political pressures to alter its focus. On the other hand, the intertwining of IPD's focus on gangs with that of the FBI poses a risk of the agency interpreting local gang problems through a federal lens, thus distorting local experience with definitions and tactics developed or prioritized by the federal government. Such a distortion could contribute to an exclusive focus on the more serious and more organized at the expense of efforts focused upon less organized although still problematic, local level gangs. However, the IPD has addressed this problem by assigning street level responsibility for gangs to its district personnel. This strategy bifurcates the gang responses by using a centralized unit for well-organized gangs and decentralized personnel to respond to disorganized neighborhood-level gangs. In many ways, this strategy parallels the common law enforcement response to narcotics, separating long-term trafficking investigations from those involving street-level sales.

Operational Practices

For many years, the gang unit in Indianapolis was officially known as the Metro Gang Task Force. Since 1993, the unit operated in conjunction with the FBI's Safe Streets Task Force. Today, the IPD gang unit is called

Safe Streets Task Force and is virtually indistinguishable from the federal task force. The task force, however, includes other law enforcement officers and agents from the FBI, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Franklin Police Department, Greenwood Police Department, Johnson County Sheriff's Department. The task force also includes prosecutors from Johnson County and Marion County. On occasion, the task force also collaborates with DEA and the U.S. Attorney's office. This research report focuses on the IPD gang unit, but the reader should understand that the IPD gang unit is a major component of the Safe Streets Task Force.

The primary purpose of the IPD gang unit has been to identify and target well-organized violent street gangs. Most of the unit's investigations have focused on violent and criminal enterprises in order to prosecute the hierarchy and membership of the gang. With the involvement of the FBI, the unit often conducts enterprise investigations, using Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) statutes, Career Criminal Enterprise (CCE) and other applicable federal laws. The unit operates as a proactive investigative unit, and thus does not carry a case load and is not assigned gang-related crimes for investigation, although gang personnel provide investigative assistance as requested by other units in the department.

In a written mission statement, the unit listed the following goals and objectives for 1999:

- Identify violent street gang organizations, their members, scope, finances, criminal activities and geographic dimensions;

- Assess all violent street gang organizations and identify the five most violent street gangs;

- Assess the amount and quality of criminal intelligence information available;

- Enhance the skills of gang unit personnel assigned to analytic responsibilities;

- Continue to develop intelligence collection through investigations, intelligence gathering and VIPER to assist in developing potential targets, the scope of their criminal activities and vulnerabilities;

- Initiate a Racketeering Enterprise Investigation;

- Coordinate and share intelligence with other law enforcement agencies;

- Initiate and conduct investigations to collect evidence and to prove patterns of criminal activities; and,

- Indict the hierarchy of the New Breed street gang for their drug trafficking and other criminal activities and remove the instruments of those criminal activities (e.g., firearms).

Much of this mission is related to the memorandum of understanding between IPD and the FBI.

Organizationally, the gang unit is part of the department's Support Services, headed by an Assistant Chief. As mentioned previously, the department is separated into two major divisions: the decentralized patrol operations consisting of five patrol districts and centralized operations that include administration and criminal investigations divisions. The centralized

investigative division includes two bureaus: Covert Investigations and Crimes Against Persons. The Covert Investigation Bureau includes two branches: Narcotics and Organized Crime, and the Safe Streets Task Force is located within the Narcotics Branch, along with the Dangerous Drug Section, Drug Interdiction Section, Vice Section and Metro Drug Section. These covert branches and their respective units are physically located in the department's training center instead of the downtown headquarters building. Each of the covert units is supervised by a lieutenant who reports to a captain who supervises the section. The gang task force includes seven detectives and three sergeants.

As with many detectives, those in the Safe Streets Task Force organize their own schedules, tailoring their work hours according to the needs of investigations, court, and meetings with prosecutors and other members of the task force. Even though much gang activity occurs during evenings and nights, the detectives typically work traditional day shifts because much of their work does not involve direct surveillance of gang activities.

To develop investigations, detectives proactively scan problem areas and groups, using input from district commanders, informants and other sources. Investigations may focus on but are not limited to the leaders of gangs. Instead, the objective is a more modest attempt to "cut off the branch of the tree" rather than to "chop off the head" of a criminal organization — the latter commonly the objective of organized crime investigations. The gang

unit pursues a wide variety of investigations. During 1999 and 2000, the unit reported handling 57 investigations on issues ranging from drug trafficking, assaults, food stamp fraud, firearms violations, vandalism and warrants. Supervisors indicated that detectives were concentrating on about 18 of the 57 investigations. Detectives reported typically handling four to six investigations at a time although many of the detectives focused on a single investigation depending upon the stage of the investigation.

The work tasks of detectives are largely self-directed. Once investigations are initiated, much of the preliminary investigation is carried out in the office; detectives conduct an extensive examination of records and use a form of link analysis to add descriptive detail to developing knowledge of a gang's members, associates, behaviors, locations and activities. This in-house investigation then gives way to a larger investigation in which the gang detectives try to build a major case against a targeted gang.

Most of the discrete job tasks described by detectives tended to fall into three broad categories: investigations, intelligence gathering and administrative tasks. Investigative tasks include interviewing suspects, victims and witnesses; conducting covert activities such as surveillance of a fixed location or of a specific person; conducting undercover operations that may include drug buy/bust operations or food stamp buy-busts, participating in wiretap operations for specific cases and performing computer-based research to identify trends and linkages between groups and individuals.

Tasks related to intelligence gathering include identifying and documenting the structure of gangs, identifying their associates and family members; conducting surveillance; collecting information from confidential and community informants, members of the task force, other criminal justice personnel or general sources; completing gang contact sheets; and reviewing incident reports to examine gang involvement in crimes. Tasks related to administration include making court appearances, exchanging information and networking with others on the task force, covert units and in patrol districts. Unit personnel are often deployed to special details supporting a variety of department activities. The gang unit rarely engages in direct enforcement activities although detectives may serve arrest warrants or conduct searches as part of larger investigations. The unit also rarely engages in prevention or educational activities because it is a covert unit but presentations are occasionally made about gangs to schools and community organizations.

As stated above, strategically, the gang unit's investigations are self-initiated and focused on criminal gangs identified as well-established and highly organized. These groups tend to consist primarily of adults rather than juveniles and involve more organized rather than street-level offending. This focus reflects the interest of the task force in dismantling organizations that generate a disproportionate amount of crime. Thus, investigations in Indianapolis do not typically target street gangs despite their high visibility to

citizens. Line officers maintain responsibility for addressing the street-level gangs.

Investigations carried out by the gang unit are typically joint operations and may be resource intensive long-term investigations. As part of these investigations, the unit frequently uses confidential informants. Detectives indicated that these informants are cultivated over a substantial period of time and tested for their accuracy and loyalty; the use of informants is consistent with federal investigative policies and any payments made by the FBI task force funding.

For the gang unit, intelligence gathering is a specialized function that relates primarily to initiating or conducting proactive investigations. While gang unit personnel collect intelligence information, they do not routinely seek out information to document street-level gang members but instead focus on particularly problematic groups and individuals. The routine documentation of gang members is tasked to district patrol officers and detectives. These district personnel are directed to complete a gang contact card if they encounter an individual who meets the criteria as a gang member. The card contains fields requesting demographic information, information about associates, location and other descriptive characteristics. Once the form is complete, it is submitted to the gang unit for entry into a database. All data entry is completed by the gang unit analyst and all members of the gang unit

have access to the data. Other department personnel may request information as needed.

Gang unit personnel believe that only half of all gang members are included in the system — a deficiency due in large part to the lack of completed gang contact cards. Although district officers and detectives are supposed to complete gang contact cards and submit these to the gang unit, few do so. One district detective reported completing only one gang contact card in the preceding six months.

Since the gang intelligence database is incomplete, it is impossible for the department or the gang unit to accurately identify, label and thus monitor the amount of gang-related crime in the jurisdiction. The department does have another mechanism for tracking gang-related crime – a gang-related check off box on the department's incident form, however, this information is not routinely reported by patrol officers thus the department does not systematically classify or collect information on gang-related crime. A specialized analysis of crime incidents in 1995 (McGarrell and Chermak, 2003) suggested gang involvement in 653 offenses in Indianapolis. Confirmed gang members were most commonly involved in assaults (14 percent involved gangs) and narcotics (12 percent involved gangs).

It is widely recognized in the department that the gang database is not comprehensive and thus not reliable for assessment or evaluation. Due to

these limitations, data are used primarily as a starting point for investigations to be carried out by detectives.

When the gang unit was reorganized in 1996 – changing from an educational unit to an investigative unit – new personnel were selected. Detectives are selected for the gang unit consistent with IPD protocol for special unit selection. This includes a written exercise, oral presentation and an oral interview. In addition, the applicant's record is reviewed for experience, education and disciplinary actions. Although there is some competition to get into the gang unit, investigative assignments are not seen as a career path within the department. The department's current emphasis on community policing and the primacy of uniformed operations in patrol districts have reduced the elitism once associated with investigative careers. The organization of centralized investigations under the "support" function emphasizes the agency's view that centralized investigations are intended to contribute to district level operations. Most detectives in the gang unit view the unit as a career path to other investigative units or as a laudable career destination. New detectives in IPD attend a two-week investigative school, but there is no other formal or mandatory training for new gang detectives. Personnel in the gang unit may request to attend training conferences or other training sessions when time and finances permit. In general, the unit is a "learn as you go" operation in which a senior detective will guide new gang detectives to show them the ropes.

Personnel performance for members of the gang unit is evaluated with the general evaluation form used throughout the department. In accomplishing specific objectives for the gang unit, personnel perceive their performance as based upon identifying and using reliable informants, building intelligence to facilitate future or on-going investigations, recovering drugs or guns, and following investigative procedures to initiate, carry out and conclude successful investigations. It is widely perceived that the small size of the unit permits supervisors to maintain awareness of employee performance. As a whole, personnel perceive that the effectiveness of the unit is measured using traditional law enforcement statistics such as arrests, warrants, seizures of drugs and guns, and documentation of gang members.

Partnerships

Like many specialized units in law enforcement agencies, the gang unit in Indianapolis has tended to become aloof and detached from the primary operations of the police department. The remote location of the unit contributes to this detachment. Although the COPS AGI grant in 1996 and 1997 put gang personnel in direct contact with patrol personnel, collaboration between the gang unit and other units of the department is infrequent. The most common collaboration occurs between the gang unit and other covert investigative sections co-located in the Narcotics Branch. Indeed, of the successful investigations reported by the task force in 2001, most involved

narcotics offenses; among 100 arrests made by the task force that year, 64 were for drug offenses.

Collaboration and information exchange between the gang unit and patrol districts is informal. On occasion, detectives will attend roll calls or talk with officers on the street regarding a case. The gang unit perceives patrol officers as valuable sources of information and the front line to address gangs, however, observations of patrol activities suggest most patrol officers are only vaguely aware of gangs and the gang unit. As a result of the COPS AGI grant, a block of training of three to four hours on gangs has been included in recruit training to cover statutes, gang recognition information and activities of the gang unit. Within patrol districts, however, uniformed personnel indicated little to no exposure to the gang unit and some claim to be unaware the department had a unit. Although districts are assigned a gang liaison officer, there is little evidence of these liaisons or interaction with the gang unit. Supervisors at the district level, however, suggest the gang unit does provide intelligence information, resources and support for special investigations.

Each patrol district deploys a tactical unit to address problems in the districts. Since these officers in these units do not routinely respond to calls but are deployed proactively, they encounter and address gangs more often than regular patrol offices. The tactical units respond to gangs in terms of addressing overt behaviors, such as hanging out, street level drug dealing,

intimidation or other behaviors. Although the gang unit reported more frequent interaction with tactical units, observations of police activities suggest the relationship between the tactical units and gang unit is inactive. The detachment of the gang unit from the day-to-day operations of the police department contributes to vague and somewhat unfavorable impressions of the unit. While detectives in the gang unit are aware of negative opinions, they believe most covert units are subject to such perceptions.

Despite its limited collaboration within the Indianapolis Police Department, the gang unit is actively involved with other local and federal agencies through the task force. Members of the gang unit area are often paired with federal agents and most of the cases pursued by the task force are conducted as joint investigations with the FBI. The initiation and sharing of cases appears to be collegial and supportive. In addition to the FBI, gang detectives work closely with other agencies in the task force. For example, one gang detective was involved in a joint investigation with a USDA agent to investigate food stamp fraud in the Indianapolis area.

Members of the gang unit are aware of the department's commitment and involvement in community oriented policing and problem solving, however, the gang unit – by virtue of its covert functions – has little involvement with citizens. Throughout the department, special units are seen as a supportive adjunct to community policing; these units have responsibility for addressing serious crime problems that are not visible and thus of little

immediate concern to most citizens. From Chief Barker's point of view, covert units are a necessary element of police operations for handling complex long-term investigations but inherently a distinctly separate part of the organization. As a strong proponent of decentralization, Barker views street officers as the front line in addressing day-to-day problems associated with gang activity. Thus beat level officers – who have the best information and are most responsive to emerging problems – have responsibility for street-level gang control efforts.

The city's experiences with gangs in the 1990s and its adoption of community policing have had a major influence in shaping the police department's organizational response. The department's success with neighborhood-based initiatives such as Weed and Seed, which established strong relationships between police and citizens, is a key foundation of community policing in the city. This organizational commitment has kept the department focused on street-level responsibility for gangs and close interaction with the community rather than large investment in a specialized gang unit.

One of the key actors in the community-based efforts to address gangs has been the Indianapolis Ten Points Coalition (ITPC). The coalition is a non-profit organization formed in October 1998. It consists primarily of churches of varied denominations, races and ethnicities in Indianapolis. The ITPC was modeled after the Boston Ten Points Coalition, which played a role in that

city's successful Ceasefire project that dramatically reduced the youth and gang violence problems in the early 1990s.

The coalition has been supported through an outreach effort initiated by Mayor Goldsmith. As a result of the city's community policing efforts, the local government began to acknowledge that serious change could only occur with community support. As such, the mayor began a campaign to seek community involvement in solving city problems. The ITPC was formed in response to this campaign and the city provided the group with $150,000 of seed money. The funds were to be used to implement new programs with the goal of rebuilding communities. The primary goals of the ITPC are to keep youth away from violence, improve literacy and job skills, and provide employment opportunities. The ITPC established ten points that serve as the organization's mission. In brief, its goals involve mobilizing the church community, conducting outreach with the residents of the community and providing counseling, job skill training and employment opportunities.

The ITPC has several programs that relate to gangs and crime. Among other services, ITPC neighborhood patrols are conduct weekly on Friday nights to engage and counsel youth and others who are involved in drug dealing, gangs and other illegal activities. Street counselors provide mediation to gang members and gather intelligence information about crime in the city.

Members of the coalition have been deeply concerned about the prevalence of gangs in the community and the relationship between drugs and

youth. Of note, members of the coalition have not attributed gang problems to shortcomings of the city or law enforcement but to the community itself. Members of the coalition take an active role in notifying police of problems related to gangs, and report that police behavior in the minority community has changed in the last decade. In contrast to past behaviors when the police were distant from the community, ITPC leaders feel that police are knowledgeable about the community and responsive to community concerns. Community members report that when they are concerned about individual officers, they have access to call district commanders and other police leaders. This access reflects the open door policy of police as part of community policing.

San Diego

San Diego stands in stark contrast to the city of Indianapolis. The city is the nation's seventh largest; with a population of 1.2 million – a 10.3 percent increase in population since 1990. Although the city is predominately Caucasian comprising 55 percent of the population; Hispanics make up 23 percent and Asians 13 percent of the city's population. African Americans comprise 9 percent of the population.

As many other large cities, San Diego experienced a major increase in violent crimes in the late 1980s. Following a peak in 1990, crime has dropped steadily. Homicides fell nearly 70 percent in the period, from 135 in 1990 to

42 in 1998; violent crimes dropped 57 percent, from nearly 20,000 violent crimes in 1990 to 8,744 in 1998 (see Table V).

Table V
Crime Trends in San Diego

Crime Type	1990	1998	2001
Murder	135	42	50
Rape	463	371	342
Robbery	4,331	2,121	1,729
Aggravated assault	14,968	6,210	5,284
Violent crime	19,897	8,744	7,405

In contrast to the highly politicized government in Indianapolis, the city of San Diego operates under a stable city manager-council form of government – a form adopted in the 1930s. The management structure includes an appointed city manager and a council of eight members. While a mayor serves on the council, the city manager maintains day-to-day responsibility for management of the city government.

The city of San Diego is the largest of the 18 municipalities in San Diego County. The city comprises nearly half of the county's 2.8 million population. The city consists of 342 square miles and, of note, shares an international border with the Republic of Mexico. At the San Ysidro port of entry, more than 38 million people cross into San Diego each year.

The San Diego Police Department

The San Diego Police Department has been recognized as a national leader in community policing and problem solving. The commitment to neighborhood policing, adopted in 1995 as an organizational vision of the department, is to engage in problem solving partnerships with the community, government agencies, private groups and individuals to fight crime and improve the quality of life for the people of San Diego. During the 1990s, the department became well known for its leadership and accomplishments in neighborhood and problem oriented policing.

Although the department has experienced changes in leadership in the last decade, the agency has been stabilized by its success in reducing crime in the 1990s and its low crime rate. The department has emerged from internal changes than occurred in the late 1990s and early part of the next decade. These changes ranged from the reassignment of managerial and executive staff to restructuring of the entire organization. Much of the department's involvement in community policing was initiated in the 1980s as the agency moved to a department-wide approach to neighborhood policing. By 1993, the entire agency was reorganized around the concept.

Much of the move to neighborhood policing was crafted by police chief Jerry Sanders, who led the department from 1993 to 1999. Sanders was succeeded by David Bejarano, who served until 2003 when he was appointed

by President Bush as U.S. Marshal for the California's Southern District, which includes San Diego and Imperial counties. A new chief, the first ever hired from outside the agency, was appointed in July 2003.

Bejarano, the city's first Hispanic police chief, joined the police department in 1979 and served throughout the department – including a stint as gang unit sergeant. In 1993, Bejarano was appointed captain of the department's Southern Division. The division piloted implementation of the Neighborhood Policing Restructuring Program, which despecialized most of the department's detectives and decentralized these personnel to division stations under the direction of a commander. In 1996, he was appointed as assistant chief for field operations – an appointment that also included responsibility for traffic, SWAT and other specialized units.

As chief, Bejarano pledged to continue to refine the department's tradition of neighborhood and problem oriented policing developed by preceding chiefs and institutionalized by Sanders. One of Bejarano's stated goals was to take neighborhood policing to the "next level," expanding neighborhood policing at the investigative levels and enhancing coordination of special units with field operations. Bejarano expressed concern that centralized investigative units had not developed strong neighborhood ties due, in part, to the department's historical emphasis on problem solving at the field operations level. As a new chief, he promised to enhance training in the

investigative divisions and hold these units accountable for participating in problem-solving efforts.

Organizationally, the San Diego Police Department was reconfigured after Bejarano became chief. Rather than the large field operations command that Bejarano had led as assistant chief, the department's eight field operations divisions (which included patrol and many investigative functions) were divided into three Neighborhood Policing Areas, each headed by an assistant chief in the department's headquarters. Similarly, the department's centralized investigative units were also divided into three subgroups – Investigations I, II and III – and each was placed in one of three Neighborhood Policing Area commands. The gang unit is located in the department's centralized investigative group with its narcotics units. Thus, three assistant chiefs share responsibility for eight geographically decentralized patrol and investigative operations and a subgroup of centralized investigative functions. Other assistant chiefs head departmental areas such as Policy and Planning, Special Service, and Operational Support. To staff its divisions, the department employs almost 2,000 sworn officers — a ratio of less than 1.9 per 1,000 population, well below the national average. Most personnel in the police department are assigned to field operations divisions.

Gangs in San Diego

Gangs in San Diego have been a longstanding tradition. Since the 1940s and 1950s, cultural gangs predominately of Hispanic roots have existed in the city. These barrio gangs were neighborhood oriented and focused on protecting their neighborhood. The gangs were also social groups, however, and many of the early gangs were car clubs.

In contrast to the barrio gangs and car clubs, street gangs emerged in the early 1970s. Police attribute the emergence of street gangs in San Diego to the arrival of gang members displaced from nearby Los Angeles because of probation conditions imposed by the courts in that jurisdiction. San Diego police began to monitor and record gangs and gang members about this time. By 1975, police reported at least three known gangs and 300 members in the city. By 1978, the number of recorded gangs grew to 25 with a membership of 1,500.

In the early 1980s, street gangs had become a major problem in the city, transformed by the emergence of crack cocaine and a new level of violence associated with drug markets. According to training materials in the department's gang unit, police estimated in 1982 that there were 35 gangs and 2,100 members in the city. Two-thirds of the gang members were Hispanic and one-third were black. Although Asian and white gangs were beginning to emerge, their involvement in criminal activity was considered minimal. During this period, the black street gangs became heavily involved in drug

sales while the more numerous Hispanic gangs continued the tradition of neighborhood protection. Drug markets appeared to drive increases in crime during the latter half of the 1980s. From 1986 to1988, gang-related homicides rose from 8 to 28, a 250 percent increase, and more than 90 drive-by shootings were reported. (See Table VI.)

Table VI
San Diego Gangs and Gang Members, 1973-2003
Source: SDPD and National Youth Gang Survey

	Gangs	Gang members
1973	3	300
1978	25	1,500
1982	35	2,100
1996	64	4,953
1997	65	4,791
1998	73	5,126
1999	74	5,368
2000	84	5,205
2001	85	5,251
2003 (July)	87	4,885

By 1990, the number of gang-related homicides dropped to 12, while drive-bys were estimated at 52. However, the numbers rose again in 1993 with 30 homicides, 102 drive-bys, and 303 assaults. In 1995, another decline was observed with 14 homicides while other crimes such as robbery, auto-theft and attempted homicides actually rose. By 1998, gang-related crimes seemed to stabilize and crimes such as drive-by shootings dropped substantially (see Table VII).

San Diego gangs continue to be predominately Hispanic (45%) and African American (40%) but there has been an increasing prevalence of Asian, Indo-Chinese (especially Cambodian and Vietnamese), Caucasian and Filipino gangs which account for approximately 15 percent of gang membership. San Diego gangs are believed to be loosely-structured, without clear patterns of leadership or organizational characteristics. Most gang members are not juveniles; department statistics on documented gang members suggests that the vast majority of identified gang members are adults, with 89 percent 18 years or older.

Table VII
San Diego: Trends in Gang Crime, 1983-2002

Offenses	83	85	90	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02
Homicide	15	6	12	14	15	16	8	15	11	13	17
Attempted homicide	6	2	19	26	21	36	40	25	16	13	8
Assault deadly weapon	52	50	296	288	256	215	238	235	223	213	192
Shooting at dwelling/vehicle	5	4	64	33	36	13	22	30	24	10	14
Robbery	64	40	101	137	126	128	107	128	101	82	82
Auto theft	n/a	7	69	51	30	66	49	50	66	67	63
Other (inc. other aggravated assaults and larcenies)	4	43	369	329	360	422	398	366	515	476	481
Drive-bys	n/a	n/a	52	57	42	30	30	30	16	37	31
Total	146	152	930	878	844	896	862	849	956	874	857

By 1999, police estimated the presence of 74 gangs with 5,368 members – most concentrated in the southeast and mid-city divisions of San Diego. Department officials estimated over 2,824 arrests of gang members in 1998. Officials reported that San Diego's street gangs engage in a wide

variety of crime from drive-by shootings, extensive street-level sales of crack cocaine and other drugs, assaults, robbery and auto theft among other crimes.

Evolution of Gang Unit

The San Diego Police Department has experimented with several approaches for the gang unit over the last 30 years — beginning with three officers collecting intelligence and culminating in a combined investigative and uniformed unit consisting of 28 detectives and 14 officers.

There is general consensus among department personnel that the gang unit started some time around 1972. Initially, the department appointed school task force officers to monitor gangs but in 1975 created a Gang Enforcement Section (GES) staffed by four officers. By the late 1970s, gang prevalence and activity increased and the former GES evolved into a larger group. For political reasons, however, department personnel did not want to refer to these personnel as "the gang unit" so the unit was renamed as the Group Activity Section (GAS). GAS grew to ten officers and one sergeant. According to veteran personnel, the earliest versions of the gang unit focused on intelligence gathering and monitoring and documenting gang members.

During the 1980s, the gang unit was renamed the Gang Detail. The unit continued its focus on intelligence gathering but became more involved in gang investigations. It was estimated that intelligence-gathering duties comprised 70 percent of personnel time while 30 percent was devoted to

specific cases, and a small percentage to prevention-based activities. Detectives were divided into five teams – three teams focused on Hispanic gangs while two focused on black gangs.

Gang violence and violent crime rose dramatically in San Diego in the late 1980s. When SDPD Officer Jerry Hartless was shot by members of a local gang known as the Syndo Mob, the department reacted by subsuming GAS into a Special Enforcement Division (SED)—a large unit comprised of 21 gang detectives, SWAT personnel, 40 special enforcement unit officers, 16 school task force officer, seven mobile police station officers and a motorcycle unit. As part of the special enforcement division, gang detectives worked closely with SED officers who were assigned to street-level duties. This approach helped the unit maintain a strong street presence coupled with investigations thereby allowing for both a proactive and reactive focus on gangs.

In the early 1990s, the unit became more involved with the district attorney's office and engaged in several high profile gang operations focused on individual gangs involved in narcotics sales. Two of these well-known operations were Operation Blue Rag and Operation Red Rag; both resulted in offenders being prosecuted under a vertical prosecution scheme by the District Attorney's Gang Unit. Upon conviction, gang members were sentenced to intensive supervised probation for a six-month period. Probation violations resulted in revocation and an active sentence of five years. Although these

operations were considered successful, the department had begun to move towards neighborhood policing in 1993 and many specialized units were decentralized while others were eliminated. The SED was dissolved during this period and gang detectives were reassigned to other investigative divisions while the uniformed SED officers were reassigned to field operations for neighborhood policing.

After the dissolution of SED, problems with gangs reportedly increased in the city although the data on gang-related offenses in Table VII do not support this contention. Although there is no documentation of the reasons, some personnel within the police department perceived that SED was too large at the time but its dissolution was too dramatic – a step that left a gap in the department's ability to respond effectively to gangs. Regardless, by 1996, the unit was reestablished and included a uniformed component known as the gang suppression team (GST) and an investigative unit. GST functioned primarily as a proactive unit targeted at identifying gang members, gathering intelligence information, monitoring hot spot locations and controlling the overt street activities of gangs. The detectives focused predominately on investigating gang-related crimes. The gang unit has retained this same basic form since 1996.

In 1998, the department engaged in another restructuring process in which a wide range of information was gathered from within and outside the organization to improve the organizational structure and the department's

operations. One element of this restructuring was a survey of personnel to gather feedback about the roles, functions and performance of different divisions in the department. The survey revealed that more than 50 percent of line personnel interacted with the gang unit between 1-10 times and most felt the unit performed well in providing gang intelligence and expertise. Sixty-six percent of the respondents rated the unit as fair or higher for its knowledge of gang problems in the city. However, the unit was not rated as well for its performance in responding to requests such as call outs, pages and phone calls; the survey respondents recommended that the unit needed improvement in collaborating with field operations by attending line-ups (as roll calls are called in San Diego) and sharing information. Many survey respondents recommended that the unit be more visible and more available and, in particular, that gang detectives be available during late shifts and respond to gang-related offenses.

Based on the survey results and other internal review processes, the gang unit changed its shift assignments to correspond with the time frame of gang activity and crime, and the unit modified its call out system to make investigators available to handle investigations of gang-related offenses. Perhaps more importantly, the gang unit was directed to define and communicate its role in addressing investigative cases and to set long-term goals for reducing gang violence.

By 2000, the gang unit had addressed many of the restructuring recommendations. Normal working hours for the unit were set at 2 p.m. to midnight although some personnel were staffed for both day and evening shifts to accommodate the needs of the department, the community and other agencies. Some detectives are assigned daytime hours for court appearances and consultation with and response to other investigative units that had traditional day hours. The shift schedule and call out assignments for the gang unit were developed with information provided by a designated gang crime analyst in the department's crime analysis unit. The data helped determine the most active days and times for gang activity, thus providing a guide for scheduling personnel.

As a result of restructuring, the unit also revised its written operations manual. The 40-page document clearly specifies the roles and responsibilities of the unit and individual positions in the unit, goals and objectives, and general rules and procedures.

As set forth in its operations manual, the gang unit has primary responsibility for handling retrospective investigations of all gang-related felony crimes that occur in the city. All cases are considered for assignment to the gang unit when they meet criteria for a gang-related crime. The department defines a gang-related crime as when

> victims or suspects are known to be documented gang members or engage in behavior primarily associated with gang membership (e.g., throwing signs, yelling gang challenges) and

> are involved in …felony crimes enumerated in Penal Code Section 186.22 et seq.

Offenses investigated include homicide and attempted homicide, assault with a deadly weapon, robbery, kidnapping, witness intimidation, arson and sex crimes. When cases are assigned to other investigative units such as homicide, the gang unit provides assistance. Responsibility for prevention efforts is assigned to area command juvenile service teams under the direction of the juvenile administration unit, however, the SDGU is expected to collaborate and assist the juvenile service teams.

The stated mission and goals of the gang unit are to reduce the incidence of gang-related criminal activity, reduce the number of active gang members, reduce the impact of gang activity on the community and maintain accurate intelligence files about gangs and gang members. Additional goals and objectives are articulated in the unit's operations guide, including partnering with other law enforcement agencies, other units within the department and the community to reduce gang violence.

To accomplish these goals, the gang unit employs both reactive and proactive strategies. Reactive strategies primarily consist of retrospective investigations of gang-related felony offenses that have been committed and have come to the attention of the police department. In recent years, many of the 800 to 900 gang-related offenses in San Diego have been investigated by the gang unit. (Cases may also be investigated in the Field Operations division where they occurred, or by another specialized unit such as homicide.)

Although case investigations are reactive and focus on clearing offenses through arrests and building prosecutable cases, detectives often collect intelligence information through their investigations and stay informed about gang trends and relationships. Gang detectives also use neighborhood sources of information and intelligence collected by other police personnel to aid their investigations.

Proactive strategies employed by the gang unit are varied. All gang unit personnel are responsible for monitoring gangs and taking enforcement action as appropriate. Monitoring contributes intelligence information to the gang database. Such information comes to detectives from confidential informants during the course of and sometimes coincidental to case investigations, through surveillance of gangs and from community members. Most intelligence information is collected and recorded on gang contact cards as uniformed officers make field contacts known as field interviews or "FIs" in known gang hang-out locations. Additional information may be gathered in other enforcement actions, such as serving warrants or conducting 4th waiver or consent searches.

Although the gang unit describes itself as committed to prevention and educational efforts in the community, proactive and reactive activities related to intelligence gathering and investigations comprise the majority of activities. Unit personnel occasionally make presentations to concerned community members, schools and other groups as requested. Such presentations are often

requested after a problem occurs in a particular community or in local schools. The goal of most presentations is to help educate the community, faculty, and parents about gangs—specifically in gang recognition and prevention. The unit maintains a database to track all presentations made by department personnel.

As a centralized investigative unit, the gang unit includes five teams with a total of 28 detectives and two uniformed teams with a total of 14 officers. The unit is managed by seven sergeants, one lieutenant and a captain; an administrator for the CalGang system, clerical staff and three full-time volunteers also assist in the operations of the unit. The position of gang intelligence and liaison detective and clerical support for updating gang files were eliminated by the department in 2002 due to budgetary issues; however, two additional positions were added to the two uniformed teams.

The concepts of problem solving are articulated throughout the operations manual for the gang unit. In practice, problem solving efforts relate primarily to addressing repeat calls for service, conducting directed patrols and field contacts in known gang areas, focusing proactive investigations on individual suspects or problem locations, and working in partnership within the unit, with other police units and divisions including field operations, with the community and others. As part of this approach, gang personnel make efforts to be aware of crime trends, problems and political issues in different geographic areas.

Technology facilitates problem solving efforts by allowing the gang unit to strategically focus on chronic offenders or problem locations and deploy resources consistent with problems. Technologically, the vast amount of intelligence information available for investigations assists officers with quickly identifying and locating potential witnesses and suspects when offenses occur.

Operational Practices

Detectives in the gang unit are assigned to teams that are categorized as Hispanic, Black, Asian and Taggers. At one time, a team of the unit's best investigators was formed to handle high profile and complex cases. A sergeant leads each team and works closely with each detective on his or her investigations and intelligence activities. Once assigned to a team, detectives are assigned a group of gangs. Unit personnel believe this division of labor helps detectives develop a higher level of expertise about individual gangs – information that results in more complete investigations, efficiency and court credibility. To maximize resources, gang unit investigators focus on felony crimes that are identified as gang-related or motivated. Case assignments are usually determined by sergeants and the gang intelligence officer. Once a case is assigned, however, SDGU detectives have relative autonomy in handling their day-to-day activities. Detectives estimate working on three to twelve cases a month.

In addition to case investigations, gang detectives maintain updated intelligence files on gang members in their assigned gangs. Most gang documentation begins with the field contacts conducted by the gang unit's uniformed officers. As officers make contact with gang members or suspected gang members in the field, they complete Field Interview (FI) cards and submit these at the end of their shift for detectives to review. FI cards include specific information about gang members, including the specific location where an individual was stopped, associates, vehicle information and information such as home, work and school addresses.

Detectives review gang contact cards to determine if there is sufficient information to document or classify an individual as a confirmed gang member consistent with state statutes. The CalGang administrator estimates that 90 percent of the department's data on gangs comes from FIs conducted by GST – nearly 7,000 FIs were completed in 1999. When three FI cards are obtained on the same person, a detective will compile evidence and, with a supervisor's approval, initiate a gang or alpha file on an individual. Once documented, information about the individual is entered into the unit's CalGang system while specific information about the gang is recorded into gang resource binders. These binders serve as an information resource for identifying trends and to assist new detectives.

In contrast to the gang unit detectives, the Gang Suppression Team (GST) is the uniformed response of the department to gang problems. GST

consists of experienced patrol officers selected from the field operations division. Many of the officers have extensive knowledge about gangs acquired from the field operations division. Positions in the GST are highly desirable and attract experienced officers. Some hope the position will lead to an investigations assignment.

Two separate GST teams alternate workdays but double up on weekends when gang problems are most common. For reasons of officer safety, two GST officers are assigned to a car. The GST teams operate as a mobile tactical team with responsibility for the entire city. The teams are expected to respond to all gang felony crimes that occur during their shift and their work is typically determined by supervisors with input from gang detectives and field operations commanders. When not responding to incidents, GST teams use a "high profile" strategy, in which the team targets areas in which gang problems are overt. The entire GST focuses on the geographic area – often caravanning to create a visible image of police concern, monitoring problem locations and initiating extensive field contacts with gang members. Although it is not included in the unit's operations manual, the departmental mission statement emphasizes treating individuals with respect and fairness, and this philosophy reflects the practices of gang unit personnel.

In addition to responding to gang-related calls and carrying out high profile strategies, GST officers also assist detectives in locating specific

suspects, associates or witnesses, or in gathering specific information. GST personnel meet daily for their own line up (roll call) to share information. They also participate in a weekly unit-wide meeting. In this meeting, gang detectives and GST officers share information about particular gangs, gang members or offenses. Although almost all gang-related data is recorded and automated, the informal interaction between GST and the gang detectives facilitates a symbiotic working relationship. Within the unit, detectives feel that the uniformed officers are a critical element of the gang unit. GST officers provide investigative and enforcement support for detectives—a role that division patrol officers who have primary responsibility for 911 calls cannot do routinely. The GST is also highly mobile and thus can be deployed to other areas of the city as gang-related problems ebb and flow.

Between 1990 and 2002 gang detectives and GST officers were supplemented by an experienced investigator assigned to identify gang-related cases by manually reviewing incident reports and identifying cases for investigation by gang detectives. Although the department's incident report form contains a field for patrol officers to mark incidents as gang-related, it is widely recognized that patrol officers do not do so. Thus, the gang unit's intelligence officer would carefully screen each felony crime report to detect incidents that are gang-related. This screening process includes an examination of the type of offense, location of the crime, and name and descriptive information about the suspect and the victim; the narrative report

is also reviewed for any indications of gang involvement. The investigator also compiled gang-related statistics, served as a liaison with the district attorney's gang prosecution unit, and prepared prosecution packages. Due to budget constraints, the investigator's position was eliminated in 2002 and case screening was assigned to one of the investigative sergeants.

The unit staffs a full-time administrator for operating its CalGang system. The administrator trains, supervises and assists gang unit personnel in the use of CalGang and ensures routine practices for data entry, maintenance and data access. The department began using the statewide CalGang system in 1997 and access is limited to gang unit personnel who have completed training. This gang intelligence database links gang intelligence information from law enforcement agencies across the state. Files consist of information on individuals and groups that meet criteria specified in the state's statute known as the STEP Act.[8] The comprehensive database thus provides reliable statistics about active gangs and gang members, and can be used for developing investigative leads, identifying crime patterns, and providing documentation useful for prosecution.

Data entered into and maintained in CalGang are consistent with state law and system guidelines. [9] For an individual to be entered into the database,

[8] The gang unit operates under the guidelines legislated by the STEP Act (186.22 of the CA Penal Code) enacted in January 1998. The act specifically defines a list of violent felony crimes as acts of terrorism commonly performed by gang members and stipulates punishments.

[9] CalGang practices are also followed for purging "inactive" members from the database; individuals are purged after five years if they have no recorded gang activity and are at least

he or she must be documented or validated as a gang member, through one or more of the following criteria usually over three separate contacts:

- the individual admits gang membership;
- the individual has tattoos, wears clothing or possesses paraphernalia that is associated with a specific gang;
- the individual is arrested participating in delinquent or criminal activity with a known gang member;
- police records and/or observations confirm the individual as a gang member; or
- information from a reliable informant identifies the individual as a gang member.

Entire groups can also be documented and entered into the system if:

- the group has a name or identifiable leadership;
- the group claims a turf, territory, neighborhood, criminal enterprise, or causes or contributes to the deterioration of a community through a pattern of criminal activity;
- the group associates on a regular basis; and,
- the group is involved in a pattern of criminal activity.

In addition to entry into CalGang, the gang unit updates information about gang member status in its Officer Notification System – a countywide database system. By querying a suspect's name or license plate, law

25 years of age; gang members are classified as "inactive" after two years with no recorded gang activity. SDPD, however, maintains separate records of purged gang members as a supplementary intelligence database.

enforcement officers within and outside the SDPD are informally alerted about potential gang membership. The querying officer receives a message to contact the gang unit for further information – this code basically alerts area law enforcement officers to gang involvement. The system was developed to share information among area law enforcement agencies and to promote officer safety. ONS integrates data obtained from field contacts, arrest reports, booking records, probation and parole records. ONS is also used as an investigative aid and to support information searches in the region. Data can be queried by suspect name, moniker, demographic information, social security number, driver's license, vehicle information, and location information.

Since access to CalGang is restricted, ONS provides an alternative source of information about gang involvement for officers across the county. For example, an officer from another jurisdiction may query a license plate and would receive notification to contact the SDPD gang unit for further information. The notification informs the inquiring officer about gang involvement.

An additional database on gang members is maintained within the gang unit. The moniker file includes historic records for documented gang members and includes other historic information dating to the 1970s. These historical records are a resource since they are not purged over time as required in CalGang. Thus, a period of inactivity by a gang member might

result in data being purged from CalGang; upon release from incarceration, a gang member may resume criminal activity and the moniker file would provide background information.

Individuals who seek a position in the gang unit – or other units in SDPD – must complete a form and submit it to the personnel office. The form documents the individual's interest in transferring and is kept on file for a one-year period. As positions in the gang unit become available, all qualified individuals who have submitted forms are interviewed by supervisors of the gang unit. Unit supervisors seek officers for GST who are familiar with gangs and have good intelligence-gathering skills. To help create a qualified pool of applicants, patrol officers may be detailed to GST for short periods of time—usually a two-week period. The short-term assignment allows patrol officers to develop knowledge and skills about gangs.

The unit is fairly diverse. In 2001, the unit had six African American detectives, four African American GST officers, four female GST officers, five female detectives, four Hispanic sergeants, and an African American lieutenant. Many gangs in San Diego are ethnically homogeneous and engage in similar behaviors. Similar gangs are thus grouped for operational responsibility within the gang unit but there is no effort to match officer ethnicity with the ethnicity of a group of gangs.

Despite agreement that there is a steep learning curve in working gangs, gang personnel describe training of new personnel as informal.

Typically, new personnel are provided with an orientation that consists of reading the unit's operations manual and other material. The exception to this informal training is training required to use of the CalGang system.

Gang unit personnel are evaluated using the same employee performance criteria as other department personnel. These criteria include skills such as investigative, legal, communication and interpersonal skills. Gang unit personnel are not evaluated based on productivity measures such as number of arrests, seizures, field contacts or other process measures. However, supervisors evaluate personnel on their knowledge of their assigned gangs and ability to locate suspects and gather intelligence information.

The unit is also evaluated and held accountable to the department's administration. Although summary statistics on arrests are reported, along with the number of warrants served, and drugs and weapon recovered, there is no indication that these measures are used to evaluate the performance of the unit. Bejarano has been more attentive to the clearance of cases, the amount of gang-related crime and citizen fearfulness about gangs. Qualitative information about gang problems and the gang unit's response is obtained through the city's citizen survey, community meetings, political and community leaders, community agencies and other partners to the police as well as from other units and divisions within the police department.

Partnerships

Relationships between investigative and uniformed divisions are not always collaborative but the relationship has improved substantially in the San Diego Police Department in recent years. The integration of investigative units with patrol divisions in three departmental subdivisions served to improve working relationships. For the gang unit, feedback from the restructuring survey provided clear direction on the need to improve collaboration and communication with field operations.

The gang unit now briefs field operations commanders about gang unit activities, gang detectives attend line-ups in the divisions, and field operations personnel are detailed to GST for short periods. The shifts of gang unit personnel are now consistent with temporal variations in gang problems, making gang personnel more available when problems arise. This availability has also improved relationships.

The gang unit has also supported joint operations with field operations personnel, including obtaining civil injunctions against specific gangs. To obtain these court-ordered injunctions, neighborhood groups and police have carefully documented patterned gang activities and used temporary restraining orders to prohibit specified individuals from the area. Once obtained, the provisions of the injunctions must be enforced by field operations personnel.

The gang unit also communicates and collaborates with other centralized investigative divisions – particularly homicide, narcotics and robbery units. Although robbery and homicide units are in a separate division of the department, the assistant chiefs work closely together and ensure cooperation among personnel. The homicide unit frequently requests assistance from gang personnel on crime scenes. Gang-related cases can be complex and difficult to solve because of language, cultural issues or fear of retaliation. Thus, the gang unit is important in order to understand issues such as turf or retaliation. The gang database may also provide investigative leads. Typically, a homicide detective is paired with a gang detective to interview victims and witnesses.

Outside the department, the gang unit engages in a wide range of partnerships from those with the local prosecutor to youth service organizations. The gang unit participates in a countywide task force and meets with its members monthly to exchange information regarding local gang activity. The gang unit also assigns detectives to the district attorney's gang prosecution unit – to ensure good cases. Gang unit personnel work directly with prosecutors on cases from their inception through prosecution in a vertical prosecution arrangement. Typically, the gang liaison and intelligence detective handles most of the day-to-day interaction between the unit and local prosecutors. The local probation and parole agencies also have

gang units and regularly exchange information and work closely with the SDPD gang unit.

One of the more intensive partnerships of the gang unit is with the FBI's Violent Crimes Task Force. One sergeant and two San Diego detectives are assigned to the task force comprised of representatives from SDPD, FBI, DEA, INS and BATF. The SDPD detectives assigned to the task force participate in long-term investigations of organized criminal enterprises – investigations requiring federal assistance because of labor, equipment and other resources are needed to conduct wiretaps and long-term surveillance activities. Members of the federal task force attend the weekly gang unit meeting to share information about pending investigations and to collect information shared by others in attendance.

Although the gang unit has not traditionally been involved in neighborhood policing, gang sergeants and detectives meet routinely with community leaders and attend community meetings. The gang unit reports being responsive to community requests; for example, many beach residents complained of gang related problems and GST focused on these problem areas. The civil injunctions also reflect community involvement.

Personnel from the gang unit occasionally conduct presentations on gangs and meet with schools, parent groups and youth service organizations and make referrals to service organizations.

The relationship of the police and the community in San Diego appears fairly stable. One minority outreach minister who planned a Christian gang crusade suggested that there is strong community support for the police and few negative concerns. The purpose of the Gang Crusade, part of a larger Christian Crusade event in 1999, was to reach out to San Diego gang members using former gang members to counsel current gang members to leave their gangs. Police worked closely with the planners and eventually advised them to cancel the event to avoid problems in the high gang crime area.

In interviews, some politicians characterized the San Diego Police Department as attentive albeit somewhat arrogant about minority concerns. Nonetheless, the same politicians starkly contrast the behavior of officers in San Diego with the aggressive style employed by police in Los Angeles, a two-hour drive away. Both politicians and community leaders in San Diego reported having direct access to members of the gang unit whenever problems arise and feel the department is highly responsive to articulated community concerns. These stakeholders describe the gang unit's focus as related to education, documentation of gang members, and controlling gangs by monitoring problem behaviors. To date, there have been no major complaints voiced about police abuse related to gangs.

Contrasting Problems and Contrasting Approaches to Gangs

The descriptive information in this chapter has highlighted the characteristics of the study sites – the political environment, the emergence and evolution of gangs, and the evolution of each department's response to gangs. Table VIII summarizes some of the major characteristics of the jurisdictions and contrasts the differences in their gang problems and organizational responses.

Table VIII:
Characteristics of Study Sites

	Indianapolis	**San Diego**
Service population	353,014[10] 86 square miles	1.27 million 342 square miles
Political structure	Mayor-council with 29-member council; unified city-county government	City manager-council 8 council members
Agency size	1,550 sworn 959 civilian	2,096 sworn 766 civilian
Crime trends/Part I	2001: 28,048 2002: 83 homicides 1995 crime high: 36,000 Declining since 1996	2001: 50,445 2002: 47 homicides 1989 crime high: 103,000 Declining since 1990
Community policing	Since 1992	Since mid-1980s
Number gangs+	Varies from 60 – 93	74
Number gang members	About 2,000	About 5,000
Gang origins	Mid-1980s	Cultural gangs since 1940s Streets gangs since early 1970s
Primary gang unit	Safe Streets Task Force: 6 detectives	14 uniformed, 28 detectives[11]; also has Safe Streets Task Force
Gang unit origin	Mid-1980s	1972
Gang unit focus	Covert high level investigations of most serious gangs supplemented by patrol efforts in divisions	Overt street activity, intelligence gathering, investigating gang-related crime

In both cities, evidence suggests that gangs have changed dramatically over time – in number of members, size of gangs, criminality and in other ways. The gang units of both departments have paralleled these changes –

[10] The consolidated city population is about 800,000 and an area of 405 square miles; however, the police department services the pre-incorporated area of the city.
[11] By 2003, there were 18 uniformed officers and two sergeants, and 23 detectives in the unit.

increasing in size and scope as levels of violence and gang prevalence rose. The tactics employed by both agencies have also evolved over time – beginning with an educational and preventive focus on juveniles to encompass more intelligence gathering and investigative efforts. Although they address the task in quite different ways, the gang units of Indianapolis and San Diego both rely on a uniformed contingent of personnel – GST in San Diego and district and tactical officers in Indianapolis – to address the overt activities of gangs.

A primary difference between the two departments is the integrity of their data on gangs and gang members. The fragmented and incomplete nature of data in Indianapolis makes it difficult for the agency to maintain accurate statistical information about gang-related criminal activity, or to identify emerging crime patterns related to gangs. In contrast, police in San Diego put an emphasis on accurate data on gang members and gangs, permitting the agency to reliably track the amount of gang-related crime and identify any changes. It seems likely that the quality of the intelligence database, the experience of gang investigators who handle a small group of gangs, and the technology of the CalGang system in San Diego also contributes to improved efficiency and higher clearances for offenses that are gang-related. Since Indianapolis does not record offenses as gang-related, there is no information about the clearance rate associated with such cases. Similarly, it seems likely that the quality of the intelligence database in San

Diego contributes to stronger cases and more convictions on gang-related prosecutions, but there is insufficient data to make this comparison between the two agencies.

The prevalence of gangs and gang members appear to be substantially different from San Diego to Indianapolis. San Diego has about 5,000 gang members in 85 gangs while Indianapolis has 2,000 gang members in 60 gangs. Since the gang database is incomplete in Indianapolis, the prevalence of gangs and gang members cannot be compared between the two cities. San Diego, however, has nearly three times the population of Indianapolis – thus the rate of recorded gangs and gang members per population is much higher in Indianapolis.

Serious crime problems with gangs are much more recent in Indianapolis than in San Diego, but these problems may not be less severe. For example, the number of all homicides in Indianapolis (83) is nearly double the number of homicides (47) in San Diego further emphasizing the difference in crime rates between the two jurisdictions. Data from San Diego suggest that about 20 to 40 percent of homicides in recent years are gang-related; studies from Indianapolis have suggested that about 60 percent of homicides may be related to groups of chronic offenders.

This study is not intended to compare these cities and infer that one approach to gangs is better than another; however, the contrast between the two jurisdictions provides descriptive information about different approaches

to gangs in quite different jurisdictions. This information about the gang units and personnel is descriptive, based on summary information gathered through written reports, policies and procedures as well as interviews with police personnel and a limited number of community stakeholders. To learn more about the nature of how the police spend their time addressing gang problems, the next section of this report describes qualitative data obtained through extensive observations of gang detectives and uniformed personnel in the field.

CHAPTER IV: HOW GANG OFFICERS SPEND THEIR TIME

The preceding chapter described in detail how two police organizations – leaders, supervisors and line personnel – view the goals of their gang units. In this chapter, we describe how officers in gang units spend their time, examining the outcomes of observations of a sample of gang unit personnel in Indianapolis and San Diego. These data and analysis of these observations permitted a comparison between the articulated policies of the police department and the actual activities of gang unit officers within those agencies. The observations also provided greater detail about the *types* of activities in which gang officers engage. Since the study examined two very different approaches to gangs – a covert proactive investigative unit in Indianapolis and ancillary activities of tactical patrol officers, and a combined uniformed and investigative approach in San Diego – the observation of activities provides insight into how these organizational approaches varied in terms of the efforts and discrete activities of personnel.

Activities of Gang Personnel

As described in Chapter II, samples of law enforcement personnel were observed in both Indianapolis and San Diego. In San Diego, only personnel from the gang unit were observed while in Indianapolis, gang unit detectives and uniformed officers from a tactical neighborhood team were

observed. In San Diego, a total of 316 hours of observation were conducted – 62 percent of the time was comprised of observations of investigative personnel. In Indianapolis, 196 hours of observation were conducted and 41 percent of the observation time was of investigative personnel (see Table X). Among uniformed personnel in Indianapolis, however, research observations resulted in only one verifiable interaction between police and a gang member. This low detection of police and gang interaction makes questionable the rationale for selecting NRO personnel for observation of the department's gang control practices. One may conclude that the incidence of street level gang activity is so infrequent in Indianapolis that the observation schedule was not able to detect gang-related incidents. Or, one may conclude that gang problems in Indianapolis are not identified and labeled sufficiently for research to detect these events; for example, police may construct and label problems as related to drugs, guns, or chronic offenders, or as unrelated criminal offenses. Despite the absence of contact with gang members, however, the police department assigns responsibility for overt gang problems to these uniformed teams. These officers also had responsibility for related problems of guns, street drug dealing and chronic offenders, thus the observations of these personnel are included in the analyses.

The main data collection instrument consisted of a list for organizing the observed activities; these activities are described in detail in Chapter II, however, a summary chart (Table IX) is included here for reference.

Table IX:
Activity Categories

Label	Representative activities
Enforcement activities	Searches, arrests or direct pursuit of suspects
Enforcement administration	Processing arrests, including transport and booking
Investigations I	Interviewing suspects, victims or witnesses; also conducting surveillance or undercover work related to specific cases.
Investigations II	Searching electronic and other files for links and leads for specific cases.
Intelligence gathering	Face-to-face contacts, such as field interviews, in which officers collected *general* information to assist with investigations
Communication activities	Use of radio or MDT
Travel	Moving from one location to another specific place, such as when responding to a call
Scanning	Directed but general patrol activities such as monitoring problem locations or looking for signs of trouble
Searches	Physically looking for specific suspects, witnesses or victims, typically via car or on foot
Data maintenance	Updating computer files and reviewing documentation for completeness and accuracy to document gang members or activities and purge records
Information exchange/networking	Meeting and sharing general information with others
Court	Preparation and testimony for cases
Calls	Responding to any calls/call-outs or conducting general police work
Assistance	Providing backup or support to other officers
Training	Attending formal training sessions or conferences
Presentations	Providing information about gangs to schools or groups
Community contacts	Interaction with the public
Proactive intervention	Counseling or advising gang members or persons at-risk
Administrative tasks	Preparing reports, activity logs or other administrative activity including talking with supervisors or colleagues about work-related matters.
Other	Personal time such as restroom visits or meal breaks

Start and stop times were recorded for each of these discrete activities and analysis involved computing the proportion of time personnel engaged in each activity. Analysis suggested that the 20 categories of activities were comprehensive and relatively mutually exclusive.

Most common activities. The most commonly observed activities of gang personnel were concentrated in nine major categories: investigations (the two categories of investigations are combined in the following table), travel, enforcement (activities and administration are combined), scanning, intelligence gathering, administration, calls (combined with assists), other and information exchange. The amount and proportion of time spent on these most frequent activities for uniformed officers and detectives within each agency are listed in Table X.

Infrequent activities. During the course of the observation, officers were seldom observed to engage in some of the activities listed in the table. These less frequent activities included eight categories: communication, searches, data maintenance, training, presentations, court, community contacts and proactive interventions. Some of these activities, such as communication, typically occurred as secondary activities, occurring, for example, while an officer traveled from one location to another or searched for an individual. Secondary activities are discussed later in this chapter. In contrast to these

complex or multi-tasking activities of police, some categories of activities were rarely observed. For example, community contacts and presentations were not observed. While observers were aware that some of these activities occurred within the unit, the sampling schedule did not result in the observation of these relatively uncommon activities.

Table X
Frequency of Activities of Gang Unit Personnel [12]

	Indianapolis		**San Diego**	
	Detectives	Uniformed	Detectives	Uniformed
Investigations (Combined investigations)	19.8% (951)	1.1% (74)	24.8% (2946)	3% (218)
Travel	22.6% (1084)	7.3% (506)	22.2% (2628)	18.7% (1330)
Enforcement (Includes enforcement administration)	0	8.2% (572)	3% (336)	17.8% (1269)
Scanning	0	39.4% (2731)	3.2% (377)	13.4% (956)
Intelligence gathering	0[13]	.5% (33)	5.7% (681)	8.5 % (603)
Administration	21.2% (1067)	3.1% (212)	13.3% (1583)	5.9% (421)
Calls (Includes assists)	0	19.8% (1371)	0	7.5 (534)
Other	21.8% (1049)	12.6% (874)	12% (1422)	9.3% (662)
Information exchange	6.6% (318)	5.5% (378)	10.7% (1272)	11% (787)
Time for these activities	92.0%	97.5%	94.9%	95.0%
Total hours observed	80.1	115.6	197.7	118.9
	196 hours		316.6 hours	

[12] Observation time is included in parentheses based on the total number of minutes observed. Since the length of officers' shifts varied, simple percentages of time are reported to permit comparisons.

[13] Note that intelligence activities for investigators in Indianapolis were all focused on specific cases and were thus recorded under the Investigations category.

Differences in Activities of Gang Units. Nine activities encompassed the majority of activities in each jurisdiction, however, the amount of time devoted to each category varied between agencies. For Indianapolis detectives, five activities comprised about 92 percent of their time; for San Diego detectives, eight activities comprised about 95 percent of their time. For uniformed personnel in Indianapolis, three activities – scanning, calls and other – accounted for 72 percent of their time; and one of these activities– scanning or monitoring problem locations and looking for trouble – comprised nearly 40 percent of their time. Uniformed gang officers in San Diego appeared to engage in a wider variety of activities – the nine activities accounted for 95 percent of time.

Of note, all of the centralized personnel – detectives in Indianapolis and San Diego and uniformed gang personnel in San Diego – spent a great deal of time in travel or simply moving from one location to another. About 20 percent of work time among these three groups was expended in travel. In contrast, uniformed officers in Indianapolis were decentralized and expended significantly less time – 7 percent overall – in travel. The amount of time devoted to travel was comparable to findings from another study of officer time. Parks et al. (1999) found that patrol officers and community policing specialists in St. Petersburg, FL, and Indianapolis, IN, spent about 14 percent of their time in travel.

Gang officers in this study also spent a substantial amount of time on personal activities, classified as "other." Gang investigators in San Diego and uniformed officers in Indianapolis spent about 12 percent of time on "other" activities while uniformed gang officers in San Diego spent slightly less time – about 9 percent – on personal activities. Gang detectives in Indianapolis spent significantly more time than any other group on personal activities – about 22 percent of time. These data again are fairly consistent with the findings from Parks et al. (1999) that patrol officers and community policing specialists spent 13 percent and 17 percent of their time, respectively, on personal activities.

Administrative activities were time consuming for investigators in both Indianapolis and San Diego, amounting to 22 and 13 percent of time, respectively. These administrative activities reflected virtually no enforcement administration (3 percent in San Diego). In contrast, uniformed officers in both jurisdictions spent considerably less time on administrative activities than detectives – 3 and 6 percent, respectively, for Indianapolis and San Diego.

Uniformed officers spent 4.0 percent and 6.8 percent of their time, respectively in Indianapolis and San Diego, on enforcement administration such as booking. Thus, 7 and 14 percent of uniformed officers' time is engaged in administrative activities (combining enforcement administration with general administration) in, respectively, in Indianapolis and San Diego.

This proportion of time compares to the findings from Parks et al. (1999), which showed that patrol officers, and community-policing specialists spent 11 percent and 15 percent of their time, respectively, on administrative activities. (In Table X, enforcement administration is combined with enforcement to fully reflect time associated with processing arrests.)

The rank ordering of substantive activities of investigative gang personnel in San Diego and Indianapolis were quite similar: detectives in both jurisdictions spent most of their time engaged in investigations and information exchange. These two activities comprised 25 percent of gang detectives' time in Indianapolis and 36 percent of detectives' time in San Diego. San Diego investigators, however, also engaged in intelligence gathering (6 percent), scanning (3 percent), enforcement (3 percent) and data maintenance (2.5 percent); in contrast, Indianapolis detectives engaged in training activities (3.8 percent) and court (2.5 percent). (These latter data are not reported in the tables in this report.)

A major difference between the approaches of police in San Diego and of Indianapolis is reflected by officers' involvement in intelligence gathering; combined, San Diego investigators and uniformed personnel expend a substantial proportion of time – about 7 percent – in collecting intelligence information that was not specific to follow-up investigations. Police in Indianapolis spent virtually no time on this activity, however, their

intelligence activities – surveillance and wiretaps and such – related to specific investigations are captured in the Investigations category.

There is a noteworthy distinction between the activities of uniformed gang officers in San Diego and uniformed officers in Indianapolis as reflected by differences in proactive activities (such as scanning) and reactive activities (such as responding to calls) – and the outcome to each. Indianapolis officers spent 19 percent of their time handling calls or assists while San Diego officers spent half as much time – 7.5 percent – on these activities. San Diego's uniformed officers spent about one-third the amount of time of Indianapolis officers on scanning (13 percent in San Diego compared to 39 percent in Indianapolis) but San Diego officers spent more than twice as much time as Indianapolis officers on enforcement activities (18 percent compared to 8 percent); These differences suggests that Indianapolis officers spend about two-thirds of their time (60 percent) looking for or responding to trouble while San Diego uniformed officers spend about 20 percent of their time on scanning and calls, resulting in spending 18 percent of their time on enforcement. The inverse nature of time on these two activities suggests that Indianapolis uniformed officers spend more time responding and looking for trouble while San Diego officers are relatively more efficient – and thus much more likely to find trouble and take enforcement action. This likely reflects the absence of geographic boundaries for the San Diego officers, who select locations in which to work based on information about problem locations.

This observation suggested by aggregate activity analysis is supported by data collected about discrete events in which police personnel engaged in both jurisdictions and is discussed next.

Gang Unit Interactions

For the purposes of this study, an event was considered an encounter or interaction between the observed officer and someone else. These events were not limited to unlawful incidents, such as responding to a call for service or conducting a field interview, but captured the breadth of officer interactions. Events were recorded to establish the frequency and assess the nature of any contact between officers and gang members, community members, other police personnel and individuals from other agencies. As such, observations included any face-to-face interaction between the observed officer and another person for field interviews, arrests, exchange of information or call handling.

Data about the number and nature of events provided further insight into differences in police activities between Indianapolis and San Diego. About three times as many events were observed in San Diego as in Indianapolis: 217 in the former and 73 in the latter (see Table XI). Overall officers in San Diego were about equally as likely to engage in an event (about two events every three hours) as were officers in Indianapolis and suspects were present in a similar proportion of events in the two jurisdictions.

(For this study, a "suspect" was a criminal suspect and/or a suspected or verified gang member.)

The majority of all events in both jurisdictions involved a suspect – about two-thirds of events in Indianapolis and three-quarters of events in San Diego. Many of these suspect-involved events consisted of field interviews, investigative interviews and enforcement actions in San Diego, while call handling and enforcement activities generated most of these contacts in Indianapolis. (These distinctions reflect the different approach and related activities of investigators in Indianapolis and San Diego. In Indianapolis, investigators – tasked to covert activities – accounted for four of the 73 events observed, or 5 percent; in San Diego, investigators – who are assigned to actively investigate criminal offenses – accounted for 61 or 28 percent of the events observed.)

In Indianapolis, suspects encountered by police were predominately African American (77%) while suspects in San Diego were more diverse, including Hispanic (44%), African American (41%) and Asian (9%) suspects. Most suspects in San Diego were male (96 percent) while about one-fourth in Indianapolis were female.

Table XI
Events: Officer Interactions

	Indianapolis	**San Diego**
Number of events	73 total (69 during uniformed observation)	217 (155 during uniformed observation)
Observation time	115 hours uniformed observation	316.6 hours overall (119 hours uniformed)
Event rate	.6 overall	.69 overall 1.3 (uniformed)
Suspect involved	66% (n=48)	77% (n=167)
Male suspect	73% (n=35)	96% (n=160)
Suspect race: African-American Caucasian Hispanic Asian Pacific Islander/Other	 77% (37) 23% (11)	 41% (68) 4% (7) 44% (73) 9% (15) 3% (5)

Most of the events in both jurisdictions appeared to be relatively calm events and did not reflect tense relationships between police and suspects. For example, Table XII shows that suspects were calm in 71 and 80 percent of events, respectively, in Indianapolis and San Diego. However, many events in San Diego were much more complex and involved numerous persons; in Indianapolis, 58 percent of events involved only one suspect while 40 percent of events in San Diego involved *two or more* suspects. This finding is closely related to the origin of events. In an estimated 52 percent of events, Indianapolis officers were responding to a dispatched call, while events in San Diego were seldom initiated this way (8 percent of events). Consistent with

the practice of responding to calls, 70 percent of events in Indianapolis involved a victim, witness or complainant while only 15 percent of events in San Diego were characterized this way. While events could involve interaction with more than one category of person, events in San Diego often involved a community member (44 percent of events) and other gang unit personnel (63 percent of events) while events in Indianapolis seldom involved a community member (15 percent of events).

Slightly more events in San Diego than in Indianapolis – 83 percent compared to 55 percent – occurred outdoors, painting a general picture of events in San Diego as visible interactions between multiple police personnel and multiple suspects, citizens or other bystanders.

Table XII
Complexity of Events

	Indianapolis	San Diego
Number of suspects:		
Zero	34 % (25)	23% (50)
One	58% (42)	37% (79)
Two	5% (4)	21% (46)
Three or more	3% (2)	19% (41)
Suspect behavior:		
Calm	71% (34)	80% (133)
Upset, angry or impaired	29% (14)	20% (34)
Outdoors (public or private property)	55% (40)	83% (181)
Dim or dark lighting	33% (24)	30% (66)
Victim, witness or complainant involved	70% (51)	15% (32)
Community member involved	15% (7)	44% (96)
Other gang personnel involved	n/a	63% (136)
Other police involved	49% (36)	12% (27)

Officers in San Diego had much greater contact with the community than Indianapolis; community members were present in 44 percent of events in San Diego compared to 15 percent of events in Indianapolis. This observation may be related to differing weather conditions. Contact between police and citizens in Indianapolis typically involved citizens as victims, witnesses or complainants (70 percent of events) and occurred indoors (45 percent of events) with the involvement of fewer individuals. This description of probably somewhat reflects the collection of observational data during winter in Indianapolis when temperatures were often quite cold.

A comparison of the origin of events between the two jurisdictions further supports the image that observed officers in Indianapolis were primarily responding to calls (52%) or monitoring problem locations that led to self-initiated interactions (43%). San Diego officers initiated most of the observed events (64%) or responded to events identified by others, including supervisors, other officers and citizens (33%).

Table XIII: Origin of Events

	Indianapolis	**San Diego**
Self-initiated	43% (31)	64% (138)
Dispatch	52% (38)	4% (8)
Other (supervisor, other police, citizen)	5% (4)	33% (71)

Secondary Activities

Police – detectives and uniformed officers – often participated in two or more activities at once. This reality reflects the complexity of disentangling the activities of gang units. Typically, personnel may use any of these activities to support another of these activities. For example, during the course of an enforcement activity, an officer may gather specific information related to another case under investigation or collect general intelligence information. In many examples, officers move rather seamlessly from one of these activities to another; indeed, gang officers often work in pairs, so that

one officer may be engaged in enforcement while another collects intelligence information.

To document secondary activities, observers recorded a primary, secondary and occasionally a third activity. In Indianapolis, officers and detectives engaged in a secondary activity in about one-fourth (23 percent) of all observed activities. The secondary activity consisted exclusively of communication, which occurred during primary activities of calls, assisting on calls, enforcement and scanning. This secondary activity pattern reflects the routine practice of uniformed personnel to seek background information on suspects or vehicles during scanning and enforcement. In San Diego, officers and detectives engaged in secondary activities during one-third (33 percent) of all primary activities observed. The most common secondary activities included information exchange, communication, administration and other. Information exchange and communication activities were common secondary activities occurring during travel, scanning and investigative activities (such as surveillance or undercover operations). Administrative and other activities also occurred as secondary activities, suggesting that officers share information about work with their colleagues or engage in personal interactions (such as phone calls) during generally passive activities such as traveling or surveillance.

Contrasting Functions of Gang Units

The differences in the observed activities of officers in the Indianapolis and San Diego police departments appear to largely reflect different departmental and unit priorities. In Indianapolis, the departmental objective is for the gang unit to engage in covert activities – hence, investigators had virtually no direct contact or interaction with suspects. Instead, the department assigned primary responsibility for street level problems to uniformed district personnel; thus, these officers spent the majority of their time (60 percent) monitoring locations, looking for trouble and responding to calls; two thirds of the encounters of uniformed personnel with others involved suspects. The department's mission for the investigative unit results in their spending the largest portion of their work time (20 percent) on investigations.

Both jurisdictions have put an emphasis on collaborating with others and the activities of officers appear to reflect this emphasis. Seven and five percent of the activities observed among Indianapolis gang detectives and uniformed personnel, respectively, consisted of information exchange. Slightly more (eleven percent) of the primary observed activities in San Diego – among investigators and uniformed officers combined – consisted of sharing information. In addition, the most common secondary activity for San Diego gang personnel was information sharing – an activity carried out during travel and administrative tasks. The proportion of time devoted to the task of

sharing information appears to reflect the departmental commitment to collaborate within and outside the gang unit.

Similarly, police leaders in San Diego articulated the departmental commitment for the gang unit to interact with other police divisions and units, and provide support services to other police personnel. Hence, most of the call handling and assistance activities of San Diego uniformed personnel (6.5 percent of their time) reflected backing up or assisting other personnel rather than responding directly to calls for service (1 percent).

Of note, gang investigators in San Diego invested a substantial amount of time in maintaining electronic databases – activities consistent with the gang unit and departmental objective of maintaining a reliable and accurate gang database as an investigative resource. The observational instrument recorded time on electronic database activities separately from administrative activities because of input from investigators in developing the observational instrument. About 2.5 percent of investigators' time consisted of data maintenance activities such as updating computer files and reviewing documentation for completeness. These maintenance activities were not related to analysis of electronic data, such as searching databases for links and leads for specific cases; detectives spent an additional 3 percent of time on these activities. Thus, San Diego investigators spent 5.5 percent of their time on electronic database activities – maintenance and analysis – virtually as much time as they expended on intelligence-gathering activities. This

investment in data integrity appears to reflect the emphasis of the San Diego Police Department on "vigorous prosecution" – police expend much effort on developing prosecutable cases, emphasizing thorough investigations and reliable documentation of gang members and their activities consistent with the state's STEP Act.

In contrast, such data have not been a focus of the gang unit in Indianapolis. While investigators in the gang unit in Indianapolis expended 11 percent of their time on investigative activities that involved searching electronic and other databases, this time reflected the focus of the gang unit on gangs as organizations and its goal of dismantling specific gangs. Using this enterprise approach, gang investigators develop cases that involve conspiracy between individuals within gangs and document these links. The electronic search time of gang investigators was supplemented by covert investigative activities such as surveillance and wiretaps, which accounted for about 9 percent of investigators' time.

Although both of the police departments in this study are highly committed to the concept of community-oriented policing, the agencies have differing expectations of their gang units in terms of participating in community policing. In Indianapolis, the investigative gang unit – focused on highly organized criminal gangs, is viewed as distinct and separate from the department's community policing initiative. Instead, the patrol officers who interact with citizens by responding to calls and street level problems, are

expected to deliver community policing services by identifying and resolving problems such as street gang-related problems. The distinct separation of investigators from community policing is seen in the lack of contact between investigators and citizens.

In both agencies, officers spent a large amount of work time on activities not directly related to departmental objectives. Activities of travel and administration consumed 45 percent of detectives' time and 10 percent of uniformed officers' time in Indianapolis; these activities comprised 35 percent of detective time and 25 percent of uniformed gang officer time in San Diego. Travel subsumed 22 percent of time for gang detectives in both jurisdictions and only the decentralized uniformed personnel in Indianapolis recorded little travel time – 7 percent, while uniformed gang officers in San Diego spent 19 percent of their time in travel. The proportion of officers' time observed in "other" or personal activities in both jurisdictions was fairly consistent with findings from Parks et al. (1999), which suggested that specialist officers spend more time on personal activities (17 percent) during work hours than patrol (13 percent). The larger amount of time spent by detectives in Indianapolis on "other" activities reflected this pattern.

The observed patterns of work activities by personnel in the gang units in Indianapolis and San Diego can be also be compared to the observations of Katz (2001), who examined the gang unit of an unnamed midwestern city. The classification scheme used by Katz consisted of four major categories:

enforcement, investigations, intelligence and education. Although our classification scheme does not correspond directly with the one employed by Katz, comparisons can be made by eliminating categories of travel, administration, personal, information exchange and other from San Diego and Indianapolis. Our original classification scheme is also altered by collapsing scanning and call handling into a single enforcement category. Investigations activities include case investigative tasks, such as surveillance used in Indianapolis, while intelligence gathering consists predominately of field interviews employed in San Diego. Based on these recoding decisions, Table XIV shows the similarities and differences between the activities of gang units in three cities. The table demonstrates that San Diego and Junction City devote a similar proportion of time to intelligence gathering and enforcement activities; while San Diego spends negligible time on education, the unit spends a greater proportion of time on investigations. The classification also demonstrates how an agency may focus all its efforts on a single function, as Indianapolis is exclusively engaged in investigations. In contrast, San Diego and Junction City fit the model characterized by Webb and Katz (2003) as a multiple-function unit. Unlike the conclusions reached by Webb and Katz (2003), however, we find no evidence of a focal or primary function in the San Diego gang unit; instead investigations, intelligence and enforcement activities are viewed as a balanced triad, shared between the two arms of the gang unit. While SDPD gang detectives primarily engage in investigations

(see Table X), enforcement activities are concentrated within the uniformed gang team. Each part of the unit, however, engages in a similar proportion of intelligence activities.

Table XIV:
Comparison of Gang Unit Functions between Jurisdictions

Gang unit functions	Indianapolis[14]	San Diego	Junction City
Investigations	100%	40%	24%
Enforcement		44%	42%
Education			20%
Intelligence		16%	13%

Although convenient for purposes of comparison, the simplistic classification scheme in Table XIV lacks the full context of gang unit activities – particularly the involvement of gang personnel in Indianapolis and San Diego in the function of sharing information. The inclusion of this function in Table XV demonstrates the prominence of this activity and its fit with the other primary functions of the gang unit.

Table XV
Modified Comparison of Gang Unit Functions between Jurisdictions

Gang unit functions	Indianapolis[15]	San Diego	Junction City
Investigations	75%	32%	24%
Enforcement		35%	42%
Education			20%
Intelligence		13%	13%
Information sharing	25%	21%	NA

[14] Only gang investigators are included in these calculations.
[15] Only gang investigators are included in these calculations.

This concept of sharing information and networking reflects a rather broad category of police activity – and the observational data suggest that information sharing subsumes a large portion of police time. Since the police departments of both Indianapolis and San Diego emphasize the importance of the gang unit collaborating within and outside the police agency, this functional activity represents – in measurable terms – the attention gang personnel expend on achieving this organizational goal. Since collaboration is viewed as a key element in many views of community-based and problem oriented policing, its prominence in the activities of gang units reflects some dimension of each unit's integration within the organization and collaboration with other partners such as other criminal justice agencies.

In practical terms, however, distinguishing the category of "information sharing" reinforces the overlap between the functional activities of gang unit officers. Although this study assigned a secondary and tertiary activity label to the observed activities of officers, much of the coding involved observation – and classification – by a non-sworn researcher. These observers – as did officers – had difficulty clearly separating where one function ended and another began. This difficulty was most acute in San Diego, where gang officers engage in a wide range of activities. Our observations indicate that the most skillful execution of the gang officer's job in San Diego – investigator or uniformed officer – reflected a multi-tasking approach or feedback loop. The scanning activities of uniformed officers lead

to intelligence information that may support investigations that result in enforcement actions. However, enforcement activities also generate intelligence information that guides scanning activities. This endless loop model requires a particularly high level of coordination because it links two different parts of the gang unit – investigative and uniformed officers – and reflects a two-way communication pattern.

In this chapter, we have described how police officers in Indianapolis and San Diego spend their time in addressing gang-related problems at the investigative and uniformed levels, adding descriptive detail to conventional categories of police activities. There are further questions, however, about how these activities fit within the broader community and problem-oriented policing tradition of these agencies. In the next chapter, we discuss the implications of the findings, examining how the context of gangs and the activities and strategies of these departments reflect on broader police objectives and contemporary views of policing.

CHAPTER V: THE ROLE OF ENFORCEMENT IN PROACTIVE POLICING

The first chapter of this report described how the anti-gang efforts of police are often characterized as "suppression." The term is often understood to reflect police use of hostile tactics indiscriminately focused on young minority males or, alternatively, is used as a synonym for enforcement. The term is also used more generally to reflect the notion of control, as in "controlling gangs." As related to gang-control efforts, the term suppression came into common use in the research of Spergel (1991, 1992) in which a wide range of organizations, including police, were surveyed about their approach to gangs. Spergel used the term to classify myriad criminal justice efforts related to gangs – from monitoring gang members to arrest, adjudication and even incarceration. This broad functional category contrasted to strategies employed by other organizations that were dissimilar to law enforcement, including social interventions, such as drug treatment, and providing opportunities to youth, such as job training or educational programs. The term "suppression" remains in wide use in gang control efforts, most notably in the Comprehensive Gang Model advocated by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, which defines suppression as:

> Formal and informal social control procedures, including close supervision or monitoring of gang youth by agencies of the criminal justice system and also by [other agencies].

The term suppression masks important distinctions employed by police in responding to contemporary gangs. While there is no clear consensus on the meaning or use of the term, there is a need to distinguish suppression tactics such as zero tolerance, aggressive patrols, and even crackdowns from tactics such as saturation, directed and high visibility patrols. The former focus primarily on increasing contacts between police and citizens and putting offenders "on notice," while the latter appear to select targets indiscriminately, making numerous arrests, in a general message of taking control of the streets. While both tactics often reflect concentrated and short-term police efforts in well-defined geographical areas, the term suppression masks distinctions in the purpose and impact of differing tactics. A more explicit classification of police responses is necessary to provide useful policy guidance for law enforcement in crafting – and articulating – effective strategies for gang-related problems.

Understanding Suppression

Throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s, the term suppression was used predominately to refer to heavy-handed street sweeps or other police actions that were indiscriminate in their application. (See, for example, Cordner, 1998.) Greene (1999), for example, noted than zero tolerance had its "roots in suppressive aspects of policing."

From a reading of popular periodicals, it is easy to conclude that police responses to gangs remain dominated by suppression tactics – newspaper headlines such as 'I Want You to Be Aggressive.' (Main and Sweeney, 2003) in Chicago or "Bratton, LAPD Officers Begin To Take Back The Mean Streets" (Kandel, 2003) in Los Angeles. Even in San Diego, a headline in 2003 read: "New police strike force gets tough on taggers: 136 arrests made since unit's inception in April" (Hughes, 2003). The language employed by police leaders in public statements often reinforces the suppression model; gang units, such as the one in San Diego, even use the nomenclature – San Diego's uniformed gang team is called the Gang Suppression Team.

Greene (2003) described "gang suppression" as police efforts in which the threat of criminal and civil sanctions was the central mechanism of police behavior. Under this rubric, a wide range of police tactics, including target hardening, proactive and criminal investigations, intelligence gathering, using civil remedies and crime prevention, have been classified as suppression (Greene, 2003; Decker, 2003b; Spergel, 1991) although Greene (2003) claimed that problem-oriented policing and suppression of gang problems are fundamentally different strategies.

Detailed examinations of police responses are necessary to clarify the use of suppression. In this study of gang units in Indianapolis and San Diego, police were observed engaging in activities that could loosely be interpreted as suppression – even under the more narrow conception of suppression as

comprised of the threat of criminal sanctions. In Indianapolis and San Diego, police engaged in directed and high visibility patrols as a reactive tactic when gang problems or violent crimes spiked in neighborhoods – substantially increasing the visibility of uniformed police personnel in relatively small geographic areas. Although implemented in reaction to particular problems, the actual activities of the saturation patrols were proactive in nature. Officers were encouraged to initiate contact with individuals rather than conducting passive observations or awaiting calls for service. This directive of being proactive may be referred to in some law enforcement agencies as "being aggressive" – a term that suggests officers to take enforcement action against a wide range of minor offenses. Of course, "being aggressive" may also suggest that police are hostile or menacing, and infers harassment or civil rights violations of young ethnic men. In our observations in Indianapolis and San Diego, police personnel routinely initiated interaction with individuals – ranging from gang members to business owners to citizens but the saturation patrols lacked the emphasis on arrests and indiscriminate practices that may be more accurately labeled as crackdowns or zero tolerance.

We found no evidence that saturation patrols were used widely or indiscriminately in Indianapolis or San Diego; instead these patrols fit within the broader community-policing mission of the police organizations. Police employed saturation patrols with a general understanding of the limited scope and impact of this tactic, recognizing their role in reassuring fearful citizens of

police concern and accessibility. Police were well aware of the potential harms of using saturation patrols indiscriminately or without respect for civil rights. Saturation patrols were predominately short-term tactics focused on relatively small geographic areas. In San Diego, saturation patrols were not typically an isolated function, but integrated into broader strategic objectives – collecting intelligence information and developing relationships with community members who could provide further information.

The strategies of the gang units in this study cannot be classified as "suppression-oriented" although uniformed police in Indianapolis and San Diego employed short-term tactics that included the use or threat of enforcement action. However, these tactics were among a range of tactics, employed within an overall strategy to address gang problems.

Tactics are inherently different from strategies. As applied to drug control, police strategies have been described as groups or bundles of discrete tactics combined to achieve intermediate goals (Kleiman and Smith, 1990). Of note, the mix of tactics or varying emphasis within strategic bundles may vary over time. Typically, tactics are short-term operational practices focused on very specific goals while strategies are more long-term approaches designed to achieve overall policy objectives.

The failure to detect the use of suppression as a common tactic or a strategy in these two police agencies shaped our understanding and interpretation of police responses to gangs in the community and problem

oriented policing context. Just as we failed to detect suppression, we also failed to observe the use of "prevention" as a tactic or strategy within these agencies. The strategic orientation of police in this study defied classification into a suppression, or prevention-suppression model. Strategically, police demonstrated a focus on chronic violent offenders, including well-organized criminal enterprises, and highly visible street gangs whose aggressive behaviors caused fearfulness within communities. In both Indianapolis and San Diego, police responses to these problems reflected a more comprehensive approach that included problem analysis, monitoring of problem individuals and locations, intelligence gathering, enforcement and investigations, and collaborating with numerous other public organizations and citizens.

Limitations of Reactive Policing

Police responses to gang problems in the 1980s and 1990s provided a case study about the negative effects of indiscriminate policing. As early as 1990, Goldstein warned about the negative effects associated with such sweeps when arrests are made without the intent to prosecute – a strategy that suggests arrest in itself is viewed as a temporary form of punishment meted out by the police. Such arrests can result in careless police practices that may not be legally justifiable, undermine the authority of the police, encourage corruption and abuse by police, and damage public confidence in the police.

Indeed, such approaches appeared to underlie major incidents of corruption in the gang units of Chicago and Los Angeles in the late 1990s.

Goldstein's (1990) broader concern about the use of enforcement as a means to address public safety problems relates to police behaving as if criminal law were the *only* means of responding to a problem, and generically and automatically applying such sanctions to a wide range of problems. In fact, the concepts of problem-oriented policing do not preclude arrests; Goldstein urges only that criminal sanctions should be invoked with greater discrimination for specific problems. Arrests are one of the means for reducing gang problems (Huff and Schaeffer, 2002) and may indeed be among the *most* effective responses for some gang-related problems. Arrests, however, should not be the only means of resolving gang problems. In fact, exclusive reliance of the police on criminal sanctions to address gang problems feeds public expectations of the ability of police to reduce gangs and gang-related problems through arrests when the capacity to do so is actually quite limited.

By the mid-1990s, many police agencies across the nation had begun to recognize the limitations of reactive investigations and indiscriminate proactive policing strategies and sought to more strategically focus their efforts on problem places, chronic offenders and the context in which crime occurred, rather than focusing exclusively on the detection of individual offenders (Weisburd, 1997). The implicit goal of many gang units – whether

termed suppression, gang control, or other – is to control the activities of gangs in order to reduce or minimize the harms accruing in communities. Many of these efforts have focused on monitoring and responding to problem locations; such efforts produce good results and recent research on displacement – once considered inevitable – has suggested that this side effect is neither certain nor complete. Indeed, evidence suggests that police efforts focused on specific places may produce benefits beyond the immediate focus of the intervention; benefits may accumulate to the larger geographic areas, spill over to additional types of offenses or offenders, and extend temporally beyond the actual application of place-control tactics. While problem-oriented policing encourages police not to rely solely upon criminal sanctions, arrests are an important element of many problem-solving efforts. Indeed, it is not the use of arrests – or threat of such sanctions – that differentiates traditional policing from problem-oriented policing; instead, it is reliance upon arrests as a measure of impact that differentiates traditional policing from problem oriented policing. Traditional police efforts to control gangs rely on enforcement as both primary strategy and tactic and use arrests as a measure of impact. More proactive problem solving efforts to control gangs may employ enforcement – among a range of tactics – to control gangs, but track arrest statistics as a process or activity measure rather than a measure of impact.

Thus, contrary to Greene's assertion that invoking criminal sanctions provides evidence that a strategy is not problem-solving, it is the articulation of arrest statistics as a primary measure of impact that infers the absence of problem-solving. The same is true for other process measures such as drugs, weapons or guns seized as these variables reflect the activities of police rather than any patterns of gang activity or harms.

Benefits of Proactive Policing

Much literature on the gang control efforts of police has focused on reactive responses employed by police – investigations, responding to calls for service, and zero tolerance or suppression patrols. Contemporary police responses to gang-related problems increasingly include proactive efforts in which police take the initiative to act rather than passively waiting for citizens to call upon them. These efforts are sometimes categorized as controlling, discouraging or preventing crime. This classification scheme emphasizes reducing criminal opportunity by addressing highly specific forms of crime.

Proactive efforts by uniformed police in addressing gangs have often focused on place management and need not involve arrests. Even the most basic proactive efforts in gang-troubled communities can produce a range of benefits to the police in resolving public safety problems, as Moore (1992) suggests. These benefits include:

- Identifying informants;

- Providing intelligence information;
- Strengthening police presence and providing a sense of the availability of the police to citizens in communities where gang problems are overt;
- Providing contextual linkage between discrete incidents, and offering police some knowledge of the situation and the people they encounter;
- Responding to unreported offenses or disorder without direct victims and/or witnesses such as loitering, vandalism and drug sales, or with reluctant victims and witnesses; and
- Responding to underreported low-level offenses that typically do not get an immediate police response.

While being proactive opens gang units to input from citizens and commanders, thus providing a mechanism for responsiveness and accountability, it also subjects gang units to institutional pressures from political constituencies and leaders. Proactive policing makes police vulnerable to charges of prejudice and favoritism. And can expose police to the possibility of corruption. During the 1970s and 1980s, many police departments curtailed proactive activities by line officers in order to control the potential for corruption (Johnson et al, 1990; Zimmer, 1987), however, operational practices such as close supervision, routine polygraphs, drug screens, citizen complaints and deemphasis on numbers of arrests and seizures can be used to monitor and prevent such problems.

In contrast, reactive policing is less prone to corruption. When police are formulaically deployed on the basis of workload and respond to calls or crimes, every member of the community is treated similarly, and variables

such as response time can be used to make comparisons to ensure the formula is applied evenly. The routine of officers reporting "back in service" provides another mechanism to control personnel and limit corruption. Of course, the limitations of reactive approaches are well-known – few offenders are apprehended as a result of rapid response and few offenses are cleared through follow-up investigations. While reactive policing will always remain central to the mission of law enforcement, its limitations suggest the need to balance proactive and reactive efforts.

Problem-Oriented Policing Strategies

The literature on problem-oriented and community-oriented policing approaches to gangs draws from a divergent set of expectations and practices about the aims of such efforts. In general, community- or problem-oriented approaches to gangs involve more focused, more proactive, and more community sensitive efforts by police with a goal towards crime prevention and crime control. In contrast, the implicit goal of much traditional gang enforcement by police has been to eliminate gangs, using reactive and general deterrent strategies to solve gang problems through the indiscriminate threat of arrest and sanctions.

While enforcement actions may be an element of problem-oriented approaches to gangs, arrests are not typically the primary means of responding to problems and are used in a strategic manner rather than indiscriminately

applied. For street level gang problems, police have recognized the higher level of proof required by criminal law, and acknowledge that invoking legal sanctions does not address the conditions underlying many gang-related problems.

Problem-based approaches to gangs typically incorporate strategies in addition to enforcement. Goldstein (1990) suggests conveying accurate information about problems to the community may be an important function of police and this has been a useful tool for the police to improve relationships with citizens where gangs are common.

A primary element of problem-oriented policing is that police responses to gangs recognize substantive differences between different gangs, such as differing types of members or criminal activities, and link responses to these different groups; employ strategic approaches such as monitoring recurrent or vulnerable locations for problems or chronic offenders; and work closely with other agencies or communities to build a stronger link between problems, police actions, and outcomes. In our reading of the literature, the distinctions between traditional and problem-oriented policing have become more clear over time; these distinctions are enumerated in Table XVI.

Table XVI:
Distinctions between Traditional and Problem-Oriented Gang Control Efforts

	Traditional gang enforcement	**Problem-oriented gang efforts**
Types of responses	Criminal sanctions Harassment	Criminal sanctions Civil remedies Control facilitators Place management Increased guardianship Focus on chronic offenders
Impact measures	Numbers of arrests, field stops; if data available, amount of gang-related crime	Does not focus on arrests; Impact reflected by declines in calls, gang-related crime, and citizen concerns. Also monitors quality of case clearances and prosecution
Empirical data	Not used	Calls and FIs used to prioritize places, times, chronic offenders, types of offenses
Community input	General information	May be frequent, depending upon problem
Perceptions of equity and fairness	Not an issue; end seen as justifying the means	Viewed as important; Monitor citizen complaints, use of force; Routine polygraph and drug screen of employees
Collaboration within agency and with other agencies	Infrequent	May be frequent, depending on problem; Close interaction between patrol and gang unit
Priorities	Arresting large numbers of offenders Reducing visibility of gangs in hot spots	Identifying and reducing patterned groups of offenders, particular problems; facilitators or chronic places

For example, Operation Ceasefire in Boston is notable for its extensive analyses that suggested gun violence between rival gangs accounted for much violent crime in an area of the city. The Boston gang initiative strategically focused efforts on the most troublesome gangs and chronic offenders in these gangs, increasing the risk of detection for the most prolific offending. This represented a *specific* deterrence strategy of identifying and specifically warning a select group of high volume offenders rather than a *general* deterrence strategy of warning all gang members. While the casual reader might classify this response as suppression since the initiative incorporated the threat of criminal sanctions, the project reflected a strategic approach focused on the *most* prolific gang members within a *specific* geographic area. The police also worked closely with probation and parole, BATF, clergy and community members to ensure that the threatened response was not merely rhetorical but increased the *actual* risk of detection for offenders. By focusing on a smaller group of offenders, police could presumably carry through on the threat.

Most conceptualizations of problem-oriented policing for gangs suggest that police rely less on the threat or application of criminal sanctions primarily because such sanctions – reliant on general deterrence strategies such as random patrol, rapid response and follow-up investigations – are not effective and do little to deter crime. The reliance on such strategies also raises issues of equity and fairness if applied indiscriminately.

Strategic and focused responses to gang problems are more promising. These responses include directed patrols at problem locations, focused and proactive investigations of chronic offenders, and police discouragement of crime through varying tactics such as civil injunctions, nuisance abatement, truancy initiatives, monitoring compliance with probation or parole conditions, changing traffic patterns and so on. These innovations in gang control emerged throughout the 1990s and reflect a much broader repertoire – and potentially more effective range – of police strategies. As Greene (2003) points out, strategies such as a truancy initiative in Dallas and code enforcement and nuisance abatement in Chicago reduced gang violence, thus achieving laudable goals through specific strategies that were not reliant on indiscriminate, unfocused and heavy-handed enforcement efforts.

Contrasting Approaches to Gangs

Research about police gang units tends to compare police functions in dissimilar organizational units – an intelligence-gathering unit in a police agency is functionally different from an investigative unit that carries a caseload. While some gang units may be configured as covert intelligence units, other police agencies deploy uniformed personnel to gather information about gangs and gang members. A specialized gang unit may combine these functions, as does the San Diego Police Department, or these functions may be divided between units. Even within an integrated unit as in San Diego,

responsibility for a problem such as a gang-related homicide may fall to the Homicide Unit. Similarly, division patrol officers may be responsible for many gang-related street level problems. The boundaries of responsibility are not solid and are subject to management decisions relating to the scope or nature of the problem being addressed.

While specialized gang units are prevalent in the United States, most police agencies probably do not have specialized units dedicated to conduct follow-up *investigations* of gang-related incidents. Follow-up investigations may typically be handled by functional investigative units, such as units assigned to investigate crimes against persons or property. Follow-up investigations may also be carried out by major crime units or repeat offender units.

In contrast to uniformed gang personnel, follow-up investigative units and covert intelligence units, many police agencies maintain covert investigative units that are proactive units which focus on dismantling well-organized criminal gangs. These gang units may be comprised of joint task forces, as in Indianapolis, but the investigations undertaken are often complex and use technology and resources not typically applied to street-level gangs. Since many street-level gangs are distinguished by their visibility, intragang warfare, drug dealing, loitering and intimidation – problems that lead to fearfulness among the public – gang units that address these problems are functionally distinct. This is similar to the range of organizational approaches

of police agencies to drug problems: organizational units may separate street level drug dealing from well-organized drug trafficking and these targets may be jointly addressed by uniformed personnel, other specialized units or task forces.

There is no generic model of a gang unit – contemporary gang units are organized to reflect distinctions between gangs in different jurisdictions and between gangs within a single jurisdiction. Since gangs vary in important ways, a single organizational configuration may be insufficient to address the varying forms and activities of gangs. Importantly, the organizational structure of some police organization may not suggest the need for a specialized gang unit. If the gang-related problems manifested locally can be adequately handled by other units or personnel within the police organization, there may be no need for a specialized gang unit at all. The most important element of responding to gangs is developing an effective approach to a locally-determined view of a problem. The nature of the police approach – and the effectiveness of police efforts – are much more important than the organizational form through which such functions are carried out.

CHAPTER VI: THE IMAGE AND REALITY OF POLICING GANGS

By examining the activities of police in gang units in Indianapolis and San Diego, we gained insight into police practices beyond the symbolic notion of suppressing gangs. The study shed light on what police actually *do* about gang problems, including police reflections on what goals they aspire to achieve, through what mechanisms and their perception of the broader organizational and political context in which gang units operate. One of the major findings of this study is that the broad organizational orientation of these police agencies towards community and problem-oriented policing has influenced the practices of the gang units in important ways. Increasingly police have realistic objectives about controlling gangs, recognizing that gangs and gang-related problems cannot be totally eliminated but must be controlled to reduce the harms occurring in communities. Correspondingly, the hyperbolic rhetoric of eliminating gangs appears to have diminished, and police have subsequently focused on finding the most effective ways to address a range of gang-related problems. Increasingly, police have focused strategically on problem locations and chronic offenders. In both Indianapolis and San Diego, community policing has helped police recognize the limitations of reactive practices, and they have sought ways to balance proactive and reactive approaches to gangs.

Adaptation of Police Responses to Gangs

Since the creation of their gang units in San Diego and Indianapolis, respectively, in 1972 and 1985, both police agencies have struggled to find the best form for the unit and to determine the fit between community policing and gang control functions. In many ways, these struggles have been shared by the two quite different agencies. These struggles have included efforts to articulate – within and outside the organization – the agency's goals and objectives related to controlling gangs; efforts to balance community and political expectations about gang control; and efforts to coordinate operational practices to support both gang control and other police work. Based on our observations of police practices and examination of police policies in Indianapolis and San Diego, the organizational evolution of police responses to gangs is evidenced by seven key factors:

- An increasingly strategic orientation that incorporates proactive and reactive functions to address problem locations and chronic offenders and recognizes key differences between different gangs;

- Greater efforts to articulate clear goals about gangs and the police response, and to communicate goals within and outside the organization;

- Increased emphasis on quality intelligence and use of technology to guide target selection, improve investigations, facilitate achievement of strategic objectives and improve intra- and inter-agency communication;

- Better understanding of criminological theories relevant to gangs, including the limitations of prevention and deterrence and the concepts of opportunity theory, routine activities and situational crime prevention;

- Increased awareness of the external environment for addressing gangs, including community perceptions and expectations; and,

- Greater attention to the organizational environment, including the need to maintain communication and collaborate within and outside the organization; and,

- Increased flexibility and use of a range of tactics to respond to changing conditions.

For the two agencies studied, these seven characteristics appear to reflect the primary evidence of the agencies' evolving approach to gang problems. Of course, other factors influenced the evolution of these departments – changes in leadership, variations in the nature and amount of crime, and other organizational and political pressures that comprise the volatile and politicized environment of policing. In developing their current gang strategy, each of the agencies struggled to develop an organizational niche and select the most effective police practices – proactive and reactive – to control gangs. Because gang control efforts encompass traditionally proactive functions of police (initiating investigations and monitoring problem locations or people) and traditionally reactive functions of police (investigating cases and responding to incidents), gang units illustrate on-going ambivalence about the appropriate balance of these two necessary police functions within police agencies. Although one department (IPD) ultimately settled on a primarily proactive unit initiating investigations, leaving reactive street level functions to patrol and follow-up investigations to decentralized investigators, the other agency

(SDPD) elected to incorporate both these functions into a single unit. Evidence of the organizations' adaptation of gang strategies is discussed next.

Increasingly Strategic Orientation. This study suggests that the adoption of community policing and problem solving had a major impact on the functions of gang units, resulting in the increased use of strategic approaches and a decrease in reliance on indiscriminate practices. In this sense, police strategies increasingly emphasize long-term strategies rather than routinely relying upon short-term tactics that are primarily reactive and corrective.

The evolution of community and problem-oriented policing has further aided police in clarifying and understanding the mission of the police organization and the role of all police officers, including those in the gang unit. Officers engaged in community policing were once labeled as being "soft on crime" or "social workers"; there is little evidence of such language in contemporary policing. Similarly, special units such as gang units are not viewed as "crack down" or as doing "real police work." Instead, current police efforts to control gangs in their communities reflects a more balanced approach to policing – police are neither zealously focused on arrests nor do they respond to gangs by merely counseling youth out of joining gangs. Instead, police make greater use of discriminate practices focused on rather specific public safety problems or targets, such as chronic offenders, violent gangs or hot spots where gang problems are emerging. These practices reflect

police recognition that the behaviors related to reactive policing can influence proactive police efforts.

Problem-oriented policing has influenced police responses to gangs in another important way – observations suggest that police avoid applying ubiquitous strategies to gang problems. Police in Indianapolis and San Diego recognize substantial differences between groups – differences that may be related to gang ethnicity, modus operandi, offenders' ages, or other characteristics; and police evaluate these differences to determine the appropriateness of different responses. For example, civil injunctions have been used in San Diego to address problems of gangs congregating in communities. These civil approaches have not been used for Asian gangs as these gangs do not congregate, and hence injunctions would not be effective. In Indianapolis, police do not view street level gangs as well-organized and having clear leadership; thus proactive investigations such as enterprise or trafficking are not employed to address these groups.

Efforts to Clearly Articulate Goals. The influence of community policing and problem solving in Indianapolis and San Diego are visible in the articulated goals and objectives for the gang units. While there are substantial differences in the goals between the gang units of the two jurisdictions (See Table XVII for a comparison), these written goals communicate messages within and outside of the organization. Even broad functional activities that state the obvious provide important information to the organization and

political constituency about what tasks and activities police are undertaking and through what means. For example, Indianapolis emphasizes processes, such as conducting a RICO investigation and enhancing the skills of gang unit personnel. San Diego emphasizes outcomes such as reducing the impact and incidence of gang-related crime. These goals are consistent with the organizational capacity of police agencies to accomplish them.

Written goals and mission statements for gang units convey images, creating a shared understanding of realistic expectations for which organizations may be held accountable. Thus, attention to the use of language employed in the goal and mission statements of gang units provides important cues about the unit's priorities and the tacit endorsement of the priorities by the department's top leadership. Notably, the goal and mission statements for the gang units of Indianapolis and San Diego reflect the following:

- There is no use of hyperbole or inflammatory language symbolically suggesting waging war on gangs;
- There are no overly broad objectives; no claims to eradicate, eliminate or suppress gangs;
- There is no emphasis on the numbers or kinds of arrests, case clearances, drug or gun seizures, prosecution or punishment of gang members; and,
- There is no reference to prevention, counseling or providing services to gang members.

Instead, the organizational goals of the gang units in both departments refer to the methods that will be used to address gangs, such as:

- Coordinating and partnering with other agencies and, for San Diego, within the police agency and with the community;

- Gathering quality intelligence information – assessing and improving this data in Indianapolis and maintaining its quality in San Diego;

- Using data for strategic purposes – identifying, prioritizing and initiating investigations of the most troublesome gangs in Indianapolis and, implicitly, evaluating the impact of police efforts in San Diego; and,

- Conducting administrative tasks, such as improving skills of gang unit personnel and using investigative strategies in Indianapolis.

Notably absent from these public and organizational statements about the gang unit are goals related to fairness and equity; indeed, these are broader organizational objectives articulated by the top leadership of the police organizations. For example, the mission statement of the San Diego Police Department includes only three core elements and one of these is "to respect individuals" while the mission statement of IPD includes: "We will accomplish our mission with empathy, compassion, and sensitivity at all times, with the highest regard for individual and constitutional rights."

Table XVII
Goals of Police Gang Units: Indianapolis and San Diego

Type of goal	Indianapolis	San Diego
Coordination	Coordinate and share intelligence with other law enforcement agencies.	Partnering with other law enforcement agencies, other units within the department and the community to reduce gang violence.
Training/Improve skills	Enhance the skills of gang unit personnel assigned to analytic responsibilities. Initiate a Racketeering Enterprise Investigation	
Improve intelligence for strategic purposes	Assess the amount and quality of criminal intelligence information available; Identify violent street gang organizations, their members, scope, finances, criminal activities and geographic dimensions; Assess all violent street gang organizations and identify the five most violent street gangs; …to assist in developing potential targets, the scope of their criminal activities and vulnerabilities; Initiate and conduct investigations to collect evidence and to prove patterns of criminal activities.	Maintain accurate intelligence files about gangs and gang members.
Impact measures	Indict the hierarchy of the New Breed street gang for their drug trafficking and other criminal activities and remove the instruments of those criminal activities (e.g., firearms).	Reduce the incidence of gang-related criminal activity; Reduce number of active gang members; Reduce the impact of gang activity on the community

Increased Emphasis on Intelligence. Police agencies must determine the investment they are willing to make in intelligence information and clearly

articulate the purposes for which such intelligence will be used. Most gang units begin as intelligence-gathering units – an assessment is undertaken to establish the number, kind and prevalence of gangs in the community, and the extent of their criminal activity. Intelligence information may be gathered covertly, through surveillance, undercover operations, confidential informants or sources; it may be gathered overtly through field interviews, arrests, observations, and informal conversations with sources; or it may be gathered collaboratively, from others such as schools, probation agencies or citizens. While there is a need for patrol officers to collect information and understand gangs, there is much variability in how line officers can receive and process this information. The experiences of IPD and SDPD suggest that generalist patrol officers cannot routinely and reliably collect intelligence information. If the agency decides this information should be collected, this task often results in the creation of a specialized gang unit.

Once formed, gang units must clearly address what to do with the intelligence information that is collected. Should such information be used only for purposes of assessment such as counting and monitoring gang activities? Or should information be used to guide deployment of street-level resources, for follow-up investigations or proactive investigations? Should these data be shared with patrol and other police units? If so, when and how?

Collecting reliable data about gangs and gang members – data that are comprehensive and current – requires a major investment and long-term

commitment for a police agency facing a sizeable gang problem. Without the investment, police departments are unable to accurately track and monitor the number of gangs or gang members, and hence, cannot reliably estimate the amount or type of gang-related offenses. Depending upon the scale and nature of a jurisdiction's gang problem, however, such an investment may not be necessary. Intelligence information that is incomplete may still be quite useful for developing investigative priorities and can be used to initiate proactive investigative efforts – as occurs in Indianapolis.

In contrast to IPD, SDPD emphasizes accurate and comprehensive intelligence information, primarily to aid prosecution and sentencing in gang-related cases. Consistent with this goal, the police agency makes a substantial investment in collecting these data and ensuring their accuracy. This emphasis has contributed to recognition of the benefits to treating gang members professionally and respectfully rather than in a "heavy handed" or antagonistic manner. Police perceive that the "professional" approach results in the following:

- Generally better information from gang members themselves, through longer field contacts with more detail, providing information that may be used to update records;

- Greater cooperation in consent inquiries, such as for consent searches and consent to be photographed;

- Better information from sources such as confidential informants, and increased cooperation from families, girlfriends and citizens when they perceive that gang members will be treated fairly by police; and,

- A more cooperative relationship with the community and higher level of satisfaction, and fewer complaints about use of force.

Interviews with police in San Diego routinely suggested that heavy-handed approaches are seen as counterproductive; antagonism between police and gang members creates a hostile environment that stymies intelligence gathering, angers the public, and compromises officer safety. Indeed, the term "suppression" is not used by police officers or police leadership. Although the gang unit in San Diego includes the term "suppression" in its name, and incorporates "suppression" into the goals and objectives of the unit, the term is used to convey the concept of "control" and does not appear to reflect a heavy-handed approach. In general, the term suppression is used neutrally in San Diego to convey the concept of controlling gangs; indeed, there is widespread agreement that police efforts will not eliminate gangs but can reduce or limit the number and severity of problems caused by gangs.

The emphasis on gathering intelligence information about gangs draws upon the experience of police with intelligence information from other venues. Experts on organized crime have long considered intelligence "the single most important tool in countering organized crime" (Lupsha, 1990: 232). However, it is recognized that a high-quality intelligence database requires a major commitment of time and personnel. Unfortunately, it may be quite difficult to determine the benefits of such an investment.

Intelligence information about gangs may be collected and compiled for different purposes – administrative, tactical, strategic and evaluative:

- Intelligence information gathered about gangs is often *administrative* and an assessment of the gang problem involves recording the number of gangs and gang members and changes in the quantity of composition over time. To track the amount of gang-related crime, the jurisdiction needs intelligence information to accurately identify and record gang-offenses;

- Some intelligence information gathered about gangs is *tactical* – related to providing information for investigating, and prosecuting cases. Some may be used to head off problems such as gang retaliation before they occur, guide deployment of police personnel to emerging problem locations or identify crime series or patterns related to particular gangs or gang members;

- Much intelligence information is strategic. Such data can be used to identify longer-term patterns and trends in gangs, such as increased size or criminality of particular gangs, emerging conflicts between rival gangs, changes in criminal activities, geography, weaponry, leadership or turf, and gang practices, such as recruitment. Strategic intelligence information may also be used to select targets – groups or individuals – or prioritize locations or offense types, for proactive investigations or other strategies; and,

- Intelligence information can be used to evaluate the impact of police efforts. With reliable gang intelligence, police can assess the outcomes of gang-related cases such as following the number of cases dismissed or prosecuted, and the outcome of cases, such as the frequency of sentencing enhancements. Over time, such information can be used to changes in the size of a gang, the age of its members and the criminality of both groups and individuals.

The ability of police to collect intelligence information has improved dramatically in recent years. Contemporary gang units in law enforcement agencies have taken some ideas on intelligence gathering from organized crime investigative practices. Police employ surveillance and covert

operations, such as infiltration, undercover operations, as well as confidential informants and sources. Such covert techniques are often necessary because of the secrecy and conspiratorial enterprises of organized crime but much intelligence information about gangs is easier to gather. In contrast to organized crime, many gang members are less secretive and often engage in highly visible behaviors. In large part, gangs lack the strict criteria for membership and the sanctions on secrecy that might limit intelligence gathering.

Better Understanding of Criminological Theories. To be most effective, police must understand the mechanisms through which their responses to problems can be expected to be effective. Historically, much policing has focused on the principles of deterrence – anticipating that quickly responding to calls for service and follow-investigations would result in the detection of many offenders and deter would-be offenders from engaging in crime. Of course, research in the 1970s showed that such practices were not very effective in reducing crime. Police have increasingly recognized the limitations of deterrence when applied to gang problems. Although heightened police presence and the increased threat of sanctions – when narrowly focused on particular problems, problem locations or types of offenders have achieved reductions in gang-related crime (Fritsch, Caeti and Taylor, 1999) and gun violence (Braga et al, 2001; McGarrell, Chermak and Weiss, 1999), such tactics are expensive and cannot be maintained over time (Scott, 2004). In

contrast, saturation patrols focused on hot spots have been effective (Sherman and Weisburd, 1995) and may not require the resources – and result in the enmity – associated with crackdowns.

Saturation patrols in Indianapolis and San Diego are used to respond to emerging or recurring gang problems or severe gang-related incidents. While saturation patrols may consist of simple increases in police presence while crackdowns usually increase the threat of sanctions for offenders, saturation patrols in these two cities gang members were more strategic. Such patrols involved collecting intelligence information about gang members through FIs and collecting intelligence information from community members. The patrols also emphasized direct contacts with citizens that demonstrated police accessibility and attention to problems and reassured citizens of police availability.

In many ways, these intensified patrols focused on specific areas demonstrate police application of deterrence theory however the patrols demonstrate police use of *specific* deterrence tactics rather than using deterrence as a *general* strategy. These focused efforts might be expected to alter the decision making of chronic offenders within small areas. To be effective, both Klein (1993) and Kennedy (1998) suggest that deterrent strategies should change offenders' perceptions about increased risks of detection. Ideally police should be able to *actually* increase risks rather than rely on a placebo or idle threats. Where police have highly developed

intelligence files about offenders and focus on specific problem locations and groups or individuals, there *is* presumably an increased risk of detection. This notion also applies to the frequency of field contacts of gang members by police. Offenders' perceptions about the likelihood of being stopped by police may serve to change behaviors such as carrying a weapon. Similarly, gang members with outstanding warrants or in violation of probation or parole conditions, may be less likely to be present in locations where they may be subject to field contacts by police.

Improved use of deterrence strategies by police has paralleled increased recognition that activities of particular gangs and gang members are highly concentrated in time and space. Drawing upon data collected about gang members through FIs, police increasingly recognize that even the most prolific offenders cannot be everywhere at once. Most chronic offenders spend the majority of their time in or traveling between predictable locations such as home, school, work or hang-out locations, and are often observed with the same companions. Thus, police can increasingly focus their attention on the opportunities for gang-related offenses that occur near these nodes of activity or along the paths from one to the other. This view of offender behavior reflects police understanding of "routine activity" theory.

This understanding of routine activity theory provides police with promising investigative leads when offenses occur. In contrast to offenses that might otherwise have few solvability factors – such as no evidence or

witnesses – the careful and repeated documentation by police of gang members, their associates, vehicles and behaviors provides readily accessible information for follow-up investigations. The documentation thus substantially increases the likelihood of detection and presumably influences offenders' perceptions about the likelihood of detection.

An understanding of routine activity theory has also assuaged police concerns about displacing gangs and gang members. Contemporary police understand the temporal limitations of tactics such as directed patrols, anticipating only that problems will diminish for a period of time. Police however observe diffusion effects associated with directed patrols of gang problems; gang problems do not immediately resume their prior level even after police presence is removed. Instead, problems remain decreased for some period of time and police can deliver additional doses of police presence at lower levels than the original dosage. These follow-up practices in which police resources may be pulsed on and off are a more efficient use of police resources than long-term increases in police presence in areas.

Another interpretation of criminological theory by police is reflected in perceptions that visible problems – such as truancy, hanging out, public drinking, drug dealing, loitering and intimidation in public places – can lead to more harmful problems such as assaults and shootings. Both police and citizens become concerned when the activities of gang members become more visible as such behaviors suggest that offenders perceive little risk of

detection. This thinking by police and citizens is consistent with the "Broken Windows" premise, suggesting that problem behaviors that are tolerated may increase the prevalence or severity of offending; the environment suggests to offenders that there are opportunities to offend and there is little risk of detection.

By responding to "low level" problems and public concerns, police signal to community members and gang members that police are available and will address such problems. This resultant attention reduces the anonymity of gang members and increases formal surveillance and guardianship of problem areas. These approaches reflect applications of situational crime prevention described by Clarke (1992) as police increase the risks of detection to gang members, increase the difficulty or effort that must be expended by gang members, reduce the rewards and remove excuses associated with offending or problem behaviors related to many gangs).

The use of situational crime prevention techniques has significantly expanded the repertoire of police for addressing gang-related problems. Rather than an exclusive focus on criminal sanctions, police can block or limit opportunities for offending by making physical changes in the environment, employing civil techniques to reduce problems, using technology to enhance crime prevention and limiting access to the means of offending. The wide range of situational crime prevention techniques (see Table XVIII) provides

police with alternative responses to gang problems, permitting police to select responses that can be expected to be more effective under certain conditions.

Table XVIII: Situational Crime Prevention Techniques for Controlling Problem Behaviors of Gangs and Gang members

Increase the risks of detection • Increase guardianship of problem places through directed patrols • Increase formal surveillance of problem places through directed patrols • Use surveillance cameras • Reduce anonymity of offenders through field contacts • Increase natural surveillance, such as community reporting of gang behaviors and information • Collect graffiti reports via hotlines • Use confidential informants or sources • Improve lighting • Target chronic offenders • Target groups through enterprise investigations • Use detailed intelligence to improve investigations
Increase the effort to offend • Alter street patterns • Control weapons • Restrict spray paint sales
Reduce the rewards of offending • Disrupt street markets • Clean graffiti quickly • Prevent media reporting of gang and gang member's names • Increase penalties using gang enhancements • Link penalties or disposition to offense, e.g., community service such as cleaning graffiti, victim restitution • Improve prosecution of cases through better intelligence
Remove excuses or rule-setting • Limit loitering • Abate nuisance properties • Use civil injunctions to restrict geographic areas • Enforce codes • Suspend drivers' licenses • Monitor probationers and parolees for compliance • Establish or enforce truancy statutes • Establish or enforce juvenile curfews • Hold parents accountable

The most important observation about the use of situational crime prevention techniques by police in San Diego and Indianapolis is that police do not try to apply them ubiquitously. Logically, some of these techniques are more appropriate to certain settings and certain types of offenders. For example, curfews and truancy initiatives are not appropriate for gang members who are not juveniles. Some gangs engage in little graffiti, while others engage in little public activity such as hanging out. Some gangs engage in greater intra-gang warfare – this may reflect competition over drug market turf or other rivalries. The effectiveness of police tactics depends upon the problem and the fit between problem and response. For example, increased police visibility through field contacts and directed patrol is probably most effective in interrupting open street drug markets in limited geographic areas where customers may be concerned about the presence of police, regardless of whether dealers continue to operate.

The notion that police employ greater discrimination in their selection of responses to gang-related problems suggests they have an understanding of the processes through which one could expect gang problems to be controlled. While one will find few officers who employ the language of opportunity and deterrence theory, the behaviors of contemporary police suggest a good understanding of how police practices can be expected to influence the behavior of offenders. These observations are contrary to expectations that

community policing and problem solving requires police to engage in prevention strategies aimed at diverting individuals from joining gangs, as suggested by Greene (2003) and Decker (2003b). In Indianapolis and San Diego, police officers and police organizations increasingly recognize that strategies designed to alter the socioeconomic conditions that lead people to initially become offenders, although well-intentioned, are impractical for the police, consistent with Felson and Clarke (1998), Eck (2003b) and Braga (2002). Thus, rather than attempting to solve "root problems" as Decker and Greene suggest, contemporary police approaches to gangs appear to be more realistic.

Greater Attention to External Environment. One mission of uniformed gang personnel is to respond to highly visible street gangs, and to do so quickly in order to deescalate problems or prevent bigger problems. Police recognize that a major part of this response is the symbolic presence of the police in a geographic area. The police presence communicates the availability of police to the community; the responsiveness provides reassurances of safety to citizens. As Goldstein (1977) suggested, a primary responsibility of the police is to create and maintain a feeling of safety in the community

Typically, deployment of the Gang Suppression Team in San Diego – a role filled by the tactical Neighborhood Resource Officers in Indianapolis – is to emerging hot spot locations; locations nominated by patrol commanders,

citizens, or direct observation by gang officers, and thus police efforts are somewhat preventive in nature – intended to diffuse conditions before more offenses occur. These saturation or directed patrols, as described previously, are viewed by some police as a routine but temporary response. This view is consistent with Sherman (1990), who described crackdowns as a "recurring political necessity but never an effective long term policy." Gang officers in San Diego, however, use the tactic as an opportunity to collect intelligence information about gangs and gang members through observation and contacts with gang members. While such contacts put gang members "on notice," the goal of saturation patrols is not usually to generate arrests although some may occur. Instead, the focus is upon collecting information to elaborate and update intelligence files for investigative purposes and providing detailed information that supports prosecutions that may result from investigations.

In addition to collecting information from gang members, saturation patrols are used to collect intelligence information from citizens and thus increase interactions between police and citizens. These contacts provide officers with a constructive and purposeful activity and an opportunity to reassure citizens about police availability and shared concerns for the community – a hallmark of community policing.

More Attentive to Internal Environment. On an organizational level, addressing problems related to gangs reflects historical police ambivalence about the role of special units and, more particularly, the on-

going struggle within police departments to determine the optimal balance between reactive and proactive functions and how to best organize these functions. Community policing has epitomized the on-going challenge to balance reactive and proactive approaches. In many police agencies, the term "proactive" is used synonymously with community policing while "reactive" is used to characterize traditional policing – responding to calls for service and conducting follow-up investigations. In some settings, the term proactive is indistinguishable from "aggressive" policing, reflected by zero-tolerance policing or crackdowns. Some police agencies use the term proactive to refer to operations such as stings, decoys and other operations addressing organized crime, gambling or even traffic problems.

Despite a growing emphasis on proactive approaches in policing – crime prevention and partnerships with the community and other partners within the jurisdiction, and long-term proactive investigations – there is an inherent tension between proactive and reactive approaches. In Indianapolis and San Diego, the adoption of community policing contributed to a broader police understanding of the limitations of reactive tactics. This recognition has changed the balance of power in both police agencies. While investigative divisions were once viewed as a career destination for police personnel, the community policing movement effectively renewed the patina and career opportunities associated with uniformed operations. Upon promotion, San Diego police are required to move from a reactive division to a proactive

assignment. Recent chiefs in both departments were viewed as chiefs who came primarily from uniformed operations, and thus emphasize patrol moreso than investigative functions.

While both these police agencies devote a substantial block of resources to reactive functions to address gangs, gang units in these two agencies have focused on improving their effectiveness by using a range of proactive strategies. These have included:

- Monitoring trends in gang-related offenses, particularly felonies;
- Targeting dangerous places, rather than random patrol, using calls for service data, patrol input and citizen information;
- Targeting chronic or repeat offenders;
- Targeting dangerous groups (dealing with gangs as different entities), increasing credibility of gang officers as expert witnesses by focusing efforts on particular gangs;
- Improving information about offenders by increasing gang contacts (in San Diego). For example, police in San Diego have digital photographs of about 90 percent of documented gang members. Indianapolis made efforts to build a comprehensive and reliable intelligence database through a grant-funded effort but the data quality declined after the grant ended;
- Sharing information, through task forces, meetings with patrol and others; collaborating with federal agencies for expertise in racketeering investigations, using technologies and expertise for wiretaps and other sophisticated investigative techniques;
- Using technology, such as digital lineups and link analysis to connect and solve cases;
- Improving gang contacts. Because field interviews are an important source of intelligence information about gangs, police departments have to be proactive and initiate contacts with gang

members; such contacts are non-confrontational and used to elaborate routine offender behaviors, develop sources, and add information useful for successful case clearances and prosecution. Skilled gang officers use interview techniques to gather field information successfully and get consent for photographs;

- Improving clearance rates. Since violent offenses involving gangs may produce no physical evidence, recalcitrant witnesses and few suspects, extensive databases can provide prompt and important investigative leads that result in more case clearances and potentially quicker case clearances;

- Improving prosecutions as extensive databases tracking field contacts with gang members result in more successful prosecutions, and can be used to initiate enhancements against gang members; and,

- Analyzing temporal and spatial patterns of problems, allowing police to allocate human resources according to approximate peak demand (San Diego).

Of course, there are challenges in how these proactive methods are put into practice. For example, link analysis in Indianapolis was a manual process, in which an analyst physically sorted records to establish connections between individuals. Police have also struggled with how to guide proactive strategies and to measure the impact of proactive efforts.

A range of police tactics do not fit neatly with the proactive-reactive dichotomy and many of these tactics reflect a major emphasis related to community policing – such as working closely with the community and other stakeholders such as probation and parole, schools or code compliance organizations to share information and develop collaborative responses. These tactics – referred to as "coactive" in some literature on community

policing – may support proactive and/or reactive efforts of police. As illustrated in Table XIX, police in both agencies invest a similar amount of time in coactive efforts – from 6 to 11 percent in each agency.

Table XIX
Balance between Proactive, Reactive and Coactive Functions: Percent of Time By Category[16]

	Investigators[17]		**Uniformed**	
	Indianapolis	**San Diego**	**Indianapolis**	**San Diego**
Proactive	20%	9%	39%	21%
Reactive		28%	28%	29%
Coactive	7%	11%	6%	11%
Administrative, travel and other	66%	47%	20%	34%

The ability to deploy special units to respond to gang problems provides police managers – and police organizations – with flexibility and accountability. For the short term, it is rational to concentrate training and resources to a specialized unit in which specialist skills or tactics may be needed. Over time, police practices evolve and gang units have an opportunity to refine their practices. Once created, special units appear to seldom disappear but may be reconfigured or reorganized. Such reorganization may reflect substantive differences in problems, or relate police functions to funding availability or local perceptions of the problem.

[16] Columns do not total 100% because only the major activities are included in the calculation.
[17] Investigations are grouped under proactive for Indianapolis and under reactive for San Diego, consistent with agency practices.

Observations suggest that many of the problems related to gangs include elements of chronic offenders, guns, violence or drug dealing. In other locales, gang problems may be interpreted as reflecting problems with youth, organized criminal activities or graffiti. While the nomenclature or spotlight on the problem may change over time, many of the core problems, chronic offenders and hot spot locations have a great deal of continuity for police. Special units, however, provide police managers with flexibility for deployment, including changing shifts and assignments, for providing specialized training and supervising, and for maintaining a locus of organizational accountability that is both practical and symbolic.

Increasingly Adaptive. Organizationally, gang units are not well-established or static entities within contemporary law enforcement agencies. As should be expected of all special units, the goals and strategies of gang units are subject to periodic reexamination; similarly the tactics employed by gang units are subject to change – to improve technical efficiency, respond to changing problems or political or community interpretations or perceptions of those problems.

The evolution of the gang units in this study demonstrates the evolution of gang units over time. Neither of these gang units are new – the gang unit in Indianapolis was created in the mid-1980s, while San Diego's gang unit dates to the early 1970s. Both units – as typical for emergent gang units, were initially tasked with assessing the extent of the gang problem in

the jurisdiction. The unit in Indianapolis emerged in the department's juvenile division while San Diego's unit was associated with the department's school task force.

Over the two and three decades following their creation, both gang units have struggled to find an organizational niche within the police department. These struggles have occurred during periods and the pressures of massive increases in violent crime – during the mid-1990s in Indianapolis and late 1980s in San Diego. The periods were also punctuated by major organizational changes related to implementation of community policing, and the organizational stress related to concerns about racial profiling. Despite their similar beginnings, Indianapolis and San Diego have taken a different approach to their gang units: Indianapolis has placed its gang unit within its covert investigations section of its Criminal Investigations division, co-located with vice and narcotics units. In contrast, San Diego's gang unit, once assigned to a Special Operations Division, is now grouped with narcotics investigations, and three field division commands, under the command of an assistant chief.

The formation and maintenance of gang units in these two agencies, and hence their organizational goals, have been highly influenced by the external environment of the police department. A department's response to problems related to gangs is shaped by external and internal environmental conditions – its organizational history, the availability of opportunity and

resources, information and knowledge, and community and political concerns about the problem.

The gang units in this study both originated as youth units; subsequently the units have been located within special operations divisions, grouped with organized crime units, and linked to narcotics and vice operations. The gang units in both departments have been also influenced by federal funding and support. A grant from the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services – Anti-Gang Initiative – supported heavy uniformed involvement in intelligence gathering during the late 1990s while WECAN – the Walking Enforcement Campaign Against Narcotics, in San Diego was supported by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. Federal resources, such as FBI Safe Streets, U.S. Marshal, ATF, DEA and USDA have also provided technical support and financial assistance in the form of overtime and buy money.

The incidence of gang-related crime problems has had a major influence on the ebb and flow of gang units and changes in operational practices. In general, events such as high profile crime events, although rare, have a major impact on political, public and media perceptions of gang problems; trends in reported gang-related crime including homicides, assaults and robberies; gun offenses, drug dealing and visibility of gang members and graffiti. All of these contribute to community perceptions of problems that influenced political demands for police action. Community and political

concerns, influenced by media interpretation of events, political campaigns or agendas, have been mediated by community perceptions of local police – perceptions that are influenced by use of force issues, racial profiling and incidents of police corruption.

The competing organizational and environmental pressures contribute to organizational ambiguity about what the gang unit is, what the gang unit does, how these activities are measured and how the gang unit fits into the organization's concept and practice of community policing. Much of this ambiguity is not limited to specialized gang units; as discussed in Chapter 1, there has historically been tension between specialized units in police agencies – including investigative units, community policing, and others.

Both police departments in this study have struggled with identifying the appropriate organizational locus for their gang unit, and identifying relevant measures of effectiveness. As currently constructed, the gang units are comprised of cross-functional teams – incorporating local level investigators, federal task forces, local or federal prosecutors, and some functions of records management and crime analysis. (In the Indianapolis task force, there was routine involvement with federal agencies such as FBI, DEA, BATF and USDA. San Diego's task force with these federal agencies was not examined in this study.) In many ways, these gang units may be conceptualized as spanning organizational boundaries in the law enforcement agency – integrating functional responsibilities that can be cast as both patrol

and investigative functions – and records management, intelligence, crime analysis and community liaison. Historically, patrol officers gathered much intelligence information at the street level, but the advent of detective units gradually transformed police organizations into functionally bifurcated bureaucracies; gang units – and some other centralized special units – fall outside of these traditional roles.

In an ideal police organization, a gang unit may reflect a hybrid organizational unit – both investigative and uniformed officers develop expertise in their functional domain, and may be advised and guided by either the recipient of information (investigator) or initiator of information (uniformed officer). The success of the unit is based upon the joint work efforts of both functional areas, thus breaking some of the parochialism associated with specialized units. Coordination and communication is encouraged across functional lines; and accountability to citizens, police leaders and political leaders is resident in a particular domain. Support functions such as MIS and crime analysis can be integrated. Centralized operations can provide flexibility to the unit in terms of developing strategic priorities and deployment; and the role of supervisors can be clarified as relating to unit goals.

The two gang units studied represent a shift from the case focus of most police investigative units, to a focus on offenders that incorporates the group dynamic – incorporating concepts of routine activity into understanding

offender behavior, patterns of co-offending and making linkages to solve cases. Although investigators in San Diego have responsibility for follow-up investigations, these assignments are based on the involvement of gang members for which the detective has investigative responsibility. In Indianapolis, gang cases represent proactive investigations that do not consist of a follow-up investigation. Although some offenses may be included in the investigation, these incidents are used to build a broader investigation rather than to seek an arrest related to a specific criminal offense.

Improving the Quality of Problem Solving

The gang units in this study show evidence of having improved their response to gang-related problems by increasing adopting strategic approaches to gangs, improving the quality of information collected and tailoring their responses to gangs, however, the quality of their problem solving efforts is not well established. In these two law enforcement agencies, the implementation of community policing and problem solving has had some important, albeit indirect, effects on gang units. In both Indianapolis and San Diego, the emphasis on community policing and problem solving has increased awareness that the effectiveness of gang control efforts should not rely on arrests or case clearances.

> "[Case clearances are] really meaningless because you can cancel any case, really, with an arrest or some other excuse." (San Diego gang investigations sergeant).

Instead of relying upon arrests or cases cleared to demonstrate impact – more useful as process measures – the goals of gang units increasingly include both tactical and strategic objectives. The progress towards such objectives can be measured empirically. The goals of the gang units, however, also reflect some of the ambiguity associated with community policing. For example, one of the stated goals of the gang unit in the San Diego Police Department is to reduce the number of active gang members. However, the recorded number of gangs and gang members in San Diego has been virtually unchanged since the mid-1990s. Nor does there appear to be an effort to distinguish the amount of activity associated with individual gang members to detect if individuals are becoming less active. In many ways, the gang reduction goal appears to be symbolic, since there were no identifiable efforts to actually reduce the number of gangs or gang members.

In both Indianapolis and San Diego, the police response to gang problems has been influenced by trial-and-error experience and examination of what tactics seem to work best under certain conditions. Police are also increasingly able to articulate rationales for strategies and tactics – linking the selection of responses with their conceptualization of particular problems, as described in the previous section.

Despite advances in critical thinking by police about gangs and gang-related problems, gang units generally have not undertaken the kind of extensive analysis – or evaluation – that is the hallmark of problem solving

and was reflected in Boston's Operation Ceasefire (see McDevitt, Braga, Nurge and Buerger, 2003). Instead, anecdotal evidence suggests that police informally incorporate a wider range of information and tend to be more strategic and discriminate in their selection of responses for particular problems. In many cases, this is both practical and common sensical. There is no need, for example, to analyze data to determine whether civil injunctions could be useful in deterring Asian gangs in San Diego. Police know that these gangs do not engage in public behaviors and overt street drug dealing amenable to civil injunctions; the overt behaviors that could be addressed through injunctions are more often associated with Hispanic and African American gangs in that jurisdiction.

Observations suggest that police in Indianapolis and San Diego pick and choose from a standardized menu of response options: primarily using directed patrol to disrupt street markets, increase surveillance of problem places and chronic offenders; conducting field interviews to reduce anonymity of would-be offenders and communicate the presence of capable guardians; and conducting intelligence-led investigations to clear offenses, improve prosecutions and increase penalties. Although Table XVIII suggests police engage in a wide range of tactics to address gangs, many of these tactics require long-term investments of time and effort. The prevalence of responses that can be carried out quickly reflects continued police perceptions about the need to react quickly to problems to calm citizens and other stakeholders.

Consistent with problem-oriented policing, one must consider whether further in-depth analysis or evaluation could assist police in more effectively controlling gang problems. Although gang problems appear to be relatively stable in both jurisdictions, the commitment to reliable intelligence information in San Diego – and the lack of this data in Indianapolis – suggest the need for comparative research between similar jurisdictions. In particular, evaluations could assess the contribution of reliable investigative information to clearances of gang-related offenses. Such a comparison might provide valuable information about the cost-benefit for a high-quality intelligence database. In such research, police agencies could categorize and track time-to-clearance on different types of offenses, examine the investment of resources in intelligence gathering and follow-up investigations, and evaluate cases accepted for prosecution, charges and cases dropped or dismissed as well as case outcomes resulted in pleas or convictions, and sentencing outcomes.

In terms of employing problem-oriented approaches to gang problems, police could also examine the presumed link between incivilities and the onset of more severe problems. By analyzing the spatial distribution of numerous field contacts as occur in San Diego, police could map the activity space of offenders and problems related to specific gangs – an elaboration of Block (2000) and the problem-solving strategy employed in Boston (Braga, Kennedy, Waring and Piehl, 2001). Such a database could be employed to

conduct journey-to-crime analyses and evaluate the mobility of gang members – presumably higher in California than other regions of the nation. While this information would be valuable for other police agencies across the country, such analysis would also aid San Diego police in further improving their response to gangs.

Additional descriptive analyses of gang databases could contribute to a better understanding of how gangs change over time. Consider, for example, the 5,000 gang members in San Diego – do individual gangs grow larger or smaller over time, does the average age of members within an individual gang increase over time, do members of specific gangs engage in more diverse activities or become more active? How does the average size of a gang, the average age of its members, or the longevity of a group influence the problems associated with a gang? How does gang size change over time – do some gangs grow larger, while others diminish in size or even dissolve? Are large gangs more problematic than small gangs, or is the size of a gang irrelevant? An examination of the population of gangs and behavioral trends over time could provide San Diego police with the ability to detect emerging patterns among their gangs – and generate a deeper understanding about how gangs change over time.

Integrating Community Policing and Gang Control

Ideally, both community policing and controlling gangs relate to the core mission and goals of police organizations and should reflect policies and practices that are well-defined and well-understood both within and outside the police organization. As such, gang problems present police agencies with a unique opportunity to critically evaluate and publicly articulate their approach to public safety. This involves identifying community and political perceptions of problems and expectations from police, and adopting established benchmarks for meeting expectations. The process, and supporting data, thus leads police organizations to evaluate routine practices, including:

- What is the organization's dominant ideology – e.g., apprehending offenders? Predicting and preventing crime? Providing reassurance to the public about safety? How does this dominant ideology apply to gangs and how is it envisioned to be effective?

- What is the relationship between gangs, guns, drugs and juveniles (or other related elements)? How prevalent and concentrated are gang problems – in time, space and people – and what trends have been observed? What data support views of these problems? Are the data adequate? If not, what additional data are needed?

- What are the organization's specific goals and objectives in responding to gangs? What does the agency hope to achieve, through what mechanisms, and how will its progress towards these goals be measured? Are the metrics for measurement well-defined, well-communicated and well-understood both within and outside the organization?

- Where can organizational responsibility for gang control goals best be established? Is there a single repository for responsibility, or can responsibility for problems be shared among different functional units?

- What is the need for information sharing within and outside the agency? How can important information be communicated to varied units and how can decision-making be shared?

- What is the department's need for extensive and reliable intelligence information? Is limited or partial information sufficient to meet organizational goals and objectives? How can the agency measure the impact or costs of intelligence and other proactive efforts? How much effort should be invested in these activities?

- What public, political or organizational goals are beyond the scope of the police department? Do key stakeholders – public, rank and file, political leaders – support the police department's stated goals, or have different expectations?

- What is the role of the community – or others – in addressing problems, and how can this role be enhanced to support police objectives? What issues of cultural sensitivity and equity are inherent in police practices, and how might these issues be perceived? How can police professionalism be ensured, police productivity maximized, and the risks of corruption and abuse of force minimized?

Policing gangs in an environment of community policing creates an inherent tension between the public image of the police; the dogma ascribed to by police personnel; the practical realities that police routinely encounter and address in communities; and organizational pressures for routine and predictability in the work environment. The willingness of police organizations to actively address these tensions reflects a growing organizational openness; an increased ability to routinely measure, interpret and adapt to changing environmental conditions; and a recognition of managerial obligations in a complex environment. The environment of community policing and gang control create an environment in which police agencies must reject rhetorical practices to placate public or political whim.

Instead, police agencies must develop, test, change and adopt practices that are empirically effective for local versions of problems.

This chapter has described progress police have made in responding – perhaps more effectively but certainly more rationally – to differing manifestations of gang problems in their communities. Recognition of this progress, however, does not suggest that police have come far enough in adopting practices that use data and information to guide responses, in developing innovative responses, in measuring the impact of different approaches, or in reducing specific problems. As Greene (2003) points out – problem solving and community policing, as currently practiced, are broad and unstructured and can best be characterized by the "use of information to tackle persistent crime and disorder problems" (p. 4). This general observation is applicable to our observations in Indianapolis and San Diego. In these sites, information about gangs and gang problems includes more empirical data and qualitative information about local problems; information is also gathered through networking with other agencies, within the organization and with key stakeholders such as citizens, victims, family members and gang members themselves. Perhaps the most important progress in technique of "using information" is its actual application; to a great extent, police appear to use information to engage in critical thinking, develop short-term tactics and longer-term strategies. Information has led police to be more realistic about deeply-rooted gang problems and diminished the bravado once typified by

promises to eliminate gangs. Thus, police in this study adopted more realistic long-term goals such as reducing the amount of gang-related violence, dismantling the most organized gangs, responding to concerns of citizens and controlling the most harmful gangs and gang members. Similarly, this study has also demonstrated that police gang units do not focus on the concept of prevention – preventing individuals from joining gangs or expediting their departure from gangs. Despite some expectations of prevention associated with early versions of community policing – articulated as concerns about police becoming social workers – police in this study recognize that such preventive efforts are overly ambitious and beyond the scope of the police function. In large part, police feel that such preventive efforts do not address public or political concerns and expectations of the police. Although police engage in some preventive activities – community presentations and proving DARE courses in school – these are viewed as basic community service functions to inform the public and are used to develop or maintain ties with the community; such prevention activities are not seen as related to the core functions or missions of the police agency. There is no indication that police in this study have ignored prevention; instead they have strategically incorporated crime prevention strategies such as blocking opportunities for offending and increasing the risks of offending (see Table XVIII).

Although much progress has been made in more strategically addressing gang problems, there is no question that problem oriented policing

strategies could be used more effectively to address gang problems. The problem-solving process employed in the two police agencies studied reflects a weak form of problem solving – yet it demonstrates that the organizational locus of responding to gangs is much less important than the ability to critically think about gang-related problems, collect useful data to guide responses and adapt to changing problems, respond to community and political perceptions, select from responses that *appear* to be effective and evaluate the impact of such efforts. Although there have been no impact evaluations of police efforts in Indianapolis and San Diego, it is not clear that rigorous high-level evaluations are needed. Weak evaluations are often employed for area level gang-related problems – calls for service, field contacts, and police and citizen estimates of gang activity provide a routine and timely measurement of impact in particular places. More rigorous evaluations could be undertaken to measure the impact of longer-term strategies – such as evaluating the contribution of intelligence information to case clearances, prosecution and disposition.

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DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

OBSERVATION LOG (SAN DIEGO)

Directions—*Systematically record all activities and communication that occur during the observation. Consult observation instruction booklet as necessary.*

Administrative Information

Field Observer : _____ Observation number: _____

Day/Date of Observation: _____

Time of Observation: from _____ to _____

Identification number for officer observed: _____

Time officer's shift originated/ended _____

Enforcement=**ENF**
Enforcement Administration=**EA**
Investigations I=**INV1**
Investigations II=**INV2**
Intelligence Gathering/FI=**INT**
Communication=**COM**
Travel=**TRAV**

CODES

Scanning=**SCAN**
Search=**SEAR**
Data Maintenance=**DM**
Info Exchange=**NET**
Court=**CT**
Calls=**Calls**
Assist=**A**
Training=**TR**
Presentation=**PRE**
Community Contact=**CC**
Proactive Intervention=**PI**
Administration=**ADMIN**
Other=**OT**

Start time	Stop time	Activity #	Activity (describe & assign primary code)	Event #	Secondary code/links/comments

EVENT LOG

Directions—*Complete the following questions and provide narrative information about the corresponding event in your observation log sheet.*

ACTIVITY # _____ (Record number from observation log)

EVENT # _____ (Record number from observation log)

EVENT SUMMARY

Start Time: _____ Stop Time: _____

Summary of Event — Briefly describe what happened in sequence.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
__

EVENT LOCATION
List Specific Location_____

- ❑ Public property, outdoors (e.g., road, sidewalk, park)
- ❑ Public property, indoors (e.g., schools, government bldg.)
- ❑ Police facility, outdoors (e.g., police parking lot)
- ❑ Police facility, indoors (e.g., police station)
- ❑ Private property, outdoors (e.g., yard, front porch)
- ❑ Private property, indoors (e.g., home)
- ❑ Mass private property, outdoors (e.g., sports facility, theme park)
- ❑ Mass private property, indoors (e.g., shopping facility, sports facility, movie theater)
- ❑ Other—specify _____

EVENT ATTRIBUTES

- ❑ Daylight/brightly lit room: could readily distinguish facial features & hands of person(s) —if present
- ❑ Dim lighting: could distinguish profile or overall size of person(s) or object(s)
- ❑ Near darkness: distinguish movement or presence of something, not enough light to determine size/nature of object
- ❑ Total/virtual darkness: unable to see anything
- ❑ Mixed lighting: varying levels of visibility
- ❑ Other—specify _____

EVENT CHARACTERISTICS *(check all that apply).* If more than one, indicate sequence below.

- ❑ Clandestine ___
- ❑ Collegial event (e.g., information exchange, mtg.) ___
- ❑ Peaceful event ___
- ❑ Tense event ___
- ❑ Conflict present ___
- ❑ Unlawful activity ___
- ❑ Violent activity ___
- ❑ Other—specify _____
- ❑ Did the officer have any prior indication of the nature of the event (e.g., anticipated violence or planned meeting)?
- ❑ Yes—specify _____
- ❑ No
- ❑ N/A
- ❑ Don't Know

Did the officer indicate that this event was part of larger on-going problem?

- ❑ Yes —specify _____
- ❑ No
- ❑ N/A
- ❑ Don't Know

Did the officer indicate if the unit had a response and/or program in place to address the on-going problem?

- ❑ ...es —specify _____
- ❑ No
- ❑ N/A
- ❑ Don't Know

INVOLVED PARTIES—Indicate all individuals and/or groups involved in the event. Provide your best estimate of the following items.

Type	**Check**	**Specify Affiliation & if Individual or Group**	**#**	**Behavior**	**Age**	**Sex**	**Race/ Eth.**	**Sequence** **# order of appearance**
Suspect(s)								
Witness(s)								
Complainant(s)								
Victim(s)								
Community member(s) (parents, business owner, etc.)								
School official(s)								
Audience/Group								
Other gang officer(s)								
Other police personnel								
Criminal justice official								
Other								

Behavior Codes
C=Calm
U=Visibly upset
A=Angry
I=Impaired (specify how)
E=Erratic
V=Violent
O=Other (specify)

Race/Ethnicity codes
C=Caucasian
H=Hispanic
AA=African American/Black
A=Asian
P=Pacific Islander
O=Other (specify)
D/K=Unable to determine

OFFICER ACTIONS

Origin of Action(s)

- ❑ Self-directed—officer acted on own w/o request or notification or command from others
- ❑ Dispatch
- ❑ Supervisor and/or administration directed (include roll call directions)
- ❑ Other gang unit officer directed
- ❑ Other police personnel (e.g., patrol officer) directed
- ❑ Citizen on-scene directed
- ❑ Other—specify _____

FIELD JOURNAL GUIDE

PART I

I. Background of Gang Unit Activities

A. Routinely meet with supervisors to learn of any gang- or police-related activities that have occurred since your last observation. Use the following checklist to stimulate recollection of events. Attach any relevant documents, memorandum and newspaper articles. Information may be related to the following:

- Gang crimes,
- Gang unit call outs,
- Meetings and/or planning sessions
- Major arrests,
- Investigation break-through,
- Initiation of a new program,
- Personnel changes, reassignments or shift changes,
- Press coverage of gang activity and/or gang unit,
- Memos and communication,
- Political climate,
- Departmental culture (eg, leadership changes or decisions),
- Economic conditions,
- Community activities,
- Department training,
- Pursuits and
- Use of force.

PART II

Directions—*Use the observation log, event logs and any additional notes to describe in a story format the events that occurred during the observation. Specifically focus on elements* ***not*** *included in the event log. Write descriptively what it is that you encounter in the field.*

General Information to be Recorded about Events

- Note if other police personnel are involved in events and discuss their role.

- Describe all people/groups involved and the actions they take that are important to understanding what happened. Record their observable characteristics (sex, age, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status and your basis for making the inference--such as dress, appearance)

- Describe behaviors (calm, visibly upset, angry, impaired, erratic, etc. and your basis for making the inference)

- Discuss nuances of interactions between police and the public (information sharing, direct orders and instructions, problem-solving, etc.)

- Officer actions (sequential discussion about what the officer was doing, where he/she was doing it, how he/she was doing it, and with/to whom he/she was doing it).

- Note all official actions or those with obvious legal ramifications taken by the police: arrests, citations, searches and seizures, use of force, interrogation, filing official reports, etc.

- Weather conditions (use local weather report if an accurate representation of weather during your observation). Note any substantial changes and the time the changes occurred.

- Any information that describes the context in which the event occurred.

- Did the officer respond in a way that was consistent with the unit's operational policies or practices? That is, was the response part of the unit's usual way of doing business? Describe how? (eg, use of the Congo line for officer safety)

II. Specific Activity Probes

A. Enforcement and Intelligence Activities

1. How was the officer mobilized (e.g., dispatcher, telephone request, officer initiated)
2. Did the officer characterize the situation before he/she had contact?
3. General context of contact.
4. Specific setting of contact.
5. Description of the contact (e.g., conversation, demeanor, actions, information shared).

6. Situations involving interaction with citizens?
    a. Characteristics of the citizen participants (Include ethnicity, sex, age, contextual relationship)
    b. Did the officer(s) identify any of the individuals as gang members'? If so, how were they identified?
7. Situations involving interaction with an organizational entity (e.g., unit in police department, social agency, community group) — obtain information relating to:
    a. Name of contact person, name of organization, phone number, and address.
    b. Characteristics of the organization
    c. History and nature of relationship between gang unit and organization

B. Prevention/Education Activities

1. Types of Prevention/Education Activity (e.g., Presentation, counseling)
2. Number of attendees
3. Characteristics of persons (e.g., ethnicity, gender, age).
4. Thick/rich description of the presentation and discussion
5. References to ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status
6. References to city geography
7. References to criminal activity (e.g., frequency, types, etc)
8. Characteristics of gang, gang members, and gang activity
9. Reliability and validity of information
10. Overall tone
11. Statistics presented
12. Attendees reaction to presentation (questions, concerns, views)
13. Obtain information from the organizational entity (e.g., unit in police department, social agency, community group) relating to:
    a. Name of Contact Person
    b. Name of Organization
    c. Phone Number
    d. Address

C. Stationary Police-Related/ Non-Police Related/ Residual

1. Individuals present
2. Description of the activity
3. Time and duration of the activity
4. Where the activity took place