The author(s) shown below used Federal funds provided by the U.S. Department of Justice and prepared the following final report:

Document Title: Gang Structures, Crime Patterns, and Police Responses

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Document No.: 188511

Date Received: 06/28/2001

Award Number: 93-IJ-CX-0044

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GANG STRUCTURES, CRIME PATTERNS, AND POLICE RESPONSES

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Rec'd 4/26/96

Introduction and Background[1]

The end goal of this project was to provide useful data on how street gang crime patterns (by amount and type of offense) relate to common patterns of street gang structure, thus providing focused, data-based guidelines for gang intervention and control. The intermediate stages of the project, however, comprised other important goals. Using contacts from prior national surveys of gang-involved cities, we obtained data from police and community experts on gang structures currently in existence. We utilized these depictions to obtain estimates of the national prevalence of various types of gang structures, and of the perceived patterns of criminal activity associated with each. Finally, we attempted to collect crime data and construct crime profiles—both amount and pattern—for each of the most common gang structures. With many hundreds of cities now experiencing gang problems, these first-time depictions of the gang/crime nexus were expected to provide guidelines to help focus gang prevention and control efforts.

There have been several scholars (e.g., Short, 1990; Morash, 1983) who have preferred defining gangs without explicit reference to crime committed by these groups. Their reason has been to avoid a tautology of defining gangs by the criminal involvement and then studying them to predict their crime levels. Yet, members of almost all youth groups, as well as individual youths, engage in some level of crime as revealed

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consistently by self-report studies (see Elliott and Ageton, 1980; Farrington, 1973; Erickson and Jensen, 1977). The issue is not whether gangs engage in crime, but how much, of what type, and under what circumstances.

The project goals combine the goals of knowledge-building about street gangs in the current era with the practical concerns of crime control. The basic message to any concerned jurisdiction undertaking street gang control is "Know your gangs." There are major differences in gang structures and crime patterns, and we believe these require differentiated responses.

Gang Definitions: During an audio-taped training seminar for gang unit police officers in the East, a high-ranking gang expert from a gang-ridden Western jurisdiction can be heard poking fun at academic definitions of gangs (to the audible delight of his audience). He then concludes "I'll tell you what a gang is: a gang is a group of thugs. They're hoodlums, they're crooks and they're criminals." Hopefully, the field can progress beyond this simplistic, vague, and operationally useless approach, although consensus on street gang definitions has not yet been reached. We will describe here three of the most influential formulations, and then indicate our own approach which led to this project. Later in this report, several gang typologies will also be described, as they differ considerably from the results obtained in Phases I and II of the project.

1. Walter Miller, drawing on his own experiences in Boston in the 1950s and his survey of a number of cities in the 1970s, attempted to distinguish gangs from a larger, generic population of "law-violating groups." He sought the common elements in the many gang definitions offered by his national respondents, much as one might seek the

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distillate from a chemistry laboratory's centrifuge. No assessment of the value of each

element thrown into this definitional centrifuge was sought, so the process yielded an

odd form of consensus from unconsidered sources, a convenient but totally atheoretical

approach. Miller described 20 types and sub-types of "law-violating youth groups,"

including turf gangs, gain-oriented gangs/extended networks, and fighting gangs, ending

with this depiction:

> A youth gang is a self-formed association of peers, bound together by mutual
> interests, with identifiable leadership, well-developed lines of authority, and other
> organizational features, who act in concert to achieve a specific purpose or
> purposes which generally include the conduct of illegal activity and control over a
> particular territory, facility, or type of enterprise (Miller, 1980).

2. In a similar but more sophisticated survey of some 45 jurisdictions, Spergel,

Curry, Ross, and Chance (1989) also settled for a distilled consensus, informed as well by

Spergel's own 30 years of experience in Chicago. His work was focussed by a concern

with law enforcement suppression programs, but he managed nonetheless to retain his

own interest in gangs as the product of socially disorganized communities. Their

description is as follows:

> ...we define the criminal street gang as a group of young people, including
> a substantial number of active adult members ...who are perceived by the
> local community and recognize themselves as aggressive and/or protective
> of "turf,"engaged in various criminal acts, especially of a violent character.
> Its structure may or may not be complex or enduring (Spergel, 1980).

3. In a radical departure in definitional approaches, a number of criminal justice

agencies in California, stimulated by the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office,

developed a definition for the STEP Act (Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention

Act). This legislation emphasized factors useful in the prosecution of gang cases with

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sentence enhancements for gang members. The latest version is offered by the state's Office of Criminal Justice Planning, with verbatim extractions from the state penal code:

> A criminal street gang is defined as any ongoing organization, association or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, which often has a common name or common identifying sign or symbol, whose members individually or collectively engage in or have engaged in a pattern of criminal gang activity[2] [Reference Section 186.22(f) of the Penal Code].

This California definition is being copied in other enforcement jurisdictions as STEP-like legislation is adopted across the nation. It places extreme emphasis on the criminal component, as might be expected in a prosecutorial context (the "three or more persons" portion has absolutely no relationship to street realities, only to establishing the basis for conspiracy prosecution). The "identification criteria" listed by OCJP, not cited here, add so much ambiguity that much of the value of the penal code specificity is lost.

The fact is, however, that any attempt at gang definitions is to some extent arbitrary and subject to criticism in some form. Our approach cannot be immune either—we are attempting to characterize a fluid phenomenon in a way that is both conceptually defensible and operationally useful. Modifying the widely used definition we provided two decades ago (Klein, 1971), we suggested the following for the purposes of this project. We used the term **street gang,** and excluded prison gangs, organized adult crime groups, motorcycle gangs, stoners and satanic cults, and terrorist groups. We also excluded many of the categories of delinquent groups or youthful law-violating groups described by Miller (1980), that have not achieved the characterization below. There are many youth groups, in school and out, that occasionally involve themselves

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[2] The reader may note the circularity of the first and last phrases.

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individually or collectively in delinquent or criminal activities. To speak of these commonly observable youth groups as street gangs is to lose the advantage of delimiting that term. However, we expressly included tagger groups in this project in order to investigate their reported evolution toward street gang structure and behavior.

Street gangs as we used the term in our prior studies are characterized as having a territorial orientation (Asian gangs are often an exception to this; see Vigil and Yun, 1990). They are principally but by no means exclusively male. They generally exhibit versatility in their criminal offenses ("cafeteria style" delinquency, Klein, 1984), although specialty cliques (auto theft, burglary, drug sales) are not uncommon. They generally thrive on intergang rivalry; the one-gang city is rare indeed. Temporary alliances or "supergang" confederacies generally do not eliminate the intra-gang identities and cohesiveness of the constituent groups. They remain "oppositional" groups (Moore and Vigil, 1987).

Taking exception to the stance of Short (1990) and Morash (1983), we see the special nature of street gangs—what makes them qualitatively different from other groups—as revolving around their delinquent or criminal orientation. Some street gangs are far less criminally active than others—the range is considerable—but we use the term to apply to those groups that are oriented to illegal values or behaviors. There is an ill-defined "tipping point" when a delinquent group comes to view this orientation as intrinsic to its nature—it knows it is a criminally involved group—and when citizens and agencies in the community also see the group this way. The graffiti, the rumors, the "war stories," the shared group self-definition, the dress and behavioral signs of membership

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signify to potential recruits that this **is** a street gang; to join is a significant commitment. Further, because criminal involvement in the gang exceeds that of nongang groups (Fagan, 1990; Tracy, 1979; Klein, 1971), and violence is in addition a disproportionate component of the criminal behavior (Thornberry et al., 1992; Huizinga, 1990), it becomes clear that gang crime differs in both level **and** form from nongang crime (Maxson, Gordon and Klein, 1985). For our law enforcement respondents, in order to narrow the definitional field and yet avoid too much specificity, we provided the following: "For the purposes of this survey, we define gangs quite broadly—younger and older, male and female, small and large, and so on. However, we only wish to include as gangs those groups **that do** have considerable orientation to or involvement in delinquent or criminal behavior. Please do not include groups whose behavior is only marginally illegal."

The Prior Studies: Our 1991 survey of 260 gang-involved cities[3] provided the background and contextual data for designing the research reported here. Our recent NIJ-funded study of gang migration enabled us to identify about 800 U.S. cities with gang activity. Descriptions of these cities' population and crime characteristics, gang numbers, ethnicities, date of emergence and drug sales involvement were available for the proposed project. Both studies provided critically important contacts, experience and data useful for sampling, data collection, and analysis.

The interviews with 260 police gang experts revealed that different structures may

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[3] The analysis of these survey results, still ongoing, has been described in several national conferences and has been reported in Klein, *The American Street Gang*, 1995.

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very well imply different intervention strategies. For example, some police respondents reported success with nascent gangs—"copy cat" groups, school-based "wannabes," some skinhead and other supremacist groups—by emphasizing suppression methods and school/police coordination. Others reported some success with crack distribution gangs by emphasizing drug control techniques **rather** than gang control techniques. Still others admitted continued failure of suppression tactics with well-established, traditional gang structures. Finally, in "emergent" gang cities with established gangs but no traditional age-graded subsets, some police were placing their hopes in coordinated community-wide gang intervention programs that approximate the recent federal "weed and seed" strategy.

Our studies also made it clear, however, that there is great confusion among police agencies across the country over both the form of and terminology for street gangs.

– Asked whether their gangs included single, independent groups or traditional age-graded groups or geographically based groups, most of those who could respond in these terms listed single, independent groups. These included a preponderance of smaller cities. But many respondents had trouble with structural depictions of this sort, adopting instead a terminology related to levels of member involvement.

– These levels of member involvement revealed several different approaches to terminology. A small minority of the police experts emphasized the 1950/1960s terminology of core and fringe or peripheral membership. A larger number responded in terms of "actives" and "associates," with the former occasionally based on entries in a police gang roster—"confirmed," "rostered," "certified" (*a la* STEP acts). Others suggested grouping patterns by reference to gang "nations" or alliances on the one hand, and on the

other by reference to sets, subsets, cliques, subgroups, and chapters.

- Posses and crews were terms reported on occasion in the East; sets and nations were more common in the Mid-West, while core or hardcore, actives, and associates seemed more common in the West and Southwest.[4] Still another collection of terms was used variously to describe the incipient gang groups emerging in a wide variety of cities. These terms included wannabes, copycat gangs, neighborhood groups, "minor criminal groups," school groups, and a few nongang groups that have on occasion been transformed into street gangs—tagger groups and break-dancing groups.

- When asked specifically about the level of structure in the gangs, the predominant view was of gangs as loosely structured and poorly organized, with shifting or weak leadership. Street gang cliques involved in drug distribution, or independent "drug gangs," were more commonly described as organized, tight-knit, and hierarchically structured in leadership and distribution roles. But the distinction between typical street gangs and focussed drug gangs was often unclear, especially among gang experts in the narcotics or vice divisions.

Prior Work on Gang Structures and Crime: All this structural and terminological ambiguity, of course, made our research task more difficult. It also made it very necessary. We needed to distinguish the more common structural patterns, even helping our city respondents to greater clarity in the process so that they could discern

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[4] "Set" was sometimes used for separate gangs, sometimes for cliques within larger gangs, and sometimes for components of alliances. One gang expert estimated his sets as having from three to three thousand members. Another, in using the term, described sets as being "pretty wimpy." In California, the term set was used originally in the 1960s as synonymous with turf among black gangs (now 'hood) and analogous to barrio among Hispanic gangs.

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alternative gang scenarios; then we could relate the types of structures to crime patterns. The gang structure clarity must be achieved first. We present below a brief summary of what the criminological literature suggests about variations in street gang structures.

Old Structures vs. New: The only comprehensive, published statement about gang structures was produced two decades ago (Klein, 1971) based on an extensive review of research undertaken to that date. Crime patterns were also described, but not in direct relationship to the different structures. Gang research had not yet concerned itself with such relationships, except on a theoretical (and, it turned out) unsubstantiated level by Cloward and Ohlin in 1955 and in one study by a student of Ohlin's (Spergel, 1964).

Depictions in that earlier review reflected the big-city locales of most gang research: New York, Chicago, Boston, San Francisco, and Los Angeles in particular. Our "knowledge" of gang structures has remained constant for twenty years simply because no serious updating has been undertaken (occasional recent exceptions will be noted below). What that 1971 review suggested as the major gang forms is briefly outlined below.

• Spontaneous gangs: ten to thirty members with a restricted age range, lasting usually a year or less, occasionally specializing in certain criminal activities. Spontaneous gangs were probably the most common form, but because of their short duration they were seldom studied and we therefore know little about them.

• Specialty cliques: smaller groups of no more than a dozen or so members, sometimes part of a larger structure and sometimes independent, with a clear focus on specialized crime (e.g., drug sales, auto theft, home break-ins).

• Violent gangs: an extremely rare group whose *raison d'etre* revolves around

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serious involvement in gang fighting and/or stranger assaults. Leadership tends toward the pathological, and membership is quite unstable. Such gangs, when they appear, are of short duration although they may garner much publicity and become mistaken for typical gangs. Most gangs engage in some violence; they should not be confused with the rare "violent gang" (Yablonsky, 1963).

• Horizontal alliances: temporary alliances across neighborhoods between otherwise independent gangs. The component groups may be spontaneous or traditional gangs (see below). The alliances seldom last long, although the famous gang "nations" of Chicago provide an exception (Blackstone Rangers, Disciples, Latin Kings, and their progeny).

• Traditional or vertical gangs: These groups endure through generations of gang members (anywhere from ten to 50 years and more) and have thus been those most studied and described. Traditional gangs have provided a disproportionate share of our knowledge of gangs and gang crime, as well as response to intervention programs. They contain a broad age range, with age-graded subgroups. They provide clear differentiation between core and fringe membership, with associated leadership at each major age grouping. Their criminal involvement is versatile ("cafeteria-style," Klein, 1971), and they are usually of only low to medium cohesiveness overall. Traditional gangs have been the most difficult to alter or suppress; most interventions seem to have had the boomerang effect of increasing their cohesiveness.

Our 1991 survey certainly suggested a need to update this picture to reflect the situation of the 1990s. The traditional, age-graded structure was reported in only 23 percent of the gang cities (many of which have developed too recently to permit

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generational patterns, but might in time). Recent research by other scholars provides some hints of what one might now find, beyond those emerging from the prior survey.

Skolnick, Correl, Navarro, and Rabb (1990) have distinguished between "cultural" gangs (turf-based, traditional) in Southern California and "entrepreneurial" gangs (crack distribution) in Northern California. The description has found a receptive audience among enforcement officials, less so among academics. Curry, Fox, Ullom, and Ball (1992) report the differential prevalence of gangs, crews, posses, and other forms across 77 cities (gangs 93 percent, posses 67 percent, crews 28 percent, and others 26 percent) but they have not characterized these forms as yet. Indeed, they are not clear on whether these are different forms, or just different terms. Monti (1993) describes both commonalities and dissimilarities among gangs in St. Louis' more-and-less-settled communities. Variations in gang organization, activity and community relationships are associated with community reorganization, rather than disorganization.

In a particularly controversial description of gangs in New York, Boston, and Los Angeles, Sanchez-Jankowski (1991) described his gangs as well-organized, rational, planful entrepreneurs, based on collectivities of individually defiant youth banded together for profit and community spirit. If he is correct, he has indeed found a dramatically new pattern. Taylor (1989) has also stirred some controversy with his depiction of Detroit gangs, heavily oriented toward drug sales, as evolving from "Scavengers" to "Territorial" to "Corporate" groups. This characterization, like that of Sanchez-Jankowski, has not been reported elsewhere.

Other recent writers, by contrast, have found a continuation of the traditional

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gang pattern: Moore (1978) for Los Angeles; Huff (1988) for Ohio cities; Hagedorn (1988) for Milwaukee. Fagan (1989) has depicted gangs in three cities as manifesting four basic forms, in relation to drug involvement:

Type 1 --   "social gangs" with low delinquent activity and drug involvement (28 percent)

Type 2 --   "party gangs" whose general delinquency involvement is low, drug use is high, and drug sales support drug use (7 percent)

Type 3 --   "serious delinquent gangs" whose versatile crime patterns include drug use and sales only as part of the overall pattern (37 percent)

Type 4 --   nascent gang "organizations" which are "highly cohesive and organized" and heavily involved in drug use and sales in systemic relationship to other criminal acts (28 percent).

As noted briefly in an earlier section, there also seem to be a number of group structures that, in some cases, become transformed into clear street gangs. These include some oppositional neighborhood, street, and housing project groups, break-dancing groups, and tagger groups. Finally, we should note the oft-reported existence in some cities of rather distinct drug gangs, usually crack distributors, as a prominent example of specialty gangs. These were most definitely included in our project census. Beyond the practical values of this project, we believe that describing the prevalence of gang structure types nationally, and specifying their relationship to criminal activity patterns, comprises a substantial contribution to criminological knowledge *per se*. It can also provide the basis for future work that aims to relate gang/crime types to their

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community contexts and control programs.

Methods

The research design involved three phases. The first phase, which was developmental, utilized law enforcement and community gang experts as informants to identify and describe gang structures in their communities. The result of this phase was a set of scenarios, or gang structure profiles, used in the Phase II survey operation to estimate the prevalence of gang structures, nationally. Also in this phase, we sought information regarding capacities to provide us with crime data linked to different types of gangs. In the final phase, we gathered crime profiles associated with the most common gang structures.

In prior sections, we have referred to data taken from a 1991 survey of police gang experts in 260 cities. In addition, our 1992 national assessment of gang migration patterns yielded descriptions of local street gangs in 792 cities.[5] Our project design made maximum use of these survey data, and also took advantage of the relationships established in the previous projects. The 1991 interview survey encountered only one refusal, and that was based on legal restrictions. The return rate on the mailed questionnaire in the migration survey was an astonishing 92 percent, albeit with considerable prodding in the forms of repeat mailings and phone follow-up.

The unit of analysis in the first two phases of this project was police jurisdictions with self-reported street gangs. Usually this meant a city with its own police department,

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[5] A complete description of the methods used to identify these cities can be found in Maxson et al., 1996.

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but some of the jurisdictions were municipalities which contract with outside enforcement agencies for police services (typically, but not exclusively, with the county sheriff). The city is the appropriate unit because it provides the institutional context for gangs (e.g., schools, social services, and police) and it is these institutions that generally dictate the nature of the formal response to gang problems.

The 792 gang-involved cities providing our prior data base included all of the nation's cities with populations of 100,000 or more that reported a gang problem: a total of about 177 such cities. In addition, among over 900 cities under 100,000 in population that were suggested as gang cities by a number of sources—other research, police informants, media reports, government reports, and so on—we confirmed 615 as gang cities.

Clearly we did not capture all U.S. gang cities by this process (although we do have all those with populations over 100,000). Given the shockingly high number of gang cities we surveyed, we thought we had captured the bulk of the gang problem. In order to test our gang city census development procedures, we selected and surveyed a small random sample of all 2,250 cities with populations between 10,000 and 100,000. Projections derived from the random sample suggested that we had identified only about 65 percent of the smaller gang cities. We continue to note reports of new gang cities, but cannot claim a total enumeration of all gang cities. Nevertheless, the data set of 792 gang cities provided a solid population from which to select cities to examine the crime/structure relationships of concern.

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Phase I: Gang Structures Identified

Law enforcement gang experts in a stratified random sample of sixty gang-involved cities provided information about the structural dimensions of their local street gangs. Stratification by period of the onset of gang activity in the city (i.e., 1970 and earlier, 1971-1984, and after 1984) was necessary to ensure adequate representation of older gang cities. These data were utilized to construct narrative descriptions, or scenarios, of the most common gang types. An oversample of 18 cities with Asian gang predominance was included in the first phase, at the request of the NIJ reviewers, who felt the sample of 60 would not allow for representation of the rapidly expanding Asian gang problem. Responses from this oversample, however, differed in no significant fashion from those from the 60, so further analysis of the oversample is not reported here.

This design relies heavily on law enforcement sources and this is a clear limitation. We would feel much more comfortable if we could derive the depictions of gang structures from the careful observations of gang ethnographers or the street gang workers that populated gang cities in the sixties. This, however, would limit us to a handful of cities and not many more gangs. During Phase I, we attempted to identify and interview community informants in about half the 60 cities. Usually, the community respondent was familiar with only a small portion of the city's gangs. They were drawn from nominations in our prior research in these cities, or from new nominations from our police respondents, school officials, mayors' offices, and community groups such as the United Way, but this did not overcome the problems inherent in limited exposure to

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city-wide gang patterns. Even with their inherent limitations, police overviews of broad gang patterns are generally the only ones available. Indeed, community respondents are often dependent on local enforcement officials for their gang data, and thus are often not independent sources of information.

Our reliance on law enforcement reflects our desire to' reach for a national picture.. These gang experts typically can report gang information for the entire city. We realized that their knowledge is heavily influenced by their occupational orientation—the gangs they know best are the most criminally involved. Their information is not gathered through systematic or unbiased methods. In addition, in Phase III, we gathered official arrest records for offense profiles, when, clearly, self-reported delinquency measures would be a more valid approach to our ultimate research questions. Nevertheless, in an exploratory vein we feel this design produces the most useful data that will suggest clear directions for future research.

Phase I Findings

The goal of Phase I was to derive scenarios of gang structures and this was accomplished, albeit through a circuitous process. In the telephone interviews in the sample of 60 cities, we took two approaches to asking about the structural dimensions of gangs in each city. In the first section of the interview, we began with one of two branching mechanisms, based on 1) ethnicity or 2) whether or not the gangs subdivided into obvious cliques or seemed to hang together as one overall group. That is, in half the interviews we asked respondents to start with the dimension of ethnicity, while in the other half they started with the cliquing dimension. This procedure controlled for any

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overall bias due to selection of the one or the other starting point. These two dimensions were chosen because they emerged as prominent dimensions in our prior research, and were more easily handled by our phone respondents. As we couldn't ask about each individual gang, this provided a systematic basis for grouping several gangs together for an aggregate description. For each combination, we asked a series of questions about size, age distribution, territorial identification, cohesiveness, and so on. We did not ask about crime patterns because wc wanted them to focus on structure rather than activity. Also, we decided to omit questions about leadership because we were skeptical about the validity of law enforcement responses to this issue.

The second section asked them to think about the gang they knew the best. The questions covered are the dimensions from Section I plus year of onset and crime specialization. (See the Appendix for the Phase I Interview.) This second section was included because we anticipated that many respondents would have difficulty responding about characteristics of a wide range of gangs in their jurisdictions, and that most familiar gangs would "color" the overall depiction. Thus the "best known" approach, while not necessarily most representative, might nonetheless prove most reliable for production of gang scenarios in Phase II.

In the 60 cities, the data from Section I, where respondents aggregated the characteristics of all gangs falling within each ethnic/subgroup combination, covered over 1800 gangs. The prevalence distribution is shown in Figure 1.

The ethnic distribution is what one might expect from a national sample, particularly where older gang cities are over-represented. About equal numbers of cities

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report Black and Hispanic gangs, although more Hispanic gangs are included. A far lower but not inconsequential number of cities report Asian, white or mixed ethnic gangs. The distribution of subgroup organization is surprising. These respondents reported much higher levels of "hang together" gangs than we expected—about three times as many as have clique structures. In particular, we noted the large differential among Hispanic gangs which appear in the literature almost to epitomize the traditional, age-graded subgroup organizational structure.

Figure 1: Prevalence of Ethnicity X Clique Combinations

GANG	"HANG-TOGETHER"		SUBGROUPS	
ETHNICITY	# CITIES	# GANGS	# CITIES	# GANGS
BLACK	33	389	21	247
HISPANIC	35	649	18	171
ASIAN	21	116	4	13
WHITE	17	116	5	38
MIXED	19	110	7	29

Next, we reviewed the responses for each structure dimension within the ethnic/subgroup combinations. We developed simple coding categories for each dimension and judged an aspect of a dimension to be "predominant" if two-thirds or more of the cities with that combination described those gangs accordingly.

Unfortunately, we found these data to be of little utility for building scenarios of common gang types. The variation along each dimension was so wide that it masked any differences between the ethnic and subgroup categories. We were looking at unreliable

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data due presumably to respondents' understandable unfamiliarity with the many gangs within their purview. Most gang officers have too many gangs in their jurisdictions to permit genuine familiarity with the characteristics of each.

Instead of tinkering further with the Section I data, for example, revising the coding categories or reconstructing the basic combinations, we turned to the Section II data, describing the single gang with which each of these officers was most familiar. Case numbers drop to 59 as one respondent did not have time to complete this section of the interview.

Using the characteristics of ethnicity, subgroup organization, size, age range, date of gang emergence, territoriality, cohesiveness, and crime versatility versus specialization, six distinguishable types emerged, which we later reduced to five.[6] No one ethnic category predominated in any type, so ethnicity was dropped as a dimension.[7] In addition, all types were reported to be characterized by tight cohesiveness, so this was deleted. The characteristics of each of the types are displayed in Figure 2.

Each of the 59 gangs could be placed in one of the five types—not all fit perfectly, but no gang varied by more than one characteristic. We have written narrative descriptions or "scenarios" that distinguish each type from the others and these are

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[6] The Traditional type can be separated into two subtypes: gangs that subgroup by area and those that have age-graded cliques. We also looked at other characteristics such as city size, region and number of gangs in the city, but none proved helpful in distinguishing types.

[7] A review of the characteristics of best known Asian gangs in the oversample confirmed this is true of Asian gangs as well as other ethnicities.

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displayed below. Note that characteristics are shared across more than one type; no type

is unique in each of its characteristics.

Figure 2: Characteristics of Five Gang Types

Type	Subgroups	Size	Age Range	Duration	Territorial	Crime Versatility
Traditional (n = 14)[*]	Yes	Large (>100)	Wide (20-30 years)	Long (>20 years)	Yes	Yes
Neotraditional (n = 13)	Yes	Medium-large (>50)	[no pattern]	Short (<10 years)	Yes	Yes
Compressed (n = 13)	No	Small (<50)	Narrow (<10 years)	Short (<10 years)	[no pattern]	Yes
Collective (n = 9)	No	Medium-large (>50)	Medium-wide (>10 years)	Medium (10-15 years)	[no pattern]	Yes
Specialty (n = 10)	No	Small (<50)	Narrow (<10 years)	Short (<10 years)	Yes	No

[*] n = number of cities

GANG STRUCTURE SCENARIOS

The Traditional gang: Traditional gangs have generally been in existence for twenty or more years - they keep regenerating themselves. They contain fairly clear subgroups, usually separated by age. O.G.s or Veteranos, Seniors, Juniors, Midgets and various other names are applied to these different age-based cliques. Sometimes the cliques are separated by neighborhoods rather than age. More than other gangs, Traditional gangs tend to have a wide age range, sometimes as wide as from nine or ten years of age into the thirties. These are usually very large gangs, numbering one hundred or even several hundred members. Almost always, they are territorial in the sense that they identify strongly with their turf, 'hood, or barrio, and claim it as theirs alone.
In sum, this is a large, enduring, territorial gang with a wide range and several

internal cliques based on age or area.

The Neotraditional gang: The Neotraditional gang resembles the Traditional form, but has not been in existence as long—probably no more than ten years, and often less. It may be medium size—say fifty to one hundred members—or also into the hundreds. It probably has developed subgroups or cliques based on age or area, but sometimes may not. The age range is usually smaller than in the classical Traditional gangs. The Neotraditional gang is also very territorial, claiming turf and defending it.

    In sum, the Neotraditional gang is a newer territorial gang that looks on its way to becoming Traditional in time. Thus at this point it is subgrouping, but may or may not have achieved the size and wide age range of the Traditional gang. The subgrouping, territoriality, and size suggests that it is evolving into the Traditional form.

The Compressed gang: The Compressed gang is small—usually in the size range of up to fifty members—and has not formed subgroups. The age range is probably narrow—ten or fewer years between the younger and older members. The small size, absence of subgroups, and narrow age range may reflect the newness of the group, in existence less than ten years and maybe for only a few years. Some of these Compressed gangs have become territorial, but many have not.

    In sum, Compressed gangs have a relatively short history, short enough that by size, duration, subgrouping and territoriality, it is unclear whether they will grow and solidify into the more traditional forms, or simply remain as less complex groups.

The Collective gang: The Collective gang looks like the Compressed form, but bigger and with a wider age range—maybe ten or more years between younger and older members. Size can be under a hundred, but is probably larger. Surprisingly, given these numbers, it has not developed subgroups, and may or may not be a territorial gang. It probably has a ten to fifteen-year existence.

    In sum, the Collective gang resembles a kind of shapeless mass of adolescent and young adult members that has not developed the distinguishing characteristics of other gangs.

The Specialty gang: Unlike these other gangs that engage in a wide variety of criminal offenses, crime in this type of group is narrowly focussed on a few offenses; the group comes to be characterized by the specialty. The Specialty gang tends to be small—usually fifty or fewer members—without any subgroups in most cases (there are exceptions). It probably has a history of less than ten years, but has developed a well-defined territory. Its territory may be either residential or based on the opportunities for the particular form of crime in which it specializes. The age range of most Specialty gangs is narrow, but in others is broad.

    In sum, the Specialty gang is crime-focussed in a narrow way. Its principal purpose is more criminal than social, and its smaller size and form of territoriality may be a reflection of this focussed crime pattern.

The two traditional types share subgroups and a strong territorial orientation. The Compressed structure can be distinguished somewhat from the traditional types by smaller size and, most particularly, by more recent onset. The Compressed, Collective and Specialty types have no subgroups and have briefer durations (except the Collective type). Territoriality is not a factor (except in the Specialty type).

In writing the scenarios, we have explicitly avoided mentioning crime patterns except in the case of the Specialty type. In fact, crime specialization is what defines this type and it's important for our research concerns to be able to distinguish drug gangs, burglary rings and the like from other gang types.

Summary of Phase I

We have some concern about the foundation of these scenarios as they are built upon the "best-known" gangs. We can't expect that they are typical of the gangs in the country and yet the content of the scenarios seems to make sense and have face validity. One exception is the Collective type. Collective gangs are fairly large in size and age range and have been around for ten to fifteen years, yet have no subgroup structure. This was a residual category and that may explain some of the ambiguity in the structural characteristics of this type. Should the Phase II data collection validate this as a meaningful gang type, it would certainly be interesting to know more about the organizational features that keep these gangs together.

We can only speculate as to why the Section I approach to gathering data about structural dimensions was not more informative. Possibly, our choice of ethnicity and subgroup organization as branching mechanisms was at fault. It may be that by

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introducing the subgroup/hang-together distinction, we confused our respondents. It may be that they were not able to aggregate characteristics within these combinations, or any other that is beyond their normal, operational categorizations. On the other hand, we didn't have the luxury of asking about each of the 1800 plus gangs individually. Another explanation—one which our experience favors—is that police officers, even those with the most gang expertise, do not attend sufficiently to dimensions of structure, or know their gangs well enough, to respond meaningfully to the type of questions we were asking. Police attend far more to gang crime than gang structure. Finally, there may be so much variability in gang structure across different cities that few characteristics emerged as predominant within our specified combinations.

It seems reasonable that departments would be better served if what they knew about gang structure would alert them to expectable crime patterns. Discovery of structure-typical crime patterns could suggest more useful approaches to gang control. Our understanding of the structure-crime nexus is now based on old research. We do not know, in the 1990s, if Traditional gangs are still very versatile in their crime involvements, or whether they are still the most violent of the gang types. Similarly, we do not know if the structure associated with crack distribution gangs is unique, so that seeing the pattern of either structure or crime necessarily implies the other. It may well be that this structure only sometimes signifies serious drug problems and therefore requires more careful crime analysis before alerting the police narcotics division to a new target. Thus Phases II and III of this project take on added importance.

Phase II: The Prevalence of Five Gang Structures

The five gang-structure scenarios that emerged from the Phase I analysis positioned us to solicit data, from a larger representative sample of cities, on the actual prevalence of various gang structures throughout the nation. Such data have never before been sought. Further, these data would describe gangs in a way seldom attempted before—notably, in relation to their structural properties. We can fruitfully return now to the depiction of gang types mentioned earlier, in the Introduction to the report. It is more directly relevant now to recast earlier works into structural and behavioral patterns.

From the 1930s through the 1960s, attempts to typologize gangs relied heavily upon their crime patterns, even though the first major attempt, by Frederic Thrasher, did not. Thrasher (1963) identified Chicago gangs in five categories: Diffuse, Solidified, Conventionalized, Criminal, and "Secret Society." The New York City Youth Board in the 1950s (1960) used an even more explicitly structural system: Vertical, Horizontal, Self-Contained, and Disintegrative. But after this, scholars moved to basically crime-based typologies. Cloward and Ohlin (1955) described Criminal, Conflict, and Retreatest gangs. Spergel's follow-up of that work (1964) identified Racket, Theft, Conflict, and Retreatest gangs. Cohen and Short (1958) spoke of Theft, Conflict, and Addict gangs, while Yablonsky referred to Social, Delinquent, and Violent gangs. In summarizing the structural qualities of the gangs described by these various writers, Klein's (1971) review yielded Spontaneous, Traditional, Horizontal, and Specialty gangs.

No further structural depiction has emerged until now. However, descriptions by

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new scholars in the 1980s continued the practice of typologizing by reference to gang behavior. Thus Taylor (1989), working in Detroit, posited Scavenger, Territorial, and Corporate gangs. Fagan (1989), summarizing data from three cities, located four types which were rather hesitantly labeled Social, Party, Conflict, and Delinquent. Huff (1988), from data in Ohio cities, listed Hedonistic, Instrumental, and Predatory gangs. All three of these 1980's typologies can be read as adding some motivational spirit to the behavioral depictions; that is, words like corporate, party, social, hedonistic, and instrumental imply **purposes** underlying the behaviors typifying the gang types.

There is, of course, some overlap among these typologies. The methods by which they were derived, however, are seldom made explicit, and in many instances are far from formal or replicable. Hopefully, the scenarios of Phase I avoid these problems, as they emerged from rather than being imposed upon observations. Further, they emerged from patterns of dimensions clearly stated *a priori*—gang size, onset, age range, ethnicity, clique structure, territoriality, and criminal versatility (but not crime type). The data came independently from expert practitioners closest to the gang scene. Finally, they came not from one or two or three cities, but from a stratified random sample of 59 cities representing the nation as a whole.

The critical methodological problem with the Phase I data was the need to fall back on our respondents' knowledge of the single gang that each knew best. If the attempts to measure prevalence of the five structures nationally were to yield unreliable responses, we wouldn't know whether to attribute this to structural variability or to biases inherent in our Phase I process.

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However, if consistent handling of the scenarios **did** emerge in Phase II, and if the five types did indeed encompass a good proportion of the gangs under the purview of our respondents, then we could feel more secure about the validity of the structural depictions. The Phase II interviews (see Appendix II) allowed for data to invalidate our Phase I finding of only five major types, because they sought not only the prevalence of the five types, but explicitly sought the existence of alternative structures as well.

We start our report of the Phase II data with two promising results. First, while our Phase II respondents did indeed offer descriptions of alternative structures, we found in coding these by the characteristics listed earlier in Figure 2 that the majority of the "alternative" structures were not alternatives at all; they fit neatly into the five structures. Return phone calls to the respondents revealed that these "alternative" listings were merely the result of some confusion about our instructions.

The second result is that the remaining alternative structures comprised only five percent of the total numbers of gangs enumerated by our respondents. In other words, the five scenarios representing types of street gangs seemed to have captured the vast bulk of gangs across the nation. We are surprised by how well the typology worked; we are no longer concerned about its derivation from the initial 59 "best known" gangs.

The data on gang structure prevalence are taken from the 201 returns from a random sample of 250 cities out of the almost 800 identified in our earlier research. This return rate of 80 percent, though below the 90 to 95 percent return rate we have had in our prior law enforcement research, is nonetheless very substantial and not a source of concern.

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Figure 3: Gang Structures in 201 Cities

	Traditional	Neo-Traditional	Compressed	Collective	Specialty	Σ
# Cities with:	75	100	149	40	76[*]	
# cities with predominance:[**]	15	24	86	6	14	
# of gangs across cities:	316 (11%)	686 (24%)	1,111 (39%)	264 (9%)	483 (17%)	2860
• Hispanic	179 (57%)	229 (33%)	292 (26%)	62 (23%)	95 (20%)	857
• Black	63 (20%)	191 (28%)	340 (31%)	125 (47%)	155 (32%)	874
• White	38	34	152	10	49	283
• Asian	15	73	156	49	85	378
• Mixed & other	21	159	171	18	99	468

[*]   Specialty focus: Drugs (24), Graffiti (20), Assault (17). Others included Burglary, Auto, Theft, Robbery.

[**]   Fifty-six cities showed no predominance of one gang structure, defined as a type appearing twice as often as any other.

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Figure 3 provides a summary of gang structures prevalence data. We call attention to the following:

- In row 1, cities containing Compressed gangs are the most common, and those with Collective structures the least. Since most of the classic gang literature of the 1950sand 1960s was based principally on Traditional, not Compressed structures, it is immediately clear that a reconsideration of gang "knowledge" is called for.

- In row 2, cities that are **predominantly** of one type of gang reveal an even stronger pattern of Compressed gang prevalence. Both rows 1 and 2 reveal that most cities will typically be more familiar with non-subgrouped gangs.

- In row 3 (reading the percentages horizontally), we see that this general pattern also applies to the number of gangs. Gangs with age-graded or geographically-based subgroups are less common than the three more homogeneous structural forms, particularly the Compressed type.

- In the five sub-rows on ethnicity (now reading the percentages vertically), we see that, in line with most scholarly reports, the vast majority of gangs are composed of minority groups, principally and equally Hispanic and black. The marginal percentages are 30 percent Hispanic, 31 percent black, 10 percent white, 13 percent Asian, and 16 percent mixed.

- In the first table note (*), we list for cities with Specialty gangs what their predominant crime type was (asked only with respect to Specialty structures). Drug gangs, while a bit more prominent than other Specialty types, certainly do not dominate the picture to the extent that enforcement and media reports would suggest. Respondents in the 24 cities with drug gangs were asked how many such gangs there

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were; the result is an estimated **maximum** of 244 gangs with a drug focus, or about 8.5 percent of the 2,860 gangs reported in total. These data are at considerable variance with widely circulated reports in the media, and many public statements made by prominent law enforcement officials and legislative members, state and federal, to the effect that street gangs have taken over much of the drug trade. They are in line, however, with other data produced by our earlier national surveys.

Not shown in Figure 3 but of some interest is the relative "purity" of cities with respect to the five types of gang structure. Only one city reported having none of the five structures (but having an alternative structure). Fully a third of all cities reported having only one gang form, and another third reported two of the forms. Thus two-thirds of all 201 cities were relatively homogeneous with respect to the structural types. An additional one-in-six reported three types, and the rest reported four or all five types. A search for common pairings or groupings of structural types was not revealing, i.e., no pattern of combinations occurred that would not be predictable from their overall totals.

The five scenarios presented to our respondents, which encapsulate defining characteristics of the five gang structures, do not include leadership patterns because we had little confidence in police views of gang leadership. They do not include the important dimensions of group cohesiveness, because responses on this dimension proved nondiscriminating. Yet other data were gathered that give us confidence that the five types are different in meaningful, indeed in validating, ways.

The ethnic differences, as suggested in Figure 3, are in some cases very substantial, as illustrated in Figure 4A-E. For example, Traditional gangs are more likely

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Figure 4.A

Traditional

Number of gangs = 316

Number of cities = 75

Hispanic
57%

Other
1%

Mixed
6%

Asian
5%

White
12%

Black
20%
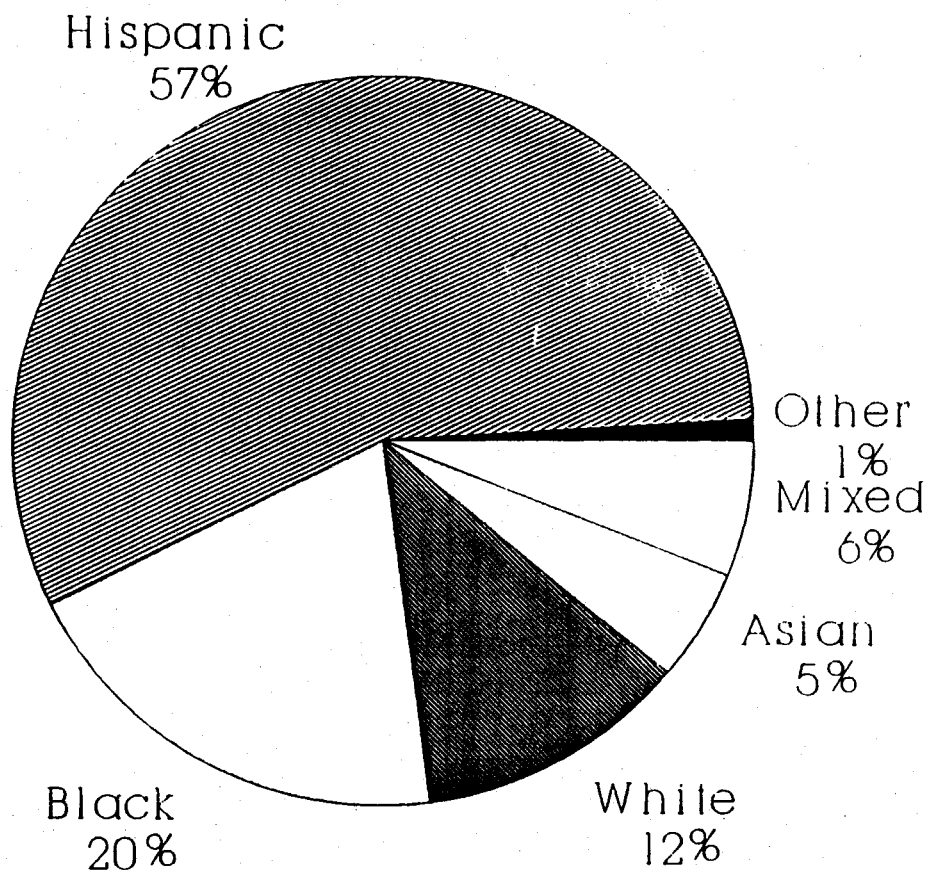
Figure 4.B

Neotraditional

Number of gangs = 686
Number of cities = 100

Hispanic
33%
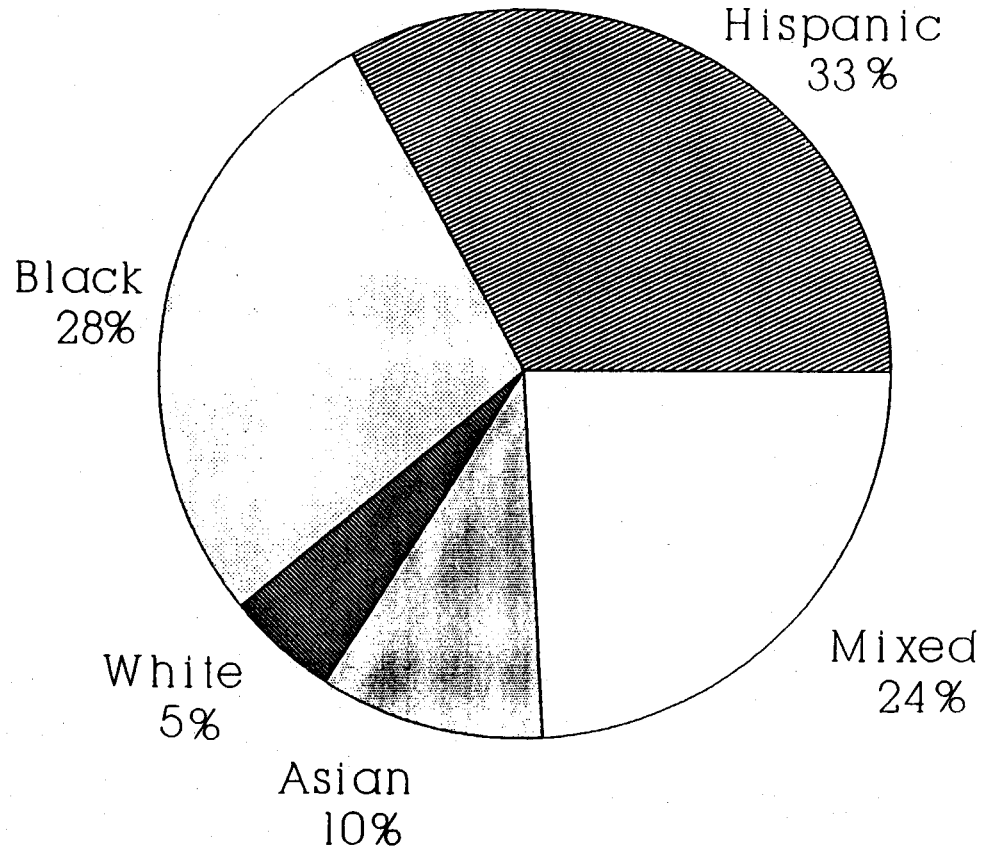
Black
28%

Mixed
24%

White
5%

Asian
10%

Figure 4.C

Compressed

Number of gangs = 1111
Number of cities = 149
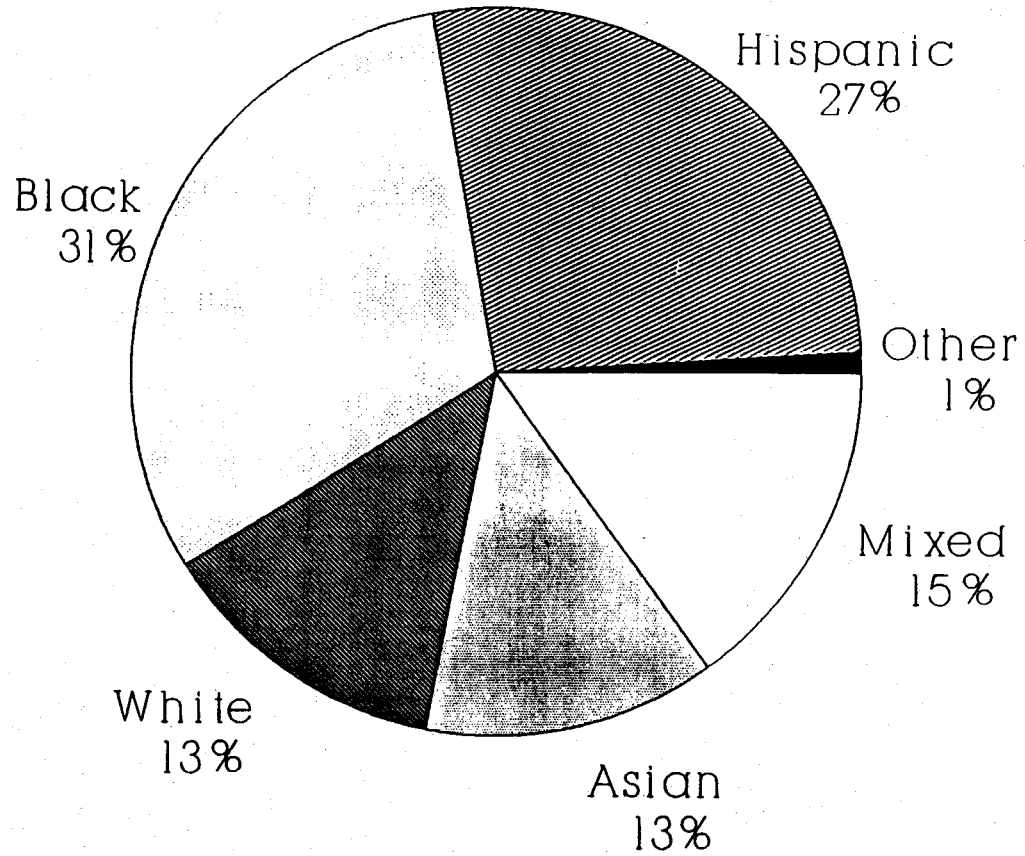
Figure 4.D

Collective
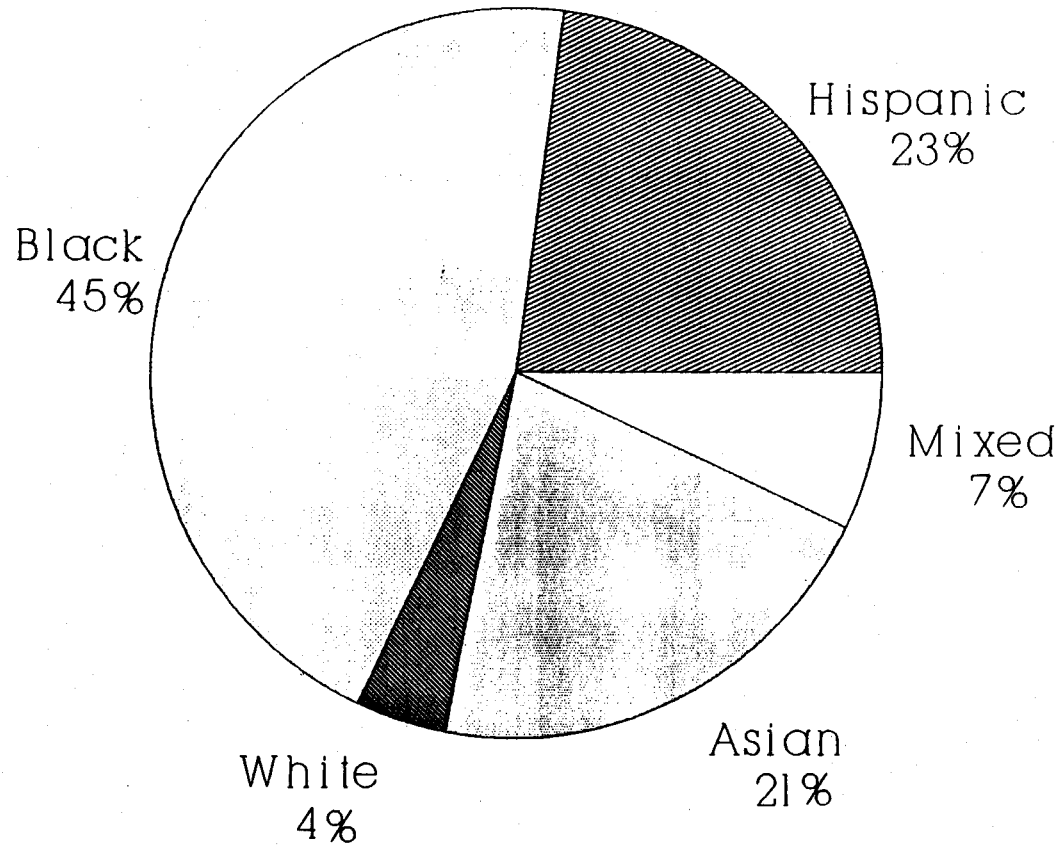
Number of gangs = 264
Number of cities = 40

Hispanic
23%

Black
45%

Mixed
7%

White
4%

Asian
21%

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Figure 4.E

Specialty

Number of gangs = 483
Number of cities = 76

Black 32%

Hispanic 20%

White 10%

Mixed 20%

Asian 18%
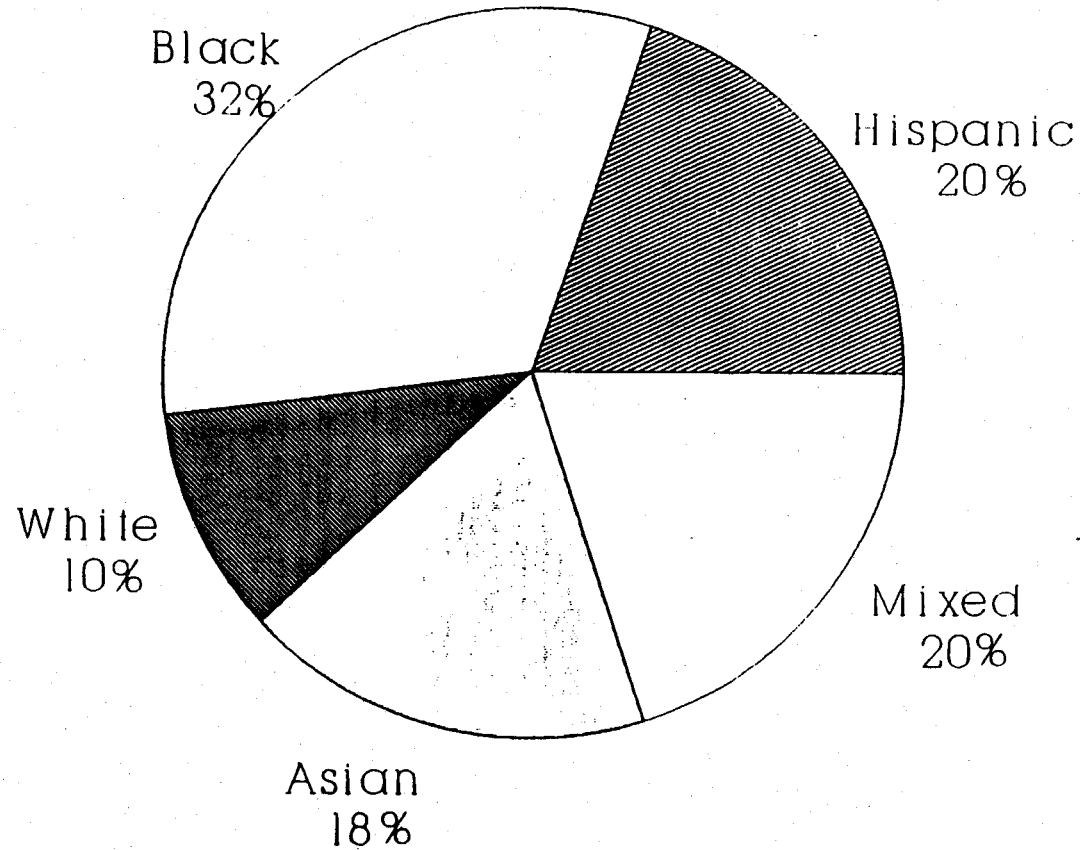
Figure 5: Selected Structural Dimensions

	Traditional	Neotraditional	Compressed	Collective	Specialty
Average Size	182	72	35	56	24
Year of Onset*					
Through 1970	24%	13%	9%	15%	7%
1971-1984	28%	18%	16%	28%	15%
1985 & beyond	49%	68%	75%	56%	78%
City Size >100,000	35%	36%	28%	52%	33%
Average Monthly Arrests	10.9	9.2	6.1	7.4	5.7
Average Monthly Per Member Arrests	.16	.20	.22	.17	.29

Year of onset refers to the year any gangs first appeared.

to be Hispanic while the Collective and Specialty gangs are more commonly composed of black members. Note, however, that the two most common types—Neotraditional and Compressed—show far less ethnic or racial predominance. Average gang size is another differentiating variable, as seen in Figure 5. We note in particular the predicted large size of Traditional gangs and small size of Specialty gangs. Year of gang emergence in the city is somewhat differentiating (Traditional gangs tend to be located in early onset cities), although not fully at the level we expected. The explosion in gang onsets in the 1980s probably puts limits on these differences. Size of the city shows some differences, but the common existence of two or more structures in the same city sets limits for these differences. The ambiguous Collective gang is significantly a product of the largest cities.

Volume of crime attributed to the structures is also important, with the Traditional and Neotraditional gangs contributing the most, and Specialty gangs

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contributing the least. Of course, this is a function of average gang size. If we control for size as in the last row of Figure 5, we see a considerable reversal; the average Traditional gang member contributes the lowest reported arrests, and the Specialty gang member the highest. Specialty gangs, it should be remembered, are very much organized around their preferred crime type, be it drug sales, burglary, or some other, and are subjected to specialized law enforcement surveillance and pursuit. By contrast, the more crime-versatile Traditional gang members engage in many activities which are of relatively little concern to the police. Thus the reversal patterns of gang volume and per-member arrest rates are quite understandable, and help to validate the nature of these gang structures.

We should also report that several variables do not reveal differences in our data. Most important, perhaps, is that our respondents did not report much of a difference in average arrests for Part I or for serious crimes. We omit the data because, as we will see in the Phase III data, their reports are necessarily based on inadequate data. Region of the country did not differ; more gangs are to be found in the west and fewest in the northeast, but this is true of all five gang types.

Finally, we must recognize that with many of the variables noted above, including those we list as differentiating between the five types, statistical significance is not achieved. We report the larger differences because this is an exploratory study overall which clearly calls for cross-validation of its findings. Equally important, many of the data are taken from police expert reports—these are perceptions of gang size, ethnicity, crime patterns and so on. An officer reporting five, fifty, or five-hundred gangs in his

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jurisdiction **cannot** be close to a lot of the raw data at the street level. Differences that

emerge do so over a miasma of informational noise and uncertainty. Those that emerge

seem to "make sense;" they have construct validity, but they call for validation with other

forms of data—gang by gang by gang. Such validation will prove very expensive.

To say this does not mitigate the distinction between the five gang **structures.**

Rather,, it calls attention to the need to assess what variables reliably characterize those

structures. It also calls for considerable thought about the policy implications that derive

from the very fact that there is a variety of structures. To label a group a street gang

does little to advance understanding of its nature or its impact in the community.

Variety, not homogeneity, is the hallmark of the modern American gang.

Phase III: Structures and Crime Patterns

In retrospect, the gang structures and crime proposal submitted to NIJ

represented a short series of gambles. Aware that police do not generally conceive of

gangs in structural terms, and are often only dimly aware of some of the gang dimensions

commonly discussed in academic circles, we nonetheless gambled that we could

inductively solicit from police experts the requirements of Phase I. That is, we could use

police responses to descriptive dimensions such as gang size, clique structures, age

patterns and so on to develop realistic scenarios of contrasting street gang structures.

While our police respondents could not do this for the broad range of gangs in

their purview, we found that they could do it for the gangs best known to them. The

first gamble thus paid off with the development of five different gang structures.

A second gamble was that the descriptions of the Phase I structures could be

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provided to a broad and diverse sample of police experts to establish the national prevalence of the newly derived structures **and** that those might account for a substantial portion of all gangs. This gamble, too, paid off—even more handsomely than we had expected. For the first time, we have an empirically derived typology of street gang structures, running the gamut from the historically well-documented Traditional gang to the small Specialty structure, with estimates of their prevalence and some empirical correlates. Clearly there is a need for empirical cross-validation of these structural and prevalence patterns, but their construct validity is encouraging.

Finally, we gambled that if reasonably distinct structures could be developed and **if** their prevalence could be established, then recorded crime data on gangs and gang members could be used to determine if different gang structures were associated with different crime patterns. With the exception of a more focussed crime pattern anticipated for Specialty gangs, it was not clear that other structures would necessarily yield distinguishing patterns—established crime versatility patterns argue against this (Klein, 1984)—but this was after all a reasonable empirical question.

This last gamble, given a successful road to Phase III, rested on the capacities of police crime recording practices with respect to gang members. From past exposure to these practices, we knew from the outset that many departments could not meet our needs. Nonetheless, in preparing the research proposal to NIJ, we suggested that perhaps 25 or so departments might be able to provide the needed data. As described below, our estimate was very much in error and our third gamble did not pay off. A different approach will be needed to relate gang structures to crime patterns.

It is not that police crime data fail to yield structure-relevant differences; we couldn't get to that point in our analysis. Rather, police crime data generally are not collected in a way that allows such differences to emerge. To understand this requires a clear statement of what we determined was needed. Several rather severe restrictions were imposed—severe because we wanted reliable and valid depictions of gang crime patterns.

1. We required the recording of gang member crimes across a wide range of possible offenses. Reference to the list of 18 offense categories of the Phase III Survey in the appendix will suggest our interest. We knew that this broad range is possible in all departments, but also that police perspectives on gang crime and legislative and prosecutorial emphases would lead to an overemphasis on the most serious offenses to the detriment (and often exclusion) of moderate and low serious offenses. Police more commonly record offenses they see as typical of gangs—assaults, drive-by shootings, robbery, graffiti vandalism, drug sales, for example—and less commonly record various forms of theft and other property offenses, status offenses, drug use, and so on, despite the fact that these latter are far more common. We decided early that departments exhibiting a major imbalance of offense recording could not yield a valid picture of inter-structural differences.

2. We also required that a participating department keep records on a substantial proportion of the members of any gang included in Phase III data collection. The tendency, of course, is for offenses to be recorded primarily for those considered "core" gang members, that relatively small number of gang members who contribute a

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disproportionately high number of arrests, probably disproportionately of higher seriousness as well. To describe inter-structure differences based too heavily on the core or most criminally active gang members would seriously impair the validity of our findings.

Further, with respect both to the range of offenses and the category of offenders, an imbalance toward more serious offenses and more serious offenders, it was felt, would dampen any inter-structure differences that exist; it's hard to find differences when categories of analysis are limited.

3. Because many gangs contain both juvenile and adult members, we sought reporting departments that did not limit their crime reports to either juveniles or adults. For instance, if gang offending was recorded only within the juvenile division of a police department, that department would not be included in the Phase III analysis.

Beyond these three restrictions, there is the obvious limitation that we could only deal with departments that **did** maintain gang records—both rosters of gang members and offenses committed by them, recorded individual by individual. Many jurisdictions with gang problems have not as yet developed either paper or computerized gang offense recording systems that would permit compilation of the sort of data we needed. As part of Phase II, all 200 respondents were asked, "Does your department have the capability of producing the arrest history of all or most of the members of at least one gang?"

If the answer to this question was in the positive, respondents were asked to indicate for how many gangs of each structural type such arrest histories or crime profiles could be produced. A surprising 110 departments responded that they **could**

provide gang arrest profiles of this sort. This was the last encouraging data we were to receive.

A procedure was established to help the 110 respondents provide the requested arrest profiles. A form was developed on which, gang by gang, they could fill in the offense data for the previous year. If they had a ready-made reporting system of a reasonably similar sort, they were welcomed to submit that to us. Finally, if the paper work involved was too extensive to be undertaken, they could report the data to us in a structured telephone interview.

Phase III contacts were originally made with 42 of the 110 respondents, 31 from cities with multiple gang structures and 11 from cities reporting only one structural type, both sets carefully selected to provide a wide assortment of gang arrest profiles. However, it soon became apparent from the response of these 42 that the full complement of 110 respondents would have to be approached. Over time, despite a great deal of effort and many, many attempts to elicit cooperation—which, it will be recalled, was overwhelmingly positive in Phase I and Phase II in addition to prior projects—only 16 departments responded with one or more gang arrest profiles that met the research requirements.

Of the remainder:

• Fifteen overtly refused to participate, primarily because the task was too demanding. Their data systems were not sufficient to provide gang arrest profiles.

• Twenty-four simply failed to respond, usually ignoring phone and fax messages from the same personnel that had successfully engaged them before. We take these to be refusals as well, albeit of a passive nature.

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- Twenty-eight agreed to respond to faxed data recording sheets, but failed to return them. Again repeated requests proved fruitless, and a third form of refusal was the result.

- One of the respondents reported that the gang problem had dissipated.

- Twenty-six returned data forms that failed to meet the research requirements. Of these, 21 admitted that their gang rosters didn't exist, or did not include the majority of gang members or were otherwise inadequate. Four reported legal restrictions—confidentiality or protected juvenile records. One reported its single gang was no longer active.

Thus, at the end of data collection for phase III, we had obtained only 16 responses that merited further analysis. Of these, one came from a large urban center and all others from suburban or small city jurisdictions. The 16 cities profiled a total of 51 gangs—17 Traditional, 12 Neotraditional, 18 Compressed, 2 Collective, and 2 Specialty. The first three numbers, at least, are sufficient to provided some stability of relationship between structural type and arrest profile, but further review raised insurmountable problems.

Only nine of the gang descriptions showed a close relationship between reported gang size, roster size, and number of members profiled. An additional eleven gangs showed a substantial (50 percent or better) equality between reported size, roster size, and numbers profiled. Only these 20 gangs, by even a relaxed criterion, could meet the requirements of valid gang crime patterns.

Finally, a review of these 20 remaining gang arrest profiles revealed that only five of the arrest profiles suggested any sort of comprehensive arrest recording practice. We

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know from much prior research, gang and nongang alike, that arrest patterns are versatile; gang members commit a wide variety of offenses, and this variety is manifested in both self-report and official records. Most common are various forms of theft, status offenses, drug use and other mostly non-violent crimes. Yet the arrest profiles we received on reasonably complete gang rosters were not of this sort, raising serious questions, as we suggested earlier, about the selectivity in common gang offense recording practices.

To illustrate the two recording deficits described here—inadequate rostering and limited offense recording—we report below several examples of each.

Figure 6: Illustrations of Number Disparities

City ID	Structure	Estimated Size	Roster Size	Profile Number
211	Traditional	100-200	27	27
749	Traditional	315	156	105
240	Neotraditional	100	60	30
749	Neotraditional	170	76	52
621	Compressed	100	50	20
261	Compressed	25-50	13	13
284	Collective	135	135	22
519	Specialty	40	17	17

Figure 6 presents examples of would-be gang profiles that would be very suspect if they were to be reported, as they could refer to a very substantial minority of the

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members from each gang. One could reasonably assume that the profiles would disproportionately reflect the detected criminal activity of the chronic offenders or core members of their gangs, thus yielding a distorted picture of gang crime patterns.

Figure 7 reports the arrest profiles for two of the five gangs that illustrate the expected versatility pattern, and three of the gangs for which important gaps are evident.

Figure 7: Illustrative Gang Arrest Profiles

	City ID: 418 Gang Type: Traditional Profile Number: 339	621 Compressed 20	436 Traditional 709	480 Traditional 462	261 Compressed 24
Homicide	2	0	0	0	0
Rape	1	0	0	0	0
Robbery	10	6	12	1	8
Assault	79	9	30	10	8
Burglary	31	10	4	0	0
Larceny/Theft	9	7	0	0	2
Motor Vehicle Theft	5	2	2	0	6
Arson	1	0	0	0	0
Graffiti	43	2	3	5	0
Drug Sales	1	2	1	0	9
Use and Possession	33	7	22	1	18
Public Disorder	79	4	0	0	24
Weapons	24	3	12	7	6
Petty Theft	38	13	0	0	2
Forgery, Counterfeit, etc.	42	0	0	0	0
Hate Crimes	0	0	0	0	0
Status Offenses	217	9	0	0	0
Other	407	0	23	8	0
Total:	1022	74	111	32	84

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The first two gangs evidence pretty much the full panoply of offenses, although the patterns differ substantially. The balance of violent to non-violent offenses seems reasonable, and there is no obvious selectivity for stereotypically "gang-like" offenses. The other three profiles quite obviously fall short of expectations. Petty thefts, status offenses, burglary, and larceny are all but non-existent; imagine gangs whose members engage in none of these activities! By contrast, violence and drug offenses predominate; the stereotype is reflected in recording practices.

Note further the numbers of offenses in relation to the numbers of members profiled. In the first two gangs, between three and four offenses on average are recorded per member. In two of the three other gangs, per-member rates work out to .16 and .07 offenses. The difference seems way out of proportion to likely gang member activity, providing illustrations of grossly incomplete recording in addition to pattern distortion.

What are we left with, then? Our respondents provided crime data on 51 gangs, or less than 2 percent of the 2,860 reported in Phase II. Of these, only 20 had even mildly acceptable proportions of profiles out of total members, or 0.7 percent of the total, of which only five, or 0.2 percent were judged to have yielded reasonably undistorted crime profiles. Far too many cities have yielded far too few gangs, and these portray grossly under-reported and distorted crime pictures. It is not possible, with these data, to assess crime pattern differences between different gang structure types.

Implications

Several implications are obvious from the above conclusions. First, if this nation

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is to base gang control policies on police-recorded gang data, then a major effort will be needed to assist law enforcement in accurately reflecting the nature of gang arrests.

Second, the policies now in place, both locally and nationally, to the extent that they are based on officially reported gang crime patterns, are based on inadequately collected and reported information. This includes greatly under-reported levels of gang crime, and largely distorted emphases on the proportions of gang-stereotypical crime—violence, drug offenses, and the like.[8] Such arrest-based policies thus are likely to be ill founded and inefficient at best.

Finally, for gang scholars, it appears that accurate gang crime depictions will in most cities have to start with ethnographic procedures. Reasonably full rosters of gang memberships must come from field studies, and then these rosters can be used to approach the issue of crime patterns (observed, self-reported, and official). In most jurisdictions, reliance on data from police gang units will not at this point be sufficient. Four very recent studies illustrate the use of alternatives in the absence of acceptable police arrest data. Knox (1993) relied on police chiefs' reports of gang crime severity (number of crime types reported) in a sample of 248 cities. Quinn et al. (1994) relied on gang unit officers' perceptions of gang problem severity (a global, unoperationalized measure) in a set of 79 cities in the south central states. LeBlanc (1994) employed self-report measures of delinquency to study relationships between (a) more and less organized gangs, b) retreatist, criminal, and violent gangs, and c) French Canadian and

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[8] One example is the widely reported finding by Curry et al. (1994:1) that "...homicides and other violent crimes account for about half of all recorded gang-related crime incidents."

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Haitian immigrant gangs, all in Montreal. Sheley et al. (1995) interviewed incarcerated gang members regarding the level of gang organization and both gang and individual involvement in five types of crime. The approach of these last two studies, self-report measures, is perfectly acceptable, even preferable to police records, but not feasible for multi-jurisdictional studies or prevalence estimates. The first two—chiefs' and officers' impressions—raise serious questions of validity and reliability about police reports of gang crime.

We make this last comment with reservations, however. There are some jurisdictions from which reasonably valid and reliable gang crime data are available. The authors have had the fortune to work with such jurisdictions. Appropriate data can be collected, albeit at considerable expense in funds, time, and frustration, and such data can be enormously effective in advancing our knowledge of gang crime and gang control possibilities. These instances are unusual, however, and stand as proof of the value of expanding their numbers.

Conclusions

It is relevant to refer back to some of our prior gang studies. The vast majority of our earlier respondents were comfortable with our survey's gang terminology. When appropriate, we entered into conversations based upon our definitional approach that led to mutual agreements as to whether a city should or should not be considered gang-involved. Our 1991 survey of nominated gang cities thus yielded 260 gang and over 50 nongang cities. Our 1992 migration study incorporated more sources for gang city candidates and yielded almost 800 gang (and about 300 nongang) cities.

The allocation of police resources to gang problems was revealed in the 1991 survey to be not as driven by crime analysis as one might hope, and not consistently determined by differentiation between gang types. In 83 percent of the departments, the most common resource allocation was to **intelligence** functions. Only 26 percent of the departments had specific gang **investigation** officers, while 33 percent reported engaging in gang **suppression** activities. Deliberate gang **prevention/community relations** functions were reported by less than 10 percent of the respondents, and participation in community or interagency task forces was mentioned by seven percent. The latter figures seem to reflect the relatively recent emergence of gangs in a large number of cities (over 50 percent of them having gang onset only since 1985). Many jurisdictions (over 40 percent by their own admission) first went through a denial phase; only 37 percent of the respondents could name a non-enforcement person in their communities who was knowledgeable about gangs. Most often this was a school official, commonly school security.

Clearly, the allocation of police resources to intelligence, investigation, suppression, prevention, and community involvement functions should depend in part both on the structural form of existing gangs, and on their patterns of criminal involvement. Intelligence, perhaps with a preventive accompaniment, may suffice for cities facing minor gang problems. Over 60 percent of our 615 smaller (i.e., populations under 100,000) gang cities reported five or fewer active gangs, and few of these were drug gangs requiring intensive anti-narcotics operations. There was also a suggestion in some of our respondents' comments that early suppression procedures can effectively

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discourage "copycat" and "wannabe" groups experimenting with gang life but not yet seriously involved in violent episodes.

Gangs with extensive drug sales activities might elicit a potential alternative for police approaches, namely the employment of crackdown operations under the control of the narcotics or vice divisions, rather than gang units. We have noted elsewhere (Maxson and Klein, 1986) the limited liaison that tends to be maintained between police gang and narcotics units, and our belief that the utility of such liaisons can easily be overstated and overplayed.

Yet other research undertaken by the authors (Klein, Gordon, and Maxson, 1986) has revealed that the involvement of gang units in the investigative process does yield increased effectiveness, although the structural form and organizational placement of the unit seems not to make a difference (Klein, Maxson, and Gordon, 1987). This makes sense when there is an established, experienced unit and when the gang situation is sufficiently stable, as with Traditional gangs, to yield reliable intelligence. In the absence of such gang stability—as in newly emergent gang cities or cities with heavy involvement in drug distribution to the relative exclusion of other crime patterns—investigative functions may better be retained in the investigative (and/or narcotics) divisions, with gang officers being called on only to assist with background information, gang informants, gang member identification, and the like.

Perhaps most critical to today's discussions nationwide is the issue of special gang suppression programs. These include legislation such as STEP, RICO, and civil abatement statutes; vertical prosecution ("Hardcore") or SHODI-type programs; intensive

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gang caseload programs in probation and parole departments; and a series of special police actions that go beyond the usual crime control procedures. The question here is whether these suppression activities are in fact suppressing gang membership and crime (there are no data on this), or whether they are inadvertently repeating the effects of earlier gang interventions, i.e., increasing gang identity, status and cohesiveness, and thus gang crime (Klein and Maxson, 1989).

Our survey respondents described these suppression variations to us in a wide variety of terms, but they seem categorizable as follows:

- Most common were heightened forms of surveillance, variously described as heavy surveillance, directed patrol, selective enforcement, harassment, patrol caravans, and zero tolerance.

- Next were specific, multi-officer street sweeps targeted at gang members. Some were modelled after Operation Hammer (L.A.P.D.), others were multi-agency coordinated efforts, and still others involved intra-department tactical units and task forces.

- Third in number were variations on "hot spot" targeting, aimed either at known gang member gathering spots or at intelligence- and patrol-defined drug market centers. Included here were occasional "cul de sac" barrier installations to discourage gang entry into specific block locations.

Each of these categories of activity, and a smattering of others, were based on a general deterrence notion. They assume that deterrence by police suppression is both an

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appropriate and effective way of dealing with established gang structures.[9] Data available elsewhere (Klein and Maxson, 1991; Spergel and Chance, 1991) suggest this may not be the case, but the issue inherent here—how to increase or decrease gang cohesiveness—is likely a function of gang **structure** first, and crime patterns second. Many police departments engaged in suppression programs have become discouraged about their efforts, and are speaking more consistently about community-based approaches. Perhaps they have been applying the suppression brush too broadly, not sufficiently appreciating its appropriateness to some types of gangs but not to others.

Summary

In this research, we have developed a structural gang typology which has proven applicable in the vast majority of a random sample of cities with reported gang problems. We have learned:

- that Traditional gangs, those most subject to prior gang research, are not the most common or typical gang form;

- that some of the ethnic differences described in the literature do not hold up

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[9] In these pages, we cannot go into a detailed description of deterrence theory and its relationship to suppression programs. This is available elsewhere (Klein and Maxson, 1991; Klein, 1995). But the reader can get some flavor of the philosophy expressed by our police respondents in these quotes:
- "We violated the hell out of their rights -- and they left."
- "Suppression? We used anything and everything."
- "We knocked the shit out of them."
- "Intensified patrol, including bad busts, but it passes the message."
- "Excruciating pressure."

Perhaps the most innovative program was the one in which intensive street sweeps were followed by the rental or purchase of a house in the swept community. An officer moved into each house as a resident. The community became his beat, by foot and bicycle.

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well for gangs in the 1990s;

- that drug gangs, so much the subject of public pronouncements and some criminological research, comprise a relatively small proportion of street gangs;

- that differences between gang types do not readily correspond to characteristics of their cities or regions in the country;

- that presumed and reported relationships between gangs and crime patterns, as reflected in official arrests, are probably unfounded—police gang arrest data are not generally up to the task of validly representing patterns of gang crime.

We caution the reader, also, that the gang typology which emerged form our data is time-limited. The data collection period of the early 1990s follows by relatively few years the major proliferation across the nation that took place in the 1980s. We may have captured a brief movement in a period of major gang evolutionary change. We know, for instance, that drug gangs have gained their prominence only during the last ten years.

It is reasonable to suggest that the Collective gang, having such an amorphous form, may be a product of this evolutionary phase and will soon becomes even less common that it is now. It is also reasonable to suggest that Compressed gangs, now so common but with a relatively short history, will evolve over time into Neotraditional and Traditional forms if they continue to exist. This is logical, since current members will grow older and the gangs can only regenerate themselves via recruitment of new, presumably younger replacements. This could well result in the age-related cliques that typify the Traditional gang.

Revisiting this issue in five to ten years, using the same research methods, would

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seem very much in order to solidify our understanding of gang structure. Perhaps by that time a sufficient number of police departments will have developed gang rosters and crime statistics appropriate to establishing valid relationships between gang structures and gang crime patterns.

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Appendix I: Phase I Instrument

GANG STRUCTURES INTERVIEW - PHASE I

INTRODUCTION. For the purposes of this research, we want to define gangs quite broadly--younger and older, male or female, small and large, and so on. However, we only wish to include as gangs those groups that do have considerable orientation to or involvement in delinquent or criminal behavior. Please do not include groups whose behavior is only marginally illegal.

Section I. In this first set of questions I will be asking you to identify the different types of gangs that you are familiar with in your jurisdiction. From a survey you/someone in your department completed for us in _____, we learned that [CITY NAME] has approximately _____ street gangs. Based on the previous definition, is this number of gangs accurate? If no, adjusted number is:_____
Please keep these various gangs in mind as I ask you questions about certain characteristics of your gangs.

The characteristics of gang types that I will be discussing with you today are cohesiveness, ethnicity, age distribution, territorial identification, subgroups or cliques, female membership and size.

# of gangs_____

If asked 2nd, TYPE:_____   ID#_____

S) Of the _____ gangs that we're talking about, in

how many do the members all hang pretty much together as one

overall group and in how many do members tend to separate out

into obvious sub-groups or cliques? [RECORD NUMBERS FOR EACH

CATEGORY]   _____ hang together (go to next page)

                   _____ sub-groups/cliques

   S1) Of these _____ gangs that have subgroups/cliques,

   in how many are the subgroups related to age only, to area,

   to things they do, or to some other characteristic?

   _____age   _____to things they do

   _____area   _____to some other characteristic

   _____combination, specify:_____

[FOR EACH TYPE MENTIONED IN S1, ASK S2 AND RECORD IN A MANNER

THAT CLARIFIES RESPONSE TO EACH.]

   S2) What is the nature of the relationship of these

   subgroups to other subgroups of the gang, and to the gang

   itself? [PROBE FOR NATURE OF RELATIONSHIP OF SUBGROUPS TO

   "GANG ITSELF", i.e., level of contact, overall leadership,

   independence vs. autonomy] _____

   _____

   _____

[BRANCH OFF WITH SEPARATE QUESTION SEQUENCE FOR EACH OF THE
SUBGROUP TYPES GIVEN AND THEIR NUMBER -- POSSIBLE FOUR OPTIONS,
OR MORE, IF COMBINATION]

2

If asked 2nd, TYPE:_____ ID#_____

ETHNICITY

E) Of the _____ gangs that we're talking about, how many

consist mostly of just one ethnic group? (none, go to E2).

_____

      E1) Of the gangs that have primarily one ethnic group, how

many gangs are:

        Black _____   Hispanic _____

        Asian _____   White _____

      [PROBE FOR NATIONALITY OF HISPANIC, BLACK OR ASIAN]:

_____

      E2) Of the _____ gangs that are not mostly composed of

one single ethnic group, how would you characterize the

ethnic mix of these gangs?

Mixed:_____

[PROBE FOR THE DIFFERENT ETHNIC COMBINATIONS AND RATIOS OF

THESE MIXED GROUPS.]

BRANCH OFF AND PROCEED WITH SEQUENCE OF QUESTIONS FOR EACH ETHNIC

GROUP, POSSIBLY INCLUDING ANY COMBINATIONS OF MIXED ETHNIC

GROUPS REPRESENTED HERE.

#/Type: _____ ID# _____

Section I.

1) Would you describe the members within each of these [READ BACK

OF GANGS AND ETHNICITY AND SUBGROUP DIMENSIONS] as tightly

connected or loosely connected to each other? In other words,

how cohesive do gangs like this seem?

_____

_____

2) Do the members of this type of gang identify pretty strongly

with any particular area or territory?

_____Yes   _____No

2a) How are areas/territories defined? i.e. do they identify

their territory by neighborhood, school, housing project, or

other types of physical boundaries?

_____

_____

3) Are all of the gangs of this type about the same size?

Yes_____; what's the typical size?_____

No_____; What is the smallest?_____

What is the largest?_____

4

3a) Can you break that down in your own terms by how many gang members are more involved and how many are not so involved? [PROBE BY ASKING FOR PROPORTIONS IF GETTING NO SPECIFIC NUMBERS]

If typical: _____   _____
                    (> involved term/number)   (< involved term/#)

Or, smallest: _____   _____
                    (> involved term/#)   (< involved term/#)

Largest: _____   _____
                    (> involved term/#)   (< involved term/#)

4) Are these [REPEAT #, ETHNICITY, SUBGROUP TYPE] about the same in their age ranges or are they different in ranges?

Same range: _____

Different ranges: _____   _____

_____   _____

4a) Can you estimate which age is most common for this type of gang? _____

5) How many gangs of this type have female members? _____

5a) What is the level of female involvement? In how many gangs are the females:

_____ a sub-group or clique of the male gang

_____ an autonomous, female gang

_____ integrated fully into the male group

5b) What is the typical proportion of females in gangs of this type? [PROBE FOR A FRACTION OR A PERCENTAGE, DO NOT ACCEPT "A LOT" "A FEW" ETC.] _____

5

6) Would you consider these [AGAIN, REPEAT PRIMARY DIMENSIONS--#, ETHNICITY, SUBGROUP, ETC] gangs to have long standing traditions and/or characteristics, or, do they represent a newer type of gang whose habits, readily identifiable characteristics and traditions are still emerging? _____

_____

_____

SUMMARIZE TYPE: Now, let me confirm what I have so far: there are _____ gangs in [CITY NAME] that are of a type characterized by [#, ethnicity, subgrouping]. For the remaining _____ gangs in your city I am going to ask the previous set of questions again, until we have covered all the different TYPES of gangs represented in [CITY NAME]. Let's continue with the [NEXT SUBGROUP OR ETHNICITY DIMENSION] gangs you mentioned earlier.

TRANSITION TO SECTION 2

[SUMMARIZE THE TYPES THAT RESPONDENT HAS DESCRIBED AND ASK:]

In this interview, we have categorized gang types with the two leading traits of 1) ethnicity, and 2) whether or not they hang together or break into subgroups, e.g. "Black, age-graded subgroups" and "White, hang together, cohesives." In what ways do you characterize different kinds of gangs, or do you have any labels or terms for particular types of gangs?_____

_____

_____

Is there anything else you would like to add about any of the different type of gangs in your city before we move on to the next set of questions?_____

_____

_____

G) We are conducting these interviews to get a picture of the different types of gangs that are operating throughout the nation. In your opinion, given our broad definition of gangs, would you consider any of the following groups to be gangs?

[Y or N]:   ____prison groups

                 ____skinheads or other supremacist groups

                 ____motorcycle groups

                 ____stoners

                 ____satanic groups

                 ____terrorist groups

                 ____organized adult crime groups

                 ____drug distribution groups

                 ____tagger crews

                 ____specialty groups (auto theft, burglary rings, etc.) [GET NUMBER AND TYPE]

                 ____"confederations/nations" (Chicago style)

                 ____organized Asian groups

G1) Which, if any, of these groups do you have in [CITY NAME]?

    [CIRCLE AND RECORD HOW MANY]

G2) Did you include them in any of the types you described

    earlier?   ____Yes   ____No

    If no, why not? _____

    _____

    _____

8

SECTION II.   ID #_____

Now I'd like you to answer several questions about <u>one particular</u>

<u>gang</u> in your city, in fact, **the one gang you know the best.** Keep

that gang in mind and tell me what is their name?

_____

1) How many members does this one particular gang have?_____

     1a) How many are core members?_____

     1b) How many are fringe members? _____

[USE THESE TERMS OR TERMS PROVIDED BY RESPONDENT IN Q3A)

2) What is the age range in this gang?_____

     2a) What is the most common age?_____

3) Do the members of this particular gang identify with any

particular area or territory?   ____Yes   ____No

     3a) If yes, how is the area or boundary defined?

     _____

     _____

     3b) If no, what other dimensions identify them as a gang?

     _____

4) **Are there any special signs or symbols that characterize the**

gang?_____

_____

5) What ethnic categories are represented in this gang? How many

are: Black_____   Hispanic_____

        Asian_____   White_____

        American Indian_____

     [Get nationality breakdowns if applicable.]

9

6) Does this gang have separate subgroups or cliques or do the members all hang out together as one group?_____

    6a) If separate subgroups or cliques, are these groups related to age, area, the things they do, or some other dimension? _____

_____.

7) Are the members tightly connected or loosely connected to each other? _____

8) How loyal are gang members to one another?

_____

_____

9) Are there identifiable leaders in the gang?

_____

_____

10) How important are rivalries or competition with other gangs on the gang members' group identity or status?

_____

_____

11) Are there any female members in this gang?

_____Yes   _____No

    11a) If yes, do they have a separate subgroup or do they seem pretty well integrated with the males?_____

12) When did this gang first get started?_____

10

13) Has anything about the gang changed much over the years, in any of the qualities we've just been talking about?

_____

_____

_____

_____

14) Over the past year, what is the worst crime you can recall that involves the members of this gang?_____

_____

15) Do you think of them doing mostly just one or two types of crime, or are they involved in many different criminal activities?

_____one or two types of crime:_____
                          (specialty/ies)

_____many different types of crime:_____
                          (typical crimes)

_____

_____

16) How many gangs in [CITY NAME] could you have responded for with this particular set of questions?_____

[IN OTHER WORDS, COULD THEY ANSWER SUCH QUESTIONS ABOUT ALL THE GANGS IN THE CITY, HALF, A FEW, ONE?]

17) Can you think of anyone in the community that it may be helpful to talk to about gangs in [CITY NAME]? [GET NAME, AFFILIATION AND PHONE NUMBER IF POSSIBLE]

_____

Thanks, etc. You might be getting a brief questionnaire from us in the next few months. We'll send you a report of our findings once the project is completed.

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Appendix II: Phase II Instrument

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE
UNIVERSITY PARK
LOS ANGELES. CALIFORNIA 90089-0375
(213) 740-4252
Fax (213) 740-8077

Date

Addressee. etc.

Dear _____ :

      A few years ago, you provided us with some valuable information about your city's gang situation and received a summary report of the findings on gang migration across the nation. We are conducting an additional study, also sponsored by the National Institute of Justice. The purpose of this current project is to learn more about the varieties of gang types, nationally, and how these may relate to different forms of crime. We expect the findings will generate guidelines for more effective responses to gangs in many cities.

      The enclosed survey should take only a few minutes to complete. The first two pages describe five types of gangs, based upon information we have received from law enforcement gang experts throughout the country. Please read **all five descriptions first**; then consider which type or types generally describe the gang forms in your city. The fit need not be perfect, but should be substantially correct. **Then,** answer the questions on page three. If some gangs do not fit any of the five descriptions, the questions on page four request information about these alternative gang forms. We'd like you to focus on the form or structure of your city's gangs first, without regard to crime. **After you have completed page four,** please turn the page and respond to the questions about crime on page five and about your records (page 6). Then, return the survey to us in the enclosed envelope.

      For the purposes of this survey, we define **gangs** quite broadly—younger and older, male and female, small and large, and so on. However, we only wish to include as gangs those groups **that do** have considerable orientation to or involvement in delinquent or criminal behavior. Please do not include groups whose behavior is only marginally illegal.

      Thank you for your participation. Please call us if you have questions. Be sure to mark Q ? "yes" if you'd like to receive a summary of the study findings.

Sincerely,

Cheryl L. Maxson   Malcolm W. Klein
Co-Principal Investigator   Co-Principal Investigator

P.S. If the person to whom this letter is directed is no longer with the department, please pass it on to the officer who is most familiar with gangs in your city.

FIVE GANG TYPES

The Chronic Traditional gang: Chronic Traditional gangs have generally been in existence for twenty or more years -- they keep regenerating themselves. They contain fairly clear subgroups, usually separated by age. O.G.s or Veteranos, Seniors, Juniors, Midgets and various other names are applied to these different age-based cliques. Sometimes the cliques are separated by neighborhoods rather than age. More than other gangs Chronic Traditional gangs tend to have a wide age range, sometimes as wide as from nine or ten years of age into the thirties. These are usually very large gangs, numbering one hundred or even several hundred members. Almost, always, they are territorial in the sense that they identify strongly with their turf, 'hood, or barrio, and claim it as theirs alone.

In sum, this is a large, enduring, territorial gang with a wide age range and several internal cliques based on age or area.

Chronic Traditional

usually:
{
long-lasting
large
distinct subgroups
wide age range
strongly territorial
}

The Emergent Traditional gang: The Emergent Traditional gang resembles the Chronic Traditional form, but has not been in existence as long -- probably no more than ten years, and often less. It may be medium size -- say fifty to one hundred members -- or also into the hundreds. It probably has developed subgroups or cliques based on age or area, but sometimes may not. The age range is usually smaller than in Chronic gangs. The Emergent Traditional gang is also very territorial, claiming turf and defending it like the Chronic gang.

In sum, the Emergent Traditional gang is a newer territorial gang that looks on its way to becoming Chronic Traditional in time. Thus at this point it is subgrouping, but may or may not have achieved the size and wide age range of the Chronic gang. The subgrouping, territoriality, and size suggest that it is evolving into the traditional form.

Emergent Traditional

usually:
{
duration of ten years or less
medium to large in size
distinct subgroups
strongly territorial
}

1

OVER -->

The Emergent Integrated gang: The Emergent Integrated gang is small—usually in the size range of up to fifty members—and has not formed subgroups. The age range is probably narrow—ten or fewer years between the younger and older members. The small size. absence of subgroups, and narrow age range may reflect the newness of the group, in existence less than ten years and maybe for only a few years. Some of these Emergent Integrated gangs have become territorial, but many have not.

In sum, Emergent Integrated gangs have a relatively short history, short enough that by size, duration. subgrouping and territoriality, it is unclear whether they will grow and solidify into the more traditional forms. or simply remain as less complex groups.

Emergent Integrated

usually:
{
short history
small
no subgroups
narrow age range
}

The Expanded Integrated gang: The Expanded Integrated gang looks like the Emergent Integrated form, but bigger and with a wider age range—maybe ten or more years between younger and older members. Size can be under a hundred. but is probably larger. Surprisingly, given these numbers, it has not developed subgroups, and may or may not be a territorial gang. It probably has a ten to fifteen year existence.

In sum, the Expanded Integrated gang resembles a kind of shapeless mass of adolescent and young adult members that has not developed the distinguishing characteristics of other gangs.

Expanded Integrated

usually:
{
duration ten to fifteen years
medium to large in size
no subgroups
medium to wide age range
}

The Specialty Integrated gang: Unlike these other gangs that engage in a wide variety of criminal offenses. crime in this type of group is narrowly focussed on a few offenses; the group comes to be characterized by the specialty. The specialty gang tends to be small—usually fifty or fewer members—without any subgroups in most cases (there are exceptions). It probably has a history of less than ten years, but has developed a well-defined territory. Its territory may be either residential or based on the opportunities for the particular form of crime in which it specializes. The age range of most Specialty Integrated gangs is narrow, but in others is broad.

In sum, the Specialty Integrated gang is crime-focussed in a narrow way. Its principal purpose is more criminal than social, and its smaller size and form of territoriality may be a reflection of this focussed crime pattern.

Specialty Integrated

usually:
{
duration under ten years
small
no subgroups
usually narrow age range
narrow criminal focus
territorial
}

Cheryl L. Maxson
Social Science Research Institute
University of Southern California
Los Angeles. California 90089-1111

U.S.C. GANG STRUCTURES SURVEY

Please record your answers to the following questions in the table below:

-> In the row marked total, beneath each type, record the number of your city's gangs that substantially fit the description of that type.

-> In the row marked Hispanic. record the number of gangs of each type whose membership is primarily of Hispanic ethnic origin.

-> In the row marked black. record the number of gangs of each type whose membership is primarily of black ethnic origin.

-> In the row marked white, record the number of gangs of each type whose membership is primarily of white ethnic origin.

-> In the row marked Asian, record the number of gangs of each type whose membership is primarily of Asian ethnic origin.

-> In the row marked mixed, record the number of gangs of each type whose membership is primarily of mixed ethnic origins.

	Chronic Traditional	Emergent Traditional	Emergent Integrated	Expanded Integrated	Specialty Integrated
TOTAL/type*					
Hispanic					
Black					
White					
Asian					
Mixed					

* Note: The gangs reported in the five ethnic categories within any particular type should add up to the total recorded for that type.

OVER ->

3

How many gangs in your city do not fit any of the five gang types? _____

If there are any, please describe them, using the same characterics that are covered in the five descriptions provided on pages 1-2. For example, how long have the gangs that fall into these alternative types been in existence? In general, what is the size of their membership? What is their age range, from the youngest member to the oldest? What is their ethnic composition? Are they territorial? Do they break out into subgroups by age, area, or some other feature?

Alternative Type 1 (please provide the average for gangs of this type):

    Length of existence _____

    Number of members _____

    Age range _____

    Ethnic composition _____

    Territorial orientation?   No   Yes

    Subgroup composition?   Age-graded subgroups   Area-based subgroups

                        Other subgroup structure   No subgroup structure

    Do you have a term or phrase you use to refer to these groups?   No   Yes:_____
                                                                                  (term)

    Number gangs in Alternative Type 1 _____

Alternative Type 2 (please provide the average for gangs of this type):

    Length of existence _____

    Number of members _____

    Age range _____

    Ethnic composition _____

    Territorial orientation?   No   Yes

    Subgroup composition?   Age-graded subgroups   Area-based subgroups

                        Other subgroup structure   No subgroup structure

    Do you have a term or phrase you use to refer to these groups?   No   Yes:_____
                                                                                 (term)

    Number gangs in Alternative Type 2 _____

For the following questions, think about the members of a gang that is typical of each of the types that appear in your city. Please record your answers in the table below. If records are not available, please give us your best estimate.

--> In the row marked **size**, record the number of members that typically belong to the gangs of each type in your city.

--> In the row marked **total monthly arrests**, write the number of arrests for the typical gang within each type, in the average month.

--> In the row marked **spread/concentrated**, indicate whether the arrests generally are spread fairly evenly throughout the membership (write "spread"), or whether the arrests tend to be concentrated among just a few members (write "concentrated").

--> In the row marked **volume**, indicate whether the gangs of this type commit a similar volume of crime (write "similar"), or whether the volume of crime varies alot from one gang to the next, within this type (write "varies").

--> In the row marked **serious**, record the number of the monthly arrests that are for Part I crimes (i.e., murder/non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft and arson). Again, this refers to the number of times that all members of the typical gang within each type are arrested for serious crimes.

--> In the row marked **specialized/versatile**, indicate whether the gangs of this type primarily focus on just one or two types of crime (write "specialized"), or whether they are involved in many different criminal activities (write "versatile"). If crime tends to be specialized, please record the typical crime(s) in the next row marked **crime type**.

	Chronic Traditional	Emergent Traditional	Emergent Integrated	Expanded Integrated	Specialized Integrated
Size					
Total monthly arrests					
Spread/ concentrated					
Volume					
Serious					
Specialized/ versatile					
Crime type					

OVER -->

We would like to know more about the arrest record system maintained by your department. If a department has a fairly complete list of gang members and a comprehensive arrest history system, then ● highly useful crime profile for a gang could be produced. Does your department have the capability to produce the arrest profile of all or most of the members of at least one gang?

                    No   Yes

If yes, please record how many gangs within each type could be profiled in your department:

     Chronic Traditional gangs: _____

     Emergent Traditional gangs: _____ ``

     Emergent Integrated gangs: _____

     Expanded Integrated gangs: _____

     Specialty Integrated gangs: _____

Is the arrest history information automated?   No   Yes

Is there anything else you think we should know about the structure of gangs in your city and about ● patterns of crime associated with them?

Would you like to receive a summary of the findings of this study?   No   Yes

Please provide the following information in case we need to clarify some of your responses:

Your name   _____   Department Address

Title   _____   _____

●ne number   _____   _____

Agency/city   _____

Appendix III: Phase III Instrument

From: Caryn Schneck. Research Assistant at the University of Southern California
Phone Number: (213) 740-4253
Fax Number: (213) 740-8077

As we discussed on the phone we are looking to collect the arrest history of gang members from the gangs in your city for the past year. (The "year" can refer to 1994 or a year from today). Enclosed is a sheet that will help you record this information. We would also like to know the size. structure type, and ethnicity of the gangs that you are able to profile. Please remember that we are only interested in the gangs in **your** city, not gangs from neighboring cities.

Total Size: refers to the total number of members that you know of for each gang. They do not necessarily have to be listed gang members, as long as you know that they are members it's good enough for us.

List size: refers to those members that are on the membership list or roster that you have.

Profile size: refers to the number of members you are able to profile the arrest information on from each gang.

Ethnicity: refers to the majority (75% or better) of the total number of members, not just those on the list or those that you can profile but all of the members that you know of. Please write in Black. Hispanic. White, Asian, Mixed or Other. If Other is recorded please specify the ethnicity.

Structure: refers to the following definitions:

The Chronic Traditional gang: Chronic Traditional gangs have generally been in existence for twenty or more years -- they keep regenerating themselves. They contain fairly clear subgroups, usually separated by age. Old Heads or O.G.s, Seniors. Shortys, Juniors, Midgets and various other names are applied to these different age-based cliques. Sometimes the cliques are separated by neighborhoods rather than age. More than other gangs Chronic Traditional gangs tend to have a wide age range, sometimes as wide as from nine or ten years of age into the thirties. These are usually very large gangs, numbering one hundred or even several hundred members. Almost always, they are territorial in the sense that they identify strongly with their turf. 'hood. or barrio. and claim it as theirs alone.

In sum. this is a large, enduring, territorial gang with a wide age range and several internal cliques based on age or area.

Chronic Traditional
usually: **long-lasting**
              large
              distinct subgroups
              wide age range
              strongly territorial

The Emergent Traditional gang: The Emergent Traditional gang resembles the Chronic Traditional form. but has not been in existence as long -- probably no more than ten years, and often less. It may be medium size -- say fifty to one hundred members -- or also into the hundreds. It probably has developed subgroups or cliques based on age or area. but sometimes may not. The age range is usually smaller than in Chronic gangs. The Emergent Traditional gang is also very territorial. claiming turf and defending it like the Chronic gang.

In sum. the Emergent Traditional gang is a newer territorial gang that looks on its way to becoming Chronic Traditional in time. Thus at this point it is subgrouping, but may or may not have achieved the size and wide age range of the Chronic gang. The subgrouping, territoriality, and size suggest that it is evolving into the traditional form.

Emergent Traditional
usually: **duration of ten years or less**
           medium to large in size
           distinct subgroups
           strongly territorial

The Emergent Integrated gang: The Emergent Integrated gang is small -- usually in the size range of up to fifty members -- and has not formed subgroups. The age range is probably narrow -- ten or fewer years between the younger and older members. The small size, absence of subgroups, and narrow age range may reflect the newness of the group, in existence less than ten years and maybe for only a few years. Some of these Emergent Integrated gangs have become territorial. but many have not.

In sum. Emergent Integrated gangs have a relatively short history, short enough that it is unclear whether they will grow and solidify into the more traditional forms. or simply remain as less complex groups.

Emergent Integrated
usually: **short history**
           small
           no subgroups
           narrow age range

The Expanded Integrated gang: The Expanded Integrated gang looks like the Emergent Integrated form. but bigger and with a wider age range -- maybe ten or more years between younger and older members. Size can be under a hundred. but is probably larger. Surprisingly, given these numbers. it has not developed subgroups, and may or may not be a territorial gang. It probably has a ten to fifteen year existence.

In sum. the Expanded Integrated gang resembles a kind of shapeless mass of adolescent and young adult members that has not developed the distinguishing characteristics of other gangs.

Expanded Integrated
usually: **duration ten to fifteen years**
           medium to large in size
           no subgroups

- **The Specialty Integrated gang**: Unlike these other gangs that engage in a wide variety of criminal offenses. crime in this type of group is narrowly focused on a few offenses: the group comes to be characterized by the specialty. The specialty gang tends to be small -- usually fifty or fewer members -- without any subgroups in most cases (there are exceptions). It probably has a history of less than ten years. but has developed a well-defined territory. Its territory may be either residential or based on the opportunities for the particular form of crime in which it specializes. The age range of most Specialty Integrated gangs is narrow. but in others is broad.

In sum. the Specialty Integrated gang is crime-focused in a narrow way. Its principal purpose is more criminal than social. and its smaller size and form of territoriality may be a reflection of this focused crime pattern.

Specialty Integrated
usually: duration under ten years
small
no subgroups
usually narrow age range
narrow criminal focus
territorial

While many of the offenses are self explanatory. I have enclosed a list of what is included in each of the categories. Please use this as a reference when recording the information.

Remember we are interested in the offenses of each member of the gang, not the offenses that are solely for the benefit of the entire gang. In other words we are interested in the gang member's offenses, not just gang motivated offenses.

Part I:
1. Homicide: murder, non negligent homicide and manslaughter
2. Forcible rape: includes attempted rape
3. Robbery
4. Assault: driveby, shootings, aggravated assault, battery, fighting
5. Burglary: includes attempted burglary
6. Larceny-theft
7. Motor vehicle theft: burglary from car, vehicle crime
8. Arson

Part II:
9. Graffiti: tagging, vandalism, minor property damage
10. Drugs: narcotics & drugs
    a: sales
    b: use/possessions
11. Public Disorder: Disturbing the peace, disorderly conduct, loud & rowdy, loitering, vagrancy, public drunkenness, DWI, gambling, sex crimes, prostitution
12. Weapons violations
13. Petty theft/shoplifting
14. Forgery, counterfeiting, embezzlement, and fraud
15. Hate crimes
16. Status offenses: runaway, under age drinking, under age driving, curfew, truancy, incorrigible behavior
17. All not included above

If you are unable to provide the information for any particular offense please write down the reason why.

If any of the categories are combined please write down which ones are grouped together and why.

At the bottom of the page please put your name and phone number.

If you have any questions at all please feel free to contact me at (213) 740-4253

Thanks for all your help
Caryn Schneck

City Name:

Gang Name: Ethnicity: Structure Type:

Total Size: List Size: Profile Size:

Please write in the number of times that the members of this gang have been arrested for each of the offenses in the past year. (The "year" can refer to 1994 or a year from today). For example if 5 of the members accounted for 10 assault arrests altogether in the past year. then put the number 10 next to assault offenses.

Please specify if any of these offenses are not included in the profile or if they are grouped together with other offenses.

Homicide

Rape

Robbery

Assault

Burglary

Larceny-theft

Motor Vehicle Theft

Arson

Graffiti

Drug Sales

Drug use and possession

Public disorder

Weapons

Petty theft

Forgery. counterfeiting. fraud. embezzlement

Hate crimes

Status offenses

Other

Please put your name here.
Completed by: Phone Number:

Call me if you have any questions (213) 740-4253.