

# Faculty Research Fellows Program

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## Anti-Gang Measures of Local Law Enforcement Agencies within California

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CENTER FOR CALIFORNIA STUDIES  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

# **Anti-Gang Measures of Local Law Enforcement Agencies within California**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Anti-Gang Measures of Local Law Enforcement Agencies within California* examines the practices of 243 police and sheriff's departments to determine if local authorities change their anti-gang strategies, including inflating gang crime statistics, in pursuit of state and federal funding. The report concludes that there are serious problems with the way in which gang crimes are classified and there are variations in anti-gang tactics among local law enforcement agencies. However, neither the reporting of crime data nor the variations in law enforcement strategies is related to state or federal funding.

The perception among local law enforcement officials within California is that state and federal money for gang mitigation either is not available for their use or is too difficult to access. Nearly all funding for local law enforcement comes from the local government (city or county) in which the law enforcement agency is based.

This report also looks at three important variations in anti-gang strategies among law enforcement agencies. The first is philosophy—emphasis on what the agency has tried in the past and is perceived to be effective. Suppression (enforcement, imprisonment) was the number one strategy employed locally for addressing gangs. We were pleased to find that many agencies realized the importance of a continuum of approaches: prevention, intervention, and suppression. However, even when the realization was there, funds were often lacking.

The second variation is the composition of the community itself. This includes size, age of incorporation, and demographics. Differences in community size and age played a role in the formation of gangs and the stronghold a gang might have within its territory, but those factors did not stand alone. Added research is necessary to determine how socio-demographics and the deterioration of local institutions contribute to the formation and cohesiveness of gangs.

The third variation is the classification of gangs, gang membership and gang-related crime. Although the State of California penal code is specific on gang crime, the application of the code—the statistical identification of the crimes—is not consistent from one local law enforcement agency to the next. Moreover, tactics used locally have a cumulative impact that skews the gang statistics for the State of California.

This study was conducted by Dr. Harold K. Becker and Shauna Clark as co-principal investigators. Dr. Becker, a former Los Angeles police officer, became a criminologist after getting his D. Crim. from UC Berkeley. He chaired the Criminology Department of California State University, Long Beach, and has published several books and journal articles on policing. Dr. Becker is often called upon to speak at international criminal justice conferences. Shauna Clark is an independent consultant for cities, universities and school districts within California. She is the former City Administrator of San Bernardino and as a researcher has completed several studies on policing and other local government issues. She holds an MBA from California State University, San Bernardino, where she has taught graduate and undergraduate courses.

## **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based upon the research for *Anti-gang Measures of Local Law Enforcement Agencies within California*, Becker and Clark present the following policy recommendations:

### **Gang Crime Classification**

The State of California must adopt codes for gang crime classification that will be applied consistently by local law enforcement. The sole fact of being a gang member should not be sufficient to label the event as a gang incident. We recommend the adoption of language by the State that clarifies that a gang incident is any illegal act that arises out of gang motivation, gang function or gang-related circumstances.

### **Support for Youth Gang Prevention**

The State should continue to fund programs such the School Community Policing Partnership offered through the Attorney General's Office and Department of Education. With a few exceptions, prevention programs have been proven effective. Every dollar spent to keep youth away from gangs saves countless dollars for enforcement, prosecution and incarceration, not to mention loss of property and increased public safety

### **Evaluation of Gang Peacemaking**

Many authorities indicated a preference for suppression as a first response to gang activity. Although suppression is a legitimate strategy, it is time to look closer at police culture of "war" on gangs and to explore more programs that offer prevention and even peace with gangs. This cultural shift will be difficult for police to accept for many reasons, but it is possible. Certain parts of Los Angeles County are informally attempting to develop gang truces and reduce or eliminate violence. Though community members, courts and probation department personnel are working with this concept – the police are not funded to do so. The State of California should take the lead in building an understanding for change and develop a working partnership for peace in lieu of gang warfare.

### **State Level Leadership**

All affected agencies from law enforcement through the prison system, along with community based organizations and gang members, must be brought into context to establish significant results to answer the core problems of who, what, when, where, how and most important "why" of gangs. This additional data and the solution strategies that come from it should be reinforced through ongoing law enforcement and community partnerships.

### **Central Coordination of State Activities and Policies on Gangs**

State agencies are divided among those that enforce the law and those that provide social services. For the purpose of policy planning and testing integrated strategies that address a continuum of approaches: prevention, intervention and suppression, a bridge between enforcement and social service must be constructed. The U.S. National Institute of Justice serves as the focal point for national strategy on crime prevention and criminal justice. One of its primary goals is to emphasize outcome and cost-benefit evaluations of criminal justice programs and technologies. An equivalent agency should be established within the State of California.

## **BACKGROUND**

At the request of the State Senate Office of Research, the Center for California Studies Faculty Research Fellows Program engaged researchers Dr. Harold K. Becker and Shauna Clark to conduct a study on whether state and federal funding acts as an inducement for local law enforcement agencies to change their anti-gang strategies.

Specifically Becker and Clark were asked to produce a report on the relationship of local law enforcement measures related to anti-gang activities by:

- Examining the institutional and other incentives in the “war on gangs”. For example, how state and federal funding motivates law enforcement to broaden their definition of what constitutes a gang in pursuit of funding
- Comparing local law enforcement agencies and how they have dealt with the gang problem

## **THE WAR ON GANGS**

A war on crime began in 1931 with the release of the “Wickersham Report” by the Wickersham Commission, sponsored by President Hoover and later revisited in 1965 with the release of “The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society” by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, sponsored by President Johnson. In the 1990s the war on drugs was developed and is nationally directed from the Executive Office of the President in the form of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, headed by an appointed drug czar.

Neither of the above created a definitive "war on gangs." However, academic studies of strain and anomie theory by Robert K. Merton (1938) and later a scholarly book, *Delinquency and Opportunity: A Theory of Delinquent Gangs* (1960), by Richard A. Cloward and Lloyd E. Ohlin, had an indirect effect on public policy with regard to gangs. Their work led to the passage of the federal Juvenile Delinquency Prevention and Control Act of 1961. The Juvenile Delinquency Prevention and Control Act was renewed by

subsequent administrations and extended in 1974 by the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP), which also created the United States Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

OJJDP was charged with conducting research and developing national policy to address juvenile justice and gang prevention. OJJDP also has the responsibility of monitoring compliance with JJDP by the fifty states. In order to engage each state in a national effort, OJJDP developed incentives in the form of discretionary and block grants. Over time, formula grants (based on crime statistics) were added to the mix. Within California, the Office of Criminal Justice Planning (OCJP) has been the primary agency for the distribution of OJJDP funds and for compliance with JJDP.

California's Office of Criminal Justice Planning (OCJP) was created in 1968 as the lead agency to address crime and criminal justice planning statewide. In 2002 OCJP spent more than \$200 million funding Criminal Justice and Victim Witness Programs throughout the state. Until the elimination of OCJP in 2004 the agency acted as the primary conduit for federal funding.

In their analysis of the 2003-04 Budget, the California Legislative Analyst's Office found that OCJP's applicant review and evaluation processes were lacking, there were overlaps with other state programs, and significant savings would occur if OCJP were disbanded and its functions divided among other agencies. Shortly after this project commenced, OCJP was disbanded. The following appears on their web site:

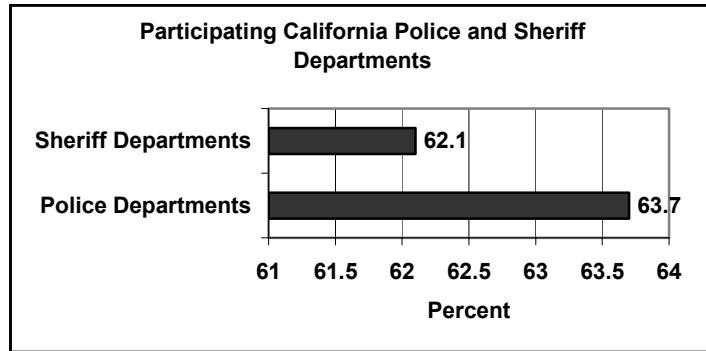
Per the State Budget Act of 2003-04, OCJP as an entity will no longer exist effective January 1, 2004 and its programs will be transferred to other agencies to be determined by the Department of Finance. Once such decisions have been made and the details of the transfers are known, OCJP will notify its grantees and the public.

## **OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY**

Becker and Clark began the study on variations in gang mitigation strategies among California's law enforcement jurisdictions and the impact of state and/or federal funding on law enforcement anti-gang tactics by reviewing the current literature on gangs throughout the United States with a particular emphasis on California. Next we held discussions with law enforcement officials, including retired Chief of Police Scott Miller, and with Tom Hayden, former state legislator and current gang researcher. Becker and Clark then developed a survey to gain the perceptions of local law enforcement on their gang mitigation strategies. The 25-question survey included a request for comments, which allowed respondents to elaborate on issues of their choice. The mailing list was developed using the web site for P.O.S.T. (Police Officer's Standards and Training), which identifies 396 law enforcement agencies within California. Though six small non-traditional units (e.g. park rangers) were removed from the mailing list, some of the larger non-traditional units, such as BART police, were included. Surveys were mailed first class. Survey data was entered into an SPSS database for aggregation and analysis.

A total of 243 completed surveys were received, representing a 61.4 percent response rate. Figure 1 on the following page shows a 62.1 percent return rate from sheriffs and a 63.7 percent response from police departments.

*Figure 1*



Responding agencies served cities and counties of all sizes within California. For example, 26 surveys (11 percent) were received from agencies that protect jurisdictions exceeding 250,000 in population. This population grouping can represent a city or an entire county. The largest city we received a response from was Los Angeles with a population of 3.7 million but we also received responses from sheriffs representing counties with less than 1 million in population. Figure 2 shows how the responses were distributed by population group.

*Figure 2*

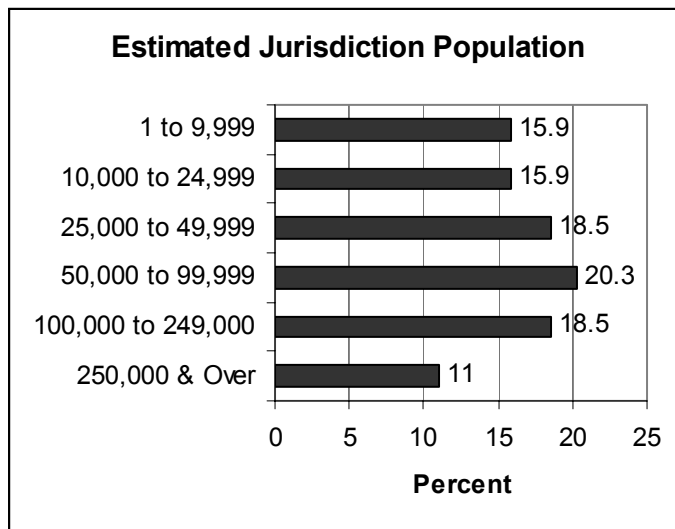
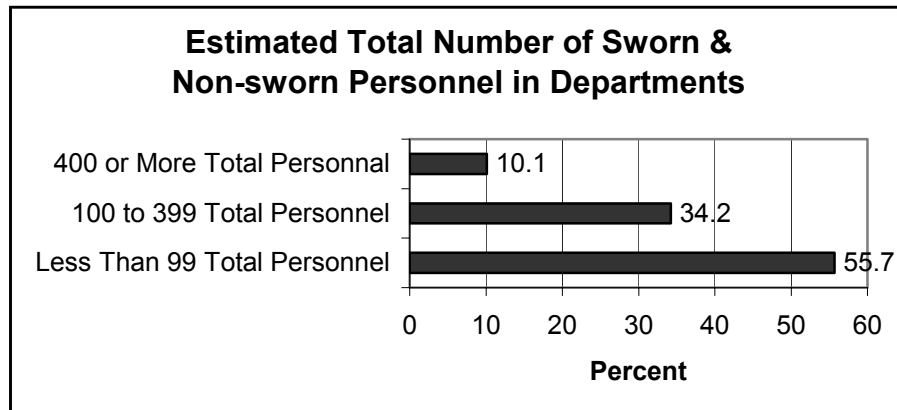


Figure 3 presents information on the size of the responding departments based on personnel numbers. The majority of responding agencies (55.7 percent) had less than 99 sworn and non-sworn personnel. Ten percent had more than 400 total personnel.

*Figure 3*



### **SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW**

Becker and Clark reviewed literature on gangs, crime prevention, the state budget, and other relevant materials through various sources. The literature review covered more than fifty books, documents and reports. A summary of reviewed literature most relevant to gangs in California (36 references) has been included as Appendix A. The following summary presents a very brief overview of literature as a framework for the salient issues in this document:

- There are no consistent guidelines for defining gangs and/or gang members. State and local jurisdictions tend to develop their own definitions and apply their own identification guidelines.
- Gang membership is never static. New gangs form, gangs divide, separate gangs consolidate, and older gangs dissolve.
- The majority of street gang members are male youth between the ages of 14 and 24. Cities with emerging gang problems report that up to 90% of gang members are juveniles. (OJJDP – Anti-Gang and Youth Violence Strategy).
- Juvenile gang members (between the ages of 13 and 19) commit violent crimes at a rate several times higher than non-gang juveniles.

- Gang homicides and violent crime patterns are characterized by periodic spurts, followed by declines and then new spikes, peaking to higher levels.
- According to Block and Block 1993, each homicide peak corresponds to a series of escalating confrontations, usually over gang member recruitment, impulsive confrontations, the defense of ones' identity as a gang member, turf protection, turf expansion, and drug wars.
- In the most recent nationwide survey (2001-OJJDP) all large U.S. cities (250,000+ total population) reported the presence of gangs.
- In general, the larger the community the earlier the onset of gangs.
- Between the years 1994 and 2001 there was a steep decline in the U.S. crime rate and a proportionately greater decline in juvenile crime.
- Despite a steep decline in arrests and incarcerations in California in the four years between 1996 and 2000 expenditures for law enforcement, prosecution, public defense, courts and corrections continued to rise by an average of 25 percent per agency with the exception of prosecution, which rose 45.4 percent. (Lockyer 2001)
- Despite the steep decline in juvenile and adult crime rates across the nation and world wide, the number of "gang cities" across the U.S. continues to grow.

#### **SOURCES OF GOVERNMENT FUNDS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT**

For the purpose of this study, Becker and Clark are using the term "local law enforcement" to define the police and sheriffs' departments and specialized law enforcement units (such as BART police) within the State of California. These agencies are found on the Police Officers' Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.) web site: ([www.post.ca.gov](http://www.post.ca.gov)).

Nearly all funding for police departments comes from local taxes, e.g., property taxes, sales taxes, and fees generated by the jurisdiction (usually a city) that the department serves. Often, police services account for as much as 45 percent of a city's annual expenditures. Funding for sheriffs' departments comes from the tax base of the 58 counties in California and from contracts between counties and cities for providing sheriff services (in lieu of operating a police department). According to the State of California Controller's Report of Local Governments, in fiscal year 2001 cities in California spent more than \$6 billion for

police services. The 58 counties in California spent more than \$2.7 billion to operate county sheriffs' departments.

Local law enforcement agencies infrequently receive supplemental funding from state or federal sources. On rare occasions, California cities and counties receive federal funding directly from the U.S. government. The most salient example in recent years is COPS, a federal fund to place additional community policing officers on the street. It was the presence of crime and local budgetary constraints, not necessarily the threat of gangs that qualified cities and counties for COPS dollars. COPS funds flowed from Washington D.C. directly to the local law enforcement authority. Local jurisdictions were required to supply a budget match and to ensure that the officer was assigned to the community-policing unit.

Commonly, federal funds are directed to the fifty states for redistribution to local governments. Until 2004 the Office of Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OCJP) had primary policy authority over the allotment of federal crime dollars throughout California. Although various federal monies are slotted for "local law enforcement" each state decides the qualifiers. In California funds designated for local law enforcement have been spent on countless programs including jails, defense of indigents, drug treatment within the prison system, and victims' services. According to their web site, OCJP's annual budget which exceeded \$220 million funded nearly 100 programs ranging alphabetically from the American Indian Child Abuse Treatment Program to the Youth Emergency Telephone Referral Program.

The state also sets aside general funds for crime prevention and suppression, and for the improvement of the jails and juvenile detention facilities operated by the counties. For example, the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA), which was designed to curb

juvenile crime through a continuum of responses: prevention, intervention, supervision, treatment and incarceration, allocates approximately \$118 million in funds per year to counties on a per-capita basis. However, in nearly every case the funds were not sent to local law enforcement units (police, sheriff). Examples of programs funded included adding bed space to a crisis shelter, a drug court program, a life-learning academy, and placing probation officers on high school campuses.

Though it can be argued that the programs offered through OCJP and JJCPA contributed to a reduction in juvenile crime, designating funds for the broad purpose of law enforcement can create the impression that local law enforcement units (police, sheriffs, etc) are being funded by the State of California; when in fact, law enforcement units are funded almost exclusively by the local governments they serve.

### **DO LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES CHANGE STRATEGIES IN PURSUIT OF GOVERNMENT FUNDING?**

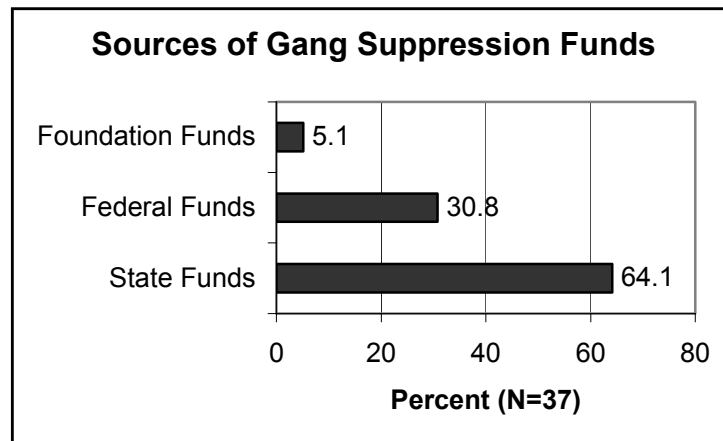
Becker and Clark were asked to examine the institutional and other incentives in the war on gangs and the consequences of those incentives. The request for proposals stated: “some analysts argue that federal and state funding programs actually provide incentives for local law enforcement agencies to exaggerate gang activity through broad definitions of gang membership and gang related activities”.

In order to establish that local law enforcement agencies might exaggerate gang activity or change responses to gain funding, it must be ascertained that local law enforcement agencies perceive an existence of state and federal funding and that they believe the funds are accessible for their use in an amount that would have an appreciable impact on their budget. We did not find this to be the case.

Those within the survey group were asked whether they had received state, federal or other (foundations, private donors) funding in the last two years for either gang suppression or gang prevention. The overwhelming majority of sheriffs and police chiefs responding to the survey believed that state and federal funding for gang suppression is very limited or not accessible. Almost 84 percent stated that they did not receive any funding from outside sources during the past two years.

Thirty-seven departments did receive funding for gang suppression, with the distribution by size as follows: 250,000+: ten departments; 100,000 to 249,999: seven departments; 50,000 to 99,999: six departments; 25,000 to 49,999: seven departments; and less than 25,000: seven departments. Figure 4 below shows the sources of gang suppression funds:

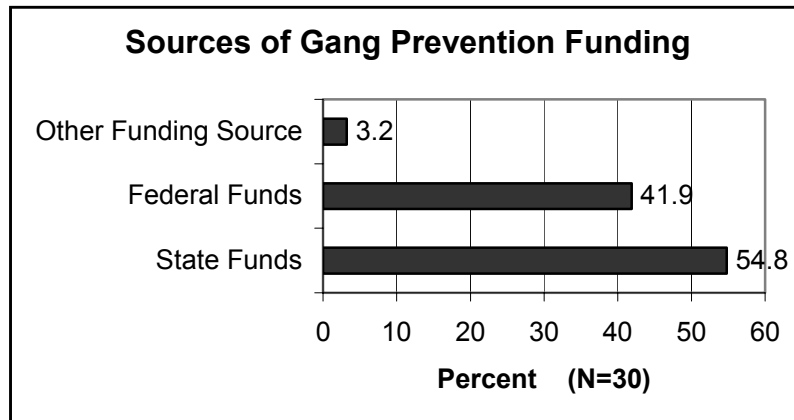
*Figure 4*



Even fewer departments (N=30) had received funding for gang prevention during the last two years. The majority, a little over 86 percent (N=199) of the reporting departments, indicated that they did not receive any funding for gang prevention programs.

Figure 5 below reveals the funding sources for the 30 departments reporting they had received gang prevention funding:

*Figure 5*



It's possible that funding was offered but not pursued by law enforcement agencies. Information from the survey comments section indicates that some respondents either did not believe supplemental funding was available and/or accessible for their use. Here are some quotes:

- Local law enforcement agencies are being battered with budget cuts and forced to eliminate programs while the gang problem is getting worse. The amount of money the state makes available to combat gangs through grants is a joke!

*Police Chief of a mid-sized city.*

- Grants are too difficult to obtain.

*Police Chief from a city of 75,000 residents.*

- The District Attorney and Probation Department receive 100 percent of our Byrne Grant and have for many years. It has become part of their budgets.

*Sheriff of a mid-sized county.*

A small agency believes the money goes to larger agencies:

- We are unable to compete for the gang grants due to the larger county and city agencies always receiving the grants and assistance.

*Sheriff of a small county.*

A large agency believes OCJP money goes to smaller, rural agencies:

- Our sense is that OCJP is funding task forces to combat gang crime in smaller jurisdictions.

*Deputy Chief of a very large city police department.*

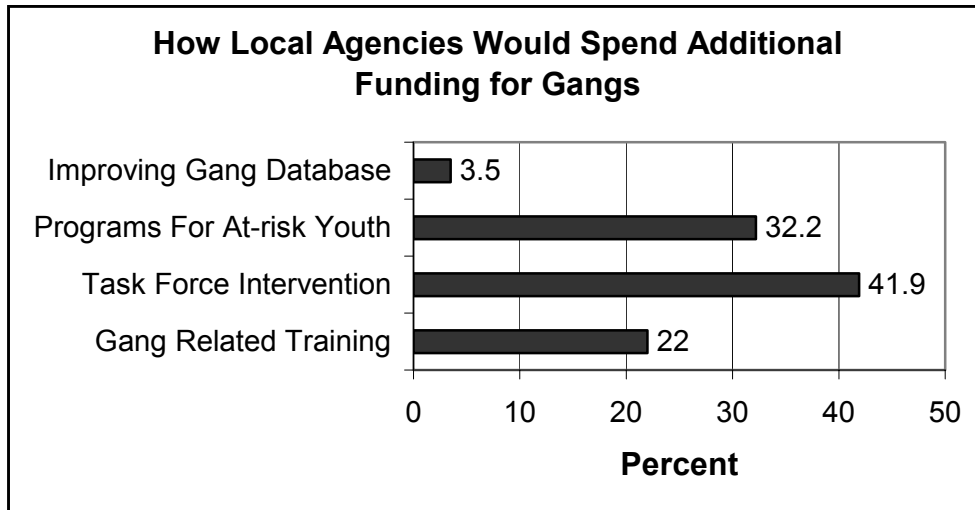
Table 1 below recaps the number of state and federal grants received for gang suppression and gang mitigation. Out of 243 survey respondents, only 16 (6.6 percent) received state funds for gang *prevention* and 23 (9.5 percent) received state funding for gang *suppression*. The table also shows that grants were distributed fairly evenly by size of jurisdiction. For example, three communities above 249,999 and three communities less than 25,000 in population each received state grants for gang prevention within the last two years.

**Table 1**

NUMBER OF COMMUNITIES, BY SIZE OF JURISDICTION, RECEIVING FEDERAL AND/OR STATE FUNDING FOR GANG <i>PREVENTION</i> AND/OR <i>SUPPRESSION</i> PREVIOUS TWO YEARS							
		250,000+	100,000- 249,999	50,000- 99,999	25,000- 49,999	10,000- 24,999	<10,000
<b>Source</b>		Number of Communities Receiving <i>Prevention</i> Funding					
State	16	3	4	5	1	2	1
Federal	13	3	3	2	3	1	1
Other	1				1		
		Number of Communities Receiving <i>Suppression</i> Funding					
State	23	7	5	3	3	2	3
Federal	12	2	2	3	3	2	0
Other	2	1			1		

Local agencies were asked how they would spend additional grant funding for gang mitigation if they were to receive it. Their responses, as outlined in Figure 6, further dispute the premise that law enforcement agencies change tactics in order to achieve state and federal funding. Nearly one-third of (32 percent) recommended spending the money in areas beyond the purview of their budgets. They said the funds should be used on programs for at-risk youth. Typically, funds for addressing the problems of at-risk youth go to schools and/or social service agencies. The distribution was as follows:

*Figure 6*



### **HOW DO DIFFERENT JURISDICTIONS RESPOND TO GANG PROBLEMS?**

The literature review and the survey results indicated several reasons for variations in gang mitigation strategy among jurisdictions. The following were selected for discussion:

1. Differing philosophies as to what works and what doesn't work.
2. Community characteristics such as size, age, and economics affect gang formation and structure.
3. Variations in local guidelines that define gang, gang membership and gang-related crime.

#### **Differing Philosophies and Experiences – What Works and What Doesn't**

The survey included several questions about the current level of gang activity within each jurisdiction, the rise and fall of gang crime over the last five years, and the reason for changes in gang activity. The questions were designed to reveal philosophies on what works and what doesn't.

Nearly all respondents credited suppression (enforcement), as an important component in their gang strategy and to some, it was the only tactic. A few agencies

preferred a continuum of approaches: prevention, suppression, and intervention (rehabilitation). Though most researchers conclude that a continuum of approaches is best, according to Starbuck et al, the best strategy depends on the community: “What succeeds in one city may have little effect in another. Thus, it is imperative that law enforcement agencies continually update staff training curriculums and monitor the specific gang culture in their own jurisdictions ...no single response will work universally.” (Starbuck, Howell, Lindquist, 2001).

Some survey respondents elaborated on their gang mitigation strategies:

- Gangs were becoming a problem in our city approximately four years ago until the chief authorized overtime for special selective enforcement. Since then, the gangs have been fairly quiet.

*Sergeant from a small city.*

- We have 16 officers full-time (out of a total of 161) combating gang violence. Suppression seems to work the best.

*Deputy Chief of mid-sized city.*

- We work closely with the school districts, County Office of Education and our probation department on prevention, intervention.

*County Sheriff.*

- We recommend stringent enforcement policy and wider use of the STEP (Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act) by other law enforcement agencies and prosecuting attorneys, resulting in longer sentencing for gang members.

*Response from a large police department*

- I have been a police officer for 40 years including 28 years as Chief of Police in both large and small cities. A combination of approaches is the key: proactive and re-active from S.R.O. (School Resource Officers) to parole/police teams, to the GREAT program.

*Chief of mid-sized city.*

- We currently use prevention/intervention/suppression model developed through an OJJDP grant nine years ago. The model is successful, but we do need more money to expand it.

*Police Department for city exceeding 200,000 in population.*

- We take a zero tolerance stand on gangs and gang-related activities. Gang members are aware of this and seldom cause problems within our city. We also have a strong and successful youth-police-community relationship in our city.

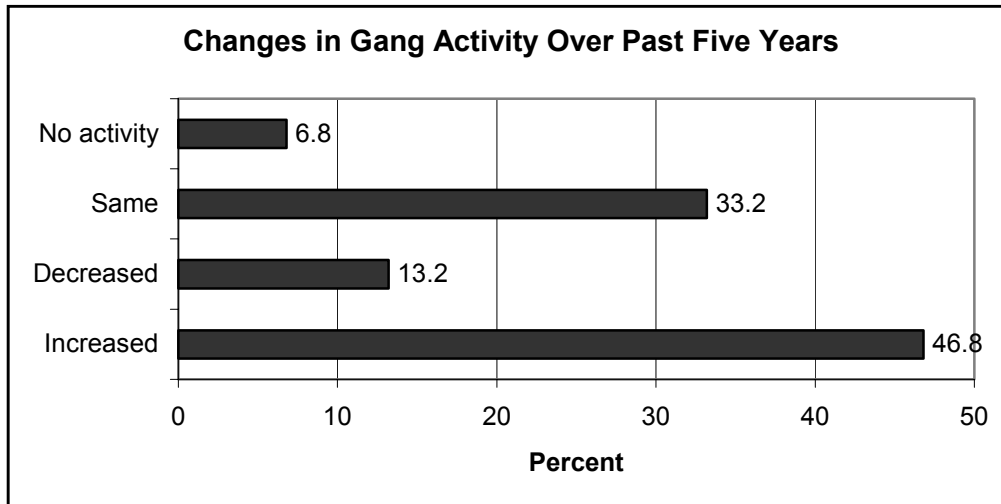
*Chief of city with over 10,000 residents*

- We prefer to use intervention, prevention and apprehension but costs for intervention and prevention are high. We try to be progressive but we need financial help.

*County Sheriff in mid-sized county.*

Agencies were asked whether gang activity had increased or decreased over the past five years. Figure 7 below shows the results. Sixteen agencies in the survey (6.8 percent) indicated no gang activity. Thirteen percent said that gang activity had decreased while 80 percent said that gang activity had either remained the same or increased over the last five years.

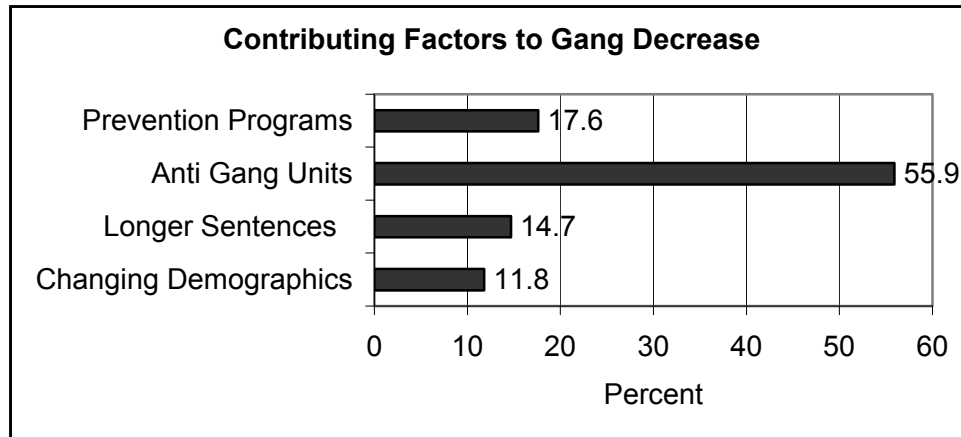
**Figure 7**



Those who said that gang activity in their community had decreased were then asked to choose among four reasons for the decline. (See Figure 8). The majority, 55.9 percent, credited suppression (including the use of anti-gang law enforcement units) as the principal explanation for a reduction in gang activity within their community. Others cited factors beyond suppression as follows: prevention programs have diverted youth from gangs: 17.6

percent; laws such as STEP and three strikes are keeping gang members behind bars: 14.2 percent; and community demographics have changed: 11.8 percent.

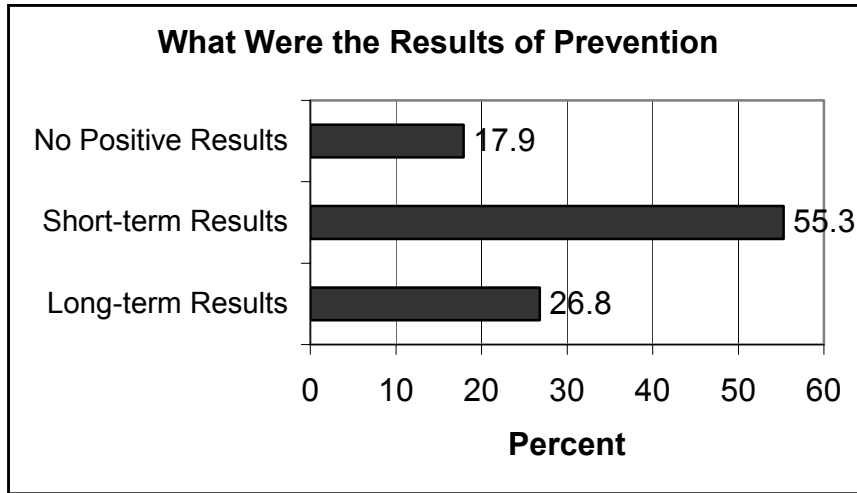
*Figure 8*



The responses in Figure 8 show strong support for suppression, which may be a result of mission. Local governments expect law enforcement to improve community safety, which generally translates into reducing crime statistics. Rarely does a city or county establish goals for crime prevention. In fact, community policing is still not widely practiced in California. With little funding for anything beyond enforcement, the view of police and sheriffs as to what works often lines up with primary mission. To that end, law enforcement agencies have developed increasingly sophisticated enforcement techniques including surveillance, computer mapping and intelligence gathering.

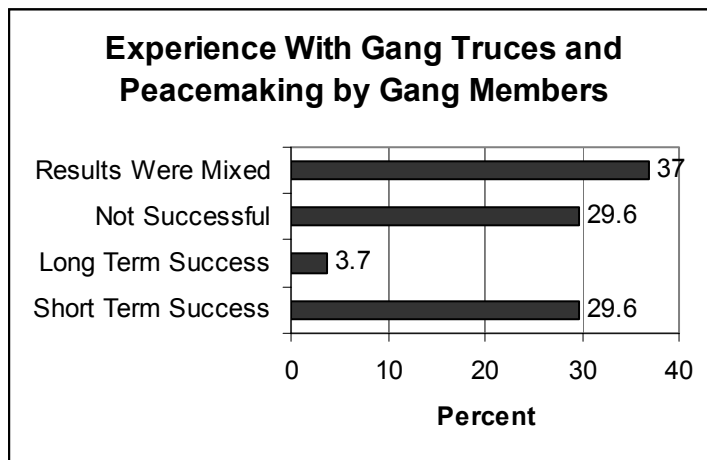
The survey included specific questions about prevention programs and experience with gang truces. Almost one-half (46.1 percent) of the departments did not participate in or initiate any gang prevention program. The responses from the 123 departments that practice some form of prevention are shown in Figure 9 on the following page. (Note: for the next two questions—Figures 9 and 10--short-term was defined as less than six months and long-term was more than six months)

*Figure 9*



Gang members in some of the larger jurisdictions, Los Angeles for example, have initiated gang truces either independently or with the assistance of a third party. Survey results showed that over 87 percent (187 departments responding) had no experience with peacemaking initiated by gangs. The remaining 13 percent of agencies (those who had experienced some sort of gang peacemaking) were asked about their experiences in gang peacemaking and truces. Figure 10 below indicates only limited success with only 3.7 percent having long term success with gang peacemaking and truces.

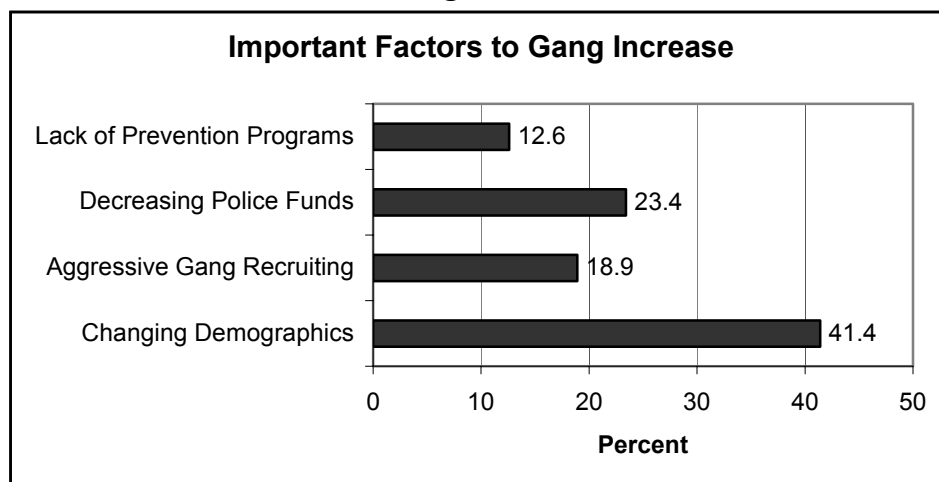
*Figure 10*



The fact is that between the period of 1994 and 2001 crime has declined dramatically nationwide and the reduction in juvenile crime has been, as measured by the arrest of those 24 and younger, steeper than the decline in violent crime among older age groups. (Butts and Travis 2001). California’s juvenile crime trends have mirrored trends across the nation. Attorney General Bill Lockyer reported: “Since 1966, the rate of juvenile felony arrests decreased 33.5 percent and the rate of juvenile misdemeanor arrests decreased 19.8%”. (Lockyer 2001).

Despite the actual declines in adult and juvenile crime between the period of 1996 and 2001, the majority of survey respondents reported that gang activity within their jurisdiction had either increased over the last five years or stayed the same. Nearly one-half of survey respondents (48.6 percent – see Figure 7) indicated that gang activity in their communities had increased over the last five year. Those who experienced an increase in gang activity were asked to cite causes. Their responses appear in Figure 11 below:

*Figure 11*



As shown in Figure 11, less than one-fourth of respondents cited diminished funding as a factor in increased gang activity over the last five years. Since previous responses established that over 80 percent of agencies didn’t see state or federal funding as available, it

is likely when these agencies refer to diminished funding, they are referring to the budget cuts made by their local city or county.

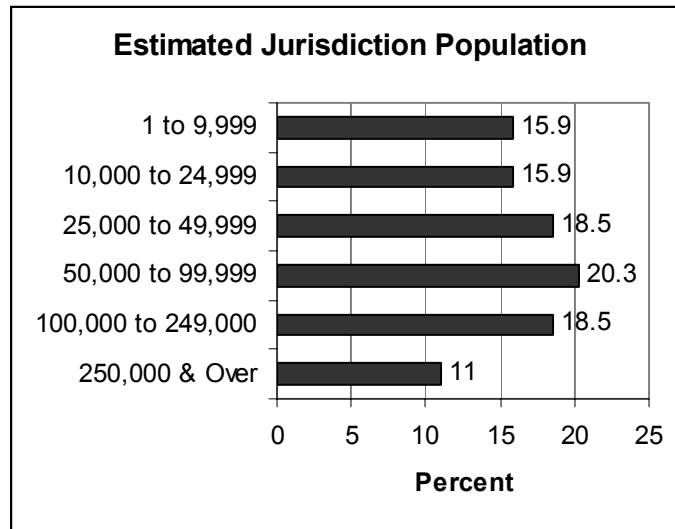
Figure 11 also shows that law enforcement agencies in this study believe that changing demographics are more likely to contribute to increased gang crime than diminished funding. The increasing number of juveniles between the ages of 14 and 24 has long been considered a driving factor in gang membership.

### **Community Characteristics Affect Gang Structure**

The next issue to be discussed with regard to the variations in how communities respond to gangs is related to the characteristics of the community itself and how those internal components affect the formation and cohesion of gangs. The number of youth within a community (especially young males) and the strength of social institutions and local economy vary from community to community. These are important factors in gang formation. Moreover, most researchers believe that community size and age are factors in themselves that affect gang formation. It has been shown that gang structure, characteristics and behavior of newer gangs is different from those of older gangs.

The age of the city, from time of incorporation or development, plays a role in the onset of gangs. Generally, older cities have a more entrenched gang problem with an escalated amount of violent crime caused by cycles of turf protection and retaliation. Newer cities, which also tend to be smaller, more suburban or rural, have a more recent onset of gangs. The survey did not query agencies about community age, but it did include data about community size. Twenty percent of respondents served mid-sized jurisdictions—within the 50,000 to 100,000 population range. Figure 12 on the following page shows distribution of survey respondents by population range.

*Figure 12*



According to Howell, Egley and Gleason (*Modern Day Youth Gangs*, June 2002) recently formed gangs may not fit the stereotype of traditional gangs in cities with chronic gang problems. Jurisdictions with relatively recent onset of gang activity need to assess their gang problem carefully. They found that:

...Gang members in the earliest onset localities not only were involved in property crimes but also were very likely to be involved in violent crimes (homicide, aggravated assault, robbery and use of firearms). In contrast gang members in the latest onset localities were most likely to be involved in the property crimes of burglary, breaking and entering and larceny/theft, although they were far less likely to be involved in motor vehicle theft. Also, gang member involvement in drug trafficking was lower in the later onset jurisdictions than in the earlier onset jurisdictions. (Howell, et al, June 2002)

Howell, Egley and Gleason recommended any community that discovers it has a gang problem should develop a continuum of prevention, intervention and (if needed) suppression strategies. “By taking action as soon as a gang problem is discovered, it may be possible to interrupt the gang’s developmental progression from involvement in general delinquency and property crimes to involvement in serious, violent activities.” (Howell, Egley, Gleason 2002)

Tackling the gang problem in cities where gangs are more entrenched may also be compounded by cycles of organized gang activities, including the return of offenders from

prison and succeeding generations of gang members. There is a strong belief among local law enforcement that street gangs and prison gangs are interdependent. “In most states, prison gangs are outgrowths of street gangs, but evidence indicates that gangs formed in prison may emigrate to the streets. Incarceration...has led to increased gang cohesion and membership recruitment...and it may worsen the problem in the streets.” (Spergel 1994).

Survey results show that law enforcement supports the premise that street and prison gangs are interdependent. As Figure 13 illustrates, nearly three-fourths said that that incarceration contributes to gang effectiveness and cohesion.

*Figure 13*

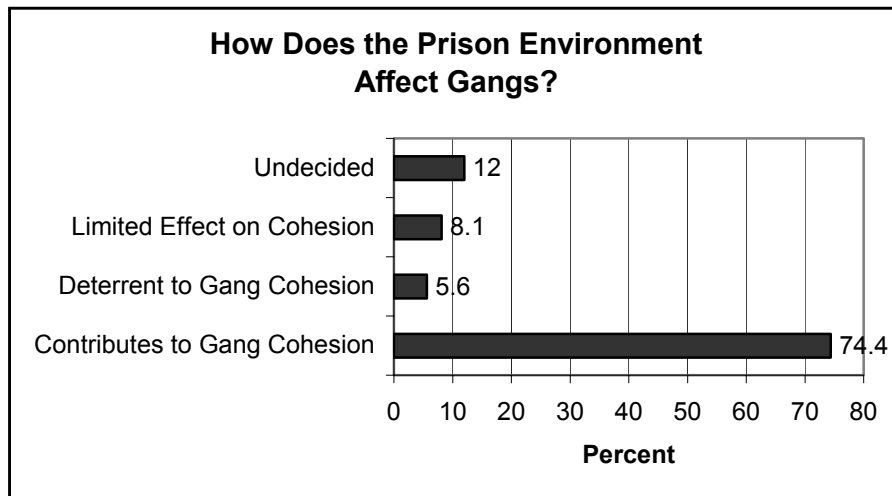


Figure 14 on the following page shows that 88.5 percent of agencies surveyed said gang leaders retain power and control from prison.

*Figure 14*

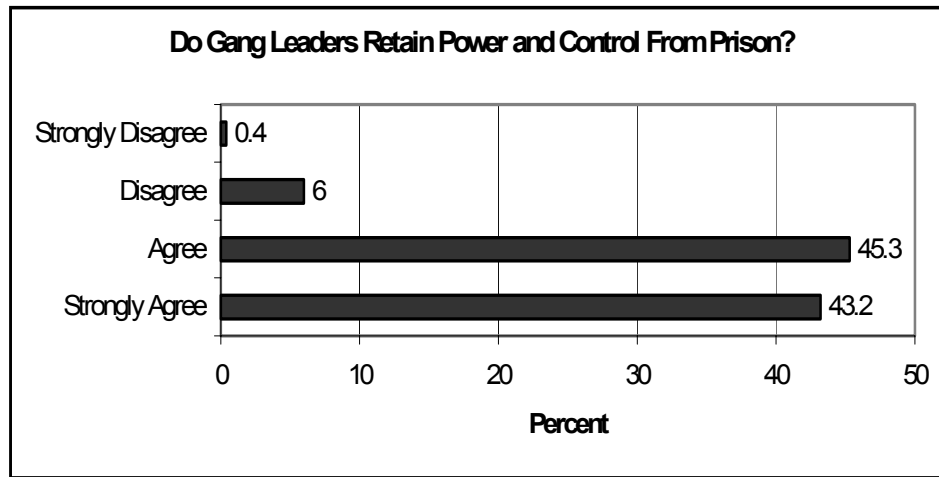


Table 2 (below) allows us to find out whether increased gang activity is concentrated in the larger cities as predicted by the current literature on gangs or whether the increases were spread out among cities of all jurisdictions. A total of 228 departments profiled their level of gang activity over the last five years. Of those, only 16 agencies, all with populations less than 50,000, indicated no gang activity. All cities over 50,000 (a total of 212 cities) reported a gang presence, but were divided on whether gang activity had increased (108), decreased (30), or remained the same (74) over the previous five years.

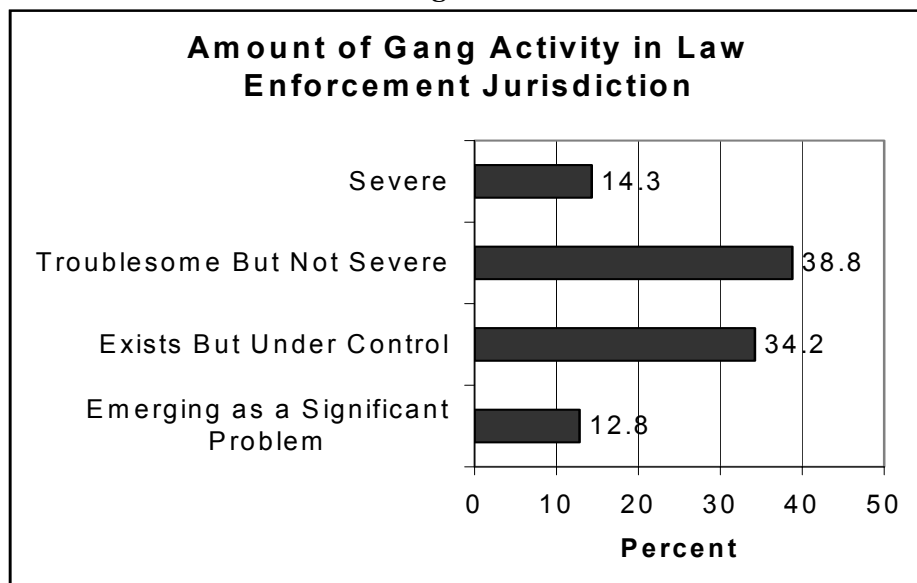
*Table 2*

GANG ACTIVITY OVER LAST FIVE YEARS BY POPULATION RANGE						
	250,000+	100,000 to 249,999	50,000 to 99,999	25,000 to 49,999	10,000 to 24,999	<10,000
Gangs Increased (N=108)	18.5% 20	19.4% 21	22.2% 24	13.9% 15	13.0% 14	13.0% 14
Gangs Decreased (N=30)	3.3% 1	20.0% 6	33.3% 10	13.3% 4	10.0% 3	20.0% 6
No change (N=74)	6.8% 5	18.9% 14	16.2% 12	25.7% 19	18.9% 14	13.5% 10
No gangs (N=16)				31.3% 5	31.3% 5	37.4% 6
Total w/in each population group	26	31	46	23	36	36

The largest grouping of cities (N=46) in Table 2 was in the mid-sized range of 50,000 to 99,000. All 46 respondents from that range acknowledged having a gang presence but they were divided on the rise and fall of gang activity over the last five years. Twenty-two agencies said that gang activity had decreased or stayed the same over the last five years and nearly an equal number, 24, said that gang activity had increased over the past five years.

Survey results revealed variances in how departments viewed the severity of current gang activities. According to results listed in Figure 15, only 14 percent of respondents (of those who acknowledged gang problems within their jurisdiction) indicated that the gang problem is severe at this time.

*Figure 15*



When the results of Figure 15 are distributed by size or jurisdiction (see Table 3 on the following page) we see that the larger the jurisdiction, the more likely the gang problem is viewed as severe or emerging as a significant problem. For example, 29 agencies said that the gang problem is severe. The majority of those cities or counties (12 of 29) have population of 250,000 or larger.

**Table 3**

<b>SEVERITY OF CURRENT GANG ACTIVITY BY POPULATION RANGE</b>							
	250,000 +	100,000- 249,999	50,000- 99,999	25,000- 49,999	10,000- 24,999	<10,000	
Severe (N=29)	12 41.4%	7 24.1%	4 13.8%	3 10.3%	1 3.4%	2 6.9%	
Potentially significant problem is emerging (N=26)	1 3.8%	3 11.5%	5 19.2%	5 19.2%	5 26.9%	7 26.9%	
Troublesome but not Severe (N=70)	13 18.6%	20 28.5%	18 25.7%	9 12.9%	7 10.0%	3 4.3%	
Exists but under Control (N=65)		12 18.5%	16 24.6%	16 24.6%	10 15.4%	11 16.9%	
Virtually non existent (N=40)			3 7.5%	10 25.0%	14 36.0%	13 32.5%	
(N=230) Totals	26 11.3%	42 18.3%	46 20.0%	43 18.7%	37 16.1%	36 15.7%	

Though size and age of community can influence the formation of gangs and level of activity, those factors alone are not sufficient to predict future gang activity. It now becomes important to look inside communities and at the dissimilarity in socio-demographic contexts. “Rapid urban population change, community disintegration, increasing poverty and social isolation contribute to institutional failures and the subsequent development of youth gangs.” (Spergel 1993). Additional research is warranted in order to determine whether socio-demographic differences are the reason that gang activity has decreased or stayed the same in one-half of communities in the 50,000 to 99,999 range, while gang activities are on the rise in the other half of communities within the same population range

### **Identifying Gangs, Gang Members and Gang Related Crime**

The third factor in variations among communities explored in this study is how the lack of consistency in identifying gangs, gang membership and gang-related crime can also contribute to discrepancies in law enforcement policy and behavior. There is no clear agreement among law authorities on how to define a gang or how to classify gang affiliation.

Moreover, there is no statewide policy on how to classify a crime as gang-related. According to Spergel crime committed in California is more likely to be identified “gang-related” than in many jurisdictions across the United States. In 1994 ten percent of all homicides in Chicago were classified as gang homicides, while in Los Angeles the gang homicide rate was 25 and 30 percent of all of the city’s homicides. (Spergel 1994). Despite the fact that total homicides, especially juvenile homicides, plunged between 1994 and 2000, the County of Los Angeles classed 41.8 percent of all year 2000 homicides as gang-related. (Attorney General Report, 2002).

The California Penal Code presents the following definition of “criminal street gang”. Section 186.22 (f) reads: "criminal street gang" means any ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, having as one of its primary activities the commission of one or more of the criminal acts enumerated in paragraphs (1) to (25), inclusive, of subdivision (e), having a common name or common identifying sign or symbol, and whose members individually or collectively engage in or have engaged in a pattern of criminal gang activity.

The U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) which is charged with providing national leadership in gang research and solution strategies says that the term “youth gang” is commonly used interchangeably with “street gang.” To define both, OJJDP refers to W. B. Miller’s definition of a gang which is: “a self-formed association of peers, united by mutual interests, with identifiable leadership and internal organization, who act collectively or as individuals to achieve specific purposes including the conduct of illegal activity and control of a particular territory, facility, or enterprise.” (Miller 1992).

Because the California penal code requires that in order to be classed as a gang the group must have the commission of crime as one of its primary activities, the California code appears to be narrower, more restrictive in its application than OJJDP's definition, which is more commonly used. However, it's the application of the California code within the local jurisdiction that determines how gangs and gang members are identified and how gang-related crime is classified and this is where the ambiguity comes in.

In addition to applying the penal code definition of gangs, each local jurisdiction develops its own standards to identify individuals as gang members. Some agencies use a checklist of behaviors including but not limited to: (a) associating with known gang members, (b) wearing gang clothing, (c) using gang symbols (including hand signals) and/or (d) writing about gangs (on walls, in books, etc). No doubt, there is a great degree of variance from agency to agency and from officer to officer in the identification and classification of gang members. For example, many jurisdictions have adopted gang "curfews" that limit the number of gang members that can congregate in certain public areas such as shopping malls. The act of congregating is not a gang crime in itself but will be classified as one if a gang member comes within the restricted area while there are other gang members in the area.

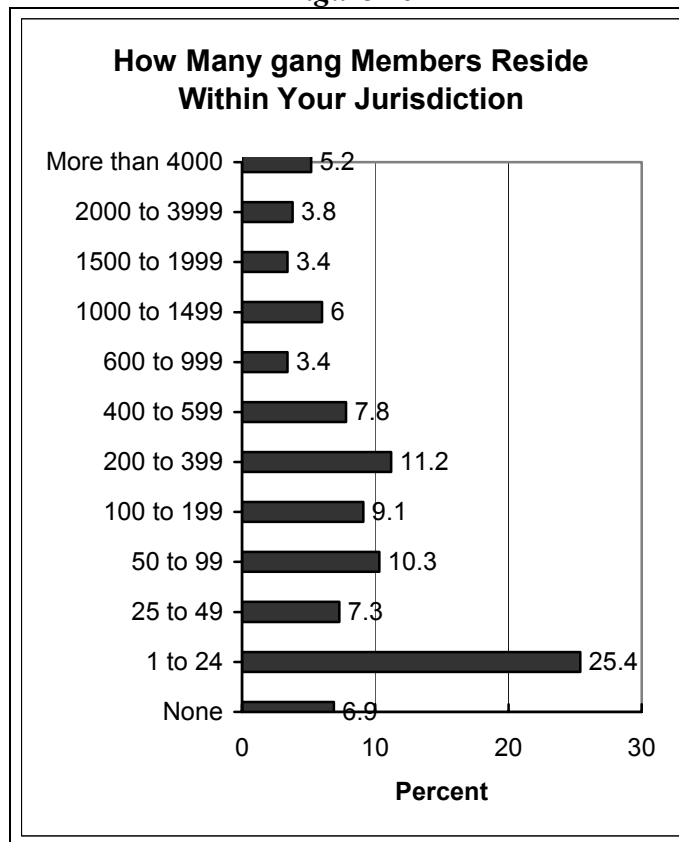
According to W. B. Miller, many jurisdictions deny the existence of gangs. Others incorrectly, many experts believe, characterize less serious forms of adolescent law-violating groups as gangs. (Miller 1992). For example, some will over-count gang members within their jurisdictions, perhaps identifying the graffiti of tagging crews as gang-related, but there are others that for political or economic reasons, will avoid running-up gang crime numbers.

Since gang members don't self-identify there is no scientific way to determine the number of gang members in California. Because of reporting, it seems though that California

has a larger concentration of gangs than any other state. According to the National Youth Gang Center there were more than 772,500 gang members in the United States in 2000. The California Department of Justice estimates there may be as many as 300,000 gang members operating in California. (SafeState.org 2003). California’s statewide gang database (CALGANG) has identified 180,219 active gang members. (OCJP Year in Review 2002).

Each law enforcement authority was asked to estimate the number of gang members within their jurisdiction. Figure 16 (below) shows that nearly one-third of survey respondents reported less than 24 gang members. Eighteen percent estimated more than 1000 gang members with 5.2 percent of all agencies reporting more than 4000 gang members within their jurisdictions.

*Figure 16*



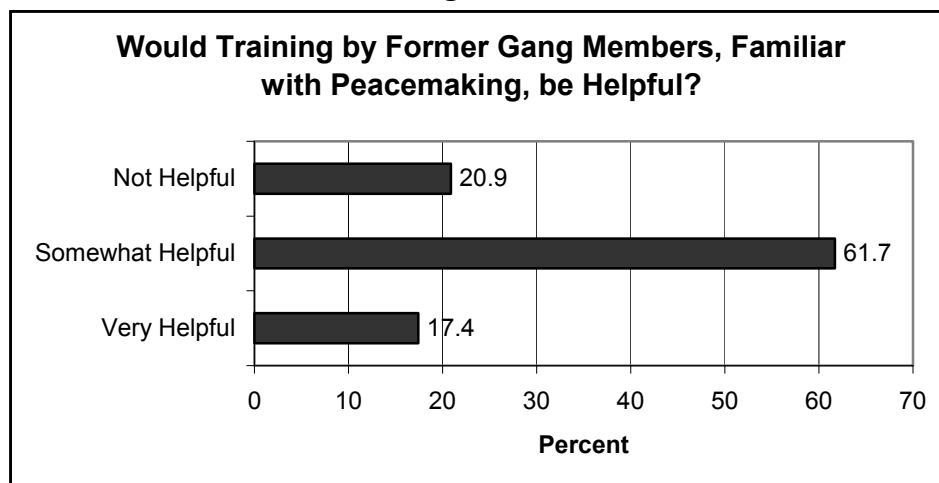
The survey asked local law enforcement about their experiences with CALGANG, the database which tracks and identifies gang members. In describing law enforcement experience with the database, 27.9% of the respondents (N=64) indicated that they do not use or know about the database. Of the remaining 165 departments who use CALGANG, 90 percent indicated they are satisfied.

### ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS

The inconsistency in how gangs and gang-related crime is classified makes it nearly impossible to estimate the extent of gang formation and activity within California. The result is that existing statistics place California as the national leader in gang activity when this may not be the case.

This lack of classification consistency also makes it difficult to perform valid research on what works and what doesn't work. For example, there is no solid data on whether or not truces and peacemaking initiated by gangs might have a beneficial effect in the reduction of violence yet there seems to be receptivity to the concept. Seventy-nine percent of agencies in our survey felt that additional P.O.S.T. training on peacemaking would be helpful.

*Figure 17*



## CONCLUSIONS

The results of this survey have brought Becker and Clark to the conclusion that local law enforcement authorities do not change their strategy on gang mitigation (e.g. exaggerating the severity of the gang problem) in pursuit of federal and/or state funding because the amount of funding available from outside agencies is viewed as negligible and/or too difficult to obtain.

Although we didn't find any evidence for the next conclusion, a more likely scenario would be for a local authority to exaggerate the severity of a gang problem in order to attain additional funding from the entity they work for. Three factors contribute to this possibility: (1) the lack of a statewide policy on classifying gang crime, (2) the lack of understanding by local policy makers on the causes of gang formation and the behavior of gangs and (3) continual reductions in revenue sources for cities and counties have driven the need for law enforcement to compete with other local departments (fire, parks, libraries) for their piece of the budget pie.

Becker and Clark were also asked to look at variations among jurisdictions on gang mitigation strategies. We received responses from 243 law enforcement agencies. The timeframe for completing this study limited our ability to take a close look at the dissimilarities between those agencies. However, based on what we were able to see from the surveys and what was supported by the literature review we present three reasons for variables in gang strategy among local agencies.

The first is philosophy—emphasis on what has been tried and what was perceived to be effective. In almost every case this included suppression. We were pleased to find that many agencies realized the importance of a continuum of approaches: prevention,

intervention, and suppression. However, even when the realization was there, funds were often lacking.

The second variable we looked at was the composition of the community itself. This included size and age of incorporation of the community. We found that although differences in community size and age played a role in the formation of gangs and the stronghold a gang might have within its territory, added research is necessary to look at the differences in socio-demographic factors among communities.

The third variant in gang strategy that we explored recalls the issue of classifying gangs, gang membership and gang-related crime. Without consistency, there is no technique to compare the severity of the gang problem from community to community.

All of the above conclusions are researchable and will offer a greater understanding in developing a response to the gang problems in California.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Becker and Clark offer the following recommendations for further research:

- “Anti Gang Measures of Local Law Enforcement Agencies within California” was limited to the practices of police and sheriffs’ departments. In fact, the “buck” only begins there. Most of the state and federal funding we were asked to examine actually went to other agencies from prosecution, to the prison system, to a myriad of a programs created by OCJP and state legislation. This research should be taken to the next level to examine how district attorneys and the courts are spending state and federal funds for gang mitigation and how their activities integrate with local law enforcement.

- In 2003 OCJP funded nearly 100 programs yet there is little knowledge of whether these programs and their combined activities are integrated toward a singular strategy for justice and crime prevention in the State of California. Despite the elimination of OCJP in January 2004, it appears that those programs will continue to be funded without an integrated or even per-program evaluation component. Those evaluations should be designed and implemented.
- To truly determine the extent of California's gang-related crime, an in-depth study on jurisdictional practices on the classification of gang-related crime must be performed. This research would include a state policy for classifying crime as gang-related and a recommendation for resolving reporting discrepancies from agency to agency.
- Although Becker and Clark received feedback from only a few law enforcement agencies that had experienced gang peacemaking, survey results also revealed jurisdictions that were open to techniques other than suppression. An in-depth examination on gang peacemaking should be performed by independent evaluators to determine whether peacemaking is a successful alternative to suppression.
- The 46 mid-sized cities in this study were going in two directions with regard to the rise and fall of gang activities within their communities. One half was seeing a decrease in gang related activity and the other half was experiencing an increase. A study to examine why similar-sized communities had different experiences would provide insight into the socio-demographic differences and institutional breakdowns that drive gang formation.

- Conducting a comparative study of the gang-related crime reporting activities within several large cities across the United States would place Los Angeles, Oakland and other large California cities in perspective with their peers.

## **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based upon Becker and Clark’s research conducted for *Anti-Gang Measures of Local Law Enforcement Agencies in California*, the following policy recommendations are presented:

### Gang Crime Classification

The literature review and survey responses indicate that the lack of consistency in the classification of gangs, gang members, and gang-related crime has contributed to discrepancies in law enforcement policy and behavior. This is especially problematic for California where local agencies classify almost any crime committed by a gang member as gang-related thus creating a perception that California has a greater gang problem than other states in the nation. As a first step, we recommend that the State of California adopt standards and guidelines along the lines of what has been recommended by Spergel as follows: “A gang incident should be any illegal act that arises out of gang motivation, gang function or gang-related circumstances in which the sole fact of being a gang member should not be sufficient to label the event as a gang incident.” (Spergel 1994).

### Support for Youth Gang Prevention

All respondents and researchers appear to agree that gang prevention for youth is promising. Public schools, especially middle schools, are potentially the best community resource for the prevention of and early intervention into youth gang problems. The peak recruitment period for gang members is probably between fifth and eighth grades. (Spergel

1994). The State should continue to fund programs such as the School Community Policing Partnership Program offered through a partnership between the California Attorney General's Office and the California Department of Education. Every dollar spent to keep youth away from gangs saves countless dollars for enforcement, prosecution and incarceration, not to mention loss of property and increased public safety.

#### Evaluation of Gang Peacemaking

Many authorities indicated a preference for suppression as a first response to gang activity. Although suppression is a legitimate strategy, it is time to look closer at police culture of "war" on gangs and to explore more programs that offer prevention and even peace with gangs. This cultural shift will be difficult for police to accept for many reasons, but it is possible. Certain parts of Los Angeles County are informally attempting to develop gang truces and reduce or eliminate violence. Though community members, courts and probation department personnel are working with this concept – the police are not funded to do so. The State of California should take the lead in building an understanding for change and develop a working partnership for peace in lieu of gang warfare.

#### Community Partnerships

All affected agencies from law enforcement through the prison system, along with community based organizations and gang members, must be brought into context to establish significant results to answer the core problems of who, what, when, where, how and most important "why" of gangs. This additional data and the solution strategies that come from it should be reinforced through ongoing law enforcement and community partnerships.

#### California Equivalent of National Institute of Justice

State agencies are divided among those that enforce the law and those that provide social services. For the purpose of policy planning and testing integrated strategies that address a continuum of approaches: prevention, intervention and suppression, a bridge between enforcement and social service must be constructed. The U.S. National Institute of Justice serves as the focal point for national strategy on crime prevention and criminal justice. One of its primary goals is to emphasize outcome and cost-benefit evaluations of criminal justice programs and technologies. An equivalent agency should be established within the State of California.

## **APPENDIX: LITERATURE REVIEW OF CALIFORNIA STUDIES AND RESEARCH**

The following descriptions of gang studies and research were selected from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service publication database. The studies mostly describe criminal justice gang problems and topics applicable to California law enforcement.

**1. Allan, Edward L.** “Policing by Injunction: Problem-Oriented Dimensions of Civil Gang Abatement in the State of California,” Dissertation, State University of New York at Albany, 2002.

Abstract Advocated by the problem-oriented perspective which includes innovative strategies of problem-oriented policing, civil gang abatement is a law enforcement proactive anti-gang strategy combining the law of public nuisance and the civil remedy of the preventive injunction therefore aiding to reduce the destructive influence of gangs on neighborhoods. Funded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, this study explored the nature of the civil gang abatement trends in the State of California to determine whether the use of injunctions to abate gang activity was a problem-oriented intervention addressing the causes of a pervasive public order problem. Two key dimensions of the problem-oriented perspective were analyzed: flexibility and community involvement. The concept of flexibility suggests that the provisions of requested relief and situational characteristics vary across injunction initiatives. Community involvement in the decision-making process allows for greater visibility for the procedures used to tackle problems. These were analyzed in the acquisition stage of the injunction process or the injunction initiative due to this providing the broadest spectrum of the gang injunction trend. Injunction initiatives include actions resulting in a preliminary injunction and actions where injunctive relief was denied, dismissed, or still in litigation. A categorical

data analysis was conducted examining all identified gang injunction cases filed with the Superior Court of California from October 26, 1987, through June 30, 2000. Forty-two identified gang injunction initiatives were represented. Results suggest that there was sufficient evidence of variation to conclude that gang injunctions tended to be “flexible” and therefore consistent with the problem-oriented perspective. US Department of Justice National Institute of Justice, Grant No. 2000-IJ-CX-0018.

**2. Bankston, C. L.** “Youth Gangs and the New Second Generation: A Review Essay,” *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, Vol. 3, Issue 1, pp. 35-45, spring 1998.

Abstract. Literature on juvenile gangs is reviewed with respect to its theoretical trends regarding youth gangs in the immigrant ethnic groups since 1965, major issues that this literature fails to address, and directions for the conceptualization of new ethnic gangs and future empirical research. The children of the new wave of immigrants who arrived in the United States from Central and South America and Asia after 1965 have been labeled the new second generation. Violent youth gangs have become a prominent aspect of society at the same time that these children have grown to adolescence and young adulthood. The children of immigrants are not the only participants in gang activity, but many gangs have appeared in neighborhoods where immigrants have settled, and these gangs are often based on the ethnic identities of the post-1965 immigrant groups. Themes in the theoretical literature on this topic may be classified as opportunity structure approaches, cultural approaches, and social disorganization approaches. However, the literature has given only cursory attention to the relationship between immigration and youth gangs. It has also overlooked several crucial issues, particularly how and why immigration may be associated with juvenile crime groups. Future research needs to focus on these issues.

**3. California Council on Criminal Justice, State Task Force on Gangs and Drugs.**  
State Task Force on Gangs and Drugs, Final Report, 1989.

Abstract. The Task Force held hearings throughout the State and received testimony from representatives of small and large cities, schools, social service agencies, government, business and industry, community organizations, and a broad range of criminal justice agencies. Judicial and other criminal justice personnel addressed the need for more efficient court processes and consistent sentencing and probation conditions for gang and drug offenders. Representatives from social service agencies and community organizations stressed the need for prevention and intervention programs. In addition to public hearings, the Task Force surveyed district attorneys, police chiefs, sheriffs, and probation officers to solicit their ideas. The Task Force found that some communities are literally held hostage by increased gang involvement in drug trafficking and that prosecution units specializing in gang and drug cases are successful in targeting and incarcerating serious gang and drug offenders. Intensive supervision of gang and drug probationers/parolees is a successful approach to monitoring their activities, specialized treatment of gang and drug offenders in correctional facilities is effective, and gang crime suppression activities improve law enforcement's ability to prevent other crimes. Recommendations to prevent criminal activities by gangs focus on such areas as the development of a statewide gang information system, stricter laws for serious gang and drug offenders, streamlined court proceedings, Federal support, education, employment, community-based programs, and parental and adult role models. The extensive recommendations are categorized according to law enforcement, prosecution, corrections, probation/parole, the judicial system, California's executive and legislative branches of government, local government, school programs, community-based

organizations, business and industry, and the media. Supplemental information on the Task Force's organization, findings, and recommendations are appended.

**4. Callanan, Paul.** *Campus Safety Journal*, Vol. 9, Issue 9, pp. 30-31, October 2001.

Abstract. A recent survey concluded that gangs continue to be a prevailing problem across the country. There is no nationally recognized definition of a street gang or a gang member. Characteristics differ from region to region. East coast gangs tend to be more structured with an identifiable leadership, while west coast gangs are less structured with no real identifiable leadership. A generic definition of a gang is “a group of three or more individuals who share a common name or identifying sign or symbol, whose primary purpose is to commit illegal activities, and who individually or collectively engage in a pattern of criminal behavior.” A gang member is “any person who participates in or with a criminal street gang, has knowledge that its gang members engage in or have engaged in criminal activity and willfully promotes, furthers or assists in any criminal conduct by members of that gang.” The typical age range for gang members is 14 to 24 years old. Fifty percent are over the age of 18. Gang membership depends on exposure to gang activity and to pro-gang attitudes. The pro-gang attitude ultimately leads to a disconnection of the youth from the family, school, and the community. Gang members have greater access to firearms, are more likely to be involved in violent crimes, and have a higher propensity to use drugs and alcohol. The percentage of students reporting the presence of gangs at school nearly doubled between 1989 and 1995. The presence of street gangs and drugs is directly related to increased school crime and victimization of students. Gangs create a climate of fear and intimidation not only in communities but also on school grounds. School administrators must confront the presence of gangs on school grounds. Lack of knowledge about street gangs is a large reason why

administrators fail to take any necessary action. A site assessment should be conducted to evaluate the presence of gangs at the school. Combating the problem requires a comprehensive community-wide approach that involves three equally important components: suppression, intervention, and prevention. A successful community-wide approach depends upon partnerships of various community organizations, both private and public.

**5. Casey, S. J.** “Gang Diversion Programs -- Can They Work?” *Law Enforcement Quarterly*, Vol. 26, Issue 3, pp. 34-35, 37, fall 1997.

Abstract. Because the number of gangs has doubled in the area covered by the San Diego, California, Police Department's Southern Division, an anti-gang program has been developed: the Cops Helping Individual Life Development (CHILD) program that targets children too old for the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program. Devised and taught by police patrol officers, the CHILD program shows young people alternatives to gang life and graphically portrays the consequences of gang life and poor life choices. The CHILD program offers strong role models, draws on a range of community resources, involves parents, and teaches life skills. Specific activities initiated to deal with juvenile gangs in the San Diego area are noted, and the effectiveness of the CHILD program is demonstrated.

**6. Clifford, M. A., B. Caughron, R. Flores, and R. Skager.** “Pro-Youth Neighborhoods and Communities in Tulare County”, California Office of Criminal Justice Planning, 1994.

Abstract. This document provides a blueprint for designing and implementing strategies for preventing and responding to problems related to juvenile gangs; the approach used here is to build a solid foundation of pro-youth opportunities in a community, and is based on initiatives taken in Tulare County, California. The document provides a definition

of gangs, developed by participants in the Tulare County Gang Response Project, which planning groups are strongly encouraged to adopt early and without changes. The report outlines characteristics of gang members, risk factors, and a basic set of principles and foundations for engaging gang-related problems. The blueprint suggests six engagement strategies -- suppression, community mobilization and planning, strengthening organizations, strengthening the family, providing opportunities, and proactive policy development and advocacy. The next section describes the needs assessment Tulare County underwent to understand the scope of gang activity, obtain baseline data, develop standardized methods for gathering data, and develop a consensus regarding the seriousness of youth gang activity. Finally, this document provides various planning and evaluation resources. US Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, Grant No. GV92010540.

**7. Esbensen, Finn-Aage, L. Thomas Winfree Jr., Ni He, and Terrance J. Taylor.**

“Youth Gangs and Definitional Issues: When is a Gang a Gang, and Why Does it Matter?”  
*Crime and Delinquency*, Vol. 47, Issue 1, pp.105-130, January 2001.

Abstract. The study resulted from recognition that the recent increase in gang research has highlighted the importance of consistent definition for gang affiliation and gang-related crime. Definitional questions have assumed greater significance in the wake of broad-ranging prevention and intervention strategies. The least restrictive definition used in this study included all youth who claimed gang membership at some point in time. The most restrictive definition included only those youths who were current core gang members who indicated that their gang had some degree of organizational structure and whose members were involved in illegal activities. The analysis compared gang and non-gang youths with respect to demographic characteristics, theoretical factors, and levels of self-reported crime

and considered the theoretical and policy implications of shifting definitions of gang membership. Data collection took place in the spring of 1995. Results revealed that 17 percent reported being a gang member at some point in time, 9 percent reported current gang membership, 8 percent were delinquent gang members, slightly less than 5 percent were organized gang members, and only 2 percent were core gang members. Results indicated that the magnitude of the gang problem varied substantially by definition. Findings also indicated the need for caution regarding the police practice of targeting youth who claimed gang affiliation and suggested that civil injunctions, anti-loitering statutes, and sentence enhancements aimed at gang members may be too encompassing of their targeted audience. US Dept of Justice National Institute of Justice, Grant No. 94-IJ-CX-0058.

**8. Everhart, Kirby L.** “California Gang Violence Suppression Program Final Evaluation Report”. California Governor's Office of Criminal Justice Planning. March 2003.

Abstract. This evaluation examined projects funded by the California's Gang Violence Suppression (GVS) Program between July 1, 1998, and June 30, 2002. During this time, 82 agencies received funding in various funding models and funding cycles. Issues addressed in the evaluation were whether the grant objectives were achieved, whether the program elements worked, whether the grant funds were spent efficiently, whether the targeted problem was addressed, and lessons learned for the benefit of other agencies. The purpose of the GVS Program is to reduce the level of gang violence and divert potentially dangerous gang activity into more positive and constructive behavior. The program funds local projects selected competitively for 3-year cycles. For this evaluation, projects were reviewed for the previously funded 3-year cycle (fiscal year 1998/99-fiscal year 2000/2001) and the first year of the current 3-year cycle (fiscal year 2001/2002-fiscal year 2003/2004).

Two models were used to implement the GVS Program during these periods: the multi-component model and the single component model. The purpose of the multi-component model is to develop a comprehensive, coordinated approach for the prevention, intervention, and suppression of violent gang activities in a specific target area. The effort involves law enforcement, prosecution, probation, prevention, and education. The single component model focuses on funding community-based organizations for the prevention component. During the period reviewed, all components of the GVS Program achieved their objectives. The CALGANG system successfully tracked information on gangs and gang members and shared that information with law enforcement agencies across the State. The program implemented strategies and methods proven to be effective by national research. Many of the projects were independently evaluated and found to be effective. The GVS Program used 95 percent of all funds allocated for anti-gang activities. Although the GVS Program is addressing gang problems in 11 communities in the State, the funding available is insufficient to address all of the State's gang problems and is facing severe reductions in the future. Lessons for other agencies include the establishment of broad-based multidisciplinary collaborative teams with representatives from law enforcement, prosecution, probation, community organizations, and schools. They should mount enhanced enforcement efforts that target hardcore gang members, and school safety planning and community mobilization should be conducted.

**9. Gomes, J.** “What Strategies Will Mid-Sized Police Agencies Use to Address Southeast Asian and Hispanic Gangs by the Year 2004?” California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training, 1994.

Abstract. This research project examined the current and projected growth of ethnic street gangs in California, particularly Southeast Asian and Hispanic gangs, and assessed the

response of medium-sized police agencies to gangs. The futures study determined that medium-sized police agencies have not been effective in responding to gangs, primarily because they typically focus on suppression rather than on prevention and intervention. A nominal group technique panel was employed to forecast trends in gang activities and police responses. Three main trends were analyzed: (1) level of Southeast Asian and Hispanic populations; (2) ability of police agencies to finance resources with public funds; and (3) number of serious crimes attributed to street gangs. The following future events were also evaluated: the U.S. Supreme Court declares interagency gang intelligence files illegal; street gangs become an organized political block in State elections; and Federal immigration law enforcement terminates. Future scenarios were postulated to evaluate the police role in gang prevention. A strategic plan was developed based on a community approach to gang prevention and the development of pro-youth principles and techniques in individual neighborhoods. Follow up research is suggested to assess the future effectiveness of mobilizing police and community resources to implement gang suppression strategies.

**10. Howard, K.** “BEST Cycle V Evaluation Report”, Community Crime Prevention Associates, Report, 1996.

Abstract. This report incorporates a descriptive evaluation, a process evaluation, and an outcome evaluation to assess San Jose's (California) BEST Cycle V Program's efforts to use community institutions and agencies to counter San Jose's gang problem. The descriptive evaluation describes the services contracted, the frequency of service provided, and the level of impact on clients of each of the BEST Cycle V Programs. The process evaluation documents the activities of the programs according to how each activity was organized, implemented, and provided to the community; it also analyzes the overall effectiveness of the

program's allocation process. The outcome/impact evaluation compares the results of the program's outcomes and impact on clients served by the program. This component of the evaluation collected pre-data and post-data to assess the program's impact and client satisfaction. Evaluation findings show that contract service providers manifested a growing capacity to serve gang-involved youth. Forty-five percent of program funds were used to serve youth who were gang supporters to hard-core gang members. The contracted services demonstrated a good mix of service, as they involved 44 percent prevention services and 56 percent intervention services. The evaluators conclude that the services delivered were cost-effective and provided a much needed youth service. They commend the City of San Jose for developing a national model for the allocation of funds for direct services that target prevention, intervention, and suppression of gang activity. Recommendations for improvement are offered in the following areas: administration of data collection instruments; data collection from sources other than the client; definition of sample of clients and service cycles; redesign of the evaluation instrument; collaboration and incorporation of suggestions from the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Evaluation Task Force; and a focusing of evaluation indicators on specific client groups.

**11. Howell, James C.** "Youth Gang Homicides: A Literature Review", *Crime & Delinquency*, Vol. 45, Issue 2, pp 208-241, April 1999.

Abstract. This literature review aims to help fill the information void on youth gang homicide by summarizing data and results of empirical studies. Information on the topic is summarized in five areas. First, the growth in youth gang homicide is assessed. Second, the distinguishing characteristics of gang homicides are reviewed. Third, studies of the relationship between youth gang homicides and drug trafficking are examined; and fourth,

promising programs and intervention strategies are reviewed. Fifth, program and policy implications are discussed. The assessment of youth-gang homicide trends concludes that although apparently gang-related homicides have increased in the past 30 years, more precise comparisons cannot be made at this time because of data limitations. Regarding the distinguishing characteristics of youth gang homicides, they are unique in several respects. Block's research (1993) on Chicago homicides shows that increases and decreases in gang-motivated homicides occur in spurts and thus do not correspond with the city's overall homicide trend. Youth gang homicides are also distinct from non-gang homicides in terms of the setting in which they occur and participant characteristics. Drive-by shootings and the use of firearms also distinguish them from other homicides committed by juveniles. Several studies of youth gang homicides and drug trafficking have been conducted in Los Angeles and Chicago. These are reviewed in this article, followed by summaries of less comprehensive studies or assessments in Boston, Minneapolis, Miami, Houston, and St. Louis. The author's overall conclusion from these studies is that drug-related homicides that involve youth gangs represent only a small proportion of all gang-related homicides. A review of promising programs and intervention strategies that target youth gang homicides shows that such homicides can be prevented and reduced. US Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Grant No. 95-JD-MU-K001.

**12. Howell, James C.** “Promising Programs for Youth Gang Violence Prevention and Intervention” (From *Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders: Risk Factors and Successful Interventions*, pp 284-312, Rolf Loeber, David P. Farrington, eds.), Sage Publications, Inc. Thousand Oaks, CA 1998.

Abstract. This chapter reviews the literature on programs for youth gang violence prevention and intervention. The review attempts to determine lessons learned from previous attempts at prevention and intervention, what has failed, and what looks promising. The chapter evaluates past youth gang programs and new approaches for preventing and reducing youth gang problems and recommends an intervention and prevention strategy based on the review. The article recommends three strategies: targeting gang problems directly; targeting gang problems within a comprehensive strategy for dealing with serious, violent, and chronic juvenile delinquency; and targeting gang-related (and gang-motivated) homicides. The third program recommendation is based in part on the Epidemiology of Youth Gang Homicides, which the chapter discusses in detail. The program model that proves most effective is likely to contain multiple components, incorporating prevention, social intervention, treatment, suppression, and community mobilization approaches. Gang problem components must be integrated in a collaborative approach with full interagency coordination, supported by a management information system and rigorous program evaluation. US Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Grant No.95-JD-MU-K001.

**13. Kent, Douglas R. and George T. Felkenes.** Cultural Explanations for Vietnamese Youth Involvement in Street Gangs, Final Report, June 1998.

Abstract. The report provides recommendations toward the development of effective community-based programs to prevent gang membership and related delinquency. A cross-sectional study examined the relationship between gang involvement and delinquency in communities with a large number of Vietnamese refugee families in Southern California. Asian gang delinquency represented up to 48 percent of all Asian delinquency. Gang involvement was measured using both a traditional method and an innovative method that

quantified the centrality of gang members in the social life of the youth. Non-cultural explanations were more predictive than cultural explanations of gang involvement. The best predictors were a positive attitude toward gangs on the part of youth, and the presence of gangs in the youth's residential neighborhood environment. Attitude change and gang resistance skills should be incorporated into programs designed to reduce gang involvement among youth. Tables, figures, references. US Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Grant No. 95-JD-FX-0014.

**14. Lane, Jodi.** "Fear of Gang Crime: A Qualitative Examination of the Four Perspectives," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, Vol. 39, Issue 4, pp. 437-471, November 2002.

Abstract. Santa Ana was considered an ideal location for neighborhood research on fear of gangs. Santa Ana has a reputation in the county as "gang infested," and it has yielded reports of high levels of gang crime. Further, Santa Ana is well suited for neighborhood research because it has structured neighborhoods with geographically defined boundaries and organizations through which to recruit participants. Although Santa Ana had the most gang-related homicides (16) in the county during 1997 (the year the focus groups were conducted), homicides had been declining for 4 years in a row. Some of this decrease may have been due to a county policing strategy to reduce gang crime. The focus-group participants were recruited from six neighborhoods in Santa Ana: two upper income, two middle-income, and two lower income areas. Although most residents reported a fear of gangs, the intensity and urgency of this fear differed by neighborhood. For those who lived in middle-income and upper income neighborhoods, the fear of gangs was only urgent when they drove through certain parts of town or saw someone whom they believed to be a gang member. On the other

hand, people who lived in the lower income neighborhoods were confronted daily with the possibility of violent victimization by gangs in their own neighborhoods. Their fear was more urgent and intense. All residents, however, regardless of the economic status of their neighborhoods, believed there were connections between the increasing influx of undocumented Latino immigrants and negative changes in their communities, which involved more disorder, decline, crime, and gangs. This study suggests that decreasing disorder and community deterioration through code enforcement and increasing cultural competency are important considerations for policymakers who want to make their constituencies feel safer. National Science Foundation, Grant No. SBR-9631719.

**15. Langston, Mike.** “Addressing the Need for a Uniform Definition of Gang-Involved Crime.” *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, Vol. 72, Issue 2, pp. 7-11, February 2003.

Abstract. The author serves with the Police Department in Aurora, Illinois, and proposes that defining "youth gang" as a person or activity that meets the definitions for a criminal gang, criminal gang member/associate, or gang-involved crime as defined by the gang-involved crime report are essential to combating their existence. With clear definitions in place, he recommends a model policy based on identification of gang crime and gang members as they are associated with criminal street gangs, criminal motorcycle gangs, criminal hate groups, criminal extremist groups, and other such groups. Reporting procedures and instructions are detailed for incident reports leading to crime suppression operations planning by patrol and special operations supervisors. Information sharing procedures are described including analysis of crime-occurrence mapping, crime statistics, crime patterns and trends, police resource allocation, and community policing direction. Some legal issues are discussed with emphasis on keeping within the applicable laws and procedures in

collecting, documenting, analyzing, and distributing information. In conclusion, it is again emphasized that a model policy that includes a clear definition of a criminal gang, and incorporates a broad range of criteria to classify gang members and gang-involved crime can lead to better understanding of the scope of gang crime and an ability to focus resources on this growing menace.

**16. Maxson, Cheryl L., Karen Hennigan, and David C. Sloane.** “For the Sake of the Neighborhood? Civil Gang Injunction as a Gang Intervention Tool in Southern California.” (From *Policing Gangs and Youth Violence*, pp. 239-266, 2003, Scott H. Decker, Ed.) Wadsworth Publishing Co., Belmont, CA, 2003.

Abstract. The civil gang injunctions (CGI) assert that as an unincorporated association, a gang has engaged in criminal and other activities that constitute a public nuisance. Specific gang members are liable for civil actions as a consequence of their membership in the association. CGI's are spatially based; neighborhood-level interventions intended to disrupt a gang's routine activities. The injunction targets specific individuals, and often other unnamed gang members, who adversely affect the daily lives of neighborhood residents through intimidation and public nuisances, while restricting residents' activities within the boundaries of a defined geographic space. Southern California has gangs of all types, with the region encompassing both chronic and emergent gang cities, an array of ethnic and national origins among its gang participants, drug gangs, skinheads, and prison gangs. Southern California has been a laboratory for injunction implementation. This chapter uses several case studies to illustrate some important dimensions of CGI's, such as their flexibility and emphasis on partnerships. It then reviews the available evidence pertinent to the impact of CGI's and the legal issues that have been raised. The chapter concludes with a

discussion of how this new intervention strategy might be placed in several categories of the Spergel and Curry (1993) gang intervention typology. The analysis shows that CGI's do not fit neatly within any one category of the Spergel/Curry typology. The flexible nature of the CGI as a gang intervention strategy defies simple categorization. The authors argue that the paucity of independent, scholarly evaluation of the effect of CGI's should raise some concerns about their accelerated use. Each of the 32 injunctions issued in southern California in the 1990's offers an opportunity for a field test of some of the issues raised in this chapter.

**17. Maxson, Cheryl L.** "Gang Homicide: A Review and Extension of the Literature" (From *Homicide: A Sourcebook of Social Research*, pp. 239-254, M. Dwayne Smith, and Margaret A. Zahn, eds), Sage Publications, Inc., Thousand Oaks, 1999.

Abstract. Particular topics discussed are the national prevalence of gang homicide; changes in the prevalence and in the proportion of all homicides that are gang related in the cities for which these data are available; and comparisons of characteristics of gang homicides with other homicides, using data from several areas within Los Angeles County and deciphering whether these patterns have changed during the last 15 years. These discussions are preceded by a review of some methodological issues that affect efforts to better understand the scope and nature of gang homicide. The studies of the nature of gang homicides in several large but otherwise diverse U.S. cities found that such homicides most often reflect the dynamics of gang membership, such as continuing inter-group rivalries, neighborhood turf battles, identity challenges, and occasional intra-group status threats. The victims in gang homicides are usually other gang members. There is no indication that gang homicides are embedded in drug distribution systemic processes or random acts of expressive outrage against innocent citizens. The increase in gang homicides in the face of the current

declining trend in other types of homicide suggests that the unique aspects of gang violence deserve greater and specialized attention.

**18. Maxson, Cheryl L. and Malcolm W. Klein.** “Street Gang Violence: Twice As Great, or Half As Great?” (From *Gangs in America*, pp. 71-100, C Ronald Huff, Ed.) Sage Publications, Inc., Thousand Oaks, CA 1990.

Abstract. Data on California gang incidents are analyzed and found to support the conclusion that estimates of the prevalence of gang violence can vary widely among cities using different definitions of gang violence. In addition, within a given city, estimates of prevalence will be comparable over time only if the definitions used remain constant. The analysis considered definitions used in Chicago and Los Angeles. The gang cases analyzed were all designated by the gang units of each police agency. The analysis involved 135 and 148 non-gang homicides from the Los Angeles Police Department and 226 gang and 200 non-gang cases from the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department. The results showed that a motive-based definition of gang-related homicides yields about half as many gang homicides, as does a member-based definition. Results indicated the need for caution in making comparisons across cities and time periods; similarities across places and time should also be recognized.

**19. Miller, Jody, Cheryl L. Maxson, and Malcolm W. Klein, Eds.** “Modern Gang Reader, 2nd ed.” Roxbury Publishing Co, Los Angeles, 2001.

Abstract. The articles define gangs as a social and legal problem, review various ways of examining them, and discuss their behavior patterns and efforts to prevent and control gangs. Topics include theories about gangs, research on gender and ethnicity in relation to gangs, recent developments such as gang proliferation and gangs outside the

United States, and contemporary programs and policies for dealing with gangs. Individual papers focus on process-based and delinquency-based approaches to gang definitions, the history of gang research, Hispanic gangs in Southern California, risk factors for gang membership, and findings of the 1997 National Youth Gang Survey. Additional papers examine the contribution of gang member migration to the national proliferation of gangs, street gang structure in the United States and Europe, and gangs as organized crime groups in Chicago and San Diego, CA. Further papers discuss race and gender differences between gang and non-gang youths in eighth grade, female gang involvement, Chinese gangs and extortion, the evolution of one gang clique into a drug gang, and the differences between street gangs and neo-Nazi skinheads. Other papers focus on gang involvement in violence and drug law offenses, gang homicide, drive-by shootings, gun ownership and gang membership, policies to strengthen neighborhood-level social control, the national evaluation of the Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT.) Program, a police anti-gang suppression program, innovative strategies involving deterrence, civil gang abatement, and the strengths and weaknesses of various public policy responses to gangs.

**20. Morrison, R.** "Gangnet Helps Laptop Cops Snag Gang Bangers," Law Enforcement Technology, Vol. 25, Issue 6, pp 74-80, June 1998.

Abstract. In 1997, the California Department of Justice (DOJ) began using an intranet-linked software package referred to as Gangnet in its war against gangs. As of June 1998, regional nodes were operational and the DOJ was in the final stages of linking the entire State. At a cost of approximately \$800,000, California jurisdictions will be linked in a gang tracking system that uses a Netscape browser. The system is essentially a statewide intranet, a gang-related clearinghouse of information. Gangnet uses a regional database to

access and categorize information collected on gang members, their crimes, and their affiliations. Police officers can use the Gangnet software to track, analyze, and retrieve data collected statewide about gangs. The biggest asset of Gangnet software is its ability to combine fragmented information and quickly draw links between disparate facts. Gangnet can also create photo lineups automatically, display biographic information, and generate gang member diagrams using automated link analysis. The cost-effectiveness of the Gangnet system for local police departments is demonstrated.

**21. Salem, S. E.** “Youth Gang Prevention and Intervention: Executive Summary”. Boys' and Girls' Clubs of America, 1991.

Abstract. The causes and extent of the juvenile gang problem and current prevention and intervention strategies were studied by means of telephone surveys, site visits, and a literature review. The literature review revealed many theories explaining juvenile delinquency factors. Among these are the bonding and social control model, strain theory, and social learning theory. Some scholars believe that the chance that an individual will become delinquent increases with the number of causative factors in childhood. Four major strategies were identified for prevention and intervention: (1) avoiding excessive labeling of groups of adolescents as gangs; (2) focusing intervention and suppression programs on small groups; (3) uniting the efforts of parents, schools, and local businesses; and (4) developing school-based programs. The telephone interviews indicated that youth gang activity is moderate to heavy in many communities. Strategies implemented by Boys and Girls Clubs to prevent gang involvement include offering positive alternatives to gangs, youth development activities, structured programming, and educational activities. Other social service agencies have implemented drug abuse prevention, job training, employment assistance, and legal

support. The site visits suggested additional strategies, including community-wide cooperation, programs aimed at youths beginning to become involved with gangs, increased parental involvement, and an increase in Boys and Girls Club facilities.

**22. Santman, J., J. Myner, G. G. Cappelletty, B. F. Perlmutter** “California Juvenile Gang Members: An Analysis of Case Records.” *Journal of Gang Research* Vol. 5, Issue 1, pp 45-53, fall 1997.

Abstract. This study examines previously incarcerated juvenile delinquents, both with and without gang affiliations. The study reviewed mental health and probation files for 122 adolescent males convicted of criminal offenses and investigated demographic, behavioral, familial, school related, and crime related variables; a detailed profile of a juvenile gang member emerged. Ethnicity, alcohol and drug abuse, depressive disorder, violent conviction, age at first conviction, and total number of convictions differed significantly between groups of delinquent gang and non-gang members. A discriminate analysis demonstrated that Hispanic ethnicity, alcohol and drug abuse, as well as age at first conviction were the best predictors of gang membership. In summary, the study disclosed that juvenile gang members become involved in crime at a very early age and engage in continuous criminal behavior; are convicted of more violent offenses than are non-gang members; and are more likely to abuse alcohol and drugs. The data for this study were collected in one county, a county in which Hispanic gangs are prominent, and generalizing of findings may be questionable.

**23. Skolnick, J. H.** “Gang Organization, Migration, Drugs, and Law Enforcement, National Youth Gang Information Center”, Fairfax, VA, Report, 1993.

Abstract. Research was initiated in the summer of 1988 to investigate street drug dealing, particularly cocaine trafficking, by California gangs, determine how youth were socialized into the drug business, and assess financial and contractual arrangements associated with drug dealing. It was determined that developing entrepreneurial activities of Los Angeles gang members were supported by the resources of traditional gang membership. Criminal acts did not define either the identity of the gang or its individual members. How gangs employed violence was central to understanding their different institutional frameworks. The sale of cocaine appeared to blur the distinction between entrepreneurial and cultural gangs. African-American gangs, never as tightly identified with the neighborhood as Chicano gangs, were more frequently involved in drug dealing. The changing role of urban gangs in street drug dealing occurred against a backdrop of dynamically changing communities. In all California locales, law enforcement was stepping up its efforts to curtail the drug trade and gang activity. Research findings are detailed in terms of drug salience in cultural gang membership, drug dealing benefits to gangs, drug territory control, and gang organization and migration patterns. The role of law enforcement in combating drug dealing by gangs is discussed, with particular attention paid to police strategies, undercover operations, criminal sanctions, and the limits of law enforcement.

**24. Spergel, I. A.** “Gang Suppression and Intervention: An Assessment, National Youth Gang Suppression and Intervention Project” Sponsored by the US Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1993.

Abstract. This final report presents the results of a review of the research literature on juvenile gangs. The report explores the research on topics such as definitions of youth gangs and related terms; the nature and causes of the gang phenomenon; and the effectiveness of

various responses from law enforcement, the judicial system, social welfare agencies, schools, and communities. The analysis concludes that a comprehensive policy is needed, under the sponsorship of some authoritative agency and involving cooperation between public and voluntary agencies and community groups. This policy should be developed and systematically tested, particularly in cities where the youth gang problem is chronic, serious, and entrenched. An early intervention approach based in the public schools, in collaboration with community-based youth agencies, the police, and community groups should also be tested, particularly in cities or neighborhoods with emerging gang problems.

**25. Spergel, I. A.** "Youth Gangs: An Essay Review" *Social Service Review*, Vol. 66, Issue 1, pp.121-140, March 1992.

Abstract. The latest literature on youth gangs is reviewed in order to provide social service workers with some preliminary information with which to begin planning programs that address the problem of youth gangs. Over the last 20 to 30 years, social workers and human service agencies have tended to focus their attention on minor juvenile offenders and runaways. Dealing with more serious juvenile offenders, including youth gangs has been left primarily up to law enforcement agencies. This was encouraged by the political conservatism of the 1980s. Recently, however, Federal policy has begun to encourage a more active role for social service agencies in addressing the problem of youth gangs. This article reviews the latest literature on youth gangs, mainly social science studies, in order to familiarize the social service community with the issues involved. The review addresses the following subjects: research method, definition of the problem, theory, racism, behavior patterns, drugs and violence, personality issues, female membership in gangs, and policy and programs. According to the author, none of the existing literature suggests clearly how to effectively

deal with youth gangs. They mainly describe programs and policies that have failed. Further research is needed to help develop effective programs and policies.

**26. Spergel, I. A. and L Bobrowski.** Law Enforcement Youth Gang Definitional Conference, Sponsored by the US Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1990.

Abstract. This volume presents the transcript of a conference that brought academicians and law enforcement professionals together at the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority to produce a uniformly applicable set of definitions to aid local and national assessment of the street gang problem. The definitions of terms such as youth gang, gang member, and gang-related incident. Introductory comments noted that terms such as youth gang, gang member, and gang-related incident are used differently across cities and jurisdictions and even within the same city. As a result, it is not known whether gang problems are similar or different in nature and scope in different cities. Definitional problems also hamper the accountability of law enforcement agencies, the ability to mobilize communities, and research and evaluation regarding activities to address youth gangs. The conference participants came from different parts of the country. They concluded that if youth street gangs and organized crime are part of the same long-term social and economic process affecting low-income youth, we may expect a growth and spread of both the gang problem and organized crime in the years ahead, unless drastic shifts occur in the economy and national social and economic policy. However, such shifts are unlikely in the short term. Nevertheless, society should focus more attention on the issues of gang prevention, social intervention, and suppression to minimize a long-term threat to social order in the country

**27. Spergel, I. A.** “Youth Gangs: Problem and Response: A Review of the Literature, Executive Summary” Report Prepared for the National Youth Gang Suppression and Intervention Project, 1989.

Abstract. This report summarizes the literature on youth gangs and responses to them. Increasingly, the definition of gang refers to juveniles and young adults in all 50 States who associate for serious, especially violent, criminal behavior. While the scope and seriousness of the gang problem are unclear, there is evidence for an increase in gang-related violence and increasing involvement in drug trafficking. Generally, gangs are loosely organized and consist of core, regular, peripheral and recruit members. Variables of class, culture, race, or ethnicity of gangs interact with local community factors of poverty, social instability, and/or social isolation to account for the variety of problems that exist. Gang membership provides certain psychological, social, cultural, and economic functions not adequately fulfilled by the family, school, or legal employment. Four basic strategies have evolved in dealing with youth gangs: community organization or neighborhood mobilization, youth outreach, provision of social and economic opportunities, and gang suppression and incarceration. Social agency youth development and law enforcement suppression strategies have predominated, and often clashed with each other.

**28. Stinchcomb, Jeanne B.** “Promising (And Not-So-Promising) Gang Prevention and Intervention Strategies: A Comprehensive Literature Review”, *Journal of Gang Research*, Vol.10, Issue 1, pp. 27-46, Fall 2002.

Abstract. Results of a literature review on gang prevention show that the findings of empirically validated research that has been conducted to date are not overwhelmingly enlightening. The number of field tests is small. The evaluation results that do exist are

mostly negative. Studies tend to reveal weak evidence. Some reviews of literature on the same topic have come to diverse conclusions. Evaluation research is not always an integral component of gang-related initiatives. Although no single program has demonstrated complete success, selected elements of many programs are worth noting and deserve replication. One of the most ambitious efforts to evaluate findings of prevention and intervention programs was developed by the American Youth Policy Forum. This compendium summarizes research and practice related to prosocial youth development that has improved the lives of young people. The key is determining what works in a particular location that is experiencing a particular type of gang problem with particular types of juveniles. Concentrated effort is devoted to analyzing community needs, developing appropriate frameworks, incorporating macro and micro-oriented strategies into a program design, and reviewing the results. The programs that appear to be unsuccessful are ones with detached street workers and police suppression strategies. The programs that appear to be promising are programs relevant to local needs, proactive strategies aimed at discouraging youths from joining gangs, school-based intervention and support programs, and comprehensive community programs. A key factor is pursuing a comprehensive, holistic approach that addresses multiple facets of the problem.

**29. Triplett, Ruth.** “Growing Threat: Gangs and Juvenile Offenders” (From *Americans View Crime and Justice: A National Public Opinion Survey*, pp 137-150, Timothy J. Flanagan and Dennis R. Longmire, eds.), Sage Publications, Inc. Thousand Oaks, CA. 1996.

Abstract. This chapter reviews the public opinion literature on juvenile crime and juvenile justice, followed by a report on such findings from the 1995 National Opinion

Survey on Crime and Justice (NOSCJ). The 1995 NOSCJ findings are consistent with those from past research regarding public opinion on issues of juvenile justice and gangs. They reflect the public's desire for harsher treatment of serious juvenile offenders within the context of a rehabilitation framework. The findings on the waiver of juveniles to adult court support the public's desire for harsher treatment of serious juvenile offenders. A majority of respondents agreed with waiver for serious juvenile offenders. The more serious the offense, the greater the public support for waiver. These findings do not mean, however, that the public does not support rehabilitation for juvenile offenders. More than half of those surveyed believe that not enough money has been designated for rehabilitation programs. Combined with the results from past surveys, these findings suggest that the public supports greater funding for programs to rehabilitate juvenile offenders. Still, more than half of those surveyed believed that rehabilitation programs are not successful in controlling juvenile crime. Findings on policies for discouraging youth gangs also reflect the desire for punishment and rehabilitation. The policy most favored was more employment opportunities for youth, followed by the use of stiffer sentences, improvement in school security, increased aid to youth centers, and holding parents legally responsible for the actions of their children. US Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Grant No. 90-JD-CX-K001; 87-JS-CX-K100.

**30. US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs,** National Field Study on Gang Violence, Los Angeles, California, March 13-14, Parts 1 and 2, 1991.

Abstract. These two volumes present background materials and information related to the panel presentations from a 2-day meeting held in Los Angeles in March 1991 and focusing on the National Field Study on Gang Violence. Speakers included Los Angeles and

California State criminal justice officials, school officials, and victim and gang prevention program leaders. The eight panels focused on law enforcement initiatives related to gangs, community policing programs to reduce gang-related crime, judicial and probation responses to juvenile gangs, school-based gang prevention and intervention, issues related to victims of gang violence, Asian-American gangs, community-based programs related to gang prevention, and research on gangs. The materials include statistics on gangs and gang-related violence, journal articles on issues related to gangs, legislation, program descriptions, and reports on materials.

**31. Vigil, J. D.** “Barrio Gangs: Street Life and Identity in Southern California”  
(From *Modern Gang Reader*, pp 125-131, Malcolm W. Klein, Cheryl L. Maxson, et al., eds.),  
Roxbury Publishing Co., Los Angeles, CA, 1995.

Abstract. Historical, cultural, and underclass theory are used to develop concepts regarding the development and persistence of Hispanic gangs in Los Angeles and other parts of southern California. The analysis notes that multiple marginality results from cultural accommodation to Anglo-American lifestyles, intergenerational cultural clashes, and limited opportunities for social mobility in barrio communities. Thus, the barrio street gang is a social adaptation to the economic and cultural stressors that confront young men of Mexican descent. Chicano gangs have adopted a distinctive street style of dress, speech, gestures, tattoos, and graffiti; this style is called Cholo. Many Cholo customs symbolize an attachment to and identification with the gang, although many individuals copy the style without joining the gang. In addition, gang members differ widely in their degree of commitment to the gang; those with the most problematic lives and intense street experience are the most likely to become regular members. Over the decades, the gang has developed a social structure and

cultural value system with its own age-graded cohorts, initiations, norms, goals, and roles that now function to socialize and inculcates barrio youth. The emergence of a gang subculture initially resulted from urban maladaptation among some segments of the Mexican immigrant population, but it is now a continuing factor to which new Hispanic immigrants must adapt.

**32. Vila, Bryan J. and James W. Meeker.** “Gang Activity in Orange County, California: Final Report” August 1999.

Abstract. The research began in 1995. The Gang Incident Tracking System (GITS) data appeared to present a reasonably unbiased and complete picture of gang incidents handled by the police and that the police agencies tend to underreport rather than over report gang incidents. In addition, the county's police training about California's legal criteria for defining gang members appears to have been successful in that police officers do not classify young people as gang members merely because of their mode of dress, ethnicity, or place of residence when they report gang incidents. Thirty-six hundred gang-related incidents were reported to the GITS database in 1994, 3,407 in 1995, 3,408 in 1996, and 3,227 in 1997. Violent crimes were the most frequent gang-related crimes, followed by vandalism/graffiti, weapons violations, property crimes, and narcotic sales. Adult street gang crime appeared to be a more serious problem than juvenile gang crime in Orange County. Furthermore, women reported more fear of gangs and gang crimes than did men, but they did not necessarily feel more at risk. Younger residents tended to rate many gang-related crimes as more serious than did older residents. Concern about community risk and disorder was a significant predictor of perceived risk and fear for almost all the crimes. Overall, the GITS project clearly demonstrates the usefulness and necessity of multi jurisdictional efforts to understand,

prevent, intervene, and suppress street gang activities. Tables, figures, footnotes, appended instruments, and 167 references. US Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, Grant No. 96-IJ-CX-0030; 96-CN-WX-0019.

**33. Waldorf, D.** “When the Crips Invaded San Francisco: Gang Migration”, *Gang Journal* Vol. 1, Issue 4, pp 11-16, 1993.

Abstract. Based on a literature review and interviews with 578 gang members from 87 gangs, this study provides new information on the possible migration of Southern California gangs to San Francisco. Data from the qualitative interviews reveal that only three gangs -- the Tenderloin Crips, the Portrero Hill Crips, and the Sur Trace (South 13) had any affiliations with gangs from Los Angeles and these alliances were tenuous. Only one of these groups is African-American (the Portrero Hill Crips), one is Cambodian, and the third is Mexican. In the three instances where there have been some associations between Los Angeles and San Francisco groups, two were by individuals who had migrated to San Francisco and started groups. One group (the Portrero Hill Crips) simply admired the notoriety of Los Angeles gangs and wanted to acquire their image. Although they had some temporary relations with a Los Angeles Crips group, they did not maintain it. None of these associations resulted from any organized effort to "franchise" drug markets or build new affiliated Crip or Blood groups. The author concludes that most gangs do not have the skills or knowledge to move to other communities and establish new markets for drug sales.

**34. Wang, John Z.** “Preliminary Profile of Laotian/Hmong Gangs: A California Perspective” *Journal of Gang Research*, Vol 9, Issue 4, pp.1-14, summer 2002.

Abstract. The author conducted research on Asian gangs, specifically Hmong and Laotian gangs operating in California. The author provided an overview of the history of the

development of Asian gangs in California, including information concerning immigration patterns of Hmongs and Laotians from 1975 through the mid-1990's. Data studied were collected via police interviews, ex-gang member interviews, reviews of police incident reports, reviews of court documents, reviews of criminal justice training materials, and newspaper reports in English language and Lao. An overview of major Laotian and Hmong gangs is provided and gang characteristics such as symbolism, assimilation, alliance, organization, physical appearance, and criminal activities are discussed. Based upon the data analyzed, the author concludes that strain theory and social disorganization theory are valid approaches for studying Laotian and Hmong criminal gangs and their organization and behavior.

**35. Westminster Police Department, Westminster Police Department Tri-Agency Resource Gang Enforcement Team, 2000 Update. Report, 2001.**

Abstract. The Tri-Agency Resource Gang Enforcement Team (TARGET) has completed its ninth year of operation. Five previous reports have detailed the structure, philosophy, goals, and progress of the program; however, starting with the 1997 report, only the tables and figures have been updated from previous reports. Twenty-two tables and figures pertinent to gang member characteristics and their criminal justice processing were provided. Demographic information on gang members covered ethnicity and age distribution verified since 1990, as well as gender and age distribution of gang members verified since 1990. Data were provided on gangs that met STEP Act criteria as well as gang member field contact and information use. Other tables and figures addressed the arrest activity of police detectives, TARGET list activity for 1992-2000, the number of TARGET subjects by gang affiliation, and demographic data on TARGET subjects. Also documented were subject

history of the most serious arrest prior to TARGET selection, subject involvement in violent crime prior to TARGET selection, most serious charge filed against TARGET subjects, outcomes of the penalty phase of prosecuted cases, and the custody status of TARGET subjects. Remaining tables provided data on the frequency of gang crime, violent gang crime, and gang crime reports in the city of Westminster; a comparison of gang-related and non-gang-related violent crime in Westminster; and trends in gang crime (1991-2000), custody status and gang crime, and gang crime and non-gang crime.

**36. Yearwood, Douglas L. and Richard Hayes.** “Overcoming Problems Associated With Gang Research: A Standardized and Systemic Methodology” *Journal of Gang Research*, Vol. 7, Issue 4, summer 2000, pp.1-8.

Abstract. The lack of uniform definition of what constitutes a gang precludes researchers from comparing different gangs across varying jurisdictions and over time. Law enforcement officials' denial of a gang presence in their community precludes researchers from obtaining an accurate and comprehensive profile of gangs and their activities. A recent statewide and systemic investigation of gangs in North Carolina used a standard definition for gangs and surveyed members of the entire criminal justice system in an effort to alleviate, or at least minimize, these common problems and to increase the study's reliability, validity, and generalizability. The study used techniques designed to minimize or alleviate problems that emerge when survey respondents are allowed to self-define what constitutes a gang or when the researchers do not adopt a standard and uniform gang definition. Survey techniques were also designed to identify and overcome respondent denial of the existence of gangs in the community. This was done by including not only law enforcement agencies in the survey but also school resource officers, court counselors, chief probation officers, and detention

and training school directors. The survey respondents identified 332 distinct gangs in North Carolina, with at least 5,143 members (an average of 15.5 members per gang). The authors recommend that standardized gang definitions be incorporated into more gang research studies and that they use a systemic approach when investigating the nature and prevalence of gangs and their activities.

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