

LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

GANGS: A CANCER WITHIN A CITY

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INTRODUCTION

Youth gangs are usually organized along ethnic backgrounds and are racially segregated; therefore, gang groups normally develop as black, white, Hispanic and Asian organizations. These organized gangs, although racially defined, are not representative of the ethnic community to which they belong (San Bernadino Sheriff's Employee's Benefit Association 1990).

In order to understand the gang issue, it is important to consider gang development, communication between gang members, the problems associated with gangs, and possible ways to combat the problems and behavior of gangs.

In the city of Wichita Falls, the known gang problem is divided among two ethnic groups, black and Hispanic. The local black gang is affiliated with the Crip gang from Los Angeles. "Crips" is the name used as an umbrella under which many newly formed gangs inside and outside of the Los Angeles area will align themselves. The Wichita Falls Hispanic gang is a splinter group which has a following from

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another known Ft. Worth, Texas, gang, the Varrio North Side (VNS). The gang problem used to be confined to the large urban areas, but is now a concern for law enforcement groups throughout the nation including cities the size of Wichita Falls, Texas (San Bernadino Sheriff's Employee's Benefit Association 1990). This report will focus on the problems local gangs have created for the Wichita Falls Community and explain how the community has responded.

BACKGROUND OF GANG DEVELOPMENT

In order for police agencies to effectively combat the gang problem in their local areas, it is important to know where and how this problem was first created.

A Brief History of Gang Development in the United States.

In Los Angeles County, there are estimated to be over 280 black gangs with membership totaling over 15,000. Law enforcement agencies in Los Angeles, California, began to see the formation of black gangs in the late 1960s and early 1970s; some are still active today. These gangs were originally created as youth from one neighborhood were looking for ways to protect themselves from kids from other neighborhoods of Los Angeles (San Bernadino Sheriff's Employees Benefit Association 1990). These Los Angeles gangs have since grown and divided as the "Crips" and "Bloods" were formed (National Law Enforcement Institute 1992). The Crip and the Blood gangs are further divided amongst themselves and identify themselves by various

devices or "sets", ie; street names, landmarks, or neighborhoods (San Bernadino Sheriff's Employees Benefit Association 1990). Different Crip sets will rival each other's gang, but Blood gangs will in the most part, not create problems among other Blood sets (National Law Enforcement Institute 1992).

The Varrio North Side gang resides in the Ft. Worth, Texas, area. This Hispanic gang's membership is drawn mostly from the poor sections of Hispanic neighborhoods. It is not unusual for Hispanic gang members in Fort Worth and elsewhere to be distrusting of police officers feeling that they should not have to conform to societal norms and the laws enforced by the police. Hispanics relate to traditional family customs and feel they are being harassed by the police when these traditions are challenged (National Law Enforcement Institute 1992). A major difference between Hispanic gangs and black gangs is the multi-cultural membership. While most black gangs won't allow other races into their gangs, the Hispanic gangs tend to be more lenient in their membership recruitment. Unlike the black gangs, where the usage of the "Crip" name is incorporated in the many different gangs identity, Hispanic gang members that separate from the originally-named gang create a new name for the gang. The gang communication stays the same, and the graffiti maintains the same style in most Hispanic gangs.

The black gang members in Wichita Falls, Texas, align

themselves with the 11 Deuces Crip gang from Los Angeles, California. The Hispanic gang in Wichita Falls, Texas, is a splinter group of the VNS gang from Ft. Worth, Texas. The Blood gang in Wichita Falls, Texas, aligned itself with the Pirus gang from Los Angeles, California, but this gang has since disbanded.

The majority of black and Hispanic gangs come from low income families or from areas where unemployment is high (Buhmann 1991). Therefore, it is difficult to make a young gang member who makes a large amount of money selling cocaine understand why he should not be in a gang (San Bernadino Sheriff's Employees Benefit Association 1990). The ability to make money and gain status is too important a factor to ignore, since the young gang member's environment is viewed as hopeless, and any chances for success are seen as unrealistically out of reach in any other terms. The profits reaped by California gangs through the sale of illegal narcotics is believed to be the catalyst for the drug trade's eventual movement east to other states within the United States. It's estimated that there are 25 major black gangs from Los Angeles that are involved in drug trafficking in other states, one of which, unfortunately, operates in Texas. The motivating factor for gang members is to have status and luxuries and the opportunity of employment; selling drugs meets these needs, and disillusioned gang members see this as their main opportunity to succeed (San Bernadino Sheriff's Employees

Benefit Association 1990).

Experts once believed that young gang members would eventually "mature out" of gangs, but this was during a time when the possibility of succeeding in life was thought to be an attainable goal based on hard work. Now, economically disadvantaged youths who aspire to reaching the level of the middle class may find that goal impractical and unattainable. In their situation, it seems that middle class status can only be reached by illegal means. The majority of the gang members represent the chronically unemployed, the undereducated and the poor. These socio-economic factors create a climate of hopelessness which is the central problem of the gang issue (Buhmann 1991).

Poverty alone is not necessarily a cause for deviant behavior. When it is combined with high societal standards and values, under circumstances of limited access to legitimate routes of success, poverty can fuel the pressures toward deviance (Cloward and Ohlin 1963). As great as a capitalist industrial society is believed to be, the fault in the system is the inability to provide good jobs for all who search for a chance to succeed. In David Greenberg's book In Crime and Capitalism, he suggests that age and economic conditions play an important role in the ability of a person to seek legitimate employment.

Because of the age differential in access to satisfying jobs, youths suffer the greatest deprivation in this regard, even to the point where no jobs are available for many people during slumps in the economy. (Greenberg 1981)

In a bleak employment situation, whether employed in an unskilled menial job or simply unemployed, an attitude of unrest and the feeling of despair develops among the youth, who seek a new direction for obtaining gratification and self esteem. Youth who are unable to deal with cultural differences or are unable to meet standards placed upon them by their environment, will seek ways to express their individuality and abilities, even if their behavior is directed toward violence, in a way that contravenes the rules of society or is considered criminal in nature (Muehlbauer 1983). Joseph Cardenas, a member of a South Central Los Angeles Hispanic gang gave his account of why youth in his situation get involved in gangs for an interview in Time magazine on July 1992:

I was born and raised in South Central, and gangs are all I see. That's the only alternative I've got, and I have to take what comes. It's pitiful . . . there's no solution to it, there are just always going to be gangs. (Monroe 1992)

The Society/Culture of Gangs

Another factor involved in the spawning of gangs is the failure of what are considered the normal social control mechanisms such as family and the public school systems. The traditional family for a gang members is usually headed by a single parent because of abandonment by one parent, the death of one parent, or the incarceration of one parent. Gang members who come from the single family atmosphere tend to be more "hard core" gang members than transitional or

peripheral members of gangs. A recent study of gang youth in the state of Texas revealed a disturbing number of Texas Youth Council referrals are from single family homes. Only about 20% of TYC referrals are from two parent families. Thirty-five percent of the youth have parents who are divorced; 20%-30% have parents who were never married; and about 15% have one or both parents deceased. A study in California reports that numbers as high as 80% of identified gang members are from single parent homes. Although no formal study is complete regarding Texas gang statistics involving single parent households, indications are that gang members in Texas follow the same trend as those in California regarding the relationship between the problems associated with dysfunctional families and reasons for gaining gang status (Buhmann 1991).

In a dysfunctional family atmosphere, the parent/child bonding process is hindered, therefore, young people are forced to take their socialization needs where they are felt needed and important. For many, this is the streets where the youth are deeply influenced by the gang's beliefs and values (Kammeyer 1987). The parents' failure to be the positive influence in the youth's life is exemplified by the lack of effort in monitoring peer associates or school performance. Parental involvement is important and may serve as the protective shield in the youth's seemingly futureless environment (Leone 1990).

Schools also play a significant role in the develop-

ment of a youths' socialization skills and are responsible for the education of youth in preparation for independent adult living. The educational system and the teachers who staff it--because of their standardized version of what represents a model student--may exclude the lower income child an identity base within the school because they don't have the socialization skills necessary to meet the required standards of above poverty society. Such youth are labeled as uneducable, and their chances of reaching set goals through the school environment are diminished; the results of this blockage of goal attainment may be delinquent behavior. Young people who feel they have been labeled negatively or who feel abandoned by the school system, will disassociate themselves from the school and seek the wanted status within peer groups by committing illegal or deviant acts, thus paving the way for gang association or involvement (Tutt 1978). A significant number of youth incarcerated in juvenile and adult correctional facilities are those considered educationally handicapped; this may be an indication of the school's failure to be associated with social inadequacies, particularly when combined with the youths' hostile environment, lower class status, dysfunctional family setting, and parental irresponsibility.

Though it is true that schools were not designed to be the only source of integrating and educating youth into the expected norms and accepted values of society, they have largely been burdened with this dilemma. By degree, they

have been shown often to be insensitive and unresponsive to a maladjusted youth's differences and needs, causing troubled youth to separate from the established norms and seek approval with those whom the youth considers equals

Public schools fail many of these socially disadvantaged youths. . . and upon ending their association with formal education, the youth has experience academic failure, may be considered functionally illiterate, is a school drop out . . . and lacks the needed skills to find a personally satisfying job. (Leone 1990)

Gang formation, or the decision to affiliate with an established gang, shows opposition to the established norms of society and reflects the gang's anti-social attitude. Gangs may form because of racism, unequal distribution of wealth and power, failure to be educated (regardless of who is at fault) or the belief that there is no hope and that survival depends on the members' own actions (even if those actions subvert societal norms and are construed as deviant behavior) (Kammeyer 1987).

Since it is assumed that people are fundamentally moral, the question of what causes people to deviate from the expected norms naturally arises. Robert Merton, a noted sociologist, answers this question in his book Social Theory and Social Structure, published in 1957:

social structures exert definite pressure upon certain persons in the society to engage in non-conforming rather than conforming conduct.

Crip Gangs

The Crip gang originated in the West Los Angeles area, begun by a Raymond Washington. The first Crip gang-related criminal activity occurred on school campuses where gang members were involved in extortion, assaults, and robberies. The Crip gang has since expanded into organized crime relating to the selling of illegal drugs (particularly crack cocaine). Gang members realized that selling rock cocaine created a substantially large money base and also produced more power and influence than they had ever known. The introduction of crack cocaine into the Los Angeles gang culture was a catalyst for the creation of Crip gangs in other U.S. cities. Crip gangs have spread their drug dealing activities to cities that they believe offer wide-open opportunities for gang members. The Crip gang earned a high degree of notoriety and, as a result, other black gangs began to incorporate the term "Crip" into their gang title creating "Crip sets" such as the Hoover Crip, the Shotgun Crips, and the Rollin 60 Crips (San Bernadino Sheriff's Employees Benefit Association 1990). The Crip gangs identify themselves with the color blue and tend to wear clothing associated with professional athletic teams.

In 1988, Wichita Falls police officers stopped and identified a subject named Keon Wallace, who stated he was from Los Angeles, California. Keon Wallace was later linked to the 11 Deuce Crip gang from Los Angeles, California, and intelligence information revealed he was in

Wichita Falls recruiting members for a new Crip gang charter to be created in the Wichita Falls area.

Since 1988, there has been a Crip gang influence in Wichita Falls. The Crip gang in Wichita Falls has been further identified as three Crip sets--Rollin 60, 11 Deuce Crips, and Shotgun Crips. The Crip gangs have since evolved into one Crip set, the 11 Deuce Crips. This Crip gang is committed to the crack cocaine market which is the primary reason for its survival as the only Crip set in Wichita Falls. The 11 Deuce Crip gang is not well organized but has shown itself to be very violent and has been linked to murders and drive-by shooting in Wichita Falls. Once the 11 Deuce Crips prevailed as the lone black gang in 1990, members of the failed Shotgun Crips attempted to challenge the drug market by forming a Blood gang which gained little membership support. The Blood gang soon dissolved without actually ever challenging the Crip gang (Wichita Falls Police Department 1992).

Hispanic Gangs

In the city of Ft. Worth, Texas, the predominant Hispanic gang is identified as the Varrio North Side gang. According to Officer Stan Fergueson, who is attached to the Ft. Worth Police department gang unit, this gang started several years ago and the gang name is believed to have originated from the North Side high school in Ft. Worth. The term "Varrio" is a play on the word Barrio, which is

where most of the original gang members lived. Officer Fergusson stated this VNS gang is organized and very violent and is notorious for drive-by shootings (Telephone interview, 28 January 1993).

The first indication that the VNS gang had been introduced into Wichita Falls came in the late 1980s. The VNS gang was relatively quiet, and the only threat the gang presented was painting graffiti on business walls. The gang membership in the VNS was made up of mostly young Hispanic males between the ages of 13 and 17 who resided in the north side of town and attended Hirschi High school. There was no information that another Hispanic gang existed until 1992. In 1992 the VNS gang split its membership and created two separate gangs, thus ending the VNS gang. One of the new gangs was named 'LUH' (Los United Homeboys), with membership of Hispanic youth from the north side who attended Hirschi High school. The membership was drawn primarily from the original VNS gang.

The other Hispanic gang was identified as the 'PLM' (Puro Little Mafia). This gang was started by Michael Torres from Ft. Worth, Texas. The 'PLM' gang is an organized Hispanic gang in Ft. Worth, Texas, and Michael Torres had been a member there prior to moving to Wichita Falls. Both the 'PLM' and the 'LUH' have multiracial members, and the gangs are bitter rivals of each other. The two Hispanic gangs are notorious for gang graffiti and drive-by shooting. There is no indication that the Hispanic

gangs are involved in the drug trade; however, they have been linked to several burglaries and drive-by shootings of rival gang members (Wichita Falls Police Department 1992).

Police Responses to Gangs in Wichita Falls, Texas

In February 1991, the Wichita Falls police department began to recognize the social problems and deviant behavior associated with gang related criminal activity. The police department formed a gang tactical unit to help gain intelligence on gang membership and to study the extent of criminal involvement of gang members in the city of Wichita Falls, Texas. Since the formation of this gang tactical unit, there has been documented evidence that the gangs in Wichita Falls are involved in criminal activity, but not yet to the extent that they are the center of all criminal activity occurring in the city. The migration of gang members from other larger cities has not played a significant role in the forming of more gangs, although those gang members who have moved into the Wichita Falls area have played a part in keeping gangs alive. The intelligence gathered on migrating black gang members revealed that the migration of California gang members to the Wichita Falls area is as a result of the gang member having family in the city, and the reason for the migration is not to actively recruit new members as was the case earlier with the identification of L.A. Crip member Keon Wallace. There have been reports that Crip gang members from Oklahoma City,

visit Wichita Falls, but it is believed that this is a result of the crack cocaine market, (which will be discussed later in this report), and not an attempt to start another Crip gang in the city (Wichita Falls Police Dept. 1992).

GANG IDENTIFICATION AND RECOGNITION

It is important for a city perceiving the emergence of a gang problem to have a defined criteria for what actually constitutes a gang or a gang member. The definition of a gang or a gang incident varies from city to city. Criminal activity involving gang members may not be considered a gang incident in one city, but would according to another city's definition. An example would be if two gang members in Los Angeles commit a theft, it would be a gang related incident. However, in the city of Chicago, if the crime did not represent gang "motivation," it would not be considered a gang incident (Parker 1992).

A law enforcement agency must be careful not to confuse an actual criminal gang with a juvenile "identity group." When monitoring criminal gang activity it is important to exclude these juvenile identity groups and not consider them actual gangs, or the city will report a higher incident of gang activity than if it only counted the gang's involved in serious criminal offenses (Buhmann 1991). A

report by the Office of Justice Programs in the U.S. Justice Department documented 1,500 different gangs across the nation with more than 120,000 members, which further gives reason for cities to have a well defined outline of what actually constitutes a criminal gang when documenting incidents of criminal gang behavior (Parker 1992).

In a Texas-based study of gang presence in various Texas cities during the fall of 1990, it became apparent that a standardized, well specified outline for defining and reporting criminal gang activity within a city was needed. Two of the participating cities, Harlingen and San Antonio, were good illustrations of the necessity for developing a uniform gang definition. In the fall of 1990, Harlingen, Texas (population 50,000), reported in a survey that the city had 14 active gangs with membership totaling between 600-800 people, this total was based on their own criteria for gang identification. The number of gangs reported by Harlingen, Texas was only slightly lower than the number of gangs reported by the city of Austin, Texas, which has a population of 400,000. This difference in gang estimation gives credence to the need for designing a state-wide acceptable gang definition. A second survey completed by the city of Harlingen showed a revision of numbers, bringing the city into line with other cities with similar population. Harlingen revised estimate revealed the city to have 2-3 criminal gangs with 100 members.

In this same 1990 survey, San Antonio, Texas, reported

54 gangs with 1000 members. In the spring of the following year, San Antonio reported only 24 gangs with 600 members. These changes in gang numbers were a result of better gang identification and the exclusion of the juvenile identity gangs (Buhmann 1991). The lack of a standardized form for accounting for gang-related crimes makes it difficult to estimate the actual gang presence in a particular city.

Even when a city has defined and identified gang activity, it can change weekly. Gangs will go in and out of existence, as gang coalitions or sets merge with\or separate from previously identified gangs, making it difficult for law enforcement personnel to keep accurate gang intelligence records (Parker 1992). The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department is using an on-line computer database called Gang Reporting Evaluation and Tracking System (GREAT) which makes it possible to cross-check gang related information across the country. Programs such as GREAT are necessary for police agencies around the nation in order to enhance a community's ability to tie a gang member to a crime and possibly help in prosecution (Ruester 1989). Blocking the spread of gangs in neighborhoods and the gang violence associated with gangs must include a commitment by all aspects of society not just law enforcement agencies. When residents of a community give up and lose heart, then even intense police efforts are not effective, and the neighborhood may be lost to the gangs and their associated criminal behavior. When a community takes a stand against

gangs in their neighborhoods, and police agencies are committed to this established resistance, together they can mobilize efforts and pool resources in the battle to reclaim their security and again be proud of their community (Bocklet 1990).

Uniform Gang Definition

The results of the 1990 Texas gang survey sponsored by the Texas Attorney General's Office revealed convincing evidence that there is a gang problem in the State of Texas. However, other points were equally important and evident: (1) there were no uniform guidelines for monitoring and reporting gangs and (2) there was little sharing of information about gang-related incidents between Texas cities. Because of the variance in definitions used by cities to report gang activity and the lack of uniform crime reporting of gangs, it was not possible to draw a conclusion about which Texas city was experiencing the most prevalent and serious gang activity. Texas legislators realized that they must act in the form of an effective and comprehensive legislative policy dealing with gang definition, what constitutes gang membership and creating an effective prosecution plan for dealing with gang members and gang related criminal acts. The Texas legislative bill being considered regarding gangs will be based on Florida's law which defines a gang member as a person who engages in criminal activity and who meets two or more of the following

criteria:

- * Is a youth under 21 who is identified by a parent or guardian as a gang member;
- * Admits to being a gang member;
- * Is identified as a gang member by a documented reliable informant;
- * Resides in or frequents a gang's territory and adopts its dress, hand signs, or tattoos, and associates with its known members;
- * Is identified by an untested informant with corroboration;
- * Has been arrested more than once in connection with the gang;
- * Is identified as a gang member by physical evidence;
- * Has been stopped in the company of known gang members four or more times. (Buhmann 1991)

This definition, as outlined by Florida law, is the one used by the city of Wichita Falls for identifying and maintaining records on local gang members.

According to Officer Kenneth Coughlin, whose assignment was to monitor gang activity for the Wichita Falls police department, identity is an important part of being a gang member, since association with a particular known gangs gives the gang member a sense of self-esteem and belonging which is important to youth (Interview 18 Sept 92). Gang members like to be known and associated correctly with the gang of their affiliation, since this shows a gang member's status and acceptance into a particular group. Black and Hispanic gangs refer to each other as CUZ or

Homeboy. Crip gang members will wear clothing with the color blue in it, whether it be a 'do rag', a handkerchief, blue jeans or shirt. The gang member will also wear jackets, shirts, and ball caps with the gang's logo or name in full view. Wearing of athletic sports wear is also very popular with gang members. The most popular team name is the L.A. Raiders, showing identification with the gangs in the Los Angeles area. The Crip gang members also wear athletic type shoes to express their views and gang relation. The wearing of the British Knight brand tennis shoe reflects affiliation with the Crip gang. The logo for British Knight is 'BK'; Crip gang language uses the initials to symbolize 'Blood Killers', a representation of their hatred for the rival gang the 'Bloods'.

Crip gang members, like other black gangs, have come to realize that the wearing of gang colors and symbols only brought unwanted attention by the police. This attention by the police was interfering with the profits being reaped by the Crip gang members who were heavily involved in the drug trafficking business. The gang members also knew that any arrest for criminal activity by a known gang member brought about harsher punishment in the justice system (Bing 1989). Rodney Brown, a known Crip gang member in Wichita Falls, stated in an interview that the reason the Crip gang quit wearing gang colors was because of the "harassment it caused by the police" (Personal interview 26 Sept. 92).

In another interview, Augustine Dominguez, a member of

the LUH gang, related the reason for the way the Hispanic gang members dress. The Hispanic gangs tend to wear clothing that separates them from the rest of the community. The Hispanic gang members wear clothes usually "associated with a low-rider description"--khaki trousers, white shirt buttoned only by the top button, hair combed back and sunglasses (Interview 23 Nov. 1993). The Hispanic gangs in Wichita Falls began to follow this trend and to dress in this fashion representing the macho image depicted by the pachucco gang members of the 1950s.

Gang Graffiti

According to Chris Baca, director of Youth Development, Inc. in Albuquerque, New Mexico:

If you live in a mid-size city and begin to see graffiti on the walls, the message is clear: gangs are present. (Bing 1989)

Non-verbal gang communication is a trademark of gangs which can be as varied as graffiti, hand signs, and gang street language (San Bernadino Sheriff's Employees Benefit Association 1990). (See appendix for examples.)

Gangs will mark various areas of neighborhoods with graffiti, including fences, walls, buildings, and homes to claim this area as their turf. Gangs will use graffiti as a way to be recognized or express their identity (National Law Enforcement Institute 1992). Black gang graffiti writing as compared to Hispanic graffiti has the same basic mechanics

and meaning but lacks the flair and attention to detail expressed in Hispanic gang writing which can be construed as art (San Bernadino Sheriff's Employees Benefit Association 1990).

Another noticeably difference between the style of graffiti is that in black gang graffiti there is the distinctive use of the dollar sign (\$) in their writing which is expressive of their heavy involvement in making money, usually through illegal means. Hispanic gangs will incorporate the use of the Spanish language in their graffiti and will often spell words in ways that reflect the Spanish alphabet and pronunciation. Gangs will also use numbers to correlate with the letters of the alphabet when abbreviating their gang name; 161213 (PLM). Gangs will often use Roman numerals to show gang affiliation: II Deuce standing for Eleven Deuce, a Crip gang set. In gang graffiti the writers will leave a moniker or nickname by the graffiti to show affiliation and to identify themselves with a particular gang. Gangs will often cross out or write over a rival gang's graffiti to show disrespect or to challenge a gang to a fight. Crip gang members show disrespect of Blood gangs by not using the letter B in any of their graffiti or language. The Crip gang writer will either cross out the letter B in a word or replace the letter B with the letter C. An example of this would be changing the word because to cecause. Gangs will often brag in the graffiti writing about a crime they or others have

committed (National Law Enforcement Institute 1992).

Gang communication includes the flashing of signs which help gang members identify themselves and to show gang affiliation (San Bernadino Sheriff's Employees Benefit Association 1990). Gang members have a language of their own which is known as street language. Street terms will identify a particular person or their status on the street. An example is the term 'original gangster' which means a person who was in a gang when it first started, and the term 'poobutt' means a "wannabe" or a low level gang member. Gang members will refer to each other as 'CUZ' or 'Homeboy' which is a symbol of acceptance. Officer Coughlin stated in his interview that it is of great importance for a street officer to learn to read gang graffiti since it tells a true story. Understanding graffiti will give a police officer the ability to learn who particular gang members are and what gang they are affiliated with and will also help in solving crimes if the gang member happened to brag about it on the graffiti written about the event. Being able to read graffiti will also allow the police officer to keep tabs on gang rivalry or of impending trouble between gangs (Interview 18 Sept 92).

CRIMINAL GANG ACTIVITY

Narcotic Trafficking

The introduction of drugs into the gang culture has changed the whole attitude of gangs as they have discovered a money base and a source of employment. The large amount of money which can be made in the crack cocaine market was the main reason that gangs moved out of the larger cities into smaller cities which offered a new market opportunity (San Bernadino Sheriff's Employee's Benefit Association 1990). Drug dealers recruit gang members to peddle drugs, and they are paid for their efforts. Gang members who are involved in the drug market business believe they have found a way to achieve employment security. According to Maslow's theory of self-actualization, human beings must ascend a ladder of various stages before they can actually realize their potential and self-worth. In this theory a person can only climb to another level of the ladder if he or she reaches fulfillment at a lower stage. Youth will join a gang to fulfill one of these stages, usually the need for acceptance. Once this need is realized they move on,

attempting to reach the level of security which is found in selling drugs (Buhmann Sept 1991). Gangs are a prime asset for drug dealer to exploit, as the gang member is the one who actually holds the drugs and fails to realize or ignores the idea of taking all the risks of arrest and prosecution in exchange for the ability to earn money (Walker 1989). Young gang members are also sought out by drug dealers because they realize that the juvenile justice system is backlogged and the systems penalties lack any real prosecution. In Austin, Texas, the older gang members call their younger compadres "minute men" because they'll only be in jail for a minute. For these reasons gang members are drawn into the drug trafficking excitement and know they have jobs as drug runners with little concern about harsh punishment if caught. Because of the opportunities for employment in the drug trade and the estimation that there are about 1.7-2 million weekly cocaine users in the United States, the drug trade presents unusually stable employment. The young gang member lives with false sense of security and the attainable goal of getting rich (Witkin 1991).

In an interview in Harpers Magazine (March 1989), a member of the Eight Trey Gangster Crip, nicknamed Lil Monster gave his reasoning for gang members' belief that drug trafficking is their way out of ghetto life:

See for White people. . . they go to college as their stepping stone to what they want to get. And some Black people look to drugs as a stepping stone to get the same thing. You got the American Dream over there and you're reaching for it, but you can't

get it. And you got dope right here real close...dealing with the close one you might make enough money to grab the other one. (Bing 1989)

Officer Coughlin believes that gang members are making money selling drugs on the street and that the typical gang member is failing in school. As a result, any real chance for a legal job at good pay is not realistic. Officer Coughlin stated that in 1990, police officers stopped five known gang members working in an open air crack market within a two month period; these particular gang members had a total of 17,700 dollars in cash on their persons probably proceeds from the sale of crack cocaine (Interview 18 Sept 1992). Drugs are the solution for gang members who can't expect to find legal employment; drugs will get them the material items they desire. As long as there are gang members who will sell drugs there will always be drugs available.

Gang members are trying to lessen the odds against them; they know the police will always be a problem, but Crip gangs are making peace with other gangs so that they can freely engage in narcotic trafficking without the problems of gang violence (Monroe 1992). Street gang members don't care whose drugs they sell or where the drugs come from as long as the final outcome of their involvement in this activity produces money. Gangs are also showing signs of sophistication, creating drug funds used to hire attorneys to represent them in drug related arrest (San Bernadino Sheriff's Employee's Benefit Association 1990).

Drive-by Shootings

Much of the fuel for the growth in youth violence flows from the availability of guns and drugs which gang member are eager to possess. One reason for violent acts by youth is that they are de-sensitized to the effects of violence because it is commonplace in their lives and environment; in addition the mass media and entertainment industry supplement de-sensitization with glorified images of gangs in motion picture movies. For many poor youth, the feeling of hopelessness fosters an attitude that paves the way for violent activity. The National Center for Health statistics, which analyzed youth firearm deathrates from 1979-1988 reported that in 1984, records reflected the homicides of 1022 teens between the ages of 15-19 as a result of gun involvement; this number increased to 1641 youth killed by gunfire in 1988 (Witkin 1991). Los Angeles county District Attorney Ira Reimer estimated there are 1000 gangs with 150,00 members in that area. Studies showed that gang related homicides in Los Angeles County increased 200% between 1984-1991. Reimer reports that gang members commit six times as many crimes as people with similar backgrounds who are not affiliated with a gang (Monroe 1992).

Gang related killings in Los Angeles in 1990 accounted for 690 deaths, 35% of the city's homicide rate (Witkin 1991). The drive-by shooting is often a rite of passage for joining a gang or enhancing a reputation. From the

relative safety of a moving vehicle, the shooter simply guns down a member of a rival gang or an innocent bystander (Bing 1989). Los Angeles gang experts have identified three levels of gang membership involved in the carrying of guns. The first is the 'wannabe' who may shoot but won't aim. The second level is the gang member who wants to earn stripes and build a reputation. Such gang members will eventually kill someone, but they have not yet reached the final level, recognition by fellow gang members as a 'hard-core' crazy killer (Witkin 1991).

In the city of Wichita Falls during the period 1989-1991, there was a power struggle between the 112 Crips and the Shotgun 52 Crips over drug territory. During this period, there were several instances of gang violence involving drive-by shootings. Three members of the Shotgun 52 Crips were gunned down and killed, and two other members were shot and wounded. Two members of the 112 Crips were shot and wounded and two other members were stabbed. There was also one reported incident of a drive-by shooting of a city police officer's home. These instances only account for what was actually reported.

In the summer of 1992, the Hispanic gangs became active and were involved in seven reported drive-by shootings of rival gang members' homes or vehicles. The actual number of drive-by shootings committed by these gangs was estimated to be closer to 15 from gang intelligence

gathered. Since the beginning of 1993, there have been reports of seven drive-by shootings. Unlike the more violent Black Crip gangs, the Hispanic gangs have not wounded or killed any rival gang members (Wichita Falls Police Dept. 1993).

GANG INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION PROGRAMS

When creating a prevention program, it is important to create or replace the things missing in a gang-ridden neighborhood. Young people join gangs because they are there; There are few Boy/scout Chapters in South Central Los Angeles (Monroe 1992). If the problem is caused by a fractured family structure, then this problem needs to be addressed by all levels of the community, and all possible resources must be researched for solutions. Parents who are on drugs will neglect or discard a child, leaving the child with no family connection and no future, causing this child to seek the needed protection from a gang which offers a twisted kind of haven for youth looking for the acceptance not found in a broken home (Castro 1992). A 1992 report from the Los Angeles Interagency Gang Task Force recommended greater emphasis on prevention, early intervention, juvenile justice reforms, and education in schools. Creating prevention or intervention programs costs money, and it is important that money allocated for such programs is utilized wisely in order to obtain the best results. For every six

dollars of Federal anti-gang money spent, five dollars go to police and prosecution efforts. This ratio leads many to believe that this program is misdirected. In 1992, the Justice Department will spend most of its 500 million dollar gang budget on law enforcement, while the Department of Health and Human Resources has spent only 40 million dollars on prevention and early intervention programs since 1989 (Monroe 1992).

Athletic Involvement

At risk youth in America need role models to relate to, and successful athletes might be willing to take the responsibility and fill this role. When many gang members have no male influence at home, or when negative male influences are all they have to relate to, role models become more important. Jim Brown, a former football star has started a program called Amer-I-Can. This program has many activities for at-risk youth, from self-esteem classes taught by former gang members to job placement programs especially designed for young black males who need training in people skills and necessary employment orientation skills (Leerhsen 1991).

Another example of a sports figure accepting involvement and responsibility for youth, is Houston Astro Baseball player Steve Finely. After signing a contract with the Astros for 10.4 million dollars, he donated \$250,000 to begin his own charity organization which will focus on

keeping youth in school and off drugs.

Because a gang member's need for role models is often expressed through the wearing of clothes affiliated with a known professional sports team, the professional sports community can play an effective role in getting the message across to young Americans that joining gangs is not the best route to follow. In stores across the nation, the latest hot items are sports apparel with anti-gang slogans urging youth to stop gang violence and stay in school. The line is named Peace N the Hood and Education is the key. Sports figures need to realize that their influence can be a key to stopping the glamorization of gang activity (Castro June 1992).

Gang Initiatives

The best solution to solving the gang problem--or at least gang violence--is for the solutions to come from the source of the problem, the gang members themselves. Following the 1990 riot in Los Angeles, gang members realized that they needed to become involved in the rebuilding of their neighborhood; a truce was initiated by several sets of the Crips and Bloods gang. This truce between four black Blood sets and Three Crip sets is the largest organized peace effort involving 12,000 black gang members (Monroe 1992).

Anthony Perry who works as a community gang worker, was instrumental in outlining the details of the truce pact

between the gangs involved. Mr. Perry outlined the truce pact using the 1949 cease fire accord between Israel and Egypt as a guide, changing diplomatic language to reflect the rules of the street. As a result of the gang truce there was a substantial decrease in the number of deaths related to gang drive-by shootings and random slayings (Life 1992). Charles Norman, also a Los Angeles community gang worker expressed his feelings about the truce, stating it is a relief to the community:

We know it's going to be difficult to sustain peace, but it's the answer to a lot of prayers from mothers, grandmothers, and other folks in the community. (Monroe 1992)

Another initiative is for gang members to attempt to break away from the gang, although such a break goes against the perceived belief that membership is forever. On September of 1992, I spoke with a Crip gang member known as Little Leonard. Leonard stated he was out of the gang and was trying to do right because he was getting married. He stated that being in the gang was getting him nowhere and that he wanted to find a job (Interview 12 Sept 92). The problem with Little Leonard leaving the gang was that he was not making a clean break, since the woman he was going to marry was from a family who had several boys in the gang. On October of 1992, I again spoke with Little Leonard who had begun to affiliate with the gang once again. On the way to jail, I asked Leonard why he fell back into the trap

and he stated, "You know man, there ain't nothing else, you think they will give me a job here?", (referring to the county jail) (Personal interview 10 Oct 92).

While investigating a drive-by shooting at the residence of Ernie Hernandez, a juvenile Hispanic gang member, on November of 1992, he explained why he was stuck in a gang. Ernie stated that the reason his house was being shot at was because he wanted to leave the gang. Ernie stated that members of his own gang are doing the drive-bys in an attempt to scare him into staying in the gang. Ernie stated the gang he is in, has a "life-time" membership. Ernie has since joined the PLM gang after the break up of the VNS gang (Interview 13 Nov 92).

Autopsy Program

An Associated Press column in the Wichita Falls Times and Record News dated January 23, 1993, discussed a possible gang deterrent initiative involving gang members in the Los Angeles area. The program would force gang members to face the harsh realities of violent gang activity. Over 800 people were killed in the Los Angeles area in 1992, as a result of gang violence. In an attempt to lessen the glamorization of gang participation, the program which will begin in February of 1993, will allow gang members to observe autopsies performed on gang members who were killed as a result of their gang related actions. Supporters of this Los Angeles county program believe this project will

shock young gang members into disassociating themselves from gangs.

Critics of this autopsy program believe more positive gains can be made if gang members are shown life saving operations or are required to work in the rehabilitation programs of gang members who have been paralyzed as a result of gang violence. Other critics of this program feel it will only make gang members further desensitized to the effects of violence. According to sponsors of this autopsy program, to avoid any unforeseen future emotional or mental effects for those involved in the program, there will be at least six months follow-up counseling sessions for its participants.

Boston Initiative

An article in the New York Times, dated November 16, 1992 discusses a Boston area program designed to give gang members an alternative to killing and a way back into society. Rodney Dalley is the leader of a Boston youth outreach program he started in 1989 called Gang Peace. Gang Peace is a non-profit street-based program which Mr. Dalley originally founded with his own money. Today, Gang Peace has eight paid staff members and an annual budget of \$180,000 which is funded by both private and public sources. The money from the program is not only used to end gang violence but also to redirect kids toward education and career-oriented goals.

Gang Peace has nearly 600 youth participating in programs ranging from job programs to support groups. Gang Peace does not pressure a member to leave a gang, but does encourage the development of work skills and self-esteem. Gang Peace has been credited by community organizations for helping to reduce the homicide rate among gang members in the city.

Texas Recreational Based Activities

In San Antonio, Texas, Frank Martin, Director of the Texas Chapter of the National Youth Sports Coaches Association, met with San Antonio Spurs assistant coach Gregg Popovich to discuss developing a basketball league for at risk youth in less affluent areas of the city. His philosophy was to get young people off the street at night and into the gyms and parks where they could compete in well supervised sports in a friendly, sportsmanlike environment. This community-based program would carry a strong anti-drug and anti-gang message and would include visits by Spurs basketball players, who would act as positive role models and talk with the youth about staying off drugs and out of gangs. With the backing of the Spurs foundation and Diamond Shamrock Corporation, the Spurs All-America Youth Basketball League was formed. When the league started to play, there were over 1100 participants and 116 teams. This League is expected to increase each year because of the interest and enthusiasm shown (Buhmann Sept 1991).

A community can do a great deal to help solve the gang problems in their neighborhoods, simply by creating or volunteering time and effort to getting the youth interested in recreational activities. These programs must be available when the youth are at the most risk of getting into trouble. Simply stated, these programs must be offered during the late night hours as well as during the day. These volunteer programs must go head-to-head against the gangs for these at-risk youth attention. These programs must have valid goals and educate the youth against joining gangs and drug involvement as well as being fun and exciting. Programs should offer youth the chance to be creative, such as learning air-paint brushing instead of graffiti, boxing and wrestling instead of knife fighting and team sports in place of gang fights. Youth join gangs and get involved in deviant behavior because they are bored and have nothing to do. A truly concerned community will make an effort to intervene in this process in hopes that the youth of today can be convinced that there is more to life than gangs and that there is opportunity in this world for them (Buhmann Sept 1991).

CONCLUSION

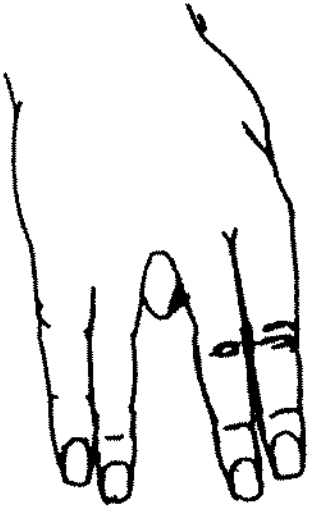
The issue of gangs is a problem that will be with our society for years to come. Without community involvement to supplement law enforcement efforts, the control of our neighborhoods may be lost to the gangs and the criminal activities associated with them. Drugs and gangs are synonymous in terms of what they can do to a community and the negative effects they create in dissolving the security of neighborhoods (Bocklet 1990).

When confronting the gang problem, the issue must be viewed from a standpoint of finding the root of the problem, not dwelling on negative situations that already exist (Monroe 1992). Youth are usually lured into the gang world as a way to gain acceptance and status they cannot find elsewhere, which can be traced back to failures of adult society. Society must take the responsibility for leading children in the right direction, which can only be done through education and programs which can be monitored, enabling the process of measuring what works and what can be improved on. We can't continue to arrest and confine our

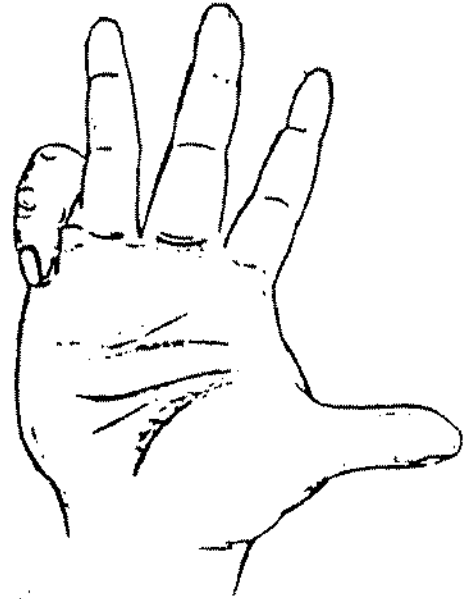
children as they are our future and they deserve better
(Buhmann 1991).

APPENDIX I

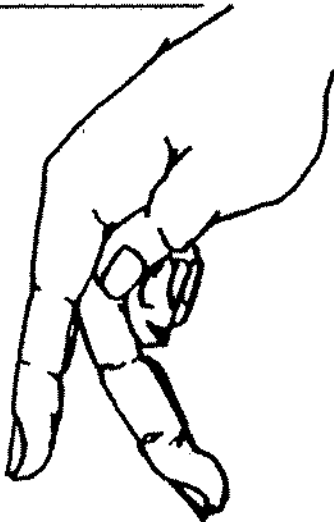
"MAIN STREET CRIPS"



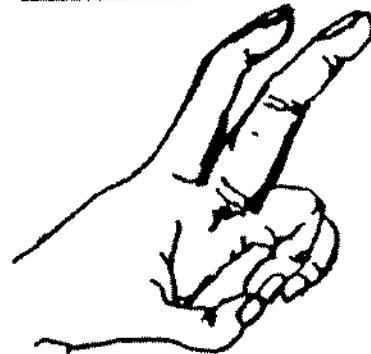
"83rd ST. GANGSTER CRIPS"



"AVALON GANGSTER CRIPS"



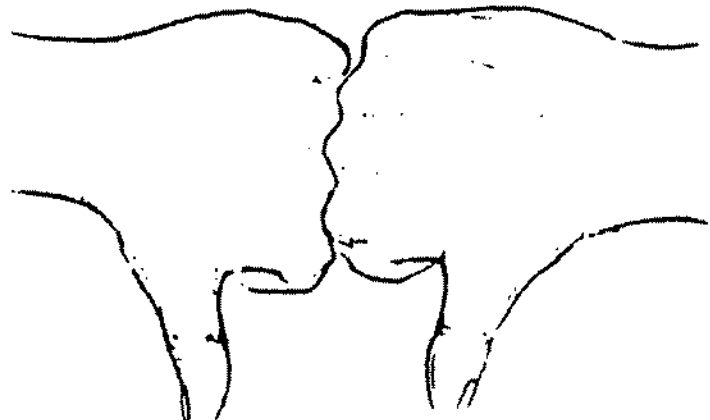
"PLAYBOY GANGSTER CRIPS"



(112/ Wichita Falls)
"HOOVER CRIPS"



"HARLEM GODFATHER CRIPS"



APPENDIX II

GUIDE TO READING GANG GRAFFITI

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA HISPANIC

1. STEP ONE

VARRIO OR BARRIO
MEANING NEIGHBORHOOD
OR GROUP/GANG

S L
V S R
S U
- 14 -

THE LETTER 'S' IS FOR
STOCKTON.

THE LETTERS 'SS' IS FOR
SOUTHSIDE. 'NS' WOULD BE
NORTHSIDE, ETC. THE GEO-
GRAPHICAL AREA SOMETIMES
MAY BE PLACED AFTER THE
ACTUAL GANG/CLIQUE
ABBREVIATION.

2. STEP TWO

TRIPLE 'S' MEANING
SOUTH SIDE STOCKTON
GEOGRAPHICAL AREA AND
IDENTIFICATION OF THIS
GROUP/CLIQUE.

S L
V S R
S U
- 14 -

3. STEP THREE

THE ACTUAL GANG/GROUP
ABBREVIATION OF; LU -
LITTLE UNITY, FROM SOUTH
SIDE STOCKTON. A CLIQUE
WITHIN A CLIQUE.

S L
V S R
S U
- 14 -

4. STEP FOUR

THE LETTER 'R' MEANT TO
BE "RIFA"; MEANING RULE,
REIN, CONTROL, WE'RE NO. 1

S L
V S R
S U
- 14 -

5. STEP FIVE

THE NUMBER '14'
STANDS FOR THE
FOURTEENTH LETTER OF
THE ALPHABET 'N'
MEANING "NORTE" OR
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

S L
V S R
S U
- 14 -

6. STEP SIX

THE LETTER 'L' OR "L's" IS
USED TO MEAN THE VATO LOCO
OR THE CRAZY ONES/BRAVE
ONES. NOT NORMALLY A
SEPARATE GANG OR CLIQUE.

APPENDIX II

GUIDE TO READING GANG GRAFFITI

BLACK GANG GRAFFITI

1. STEP ONE

THE LETTERS "OG"
DENOTES THE
INDIVIDUAL IS AN
ORIGINAL GANGSTER;
IMPLYING BEING A
FOUNDING MEMBER

OG/SNIPER
8/3
HC
SUR
P/K

2. STEP TWO

"SNIPER" IS THE MONIKER
IS THE INDIVIDUAL THAT
SCRAWLED THE/HIS GANG
GRAFFITI.

3. STEP THREE

THE NUMBERS "8/3" MEAN
8-TRAY; FOR 83RD STREET
USUALLY A SPECIFIC SET/
GANG OR BLOCK/CLIQUE OF
A GANG. IT MAY ALSO BE
WRITTEN 8-3.

OG/SNIPER
8/3
HC
SUR
P/K

4. STEP FOUR

THE LETTERS "HC", MEANS
HOOVER CRIP. A SPECIFIC
CRIP GANG.

5. STEP FIVE

THE "SUR" IS SPANISH
FOR THE CARDINAL
DIRECTION OF SOUTH.
IN GRAFFITI IT MEANS
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA. IT
HAS BEEN EMULATED FROM
THE HISPANIC GANGS.

OG/SNIPER
8/3
HC
SUR
P/K

6. STEP SIX

THE LETTERS "P/K" MEANS
PIRU KILLER A RIVAL TO
CRIPS. IT MAY ALSO BE
"B/K" MEANING BLOOD
KILLER OR "P/187" MEANS
PIRU MURDERER: SEC 187
PENAL CODE FOR MURDER.

OG/SNIPER
8/3
HC
SUR
P/K
or
B/K

APPENDIX III

WHAT DO THE FOLLOWING "STREET" TERMS REPRESENT?

- "POINTS" OR "RIGS" - NEEDLES, SPON
- "TECATO" - HEROIN ADDICT
- "DEAL-BAGGIES" - SANDWICH BAG
- "BUMP-BUNNIE" - } FEMALE ABUSE OF SPEED
"SPEED WHORE" - }
- "CRANKSTER" - ABUSE OF SPEED - MALE
- "BUMP" - SMALL AMOUNT OF DRUG
- "TOOTER" - SUFFR COKE
- "JONES-N" - SNOT COCAINE
- "RUNNER" - INTER TAKING DRUGS
- "BUMP MONKEY" - MESS UP ON DRUGS, TAKE DRUGS INSTEAD OF MONEY
- "MIXING SPOON" - USED WITH RIGS
- "ROCKET FUEL" - COCAINE, HEROIN
- "SLANGIN" - SELLING CRACK
- "BOLO" - LARGE CRACK ROCK
- "STEM" - SMOKING PIPE
- "MICRO DOTS" - LSD
- "JIM JONES" - JOINT LOADED WITH LSD, THEN DIPPED IN PCP
- "GLASS HOUSE" - POLICE DEPT
- "EIGHT TRACK" - 2 1/2 GRAM OF COKE
- "POOH BUTT" - WHAT A BE GANG MEMBER
- "MARK" - " " " "

APPENDIX III (Cont.)

"KITE" - letters

"DEAD PRESIDENTS" - money

"TAKE OUT OF THE BOX" - Killing someone

"YOU GOT FOUR FEET?" - do you want to fight

"SQUAB" - Fight

"RUSH" - Attack another gang

"TALKING HEAD" - Arguing

"JACK" - Pulling off a robbery

"RIDE ON" - drive by shooting

"BUSTIN" - going out shooting

"DIMDAY" - Dusk

"GAT" - Gun

"GUAGE" - Shotgun

"TREY-EIGHT" - 38 Cal

"HOOPTY" - Car

"MUD DUCK" - Ugly girl

"FOOLED OUT" - Made a mistake

"DO A TRAIN" - leaving

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