

————— **Research Report** —————

**Street Gangs: A Review of
Theory, Interventions, and Implications
for Corrections**

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**Street Gangs:
A Review of Theory, Interventions, and Implications for Corrections**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proliferation of street gang membership and activity in Canadian society has become a national concern. Sharing in this concern is the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), which houses a significant portion of the street gang population within its walls. Recently, CSC has recognized the specific challenges that street gang members and their activities pose to the safety and operations of its institutions and, as a result, is actively assessing best practices in gang management strategies.

This paper aims to review the literature surrounding street gangs to better inform CSC policies, procedures, and future research. Gang definitions, the evolution of street gangs and the current scope of the street gang problem, both inside and outside the institution, are presented in an American and Canadian context. Following, theories of gang development are reviewed in an effort to understand why street gangs are formed, while a review of gang intervention strategies and their effectiveness aims to discern the most effective ways of preventing and intervening in gang membership. Finally, the implications of the street gang literature on CSC are examined.

Report Highlights:

- There is little consensus among social scientists as to the meaning of the term “gang”. The primary obstacle to a universal definition is the changing dynamics of what represents a gang (or any group) over time. Definitions vary according to economic, political, social, and cultural norms. There is a lack of consistency both in American and Canadian gang literature regarding a definition of “gang”.
- Street gangs have a long history. Reports of street gang activity in England, Germany, Switzerland, and France date back to the 14th and 15th centuries. Street gang activity in North America grew out of the class structured society based on ethnicity and racial distinctions that resulted from the industrial revolution and immigration. Other gangs evolved out of rebellion against their low social status, engaging in criminal acts as a form of revolution as well as for profit.
- The level of street gang activity has grown in alarming rates. The United States reported the existence of 700 to 3000 gangs in 1982, a number that grew to 30,000 by 1998. In Los Angeles County alone, there are 1,142 identified street gangs. While the number of street gangs in Canada is substantially less than that in the United States, research has found that they are increasingly presenting themselves in smaller cities, rural areas, and Aboriginal reserves as well as becoming more organized and criminally sophisticated.
- Although often ignored in street gang literature, female street gangs are also in existence in American and Canadian society. Female street gangs can be involved in the gang on a number of different levels, and are often involved in violent activity. Canadian research has found that incarcerated female street gang members have a

higher disregard for others, more aggression, lower frustration tolerance, and more hostility problems than non-affiliated offenders.

- Estimates of gang presence in American institutions have found that between 9 and 25% of the American prison population is affiliated with a gang. In Canadian institutions, the proportion of inmates affiliated with a criminal organization is reported to be approximately 14%. Both American and Canadian research highlights that gang affiliated offenders tend to be much different than non-affiliated offenders, especially in the risk they pose to the institution. Both American and Canadian incarcerated gang members were more likely to be involved in violence and contraband offences while in the institution.
- Theories on the development of gangs and gang membership are divided into two classes: criminological and psychological. For the most part, criminological theories focus on the social aspects of crime, such as economic and social strain, social relationships, the moral order, and attachment to society. Psychological theories focus on the psychological processes which make people vulnerable to, or guide their decisions toward, gang membership.
- Gang interventions can likewise be divided into two classes: human/social intervention strategies and law enforcement strategies. Included in the human/social intervention strategies are prevention programs (proactive strategies which attempt to discourage gang membership), community intervention programs (which attempt to mobilize the community to become actively involved in controlling the gang problem), and school-based intervention programs (which provide education and programming to gang members in the school environment). The primary law enforcement strategy, gang suppression, involves the modification of elements of the legal system to better address the gang problem.
- In general, community intervention programs were found to be more effective in areas where the gang problem was just emerging, while prevention and school-based programs were more effective in areas that had a chronic gang problem. Overall, early prevention programs have shown the most promise in terms of diverting youth from joining gangs. However, the majority of gang interventions in use have yet to be evaluated, and many of those which have been evaluated lack a strong statistical basis.
- A number of gang intervention strategies have been utilized in American Institutions. Included among these are bus therapy (transfer), gang recognition/legitimization, set-off policy, gang suppression, separate housing/programming, debriefing/denouncing, the 'snitch' farm, and instilling a zero tolerance policy. The majority of these strategies have not been evaluated, but some were more successful than others. Gang recognition/legitimization and the set-off policy, for example, were ineffective.
- CSC has a number of policies in place to address the management of gangs in its institutions. To date, these policies and procedures have not been evaluated to ascertain their effectiveness in controlling gang activity, recruitment, violence, and

desistance. However, a number of studies are underway which aim to address these issues.

- The review of the research presents several suggestions for future best practices in gang management. Paramount is the accurate identification of the gang problem within each institution, especially in considering the risk that gang members pose to institutional safety. Gang management rather than gang elimination should be the focus, and a comprehensive approach should be considered. Negotiating with gang leaders or denying the existence of a gang problem should be avoided. Finally, a multidisciplinary task force should be established to develop an appropriate action plan for the management of the gang problem in each institution.

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INTRODUCTION

"Anyone who has studied gangs over a period of time will admit that the more one studies them, the more complex they are. At best, we can come to understand a bit about certain features of gangs at given points of time. Gangs are dynamic, flexible and ever-changing." (William B. Sanders, 1994)

Street gangs have been in existence for centuries. Reference to a type of adolescent gang is made by Saint Augustine (AD 354-430) in his Confessions, describing his own criminal involvement as a member of a group of youth (Covey, 2003). In Great Britain, gangs were common during the 14th and 15th centuries (as reflected in the writings of authors such as Chaucer) while 17th century church and court records identify the presence of youth gangs in England, Germany, Switzerland and France (Gillis, 1974; Klein, 1995; Sheldon et al., 1997). Later, several events in societal evolution, such as the industrial revolution and the migration of European settlers to North America, created the breeding grounds for slum conditions and poverty in a class structured society. For many, gangs became a source of identity, social status, and economic survival in these dire conditions (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996).

For as long as they have existed, gangs have been an issue of social concern. From this concern grew a desire to learn more about gangs, their formation, and what can be done to combat them. The first social scientific examination of the gang phenomenon occurred with Frederick M. Thrasher's book, 'The Gang: A Study of 1,313 Gangs in Chicago' (1927). Thrasher, a sociologist at the University of Chicago, proposed an etiological sequence for gang development based on the belief that gang formation was a result of the psychological and group processes of youth in lower-class communities. His focus on both individual and community causes of gang membership significantly influenced the future directions of many gang researchers. Clifford Shaw and Henry MacKay (1931), also from the University of Chicago, theorized that second generation immigrants formed gangs due to the absence of neighbourhood social infrastructure and community organizational abilities, an absence which resulted from immigrant isolation from mainstream society. Albert Cohen (1955) theorized that the alienation and frustration of being a lower-class person in a middle-class system of education was a major factor contributing to gang formation, while Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin

(1960) hypothesized that gang formations resulted from the perception by lower class youth that the system provided little or no opportunity for upward mobility.

In the late 1960's and early 1970's, the focus of gang research shifted away from theories on gang development and moved towards the area of gang prevention and intervention strategies. The work of four researchers, Spergel (1966), Klein (1971), and Short and Strodtbeck (1974) were instrumental in this shift of focus and in setting the stage for the research that was to follow. Each of these researchers evaluated programs that were established to deal with the 'gang problem' and was based on previously established theories about gangs and gang behaviour.

This paper presents a review of the American and Canadian literature on gangs, specifically street gangs. Gang definitions are presented, and difficulties regarding defining a gang are discussed. The evolution of street gangs and the current scope of the street gang problem will be presented, both in an American and Canadian context, as well as the scope of female involvement in street gangs and gang presence in American and Canadian institutions. Following, theories of gang development will be reviewed in an effort to understand why street gangs are formed. A review of gang intervention strategies and their effectiveness, both inside and outside the institutions, will aim to discern the most effective ways of preventing and intervening in gang membership. Finally, the implications of street gang literature on the Correctional Service of Canada will be examined.

DEFINITION OF A STREET GANG

Definitional Issues

There is little consensus among social scientists as to the meaning of the term “gang”. Part of the problem stems from the fact that many definitions can be extremely general and inclusive. For instance, the definition noted in Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (1997) provides a range of meanings inclusive of “groups and bands; a group of persons working to unlawful or antisocial ends; a band of antisocial adolescents; and a group of persons having informal and usu. close social relations (p. 479)”. On the other hand, the Gage Canadian Dictionary (1991) defines gang as “a group of people acting or going around together, especially for criminal or other purposes generally considered antisocial; a group of people working together under one supervisor: Two gangs of workmen were repairing the road; and a group of people closely associated for social purposes (p. 485)”. Obviously, these definitions leave much room for interpretation and do not allow for a thorough understanding of the gang phenomenon.

The main problem inherent in defining what constitutes a gang lies in the changing dynamics of what represents gangs (or any group) over time. In as much as economic, political, social, cultural, and sub-cultural norms and conditions vary throughout time, so do the definitions of what constitutes a gang. Puffer’s (1912) conceptualization of the gang as nothing but a normal play group for boys and Thrasher’s (1927) portrayal of gangs as an interstitial group of boys brought together through conflict do not necessarily describe the complexity of street gangs today. A pertinent example of the evolution of gangs and, inherently, their definition is the relationship between gang activity and organized crime. In past years, organized crime and gang activity were very distinct events motivated by different goals. In recent years, however, this distinction has been blurred (Kenney & Finckenaer, 1995). This has resulted in a blurring of the definitions between gangs, gang activity, criminal organizations, and organized crime (Kelly & Caputo, 2003). While the issue of definitional inconsistency is problematic for several reasons, it makes a review or comparison of gang literature especially difficult.

The literature further suggests that a contributing factor in the problem of defining ‘gangs’ stems from the often biased information presented by the media. Joan Moore (1993) suggests that a history of stereotyping has shaped the definitions of gangs, listing the following as a sample of the most destructive stereotypes:

- a) They are composed of males (no females) who are violent, addicted to drugs and alcohol, sexually hyperactive, unpredictable, and confrontational.
- b) They are either all African-American or all Hispanic.
- c) They thrive in inner-city neighbourhoods where they dominate, intimidate, and prey upon innocent citizens.
- d) They all deal heavily in drugs, especially crack cocaine.
- e) “A gang is a gang is a gang” – in other words, they are all alike or “you see one and you see them all”.
- f) There is no good in gangs; it is all bad (a corollary to this is that anyone who would want to join a gang must be stupid or crazy).
- g) Gangs are basically criminal enterprises and that youth start gangs in order to collectively commit crimes. In other words, there is a tendency to confuse individual and group criminality.
- h) The “West Side Story” image of aggressive, rebellious, but nice kids has been replaced in recent years by the “gangster” image of a much disciplined criminal organization complete with “soldiers.”

Moore’s analysis on stereotyping has merit. To understand and formulate anti-gang strategies, gang analysis must be careful not to ignore the research of the past or the present and be cognizant of a progressive socio-political environment. As noted by Saunders (1994), gangs are dynamic, flexible and ever-changing.

Traditional Gang Definitions

Several prominent researchers have proposed gang definitions which are widely used in gang literature. Perhaps the most cited definition is that which is operationalized by Klein (1971), distinguishing a gang as any identifiable group of youngsters who:

- a) are generally perceived as a distinct aggregation by others in their neighbourhood;
- b) recognize themselves as a denotable group (often with a group name);
- c) have been involved in a sufficient number of delinquent incidents to elicit a negative response from neighborhood residents and/or law enforcement agencies.

This definition is not without its critics (Sanders, 1994). It excludes criminal gangs imported from other countries, gangs which operate in relative secrecy and gangs which consist mainly of young adults. However, Klein's definition has the advantage of capturing the essence of the word "gang" while speaking to the dynamics of gang formation and interaction as well as external reaction to gangs.

Gardner (1983) gives a more specific definition of what a gang entails, identifying gang members as being in their early teens and twenties, claiming a group name or territory, meeting regularly, possessing leadership, and being involved in criminal activity. Spergel, Ross, Curry, and Chance's (1989) definition concentrates more on the outward elements which identify gang membership as being indicative of what a gang is. Included among these elements are involvement in criminal activities, the possession of symbols or symbolic behaviour, self-admission, and identification by others (such as the police and other gang members).

Miller (1975) conducted a survey of 160 criminal justice and youth service agencies in an effort to amalgamate the common elements in their respective definitions of "gang". The results found six attributes which were essentially consensual among the definitions as being characteristic of a gang:

1. Organization
2. Possessing identifiable leadership
3. Identifying with a particular area (territory)
4. Associating on a continuous basis
5. Having a specific purpose
6. Engaging in illegal activities

These attributes are likewise reflected in the majority of theoretical definitions of “gang”. Caution should be taken, however, in applying these elements to 21st century gangs. Although the majority of the attributes may be consistent across time, many socio-economic changes have occurred since Miller conducted his research in 1974 which may have altered the scope of what “gang” involves (Goldstein, 1991).

Canadian Gang Definitions

A unanimous definition of the gang construct likewise eludes Canadian researchers (Kelly & Caputo, 2003). The majority of Canadian literature on gangs defines them within the realm of ‘criminal organizations’, as reflected in the official definition in the *Canadian Criminal Code*, which outlines that a criminal organization refers to a group, however organized, that:

- a) is composed of three or more persons in or outside Canada; and
- b) has as one of its main purposes or main activities the facilitation or commission of one or more serious offences that, if committed, would likely result in the direct or indirect receipt of a material benefit, including a financial benefit, by the group or by any of the persons who constitute the group (Section 467.1).

This definition of gangs is also utilized in research by the Canadian Department of Justice. Other Canadian organizations have forgone the Criminal Code definition for other options. Statistics Canada (2002) rejects the Criminal Code definition for being too broad, while research conducted by the Solicitor General of Canada (1998) defines a criminal organization as “...any group, association or other body consisting of two or more individuals, whether formally or informally organized, where the negative impact of said activity could be considered significant from an economic, social, violence generation, health and safety and/or environmental perspective (p. 2)”.

Research by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP; Dickson-Gilmore, & Whitehead, 2003) has outlined the following in their description of criminal organizations, more specifically, organized crime:

“organized crime is an on-going activity motivated by political, social and/or economic conditions or ends (or some combination thereof), which is articulated through a network of both formal and informal cooperative social relationships whose structure is greater than any single member, with the potential for corruption and/or violence to facilitate the criminal process (p. 13)”.

The Criminal Intelligence Service of Canada (CISC), a branch of the RCMP, prefers not to define criminal organizations in general, but instead opts to establish a unique definition for each type of organization. They are unique in that they do not consider street gangs as a type of criminal organization, instead categorizing them as a “serious crime issue” while acknowledging both their connections with criminal organizations and their propensity to become as organized as traditional criminal organizations (CISC, 2003).

The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) takes a different approach in considering the relationship between street gangs and criminal organizations. CSC maintains that gangs and organized crime are not mutually exclusive, rather that they are distinguished by the degree of sophistication and entrenchment of the criminal activity. That is, gang activity and organized crime activity differ only in their degree of magnitude, not necessarily in the nature of the offence (Correctional Service of Canada, 1996). Thus, street gangs are included in CSC’s definition of a criminal organization as “a group or association that is involved in ongoing illegal activities. This includes groups, organizations, associations or other bodies that were established in the community before their members were incarcerated, as well as groups established in our institutions” (Correctional Service of Canada, 2003a).

SCOPE OF THE GANG PROBLEM

History of Street Gangs

As previously stated, the phenomenon of street gang activity is not a new one. In North America, elements such as the industrial revolution and the migration of European settlers created a class structured society based in ethnic and racial distinctions. For many, gangs became a source of identity, social status, and economic survival (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996). In the early 1800's street gangs, such as the Long Bridge Boys and the Fly Boys, were not involved extensively in criminal activity (Valdez, 2000). These early gangs were mostly mischievous and predatory groups. Soon after, the first American criminal street gangs were reported (Goldstein, 1991).

The Forty Thieves, an Irish-American street gang, was the first criminal street gang to be recognized in the United States. The New York based gang formed in 1820 to rebel against the low social status and prejudice shown toward Irish immigrants and engaged in criminal behaviour in part for profit and to relieve their frustration. Soon after, other Irish gangs developed in the area, and rivalries and turf wars ensued. Throughout the 19th century, various gangs appeared across the United States. Chinese gangs developed in California, mainly as a revolt against their poor treatment in the railway industry. Philadelphia saw the rapid rise of street gang activity at this time. The city had reported its first gang activity in 1840 and by 1870 laid claim to over 100 street gangs. New York remained the hotbed of street gang activity in the 19th century, with the presence of Jewish, Italian, African-American, and Irish street gang reported in 1865 (Valdez, 2000).

As the 20th century approached, a new type of class distinction brought about a new type of street gang. No longer were class distinctions due to ethnicity but to economic differences. As the economy slipped into the Great Depression, more and more gangs developed across America, and violence between conflicting street gangs increased. Mexican and west-coast African-American gangs developed in Los Angeles, Detroit, Boston, and Chicago. After World War II, new types of gangs began to emerge, including motorcycle and prison gangs. In the years leading up to the current situation, gang membership, proliferation, and violence increased, with every American state now holding claim to street gang ownership (Valdez, 2000).

The Scope of the Problem: American Perspective

Largely due to differing definitions of what constitutes a gang and various methods of identifying gang members, estimates of the actual number of gangs and gang members in the U.S. fluctuate. Nevertheless, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) statistics (1996) illustrates the scope of the problem. The FBI (1996) reports that violent street gangs are active in 94% of the medium and large sized cities in America (many of these cities have up to 40 different gangs), and that gang membership exceeds 400,000. A study conducted by the national Youth Gang Centre (1999) found that by 1997, every city in the U.S. with a population over 250,000 and 92% of the second-largest cities (populations between 100,000 and 249,999) reported the presence of active youth gangs. In addition, this survey found that approximately 72% of the urban areas in the U.S. (population above 50,000) are plagued by such gangs. This research determined that there was an estimated 30,533 youth gangs with 815,896 active members throughout the United States. However, Petersen (2004) cautions that as these gang figures are estimates obtained from law enforcement agencies, they may be over or underestimated and should be regarded with caution.

More worrisome than the actual number of street gangs, however, is their rate of growth. A national survey conducted by Miller (1982) estimated the existence of 700 to 3000 gangs in the largest cities in the United States. Howell (1998) reported estimates of more than 30,000 gangs with a membership of over 800,000. This exponential increase is also apparent from the number of U.S. cities reporting gang involvement (from 54 in 1961 to 94 in 1970, 172 in 1980, and 766 in 1992; Klein, 1993), as well as the escalating rate of violence attributed to gang activity. It is the violence associated with gangs which arouses public anxiety and has made gang intervention a high priority in American National and State policy. It is generally assumed that delinquents who belong to gangs are more violent than delinquent youth who are not gang members (Klein, 1995) and that there is a progression in youth who join gangs from minor crime towards more extensive and more violent criminal involvement (Elliott & Menard, 1993).

While there is little doubt that the number of gangs and gang membership has increased rapidly since the mid-eighties, the association with increased violence is less certain. At one extreme, certain gangs can be associated with a tremendous amount of

violence. In 1995 there were 790 gang homicides in Los Angeles County, where there were an estimated 1,142 identified street gangs (Block, 1995). Other gangs (i.e. "suburban" gangs) are associated with comparatively little violent crime. It is unclear, therefore, whether such increases in youth homicides are due to increased nation-wide gang membership, increased drug trafficking, greater prevalence and use of weapons, or an increase in youth violence nationally (Goldstein et. al., 1994; Klein, 1993). While such questions await empirical clarification by social scientists, even the most cautious current gang writers view the problem of street gangs in America as substantial and growing.

The Scope of the Problem: Canadian Perspective

The street gang problem is not unique to American cities. Canada likewise experiences its share of problems with street gangs, although not to the extent experienced in the United States. Nor has gang research in Canada received the in depth attention it has in the United States. During the 1980s, Canadian street gangs were receiving close attention from the media and law enforcement, spurring more research in the area. The etiology of Canadian street gangs was found to follow similar developmental patterns as those in the United States. Ethnic differences, limited opportunities and economic interests (elements especially applicable to immigrant youth) have been found to be contributing factors in street gang membership in Canada (Covey, 2003). A major problem in addressing "gangs" and their activities in Canada is the limited amount of Canadian academic research. The majority of gang data in Canada emanates from journalistic reporting and police sources.

Early academic researchers and media reports on street gangs in Canada identified a number of gangs, particularly in Canada's major urban centers. Haitian street gangs were found mainly in Montreal (Le Blanc & Lancôt, 1994), Jamaican "posses" were reportedly concentrated in Toronto and Southern Ontario (Gay & Marquart, 1993), the Aboriginal "warriors" were found to be particularly problematic in Winnipeg (Canadian Press, 1995) and various Asian street gangs operated in Vancouver (Klein, 2002). One study of interest was conducted by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in 1990. The report noted that street gangs were not a passing fad in Canada and were likely to

persist. They were found to be influenced by American culture and be involved in many activities, including swarmings, drug sales, assaults, extortion, and prostitution.

More recent research by CISC (a branch of the RCMP; 2003) reports that street gangs have increasingly presented themselves in smaller cities, rural areas, and on Aboriginal reserves. It stipulates that Canadian street gangs are becoming more organized and criminally sophisticated. They are becoming involved in activities such as counterfeit cheque and debit card fraud and are promoting themselves through internet websites. They are also increasingly supporting and facilitating the activities of more established organized crime groups. The report also points out the increase in gang numbers in Canadian areas such as the greater Toronto and Montreal areas as well as an increase in the amount of gang violence and rivalries.

Female Street Gangs

Prior to Anne Campbell's (1984) revolutionary book *The Girls in the Gang*, very little was known about female street gangs. While popular claims attempt to reveal the recent insurgence of violence among young women (Tremblay, 2000), reports of female street gang membership in the United States can be found from as early as the 19th century (Valdez, 2000). Early research on this era of female gang members found that females were actively involved in violence (most often fighting) and held authoritative roles and positions in their gangs, rather than being mere "sex objects" (Miller, 2002).

The scope of the female street gang problem is difficult to ascertain, due in part to an underestimation of membership by official data sources (Curry, Ball, & Fox, 1994). Also complicating matters is the fact that females can be involved in several types of gangs:

- a) mixed-gender gangs with both male and female members
- b) auxiliary gangs; female gangs that are affiliated with male gangs
- c) independent female gangs (Miller, 1975).

Research has found that of those females who are involved in street gang activity, 57.3% were involved in mixed-gender gangs, 36.4% in female gangs affiliated with male gangs, and 6.4% were part of an autonomous female gang. These distributions vary

across ethnic backgrounds, with African-American females more likely to be in independent or mixed-gender gangs while Latina females are more likely to be affiliated with male gangs (Curry, 1997).

Several theories exist attempting to explain female gang formation and membership; however, two theories are predominant in the literature. The first, similar to the Strain theory of delinquency (see the theories of crime development section), explains gang membership are the lower-class female's attempt to fulfill their middle-class goals in the absence of legitimate means to do so. In an effort to achieve and compensate for their social and economic situation, they seek the illegitimate means of gang activity (Rosenbaum, 1996). The second theory explains gang membership by suggesting that females seek out gangs in an effort to fulfill personal, social, and emotional needs which are not realized by their own homes, which are often abusive and/or dysfunctional (Chesney-Lind, 1993).

A recent profile of female gang members in Canada (Mackenzie & Johnson, 2003) examined differences between 36 incarcerated female gang members and 36 non-gang members in a number of Canadian Federal Institutions. Female gang members made up 6% of the total inmate population in 1999 and were on average younger than the general population. Female gang members were more likely than non-members to have been convicted of a violent offence, however non-gang members accounted for a slightly larger proportion of homicide offences. This finding coincides with the results showing that female gang members were more likely than non-gang members to have higher security ratings and higher levels of risk. Female gang members were also higher in needs than non-gang members, specifically in the areas of associates and attitudes. Further analysis into the attitudes domain shows gang members have a higher disregard for others, more aggression, lower frustration tolerance, and more hostility problems than non-gang members. Surprisingly, and contrary to theory, female gang members had significantly *less* need in the family/marital domain than did non-gang members.

Gang Presence in Correctional Institutions

American Institutions

In a national study on the presence of gangs in American Institutions, Camp and Camp (1985) identified 114 gangs with a membership of 12,643 in 33 prison systems. As a result, they estimated that 3% of the adult prison populations were gang affiliated and attributed 50% of U.S. prison management problems to gang presence. In Knox's & Tromanhauser's (1991) survey, Warden's estimates of gang members in their facilities yielded a national estimate of 10% (slightly higher for juvenile institutions). A more recent survey by the National Gang Crime Research Center (1996) found that gang membership in adult state correctional facilities in the U.S. increased from 9.4% in 1991 to 24.7% in 1999. While some allowance must be made for false claims of gang membership (for status, or self-preservation reasons), there exists disparity between official estimates of gang presence and inmate reports of gang presence. This suggests that U.S. correctional personnel are simply unaware of the magnitude of the problem in their own institutions which implies not only poor intelligence, but also staff ignorance about gangs and gang management. For this reason, Knox (1994) and more recent writers on gang membership in prisons (Toller & Tsagaris, 1996) view staff training on gangs and the institution's gang policy as essential not only for effective gang intervention, but for staff safety.

It is important to highlight that gang members tend to be much different types of inmates than are non-gang affiliated inmates. Sheldon (1991) found that, in a Nevada prison, inmates who were gang members differed very little from non-gang inmates on most socio-demographic variables (such as age, family history, and education), but were significantly different in their employment and criminal histories. Gang members were more likely to have had no previous employment or listed occupation, more juvenile court referrals, and more prior commitments to juvenile correctional facilities. Examinations of prior adult criminal records found that gang members had more prior arrests (32% had 15 or more priors compared with only 7% of the non-gang members) and more serious charges (38% had five or more felony arrests compared with 12% of the non-gang members).

An analysis of the institutional behaviour of gang members suggests the increased risk gang members pose in the institution. Comparisons with non-gang inmates indicated that gang members had significantly more disciplinary offences (especially drug and fighting offences), more “guilty” decisions in disciplinary hearings, and significantly less enrolment in prison work and rehabilitation programs. Such data suggest that gang members as a group are higher in risk for violence both inside and outside prison, have greater needs (especially in the employment and drug abuse domains) and are more resistive to participating in rehabilitative programming (Sheldon, 1991).

A study of gang members in 44 juvenile correctional facilities (Knox & Tromanhauser, 1991) found gang members had a significantly higher incidence of physical fights than non-gang members in the 12-month period prior to confinement, earlier and more serious drug and alcohol abuse, earlier sexual activity and more frequent diagnoses of sexually transmitted diseases. Taken together, these studies confirm staff concerns of the negative effects of gang presence in institutions and provide an empirical justification for implementing gang intervention strategies in correctional facilities. Importantly, Knox and Tromanhauser’s (1991) research found that almost half (46.1%) of the youth surveyed reported gang membership, an estimate that is much larger than earlier estimates of the prevalence of gang members in America’s institutions.

Canadian Institutions

The combination of increased gang activity in Canada and criminal justice interventions targeting organized crime has culminated in the growth of the gang affiliated offender population in Canadian institutions. In their report on the changing profile of the federal inmate population, Boe et al (2003) report that the proportion of inmates affiliated with a criminal organization increased significantly from 12% (N = 821) in March of 1997 to 14% (N = 1218) in March of 2002. By November of 2002, the number of incarcerated offenders affiliated with a criminal organization increased to 1696, an increase of 11% (Leger, 2003).

Canadian research on the characteristics of gang affiliated federal inmates is consistent with similar American research. Nafekh and Stys found that, in general, gang affiliates were younger than non-affiliates at time of admission and received longer

sentences. Gang affiliates were rated as having lower motivation levels, lower reintegration potential, and as more likely to have needs in the areas of associates and attitudes. Street gang members in specific were found to be African-Canadian, more likely to be admitted for a violent offence, and to be classified as a high-risk offender. Street gang members were more likely than non members to have a history of violent offences and to have needs in the areas of attitudes, associates, employment, and community functioning.

The impact of gang members on the daily operations of federal institutions has been a growing concern for CSC. The presence of gang members poses various challenges for operations, including power and control issues, gang rivalries, drug distribution, recruitment, and intimidation and corruption of staff (Leger, 2003). CISC (2003) reports that street gang members have been found to be involved in criminal activities and gang recruitment inside federal institutions and to sometimes influence gang activity outside of the institutions. Street gang members are known to intimidate institutional staff and to mature criminally in federal institutions. These reports are consistent with findings by Nafekh and Stys, who report that the presence of street gang members influences criminal activity in the institutions and that street gang members are significantly more likely to be directly involved in assaults on inmates and staff and in contraband seizures than non-affiliated offenders.

THEORIES OF GANG DEVELOPMENT

As previously mentioned, researchers have been trying to explain gang dynamics since its emergence as a social concern. The following section outlines the principal criminological and psychological theories regarding gang activity and criminality in general.

Criminological Theories

Social Disorganization Theory

One of the oldest gang theories, social disorganization theory considers gang involvement as an alternative avenue for youth who otherwise lack social connectedness with personal and community institutions. This lack of connectedness can originate from rapid population movements (such as a wave of immigration), rapid political, economic, or social changes, racism, unstable political regimes, war or revolution, rapid industrialization or urbanization, radical shifts in the labour market, community fragmentation, social or family disorganization, or the failure of socialization agents, such as schools, to meet the needs of a changing population. Social disorganization theory stressed that gang formation was not abnormal, but a normal response by normal individuals to abnormal social situations (Spergel, 1995).

Social disorganization theory originated with Thrasher (1927) who believed that gangs originated through the effort of boys to create a society for themselves where one which catered to their needs failed to exist. They sought out the gang to obtain the life satisfaction and rewards that their communities, schools, and families failed to provide (Goldstein, 1991). Two other prominent social disorganization theorists, Shaw & McKay (1942), used official police statistics and topographic maps to explain that delinquency and gang formation occurred in the area around a city centre, an area generally in a state of social flux. They showed that regardless of the individuals who lived in this area, the crime rates remained constant over time, illustrating that it was the social disorganization of the community and not individual characteristics that determined criminal activity (Shoemaker, 1996).

Strain Theory

Strain theory perceives delinquency and gang membership as a consequence of the discrepancy between having high economic aspirations and a lack of means by which to achieve them. It assumes that all youth have similar economic goals (such as wealth, success, and power) but that many youth do not possess legitimate resources with which to attain these goals. Thus, in order to compensate for a lack of means, these youth must resort to illegal activity to achieve their aspirations (Goldstein, 1991). Several variations of strain theory exist, including Merton's anomie theory and Cloward and Ohlin's differential opportunity theory.

Robert Merton's anomie theory acknowledged the strain that lower-class youth felt in attempting to achieve middle-class aspirations, and outlined five ways that they could adapt to this strain. They could *conform* to the universal goals and attempt to reach them using legitimate means. They could use *innovation* and reach the goal using means other than those generally used by society (i.e. gain money by robbing a bank rather than working for it). They could use *ritualism*, rejecting the goal and focusing instead on the means of achieving it (focus on keeping a job rather than achieving success in it). They could *retreat*, completely rejecting both the goals and means of society, or they could *rebel*, substituting their own goals and means for the 'universal' ones (Williams & McShane, 1999).

Cloward and Ohlin (1960) developed a strain theory (known as differential opportunity theory) which proposed that gang affiliation was the result of lower-class boys lacking access to society-defined goals. However, they argued that the type of gang which developed would depend on the type of area in which they developed, as even illegitimate means were unevenly distributed (Kenney & Finckenauer, 1995). *Criminal gangs* would evolve in stable neighbourhoods and focus on crimes that reap large financial rewards. *Conflict gangs* would develop in more transient neighbourhoods, aiming to achieve status through threat. Finally, *retreatist gangs* develop in both types of neighbourhoods and are composed of those individuals who did not qualify for the other two types of gangs. These gangs generally socialize and engage in drinking and drug-taking behaviour (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960).

Subculture Theory

The subculture theory of delinquency and gang development grew out of the strain theory and is based on the assumption that all youth share similar goals and economic aspirations. However, it differs in postulating that instead of striving to attain the same goals as middle-class youth, lower-class youth create their own, new, subculture in which to attain status. This subculture consists of norms and criteria which are suitable to a criminal lifestyle: toughness, excitement, fate, autonomy, hostility, achieving recognition through crime, and hedonism (Williams & McShane, 1999). Several theorists contributed to subculture theory, including Albert Cohen and Walter Miller.

Albert Cohen (1955) proposed his reactance theory of gang formation, asserting that working-class and lower-class boys develop frustrations about achieving middle-class standards that they are not equipped to meet. In order to resolve these status concerns they turn to the group affiliation of the gang to set up their own, anti-conventional value system which provides status for behaviours that are negative, malicious, and dysfunctional. Cohen asserts that this value system is transmitted throughout generations, fostering an ongoing gang subculture (Williams & McShane, 1999). Miller (1958) hypothesized that a far different set of values permeated lower-class structure and that these values naturally lead to increased levels of delinquent and gang involvement. He proposed six “focal concerns” that defined life for lower-class boys: fate, autonomy, smartness, toughness, excitement and trouble. It is the commitment to these values and not to those of the dominant culture that contributed to problematic behaviour.

Labelling Theory

Labelling theory argues that no behaviour in and of itself is necessarily deviant; it is the labelling of a behaviour as deviant that makes it so. As a result, individuals are not criminals until society has labelled them as such. In addition, labelling theory asserts that labelling an individual a ‘gang member’ results in these labels becoming the individuals’ *master status*, or primary identity. Once this identity is internalized, the individual considers themselves a gang member and nothing else, and acts according to the

stereotypical role of a gang member, further reinforcing societies view of them as such (Williams & McShane, 1999).

Underclass Theory

The underclass is thought to be a social class below the traditional lower class. For many in the underclass, employment is neither available nor accessible due to the isolation of the neighbourhood, inadequate job information networks, and poor schooling (Miller, 1958; Cohen, 1969; Wilson, 1991). Similar to, but more elaborate than strain theory, the underclass theory takes the view that gangs and their involvement in crime is a natural response to the harsh influence of street life created by structural divestment. Divestment limits positive cultural and social opportunities and is interrelated with various social problems (Miller, 1958; Cohen, 1969).

Control Theory

Social control theory assumes that deviance is a natural part of the human experience and that everyone has the propensity to become involved in criminal behaviour. It attempts to explain why it is that some people conform to the moral order (the rules and regulations of society) while others deviate from it. In general, control theory postulates that those who do not become involved in gang activity possess a stronger bond with the moral order than those that do become involved. The elements of this bond include attachment to important others (family, friends, role models) and institutions (employment, school, clubs), commitment to investment in conventional society, and belief in the general values of society (Hirschi, 1969; Williams & McShane, 1999).

Gresham Sykes and David Matza (1957) theorized that individuals used a variety of techniques in order to suspend their bond with societal values and become involved in criminality. They denied responsibility for the actions, denied that the crime caused any injury, denied that the crime had a true victim, and blamed the authority figures who were condemning them, or professed to serve loyalties more important than the rules of society (i.e. friendship).

Differential Association Theory

Proposed by Edwin Sutherland and Donald Cressey (1978), differential association theory posits that criminal behaviour is learned in the interactions with other persons, and that criminal activity especially is learned within intimate social groups. Not only are techniques taught, but so are the specific motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes behind the criminal activities. Thus, it is hypothesized that individuals will lean toward or away from crime according to the norms and beliefs of their associates (Williams & McShane, 1999). This hypothesis has been substantiated with research indicating that criminal attitudes and associates are two of the most significant correlates of criminal conduct (Andrews & Bonta, 1994).

Psychological Theories

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory expands on the ideas of Sutherland and Cressey (1978) in order to explain *how* individuals learn criminal attitudes and behaviours. One of the most influential social learning theorists, Ronald Akers (1985) proposed that overall, human behaviour is driven by seeking pleasure and avoiding pain. Humans learn behaviours by repeating those that are reinforcing and discontinuing those that are punishing. Criminality occurs when a criminal act is more reinforcing than punishing. That is, if a criminal act brings about material reinforcement (money, jewellery, etc.) or social reinforcement (gang acceptance), and does not bring about material and social punishments which outweigh these reinforcements, then the individual will choose to repeat the criminal act (Williams & McShane, 1999).

Social Development Theory

The social development theory outlines the general processes by which bonding and behaviour evolve. Recognizing the importance of development, the theory outlines specific models for each developmental period during childhood and adolescence (preschool, elementary school, middle school, and high school). Within each model are research-driven risk and protective factors that lead either down a path that encourages antisocial behaviour or down a path that encourages prosocial behaviour.

The central tenants of social development theory are the opportunity for involvement in the bonding process, possessing the skills necessary to perform competently in family, school, and prosocial peer settings, and reinforcements for using those skills in the settings. The probability of becoming involved in delinquent behaviour in any of the four developmental periods is dependant on the degree to which the opportunities for bonding, possession of skills, and reinforcements are adequate, available, and prosocial (Hawkins, 1998).

Hyperadulthood Theory

Arnold Goldstein's hyperadulthood theory attempts to explain gang membership and delinquency in terms of the differences between a typical adolescent teenager and an adolescent teenager who is involved in a gang. The theory posits that gang affiliated teens are hyperadolescents, or adolescents who exhibit needs and behaviours typical of other adolescents but to a greater degree. A variety of characteristics exemplify the typical adolescent experience, including a feeling of marginality, the challenging of those in authority, a need to experiment with diverse adult-like roles, a search for status, a concern with self-esteem, and a striving for independence. Especially important to all adolescents is the task of identity formation. Gang members (or hyperadolescents) were found by Goldstein (1991) to be more susceptible to peer pressure, more active in the search for adult status, and more willing to incorporate peer-initiated opinions into their developing sense of self. Further, Goldstein asserts that gang membership provides hyperadolescents with the status-enhancing opportunities (delinquent and violent behaviour) that are not available from other peer groups.

Personality Theory

While several personality theories of criminality exist, in general they focus on the idea that delinquency is a result of individual personality characteristics, as opposed to being influenced by social factors. Personality theory rests on the assumption that individuals are born with certain personality traits which can be influenced and moulded throughout life by personal experiences, but the majority of which generally remain

constant over the lifespan (one's 'core personality'). For gang members and delinquents, this core personality possesses characteristics which converge to produce deviant behaviour (Shoemaker, 1996). Personality theorists have proposed many characteristics which they believe to be indicative of a deviant personality. Included among them are extroversion, neuroticism, psychoticism, psychopathy, moral reasoning, and irresponsible thinking (Goldstein, 1991).

Group Dynamics Theory

Group dynamics theory attempts to explain gang formation by exploring the process and advantages of group development. The theory outlines that gangs in general are characterized by a set of criteria (social categorization, social reward, interdependence, interaction, and influence) and are developed through a set of five stages: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Among the many processes characteristic of group development, cohesiveness has been shown to be an especially significant influence on the quality of group interactions, longevity, and success at attaining its goals. Members of more cohesive groups are more likely to be influenced by other group members, to place greater value of the group's goals, to be more active and equal participants in discussions, to be less influenced by members leaving the group, to be absent less often, and to remain in the group for a longer period of time (Goldstein, 1991). Research has illustrated a positive relationship between group cohesiveness and delinquency in that gangs are more likely to be engaged in violent activity when the status and solidarity of their gang is threatened (Thornberry et al, 1993; Jansyn, 1966).

GANG INTERVENTIONS

As discussed earlier, a significant increase in the number of gangs has been seen in American and Canadian society in recent years (Esbenson & Osgood, 1999; Stinchcomb, 2002). Fittingly, as the gang problem becomes more severe the need to find effective strategies to deal with this problem has become more important. Over the past 10 years, a number of comprehensive literature reviews regarding prevention and intervention strategies for gangs have been conducted (Howell, 1998; Spergel et al., 1994; Stinchcomb, 2002). Similar conclusions have been reached by each researcher: despite the enormous amount of resources that have been placed into prevention and intervention strategies to deal with the gang problem, very few of these programs have been rigorously evaluated to determine their effectiveness. Furthermore, of those that have been evaluated there are only a few that demonstrate promising or positive results. Despite this lack of success and evaluations, it is important to take a closer look, if only to learn from what has not been effective.

It is difficult to know exactly how many gang programs have been implemented over the years. Between 1985 and 1993 over 90 foundation grants related to gangs were awarded (Knox, 2000). The actual number of these programs that have been implemented and evaluated is difficult to determine. However, since the 1930's at least 30 large scale gang programs have been implemented with some degree of evaluation or follow-up report published. The majority of prevention and intervention strategies implemented have been directed towards youth. Therefore, in this review of gang-related strategies, the interventions are almost exclusively youth oriented.

Human/Social Intervention Strategies

Prevention Programs

Prevention programs are proactive strategies in which the objective is to discourage youths from joining gangs. These strategies may include early childhood development programs, programming for parents, programs which refer fringe members and their parents to youth services for counselling and guidance and providing preventative services for youths who are clearly at risk (Spergel et al., 1994). Prevention programs have been cited as the most cost-effective method of reducing gang-related

crime (National Drug Intelligence Center, 1994). However, there is not a large amount of research regarding these types of programs.

Several early childhood developmental programs have been shown to be effective in preventing delinquency and gang membership. The Beethoven project in Chicago's Robert Taylor Homes was designed as a head start program for mothers and their pre-school children, providing health and social services for the parent in identifying and dealing with signs of early child antisocial behaviour (Short, 1996).

In Montreal, Tremblay et al. (1996) implemented a similar bimodal prevention program to address early childhood risk factors for delinquency, including gang involvement. This program was designed to identify and prevent antisocial/disruptive behaviour of young boys from lower socioeconomic families who displayed behaviour problems in kindergarten. The approach incorporated both risk and protective factors, demonstrating that parent training and childhood skills development could deter the child from future delinquent/gang association. Training sessions were conducted in small groups for both the parent (monitoring and giving positive reinforcement for prosocial behaviour) and the boys (improving social skills, self-control). Sessions on coaching, role playing, peer modeling and reinforcement of positive behaviour were utilized to build positive skills.

A longitudinal evaluation (10 years) of the Montreal program in both short- and long-term gains illustrated that boys who participated in the program were significantly less likely to engage in acts of delinquency, such as substance abuse and gang involvement. Other similarly structured early childhood development programs, such as the Perry Preschool Project, in concert with parent training have shown favourable results in preventing childhood involvement in delinquent acts into early adulthood; however, these programs were not specifically evaluated for the prevention of gang involvement.

Howell (1998) indicates that the only program that has been designed to prevent youths from joining a gang that has been well evaluated and shown promise is the Project Broader Urban Involvement and Leadership Development (BUILD). The BUILD prevention program was implemented in grade eight classes of lower and lower-middle-class areas prone to high levels of gang activity in Chicago. The prevention component of the program involved a 12-week classroom curriculum that focused on educating the

students on gangs, gang activities, violence, substance abuse, methods of gang resistance, consequences of membership and values clarification. In addition, youth that were identified as higher-risk were asked to participate in an after-school program. In this component of the program, the focus was on both recreational activities as well as education and job skills assistance programs.

To evaluate this program, Thompson and Jason (1988) used three pairs of public middle schools matched on the basis that the same gang actively recruited members from both schools in a pair. One school in each pair was randomly assigned to be the experimental school, and the other was the comparison school. Gang membership was assessed at the end of the year to determine effectiveness of the program. The results demonstrated that experimental youth were less likely to join a gang than comparison youth, but the difference was only marginally significant. The study was limited in that it used a short follow up time and small sample sizes (74 experimental youth; 43 comparison youth), however, both Howell (2000) and Thompson and Jason (1988) concluded that overall this type of intervention appears promising and continued evaluation should be conducted.

Community Intervention Programs

Community intervention strategies attempt to mobilize the community affected by gang behaviour to become actively involved in controlling it. Interventions focus on public education, enlisting the support and cooperation of community members in identifying gang members, building trust between community members and public agencies (such as citizens and police), involving parents in recognizing problems in children and instructing them on the dangers of gang membership (Spergel & Curry, 1991). Community interventions may also include crisis intervention or mediation of gang fights; targeting, arresting, and incarcerating gang leaders and repeat violent gang offenders, vertical prosecution, close supervision and enhanced sentences for hardcore youth gang members (Spergel et al., 1994).

Certain community intervention strategies have been attempted repeatedly despite the fact that they have shown no positive effects. In fact, in some cases these programs have resulted in an increase in delinquency or crime. The most commonly cited of the

negative strategies is the ‘detached street workers’ approach. This intervention stemmed from the assumption that gang members would be more likely to respond to programs taken directly to them as opposed to those they have to seek out on their own initiative (Stinchcomb, 2002). The worker establishes him/herself on the streets where gangs meet and hang out. The worker then tries to work with the youth in order to transform the gang or to influence members to desist. A detached worker may take part in social activities with the youth, such as sporting activities, but would also provide various social services, including tutoring, employment counselling, advocacy work with the police and court, individual counselling and family services (Howell, 2000).

Research on the use of detached workers in gang intervention strategies has demonstrated that it is ineffective (Stinchcomb, 2002). In fact, one national review indicates that none of the evaluations of detached worker programs found any evidence of reduced crime (Sherman, undated; Klein, 1971). One of the most rigorous gang program evaluations ever conducted was by Miller (1962) on a detached worker program in Boston. The Midcity Project worked with 400 members of 21 gangs, providing intensive services to seven gangs. The objective of the project was to provide legitimate opportunities to youth. Although it was well implemented, Miller found it to be ineffective and to have a “negligible impact” on certain delinquent behaviours. Further, in one study of a detached worker program, Klein (1995) found that the use of this strategy actually led to an increase in group cohesiveness, leading to increased gang crime. Despite research that demonstrates the lack of effectiveness of such a strategy, detached workers continue to be used and remain a component of many gang-related initiatives today (Stinchcomb, 2002).

The Little Village Project in Chicago is an excellent example of a community-based intervention that has shown promising preliminary results. The project is an innovative approach in the control (and prevention) of serious gang problems based on interrelated strategies of community mobilization, social intervention, suppression, opportunities provision, organizational development and targeting. Briefly, community mobilization is the involvement of local citizens and organizations (such as local residents, former gang youth, police, and probation officers) in a common enterprise. Opportunities provision attempts to provide the gang members with relevant

opportunities, such as jobs and education classes, which are critical to meeting the needs of low-income youth. Social intervention refers to outreach to gang youth in the streets or in problematic social contexts and is based on the assumption that many youths are not able to use available opportunities to become adequately connected to legitimate social institutions. Suppression is the application of a variety of informal and formal controls on the behaviour of individual youths and the structure and process of their gangs.

Organizational change and development consists of units of workers across key organizations that collaborate to develop a common set of objectives for reducing and preventing gang crime and mainstreaming gang youths or those at risk. Finally, targeting is a team of workers from different disciplines that target specific youths, gangs, and social contexts who or which induce crime situations (Spergel, & Grossman, 1997).

A series of methods were used to assess the effectiveness of this program, including surveys of community residents and organizations, interviews of the youths and police, and court and detention data. Although only preliminary results are available for this program, the findings appear to be consistent. The project seems to have had a positive impact on school and job attainment. Of the three cohorts used in this project, the number of youths from cohorts one and two who graduated from high school or received GED certificates rose from 25.3% at the first baseline interview to 51.6% at the third annual review. In addition, the proportion of individuals in cohorts I and II who were currently employed increased from 30.8% at the first interview to 76.0% at the third interview. The arrests for a three year pre-program interval for targeted youths were compared to a three year program period for control youths. The program youths experienced a relative reduction in gang crime, especially gang violence, compared to the two groups of control youths.

In addition, taking into account prior criminal history, the project had a significant effect in reducing violent criminal activity, particularly for those youths who were older when the project began. Those who were 19 years or older did better over time and had fewer arrests when they received project services and contacts compared to project cases who were younger or to individuals from both comparison groups regardless of age. Finally, Little Village had the lowest increase in gang violence compared to six similar, mainly Hispanic, areas in Chicago with similar attributes and high levels of gang violence

when a four-year program period was compared to an equivalent four-year pre-program interval (Spergel & Grossman, 1997). What is especially encouraging about this project is the positive effect that was found for those gang members aged 19 and above.

School-Based Intervention Programs

Spergel (1994) describes a school-based intervention program as one that provides remedial education for targeted youth gang members, especially in middle school. In addition, job orientation, training, placements and mentoring for older youth gang members are available. A school-related intervention program that has demonstrated positive preliminary results is the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearm's Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) program. The G.R.E.A.T. program is a nine-week curriculum program with sessions in victims' rights, cultural sensitivity/prejudice, conflict resolution, meeting basic needs, drugs and how they affect the neighbourhood, responsibility, and goal setting.

Esbensen and Osgood (1997) evaluated this program by conducting a cross-sectional survey of nearly 6000 grade 8 students in 11 geographically and population-representative sites one year after the G.R.E.A.T. curriculum was administered. Students who completed the program reported lower levels of gang affiliation and self-reported delinquency, including drug use, minor offending, property crimes, and crimes against persons. In addition, the experimental group demonstrated more positive attitudes towards police and negative attitudes about gangs. The authors caution that these are only preliminary results and that a more long-term thorough investigation is required to fully understand the effects of the program. However, it is promising to see some positive results.

Law Enforcement Strategies

Gang Suppression

This strategy shifts the focus from the causes of gang development to its most problematic characteristics: criminal behaviour. In the U.S., there have been literally hundreds of specialized modifications in law enforcement, prosecution, adjudication, intelligence gathering, and laws themselves targeting gang-related crime. Suppression

tactics include tactical patrols by law enforcement, vertical prosecution by District Attorney's and intensive supervision by probation departments (Fritsch, Caeti, & Taylor, 1999). In general it includes the arrest, prosecution, and incarceration of gang members. Suppression tactics have also taken the form of "crackdowns", sharp increases in law enforcement resources applied to the previously under-enforced laws, with a clear goal of enhancing general deterrence of the misconduct (Fritsch et al., 1999; Sherman, 1990). Although crackdowns at first appear to be effective, they are frequently followed by a return to pre-intervention levels of crime (Sherman, 1990).

Not all gang suppression programs have taken the form of crackdowns. Some programs, such as the Operation Safe Streets program in Los Angeles, have adopted a technique in which only hard-core gang members are targeted (Fritsch et al., 1999). Others, such as the Tri-Agency Resource Gang Enforcement Team (TARGET) in Westminster, California have focused on information sharing and intelligence gathering to identify, arrest, and successfully prosecute gang members (Cook, 1993).

The effectiveness of suppression programs is unknown as they have not been rigorously evaluated to this point. However, most studies of areas where gang suppression tactics have been used have not found a decrease in gang problems (Klein, 1995). One of the most unsuccessful examples of a police suppression program was Operation Hammer, based out of Los Angeles in 1988. In this program, approximately 1000 police officers took to the streets on a Friday night and again on Saturday arresting likely gang members on a number of offences. In total, 1,454 arrests were made. However, 1,350 of those arrested were later released with no formal charges being filed (Fritsch et al., 1999). Almost half of those arrested were not gang members. In the end, only 60 felony arrests were made and charges were filed in only 32 instances (Spergel, 1995). Furthermore, following these sweeps it was noted that not only did hundreds of youths join gangs, but citizens actually began to sympathize with them (Stinchcomb, 2002).

Effectiveness of Gang Interventions

In a review of a number of gang interventions, Spergel indicated that community organization, as a primary strategy, was perceived to be more effective in "emerging"

gang problem settings than in "chronic" settings, while opportunities provision programs (generally prevention and school-based programs) were seen as more effective in settings where the gang problem was "chronic". Neither social intervention-type programs nor gang suppression was perceived as effective primary strategies. Most street gang outreach programs were evaluated as non-effective (Spergel, 1995).

Celebrated and well-funded attempts at "values transformation" of street gang members by working directly with them have been found to repeatedly flounder. These interventions appeared to sustain, rather than solve, gang problems (Klein, 1971). In several programs, gang recruitment stabilized, but delinquency actually increased, and in at least one case (Chicago Youth Development Project), those youths who said they were closest to their workers continued to be the most often in trouble with the police (Gold & Mattick, 1974). Street gang suppression efforts, as suggested earlier, may actually exacerbate the problem by calling special attention to the gang and its leaders and providing the very status and identity that drive youths to join gangs (Klein, 1993).

A more recent evaluation of a national social intervention - the National Youth Gang Drug Prevention Program - examined the impact of 13 consortium projects in the U.S. (Cohen et al, 1994). The researchers found that the projects impacted significantly on drug use, but had little or no influence on participants' gang involvement or avoidance and little or no influence on the gang involvement of participants who were already involved. The authors were surprised to find that 44% of the gang members in the project were without drug involvement, detracting from the common view that drug use and drug sales involve most gang members, if not the *raison d'être* for gangs.

There would appear from the major reviews (Spergel, 1995; Klein, 1995; Goldstein et al., 1994; Knox, 1994) that gang intervention strategies have proliferated in the U.S. in the absence of sound theory behind the interventions, or planned systematic evaluations of their outcomes. The result is that there is little evidence that gang intervention per se has any impact on either deterring gang membership or the growth of new gangs in the nation's urban centres. Most recent writers conclude that efforts to intervene in gang formation have generally failed, and many are pessimistic about the future (Klein, 1995; Jankowski, 1991). However, such pessimism is not necessarily warranted. Much past gang intervention has been driven by a public perception of gangs

as efficient, fanatically loyal brotherhoods committed to violent crime. As Klein points out, the reality is that in most gangs, group goals are minimal, membership stability is low and gang structure is fragile (Klein & Crawford, 1995). This suggests that gang intervention is far from futile and that the failure of gang suppression (literally a "war on gangs" in some communities) may have been the result of a misperception of the gang phenomenon (Huff, 1990).

Much of the pessimism among recent gang sociologists and criminologists regarding gang intervention in the U.S. appears to centre on an appraisal of the enormity of the environmental problem in large urban centres (especially Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Miami, and Chicago) and a perceived lack of political will among the U.S. government and its citizens to correct these problems. It would appear that the emergence of an urban "underclass" is a well established context or spawning ground for American street gangs. However, it is equally clear from the U.S. literature on gangs that some of the factors contributing to formation of an "underclass" - notably under-education and unemployment - have been the target of fruitful intervention. In fact, it is argued that vigorous "opportunities provision" in lower class neighbourhoods could slow or even reverse the trend towards the development of an "underclass". Huff (1990) points out that these areas are not only high in gang membership, but crime generally, in addition to poverty, malnutrition and mental illness. He argues that gang intervention strategies have been misdirected by their focus on gangs and that a focus on the problems in the community, an ecological approach would subvert the causes of gang formation itself.

Secondly, the almost universally accepted notion of hopeless poverty as a structural cause of gang formation is itself open to question. Not all adolescents of "underclass" neighbourhoods become gang members, and not all gangs are from impoverished communities (Korem, 1995). This fact raises the possibility that the well documented correlation between poverty and violent youth gangs may be misleading. Some writers (Goldstein et al., 1994) point to increasing violence in American culture generally. Korem points to family deterioration, more specifically the absence of an adult "protector" in the home to which the adolescent can turn in times of crisis (referred to as the "Missing Protector Factor").

Korem's hypothesis has merit in explaining the reported proliferation of suburban gangs since the mid-eighties in affluent U.S. communities. It also suggests the possibility that earlier gang intervention strategies may have failed because they targeted the wrong problem. He argues that a combination of elementary school prevention programs (i.e. the G.R.E.A.T. program and volunteer-run programs for adolescents which supply an adult "protector" to youth at risk) can effectively prevent gang enrolment. While Korem claims a 100% success rate in preventing "at risk" youth from joining gangs in Dallas suburbs, it is debatable to what extent the project youth were actually "at risk" and whether or not a similar program would be as successful in other areas. Such programs also run the risk of falsely labelling youth as "pre-delinquent" or "at risk" for joining gangs without evidence of criminal behaviour. Nevertheless, primary prevention has been shown to be effective in reducing drug and alcohol use in pre-adolescents (with the DARE program), and reducing child fire-setting behaviour (with the Fire Hawks program). Although it is difficult and costly to demonstrate the effectiveness of primary prevention programs, their appeal in gang intervention lies in the intuitive logic that it is easier to prevent youth from joining gangs than it is to persuade a gang member to leave a gang. As noted earlier, there is also evidence (Spergel & Curry, 1991) that community organization around prevention of gangs in neighbourhoods with an "emerging" gang problem is one of the few approaches to gang interventions with a positive outcome.

A comprehensive approach, by recognizing the gang phenomenon as a complex interaction of individual and situational variables, has a more concrete theoretical basis than earlier approaches. It proposes the simultaneous application of prevention, deterrence, and rehabilitation strategies and requires interventions for individuals, systems, and criminal justice alike (Spergel, 1995). In theory, and if successfully implemented, a comprehensive approach could produce a greater impact on the gang problem than seen in earlier interventions, and provide grounds for a less pessimistic prognosis. In any case, this approach has already been adopted by major U.S. task forces on gangs and is reflected in their recommendations for State policy (Goldstein, 1990). Unfortunately, attempts in California to implement recommendations for comprehensive gang intervention programming are hampered by conflicts between "suppression and

community protection on the one hand and rehabilitation and prevention on the other” each competing for limited resources in a society clamouring for “law and order” (Spergel, 1995). Other comprehensive strategies are too new to evaluate. There is evidence, however, that when successfully implemented, a coordinated strategy with close supervision of probationers or parolees may be effective. In Santa Clara County for example, a community-based coordinated approach (law enforcement, district attorney, probation and parole) claims, after five years of operation to have reduced the number of gangs from 50 to 20, with only 10 to 12 active on a regular basis (Spergel, 1995).

A retrospective re-examination of earlier gang interventions reveals that few programs were adequately evaluated, and that many promising efforts were weakly implemented or were prematurely discontinued (Goldstein et al., 1994). Where attention is focused on targeting criminogenic factors (anger, social skills, moral reasoning, family dysfunction), and ensuring program integrity, the outcome of gang intervention research may be very different. Goldstein's application of a social learning approach (Aggression Replacement Training) to Brooklyn gang members for example, reported a 13% re-arrest rate in a four-month post-treatment follow-up compared with a 52% re-arrest rate for a matched control group. Program participants showed significant pre- to post-treatment differences in interpersonal skills and "work adjustment" (Goldstein et. al. 1994).

It is important to note that Goldstein made no attempt in his program to discourage gang membership per se. His intention was to simply target antisocial attitudes and behaviours and to reduce criminal behaviour. Goldstein's approach is exemplary in applying sound treatment methods (cognitive behavioural) to an appropriate target (criminal attitudes and behaviour rather than gang membership specifically) in a manner likely to be receptive to its participants, and to the surrounding communities. This approach is also remarkable in reminding us that needs for status, identity and affiliation with peers are normal needs for both adolescent males and females, and that some aspects of gang membership may be prosocial. In this regard, Goldstein's gang intervention is analogous to modern "harm reduction" approaches to drug addicts (Marlatt, 1998) or "relapse prevention" for sexual offenders (Laws, 1989) where the intent is to reduce the criminal behaviour, not to "cure" the problem.

Finally, as previously mentioned, not all gang interventions have failed. Reviews of gang intervention research (as most literature on criminal rehabilitation) have suffered historically from methodological "tunnel vision", which ignored or glossed over evidence of successful interventions in favour of a premature conclusion that "nothing works" (Goldstein et. al., 1994). More balanced and thorough meta-analyses of criminal rehabilitation research (Andrews et. al., 1999; Gendreau et. al. 2001) have not only discredited the earlier pessimistic conclusions, but have also determined appropriate treatment targets (criminogenic factors) and delineated principles (risk, need, and responsivity) for effective intervention. There is growing evidence that with the selection of appropriate treatment targets, modalities, and intensity (duration), treatment can impact significantly on problems formerly considered insurmountable.

Gang Interventions in Correctional Settings

Despite the growth of the prison gang population over the years, there has been very little empirical research conducted or reported in regards to methods of dealing with gangs within a correctional setting. In the United States and in Canada, the role of corrections in the gang problem is not primarily gang intervention or gang suppression, but rather gang management. The role of corrections is to maintain its mission of community safety, ensuring stable and humane control of correctional facilities and to provide rehabilitative services to inmates. Gang management is an important component in maintaining this mission. This section will outline some of the ways in which American and Canadian institutions are managing their gang populations.

American Correctional Settings

In a review of the 33 States reporting gang problems in their correctional institutions, Camp and Camp (1985) found that 13 techniques were used for dealing with these gangs, none of which were formally evaluated at that time. Bus therapy, a move or transfer, was reported to be the most commonly used strategy (N=27). Other commonly mentioned strategies for dealing with the gang problem in institutions were the use of informers and prevention of incidents (N = 21), segregation of gang members (N = 20), lock up of leaders (N = 20), lockdown (N = 18), prosecution (N = 16), interception of

communications (N =16), ID and tracking (N = 14), dealing with situations on a case by case basis (N = 13), refusing to acknowledge the gang (N = 9), putting different gangs in particular institutions (N = 5), infiltration (N = 5), and the co-opting of inmates to control (N = 3). A number of these methods will be discussed in more detail below.

Bus Therapy (Transfer)

This strategy is simply a punitive transfer of a prison inmate from one facility to another (Knox, 2000). Bus transfers are reported to have been effective in the 1970's with the break-up of a protest or religious group, but not all results were seen as positive. For some gangs, such as the Aryan Brotherhood, the transfer of gang members did not lead to the dissolution of the gang. In fact, the move only spread and inflamed the problem (Knox, 2000).

Gang Recognition/Legitimization

The idea of gang recognition was used in an Illinois institution in the 1970's with dismal results. The administration of this institution hoped that by meeting with the respective gangs at special times the gangs would be appeased and levels of inter-gang conflict would be reduced (Knox, 2000). However, these special meetings facilitated the power of gangs to create violence, pressure inmates and staff and usurp the authority of institutional officials. Gang jealousies and intra-gang strife also resulted from gang recognition (Illinois Training Academy, 1988 as cited in Knox, 2000). Knox (2000) refers back to instances in the literature which assert that gangs emerge from, grow, and become more cohesive out of conflict and recognition within a community and/or by police.

In a study of "gang nations" (confederations of previously oppositional gangs) in Illinois prisons, Bobrowski (1988) concluded that allowing gang members to meet as groups, recognizing them as groups, and officials negotiating with the gang leaders was a result of misdirected and misguided prison policy. Attempts to reduce gang related violence by allowing meetings between gang leaders had the reverse effect of facilitating further organizational development and resulted in "gang nations" instead of gangs. These factors appear to have contributed to the rapid expansion of gangs, and ultimately

the replacement of the prison's mission by the opposing and violent agendas of warring gangs.

Set-Off Policy

The 'Set-off Policy' is another gang management program that has resulted in negative outcomes. This method strives to counter-balance the gangs housed in a unit so that no single gang becomes dominant (Knox, 2000). For example, in a housing unit of 25, place 10 "Bloods", 10 "Crips" and five neutrals. Implemented in Corcoran Prison in California, rival gang members were integrated during recreational period. This 'integrated yard policy' led to dire results and, on April 2000, eight correctional officers went on federal trial after being indicted for their roles in facilitating inmate violence. Of these, four of the officers face life in prison. As the inmates would begin to fight in the yard, the guards in the security towers would simply use their right to fire a weapon, in one case one of the inmates was hit. Obviously, the use of this method did not eliminate the tension between rival gangs.

Gang Suppression

There are several reports in the literature regarding a notorious prison-gang problem and corresponding gang suppression effort that occurred in Texas (Ralph & Marquart, 1991). In 1984 and 1985, the Texas State prison system experienced a dramatic rise in gang related homicides (52 murders, 90% of which were gang related; Beard, 1986). This escalation coincided with the removal of the "building tender" system, a method of prison control which relied upon the use of an elite group of prisoners who were directly responsible for the control (often violent) of other inmates.

Early efforts to regain control of the prisons through the segregation of gang leaders, transferring of gang leaders to other units, and increasing prosecution of gang members, had little impact. Control over the institutions, and a subsequent reduction in gang violence was only achieved by unprecedented and extreme measures of gang suppression. This involved the formation of a special crime unit which took over the intelligence gathering and prosecution of all gang related crime. In addition, a new state law was passed making the possession of a weapon by an inmate a felony, and mandating

consecutive (not concurrent) sentencing for conviction. Finally, all gang members in the system were identified and placed in administrative segregation. Since the introduction of these strategies in 1985 prison homicides dropped dramatically. Only nine homicides were reported in the Texas state prison system from 1985 to 1991 (Ralph & Marquart, 1991).

Separate Housing/Programming

There is some anecdotal evidence that this dual approach - separate housing and intensive programming for gang members may be effective. Spergel (1995) describes an experimental program in Wisconsin which targeted “hard-core gang offenders in their late teens”. Inmates were housed in a separate cottage of the Ethan Allan Boys School and provided intensive (seven month) life-skills programming emphasizing psychosocial treatment, educational/vocational and family/community functioning. Data collected between 1988 and 1991 indicated that of 107 participants in the program, only 6.7% later came in contact with the Wisconsin adult correctional system and only 17.7% were known to probation. While not an adequate evaluation (there was no control or comparison group), such results corroborate other findings (Goldstein et. al., 1994; Lipton, 1995) that appropriate intensive programming may reduce recidivism, in this case, for incarcerated gang members. If nothing else, such experimental programs demonstrate that gang members can be housed and treated separately without uncontrollable inter-gang violence, or organizing and usurping institutional control.

A similar experiment in an adult correctional facility is currently in progress in Ludlow, Massachusetts (Toller & Tsagaris, 1996). This gang management strategy, like the Wisconsin juvenile program, attempts to address the gang problem at the institutional level, rather than transferring the gang members to other facilities in the system. This model also segregates gang members from the general population, but unlike the juvenile program inmates may earn their way back to general population by successfully completing the gang rehabilitation program. This program consists of a period of strict observation, movement to less restrictive segregation, completion of a cognitive retraining program (a 10-hour video program entitled “Changing Directions”), a behavioural contract promising “no further gang activity” and finally, a carefully

monitored return to general population. The authors report that two years after the implementation of the program, only 9% of 190 gang members were returned to the segregation unit for involvement in gang activity.

Unfortunately, as in the Wisconsin program, this experimental gang management strategy has not been adequately evaluated. Without a baseline (pre-treatment) estimate of gang activity before the program was implemented, program impact cannot be reliably measured. Lacking a control group or comparison sample, it is impossible to determine if the apparent reduction in gang activity would have occurred in the absence of the intervention. It is possible that institutional gang activity has merely “gone underground”. More important, the authors do not report follow-up data on inmates who completed the program and were later released. It is unclear, therefore, whether the gang rehabilitation program had any effect on reducing risk for re-offending or returning to gang activity in the community. Nevertheless, the Ludlow program makes a strong case for combining security and services in a rational and well-planned gang management strategy. The institution addressed its gang problem by researching gang dynamics, and gang interventions, appointing a full-time “gang coordinator” for liaison with local law enforcement and prosecutors and organizing intelligence, and provided staff training on gangs, the institution’s gang policy and its gang management program.

Debriefing/Denouncing

Debriefing and denouncing strategies have been initiated in a number of states in the United States; however, no outcomes of these strategies have yet been reported. The objective in this strategy is to entice the inmate to give information up about gang life, including the hierarchy, his position within the gang and who the main players are (debriefing). In addition, it is expected that the inmate will ‘quit’ his gang (denounce). In order to accomplish this objective, an ‘institutional gang investigator’ collects as much information regarding a new inmate as possible in order to determine how much of a threat this inmate is. As a new inmate arrives to a correctional facility, the investigator conducts an interview in order to ascertain current gang status. Following this, the investigator continues to collect information through speaking with other inmates, monitoring of telephone conversations, monitoring their mail and other correspondence

and frequent inspections of personal belonging in the inmate's cell. Once the inmate is identified as a gang member, he is often times placed in a special housing unit until he decides to debrief and denounce his gang. Once that is accomplished, he can slowly be released and make his way back into the general inmate population (Knox, 2000).

The 'Snitch' Farm

An additional method of gang member management that is showing promise is the 'snitch' farm (Knox, 2000). The 'snitch' farm is used to protect gang members who are willing to become informants and help convict another gang member, one from his own gang potentially. In order to protect the 'snitch' from suffering severe consequences for his act, the snitch farm is a secure and separate facility in which only initials are used to address the inmate. In addition, before any visitors can be allowed into the facility, a Polaroid picture is taken and shown to the inmate in order to gain his approval before entrance can be granted. In the absence of a snitch farm, many violent crimes within institutions would never be solved. This avenue offers a sense of security to the 'snitch'.

Zero Tolerance Policy

Based on a number of surveys of adult state correctional institutions within the U.S., Knox (2000) was able to compile a model for various levels of zero tolerance policies regarding gang membership and activity within the institution. Knox suggests a minimum strength, medium strength and maximum strength intervention depending on the severity of the problem, but cautions that these are ideal situations, and that not every institution will be able to implement all aspects.

For the minimum strength zero-tolerance policy, Knox suggests that a full-time Security Threat Groups (STG) coordinator is required. There must be a coordinator for every shift in order to monitor all gang and STG activity. The correctional system must be able to identify, monitor, separate, isolate, transfer to maximum security institution and prosecute where necessary any gang activities using staff trained in gang issues. It is essential to have a number of staff trained in gang issues.

In addition to the criteria for the minimum strength level, the medium level policy should include a central State gang unit that all local STC coordinators report to. All gang

members that are found to be involved in gang activity while behind bars should automatically be placed in segregation or closed custody. Following this, a graduated step system would be in place in order to let gang inmates return to the general population if the inmate cooperates and debrief and denounces gang membership. Should an inmate “relapse” after denouncing his gang membership and return to gang activities, that inmate would be subject to permanent lockdown for the duration of their sentence. Furthermore, inmates would be prohibited from wearing any individualized clothing, only prison uniforms of a neutral colour would be allowed. This would eliminate the ability to use colours representative of certain gangs.

The maximum strength zero-tolerance policy includes all of the requirements of the first two levels, plus a number of enhancements. Knox (2000) states that the first rule of this level is to eliminate all of those in administration as well as front line staff who refuse to recognize that a gang problem exists. These people would be replaced by new staff that are aware of the situation and prepared to deal with it. Gang training would be required of all front line staff, including teachers, healthcare providers and clergy. The STG coordinators should be given the financial support to attend as many gang related conferences and meetings as possible and should become experts in the field.

In addition, all active and verified gang members should be removed from the general inmate population into a Special Housing Unit. This would help prevent the recruitment of other inmates. This can also be taken a step further to isolate even those who are suspected gang members. The institution must also develop a system of rules and regulations to deal with the threat of gangs. A disciplinary conduct hearing must be held for any slight infraction of the rules seeking to suppress gang activity. The “disciplinary code of conduct” would impose mandatory sanctions against inmates who violate the rules of conduct that pertain to gang activity.

Ideally, for the maximum strength policy, all tattoos would be removed by laser. All communication entering and leaving the facility would be strictly monitored. Again, no individualized clothing, religious medallions, or things such as rolling one sleeve would be allowed. Military-style haircuts would be provided to each inmate. No inmate would be released from 23-hour lockdown until they were debriefed and signed a form

denouncing their gang, of which a video tape would be made for use at a possible later date.

Specific Gang Programming

The strategies for dealing with prison gangs that have been discussed to this point have concerned methods for managing gangs. Another aspect that requires discussion and research is programming for gang members within a correctional institution. In a review of gang literature there appears to be no programming available that specifically targets gang members and gang desistance. In addition, very little research has been conducted on the programming available to gang members and what works. What has recently been established is that a number of differences exist between gang members and non-gang members found in correctional institutions. These differences may help in determining the target areas for programming in order to help gang members break the ties with their gangs.

Knox's review of gang intervention strategies suggested that while none of the interventions have been systematically evaluated, the literature is nonetheless generally suggestive to correctional administrators in what *not* to do, for example:

1. Do not facilitate further organizational development wittingly or unwittingly (as noted in the misguided Illinois strategy reported by Bobrowski).
2. Do not attempt to control gangs using other inmates (i.e. organized inmate vigilantes).
3. Do not use gang members in inmate youth education programs (i.e. "scared straight" because the allure of gangs to youth often overrides their hazards).
4. Do not give credence to alleged "pro-social" propaganda of gangs (i.e. helping the poor, advocating civil rights for minorities).
5. Do not negotiate with gang leaders.
6. Do not allow gangs to freely attract and recruit juveniles without penalty.

Canadian Correctional Settings

Partly because the gang problem in Canada evolved later than the gang problem in the United States, and partly because the Canadian Federal institutions are less populated than the American institutions, there has not been a history of street gang interventions in Canadian Correctional settings. This is not to say that CSC is not interested in institutional gang management. A recent report by Nafekh and Stys recognized the effects that gang presence and gang members themselves can have on institutional incidents, and recommended that more thorough research be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of present gang management strategies.

Unlike American corrections where each state is governed by their own independent laws, regulations, and guidelines, Canadian corrections is federally managed with uniform national policies and procedures. Several policies are in place which currently acts as CSC's guiding principals when it comes to institutional gang management. Commissioner's Directive 568 - 3: *Identification and Management of Criminal Organizations* (Correctional Service of Canada, 2003a), identifies a gang member as being associated with a criminal organization as a result of a specific process. Once identified as a gang member, offenders are regarded as a significant risk and are denied options such as accelerated parole review. This policy recognizes that criminal organizations (including street gangs) pose a threat inside and outside the institutions and attempts to prevent members from exerting influence and enhancing their image or status while encouraging them to desist from gang membership.

Commissioner's Directive 568 – 7: *Management of Incompatibles* (Correctional Service of Canada, 2003b) outlines further management options for dealing with gang members in Canadian institutions. Gang members are considered incompatibles to the extent that they pose a threat to the safety and well-being of others in the institution, and should primarily be dealt with via conflict resolution. If this is unsuccessful, incompatible offenders may be housed in different units, ranges, cells, or institutions. It should be noted, however, that this policy is not a specific gang management policy per se, but a policy to address problematic offenders in general.

One example of the movement of incompatibles between Canadian institutions, and the effect this movement can have, was described by Dan Erikson, former Deputy

Warden of Edmonton Institution. Erikson (personal communication, September 23, 2004) described a Canadian incident of “bus therapy” where members of the “Manitoba Warriors” were involuntarily transferred from Stony Mountain Institution to Edmonton Institution in 1997. A cell search conducted by Erikson and Vince Roper, Assistant Warden Correctional Strategies, uncovered the founding document of the “Manitoba Warriors”, the “Alberta Warriors Constitution”. Such findings lend support to the contention that the movement of gang members from one institution to another may not be the most effective way of dealing with gang problems, as the transfer of the actual gang members often results in the transfer of gang-related principles.

To date, there has been no comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of CSC policy in the management of the gang population. However, under the recommendation of the Nafekh and Stys report, several CSC initiatives are currently underway to evaluate the previously aforementioned policies and procedures. Using staff focus groups and surveys as well as offender interviews, research is currently examining the knowledge, application, and effectiveness of existing operational policies in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of gang dynamics in Canadian institutions and what can be done to minimize the gang problem.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CSC

The plethora of research available on the scope of the gang problem, theories of gang development, and gang interventions provides CSC with much inspiration for future best practices. As noted earlier with respect to gang intervention in general, the most important lesson for corrections would appear to be to avoid misidentification of the gang problem. From a correctional research perspective, there is substantial evidence that inmates who are gang members are higher risk, and higher need than inmates who are not gang members, and that they are less responsive to institutional programming. For this reason alone, incarcerated gang members pose a serious threat to prison security, safety of staff and inmates, and ultimately to community protection.

The major drawback in American management of gangs in prison appear to be related to poorly informed and misguided efforts to negotiate with gang leadership (thereby according positive or negative status to the gangs) or by attempting to deny a gang problem in an institution where there clearly is one. Institutions which quickly acquire intelligence about gang membership, formulate a rational gang policy, and educate staff about the extent of the problem, the institution's gang policy, and gangs in general, appear to be more successful in maintaining institutional control.

A second lesson to be learned from the experience with gangs in American prisons is that gang management may be more realistic (and more productive) than gang elimination. There is no evidence that an exclusive gang suppression policy is any more effective in prison than in the community. Without a wide range of research to date on the effectiveness of the various strategies used to manage gangs in prison, the correctional literature is speculative, but suggestive nonetheless that rehabilitative programs for gang members should be included in institutional gang management planning. For the least disruptive inmates, mainstreaming may be the first choice. However, where mainstreaming proves too great a risk, there is some evidence from recent experiments with smaller housing units for gang members and vigorous programming focused on the psychological causes of gang involvement that reductions in gang activity or subsequent recidivism in the community may be achieved. There is no evidence that housing gang members in separate units necessarily increases violence between inmates or loss of institutional control.

Recent developments in the United States with respect to the management of gangs in prisons appear to be moving in the same direction as gang interventions in the community: towards a more "comprehensive" approach signalled by increased communication and cooperation between law enforcement, prosecution, corrections, probation and parole. In comprehensive models, corrections are perceived as an integral part of state-wide planning for gang intervention. In such planning, correctional institutions are no longer viewed solely as agents of deterrence (through incapacitation and punishment) for gang related crime, but as institutions which can initiate changes in incarcerated gang members towards reduced criminality in the institution, and ultimately in the community.

If we are to learn anything from this literature review, it is clear that we require more information regarding gang presence in federal institutions. At this time it would be premature to recommend operational guidelines related to the management or control of gangs. However, it is reasonable to suggest the establishment of a working group comprised of key individuals in order to develop an appropriate action plan that identifies the specifics and seriousness of the problem, its effects on the overall institutional operations and staff safety, and how these coincide with and affect CSC's Mission.

We must also consider the feasibility of forming partnerships with other sectors of the Criminal Justice system and the community in addressing the gang issue. The literature review makes a strong case for a number of gang management strategies as well as other strategies which are inclusive of a number of criminal justice and community sectors. Although the gang management strategies have not undergone the rigors of evaluation, they do show promise. The American experience in addressing gangs in the institutional setting provides CSC with a template of what *not* to do and, more importantly, a direction for avenues to explore in the future.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has presented a comprehensive review of the literature regarding gangs, with a particular emphasis on street gangs. In recognition of a street gang population both in Canadian society and in Canadian institutions, it was the goal of this paper to review the literature surrounding street gangs to better inform CSC policies, procedures, and future research. A review of the definitional issues, scope of the problem, theories of gang development, and gang interventions and their effectiveness illustrates the complexity of the gang issue. While CSC currently lacks specific gang management programs and initiatives, this review enables CSC, through a review of the past, to be better informed and equipped for the future.

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