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**FINAL REPORT TO
THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE**

REGARDING

"THE CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR OF GANG MEMBERS"

(NIJ GRANT #91-IJ-CXK013)

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Introduction

This report summarizes an applied research project sponsored by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ). The focus of this study, as requested by NIJ, was on the criminal behavior of gangs, including their involvement in drug use and drug trafficking activities. Many communities throughout the nation have been attempting to address the emergence of gangs and their related criminal behavior since the mid-1980s, when the principal investigator completed his initial gang study. It is hoped that the results of this study will also assist these communities and the government in formulating and implementing policies and programs designed to prevent and control the criminal behavior of gangs.

Critical Research Questions

This study was designed to address three critical research questions:

- (1) What is the nature and extent of criminal behavior committed by current youth gangs?
- (2) What is the nature and extent of criminal behavior committed by non-gang, at-risk youth? and
- (3) What is the marginal contribution of gang involvement to criminal behavior, comparing #1 above with #2 above?

Design and Methodology

To address these critical issues, this research project was designed to provide a comparison of the criminal behavior of (1)

currently or formerly active youth gang members with that of (2) youth who are "at risk" of gang involvement but have not become active in gangs. By constructing samples that consisted of both active gang members and youth who were "at risk" but had not become active in gangs, it became possible to make direct comparisons of their behavior and, by inference, to make a reasonable assessment concerning the role that gangs play in the lives of these young people whose living conditions were otherwise comparable.

In constructing the sample of gang members, it was important not to rely on official police perceptions of gang members. Although a number of research studies have done this, such samples include considerable bias, from a scientific standpoint, since they include only those who have been arrested or have had contact with the police. Left out of such samples are those who have been able to avoid police involvement, and they may or may not be comparable to those with official police records or contact.

This is not to suggest that the sample included in this study is perfectly representative of gang members, either, since without knowing the "universe" of all gang members, it is impossible to construct a perfectly representative sample. Sampling gang members is not the same thing as sampling the members of the PTA or the police department, for example, since both of the latter have known "universes" of membership. Instead, this study relied upon a strategy of stratified reputational sampling. That is, the sample for the gang component of this study was based on knowledge gained

from expert informants concerning (1) existing gangs in each of the three sites and (2) who is, or has recently been, active in those gangs. Sources of information included a large number of individuals who interact with gangs and gang members on a daily basis, including social service and community outreach workers (especially those with current "street knowledge" of gang members), school personnel, gang prevention experts, and law enforcement experts.

The sample of non-gang but at-risk youth was identified by utilizing information elicited primarily from social service and community agencies working closely with at-risk youth, including those deemed at-risk of joining gangs due to the agency's knowledge of their circumstances (family, neighborhood, and school information was especially valuable in this respect). However, as in the case of the gang member sample, since the universe of non-gang but at-risk youth is not specifically determined, it cannot be said that our sample is necessarily representative of those youth.

Finally, it must be noted that although we have great confidence in the classification of our two samples (i.e., those in the gang sample are or have recently been active gang members and those in the non-gang, at-risk sample are truly at risk of gang involvement), comparisons across the two samples or across the three sites are subject to the limitations noted above. In addition, as subsequent tables will demonstrate, the gang and non-gang, at-risk samples in this study differ on a number of potentially important variables such as age, gender, and race/ethnicity. These differences

were larger than intended due to (1) the researcher's lack of prior experience with the three sites' gang/at-risk youth populations, (2) referral sources whose at-risk clientele were generally much younger and included a higher proportion of females, compared to local gangs and (3) variation in access to local gangs. Thus, it cannot be claimed that the two samples are statistically comparable or that either sample is scientifically representative of its universe, since those universes are not specifically determined in any community. Nonetheless, most studies of gangs do not include any samples of local non-gang, at-risk youth, and in that sense this study offers some additional insight into the criminal behavior of those populations.

In each of the three sites, the proposed samples included 50 gang members and 50 non-gang, at-risk youth, yielding a total of 150 gang and 150 non-gang, at-risk youth. Some sample attrition occurred near the end of the study in Denver due to staff attrition at a key referral agency, and time did not permit the completion of all the Denver interviews. Actual (final) sample sizes for valid, useable interviews were 140 for the aggregate gang sample and 145 for the non-gang, at-risk sample. Thus, overall sample attrition was only 6.7% for the proposed gang sample and 3.3% for the non-gang, at-risk youth sample, a good result given the complexity of sampling these populations in sites where the principal investigator had no prior experience and no initial field contacts. Overall sample attrition was

only 1% in Aurora and 2% in Broward County, but was 12% in Denver, largely due to difficulties that occurred in the late stages of field interviewing (staff attrition at a key referral agency resulted in a number of interviews not being scheduled as expected and others that were found to be inappropriate referrals).

Interviewers at each site were selected and trained by the principal investigator, using the interview instrument developed for this study (see Appendixes A and B). Scheduling was established so that the safety of all human subjects would be protected. For example, members of rival gangs were never scheduled for sequential interviews so as to avoid their arriving at the same site at the same time. All interviewees were paid for their time with either movie coupons purchased from a local theater chain or McDonald's coupons. Given the neighborhood "turf rivalries" that exist among gangs in different neighborhoods, a substantial amount of time was required to establish theater chains whose outlets were located in all of the different "gang areas" so that our interviewees could actually use their movie coupons without fear of being attacked by "intruding" into "enemy territory" to go to the movies. Otherwise, we could hardly call these movie coupons a "reward" for their cooperation. (This was not a problem for the McDonald's coupons, since the large number of McDonald's restaurants permits easy access.) In addition to these coupons, those individuals who had been ordered to complete community service requirements were given the opportunity to request that the principal investigator

contact the court in their behalf to ask that their cooperation in the interview be counted toward the community service requirement (see Appendix C).

At the beginning of each interview, the interviewer read to each interviewee some basic information about the study and the relevant information concerning human subjects requirements (see Appendix D). The interviewee then had the option of participating or refusing to participate in the study. Those who chose to participate were then interviewed using either the "gang member" instrument (see Appendix A) or the "at-risk youth" instrument (see Appendix B). These interviews were audio-taped for later transcription and the responses were subsequently coded for computerized data analyses. (For a detailed discussion of the process of transcription, coding, and data entry, please see Appendix E.)

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS: THREE SITES COMBINED

First, it is important to compare the two samples (gang members and non-gang/at-risk youth) across all three sites to determine the degree to which the two samples are comparable with respect to potentially important variables and attributes. This comparison is presented in Table 1, which demonstrates that the aggregate gang sample was older, had a larger proportion of males, had fewer African-Americans, and had somewhat more educational and work experience (due to their older age) than did the non-gang, at-risk sample. The two samples were quite comparable with respect to their family status, with about one-third of each sample

**TABLE 1. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang Member Samples
(Aggregate Sample)**

	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)
Age	$\bar{x} = 18.0$	$\bar{x} = 15.3$
Gender (% Male)	87.9	69.0
Race (% African-American)	43.2	73.8
Education Completed	$\bar{x} = 10.0$	$\bar{x} = 8.6$
Work (past yr)	69.3	55.2
Two Parent Family	39.3	33.1
# of Arrests	med = 4.0	med = 0
Age at 1st Arrest	med = 14.0	med = 14.0 ¹

¹Median for those arrested (n=67).

coming from a two-parent family. Note that although the at-risk sample was younger, subsequent data will demonstrate that they were certainly old enough to have joined gangs and to have engaged in the types of law-violating behavior included in our survey.

One of the key questions addressed by this study is the degree to which gang members and a comparable sample of non-gang/at-risk youth differ with respect to delinquent/criminal behavior. Most of the data that bear upon that question will be presented below, but Table 1 indicates that there is a major difference between gang and non-gang/at-risk youth with respect to total number of arrests. The median total number of arrests for gang members was 4, while the median for non-gang respondents was 0. These data provide our first suggestion that gang involvement may be a very significant criminogenic factor. The median age at first arrest for both gang members and for those non-gang, at-risk youth who had been arrested (n=67) was 14, though most non-gang members had never been arrested.

Gang vs. Non-Gang Member Activities

Since the gang members in this study tend to be adolescents and adolescents have certain age-typical developmental characteristics and needs, we would expect to find that certain activities are commonly engaged in by both gang and non-gang youth. A number of items on our interview schedule were designed to address this question and to determine what, if any, differences exist in the extent to which these two samples engage in various

activities. Table 2 suggests that with the exception of sporting events (where there is a statistically significant 16% difference in favor of *non-gang* youth participation), gang members are significantly more involved in all of the activities listed in Table 2.¹ Although varying proportions of non-gang youth engage in these activities, gang members are significantly more likely to "party"; attend musical concerts; "hang out"; and "cruise" than are non-gang youth. Moreover, as the list of activities begins to include more illegal and more violent behavior, the differences become much larger. Gang members are far more involved in fighting, drinking, drug use, and drug sales, and they put up and cross out graffiti far more often than do non-gang youth. These data provide further corroboration that it is appropriate to view youth gangs and other youth groups along a continuum ranging from acceptable to unacceptable, and even criminal, behavior.

Gang vs. Non-Gang Member Criminal Behavior

A major purpose of this study was to address the degree to which the criminal behavior of gangs is comparable to or differs from the criminal behavior committed by non-gang but at-risk youth living in ostensibly similar circumstances. To address this issue, a large number of interview questions sought to determine the

¹ In Table 2 and subsequent tables in which the question dealt with the frequency of various behaviors, the original scaled responses were dichotomized into "ever" vs. "never" comparisons (i.e., whether the respondent or his gang/group ever did these behaviors or never did them). For simplicity of presentation, the percentages presented in the tables reflect these dichotomized responses, while the levels of statistical significance continue to reflect the original, scaled responses.

TABLE 2. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang Member Activities
(Aggregate Sample)

Activity	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)	p ¹
Dances, Parties	80.2	65.0	***
Sports Events	66.9	77.8	*
Concerts	78.7	41.7	***
"Hang Out"	99.2	89.0	***
"Cruise"	90.6	68.4	***
Fighting	96.9	31.9	***
Drinking	93.8	30.7	***
Drug Use	76.9	9.9	***
Drug Sales	76.9	6.4	***
Put Up Graffiti	86.4	28.5	***
Cross Out Graffiti	90.0	24.8	***

¹p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant), calculated for scaled responses, which were then dichotomized for this table.

involvement of our respondents and their gangs or peer groups in such criminal behavior. Table 3 presents the findings with respect to our individual gang and non-gang member respondents *as individuals*.

As expected, certain types of crime are engaged in frequently by many youths, whether or not they are gang-involved. Other crimes are engaged in very infrequently by youths, and again this does not depend on gang membership. But for a large number of crimes, especially violent offenses and major property crimes, both criminological theory and our field experience over the years suggest that gang members are likely to exhibit greater involvement in these illegal behaviors. Theoretically, adolescents' attempts to deal with the problems associated with "coming of age" (biological, social, and economic challenges) often result in their parent(s) or other significant adult caregivers being drawn into conflict with the independence-seeking youth. The strain that ensues can help push the adolescent even more toward social groups outside his/her family in a search for gratification, acceptance, and reassurance. Both classic learning theory and more contemporary social control theory suggest that when the youth makes a commitment to a primary social group (the gang) whose values and social reward system favor certain types of criminal behavior, that youth is more likely to engage in such criminal behavior.

As indicated in Table 3, the least common criminal behaviors committed by our respondents themselves (whether gang or non-

TABLE 3. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang Member Criminal Behavior
(Aggregate Sample)

Crime	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)	p ¹
Shoplifting	55.1	32.9	***
Check Forgery	9.3	2.1	**
Credit Card Theft	23.6	2.1	***
Auto Theft	58.3	12.5	***
Theft (Other)	64.3	17.7	***
Sell Stolen Goods	55.7	11.9	***
Assault Rivals	82.9	11.2	***
Assault Own Members	33.1	11.9	***
Assault Police	27.1	3.5	***
Assault Teachers	23.7	12.5	*
Assault Students	59.4	31.9	***
Mug People	37.9	5.6	***
Assault in Streets	50.7	9.8	***
Bribe Police	10.8	2.8	**
Burglary (Unoccupied)	43.6	8.4	***
Burglary (Occupied)	18.0	0.7	***
Guns in School	48.2	7.6	***
Knives in School	50.4	12.5	***
Concealed Weapons	86.4	28.5	***
Drug Use	59.3	11.8	***
Drug Sales (School)	31.7	2.8	***
Drug Sales (Other)	65.5	8.4	***
Drug Theft	33.6	1.4	***
Arson	12.1	6.9	n.s.
Kidnap	5.7	0.7	*
Sexual Assault/Molest	2.9	0.0	*
Rape	2.1	0.0	n.s.
Robbery	23.6	5.6	***
Intimidate/Assault Victims- Witnesses	44.6	5.0	***
Intimidate/Assault Shoppers	37.7	11.3	***
Driveby Shooting	56.8	1.4	***
Homicide	17.3	0.0	***

¹p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant), calculated for scaled responses, which were then dichotomized for this table.

gang) are rape,² sexual assault/molestation, kidnapping, check forgery, bribing police, and arson (though the differences between gang and non-gang youth are still significant, except for arson and rape). The base expectancy rate of these offenses is generally low to very low for adolescents whether they are gang-involved or not, so this finding is not surprising. Conversely, the propensity for theft, conflict, physical violence, and drug use that seems to be present in contemporary youth culture means that larger numbers of non-gang youth shoplift and commit thefts; carry concealed weapons; assault students, teachers, and even peers; intimidate/assault shoppers; and use drugs.

Table 4 provides even more compelling evidence of the highly criminogenic nature of gangs. This table compares the *collective* criminal behavior of gangs with the *collective* criminal behavior of non-gang peer groups, based on our respondents' reports of the behavior of their fellow gang members/peer group members. Again, from the perspective of criminological and sociological theory, these two groups (gangs and peer groups) are primary social groups that have powerful influences on the behavior of adolescents. In fact, given the tension, conflict, and estrangement that often accompanies

² In interpreting gang members' self-reported data for rape (both for the respondent and for the gang collectively), one must note that these rates may be *underreported*, since gang members tend not to define as rape "consensual" (from their perspective) sexual intercourse with female gang members during or subsequent to gang initiation rituals. However, the researcher believes that sufficient coercion/intimidation exists to support a rape charge in many of these incidents and that the male gang members tend to engage in neutralization (denial) when discussing the degree to which these incidents were truly consensual.

TABLE 4. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang (Peer Group) Criminal Behavior (Aggregate Sample)

Crime	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)	p ¹
Shoplifting	75.5	50.7	***
Check Forgery	27.3	4.9	***
Credit Card Theft	59.4	9.0	***
Auto Theft	93.6	40.7	***
Theft (Other)	87.1	45.1	***
Sell Stolen Goods	85.7	33.3	***
Assault Rivals	98.6	35.4	***
Assault Own Members	56.4	20.6	***
Assault Police	67.9	16.1	***
Assault Teachers	55.1	27.5	***
Assault Students	77.9	63.8	**
Mug People	70.0	21.3	***
Assault in Streets	78.3	26.6	***
Bribe Police	27.9	9.2	***
Burglary (Unoccupied)	75.5	25.7	***
Burglary (Occupied)	51.9	8.6	***
Guns in School	87.9	31.7	***
Knives in School	81.9	39.3	***
Concealed Weapons	97.1	54.0	***
Drug Use	87.8	35.3	***
Drug Sales (School)	71.0	14.5	***
Drug Sales (Other)	94.3	37.2	***
Drug Theft	69.1	13.0	***
Arson	27.1	11.5	***
Kidnap	19.1	0.7	***
Sexual Assault/Molest	17.1	2.1	***
Rape	18.8	5.0	***
Robbery	54.0	12.9	***
Intimidate/Assault Victims-Witnesses	74.1	20.1	***
Intimidate/Assault Shoppers	57.1	17.3	***
Driveby Shooting	86.4	15.1	***
Homicide	64.2	6.5	***

¹p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant), calculated for scaled responses, which were then dichotomized for this table.

the process of emancipation from the family, it can be argued that for most adolescents, the peer group/gang is the most powerful socializing influence in their lives.

A major purpose of this study was to assess the nature and magnitude of the delinquent/criminal behavior of gangs and to compare that behavior, to the extent possible, with the corresponding behavior of non-gang, at-risk youth. This allows us to assess the marginal contribution of gangs to the criminal behavior of young people living in similar circumstances. The data in Table 4 indicate that the differences between collective gang criminal behavior and collective peer group criminal behavior follow the same general patterns seen for individual respondents in Table 3, except that the differences become even more pronounced when the behavior of all group members is included.

What we see in Table 4 is that gangs are significantly more involved in all forms of criminal behavior. Further, with the exception of those offenses that have generally low base rates for adolescents (e.g., kidnapping), those that are more common within "youth culture" (e.g., shoplifting, carrying concealed weapons, and engaging in school-related fights), and those that are perceived as "unmanly" (e.g., sexual assault and rape), gangs are vastly more involved in criminal behavior, especially the most serious crimes of violence, drug sales, and major property crimes. Although the involvement of comparable non-gang youth in such crimes is clearly

more extensive than is desirable in our society, the reported differences between gang and non-gang crime range from 22.1% greater for assaulting other students to 432% greater for drug theft, 472% greater for driveby shootings, 503% greater for burglary of an occupied dwelling, 560% greater for credit card theft, and 888% greater for homicide.

Gang vs. Non-Gang Member Drug Sales

Another major purpose of this study was to examine the differences between gang members and non-gang/at-risk youth with respect to drug sales. One of the major debates in recent years has been whether gang members are more likely than other youths to sell drugs, whether gangs and drug trafficking are nearly "synonymous," and whether gangs "control" drug trafficking markets. The data in Tables 5 - 7 help address these questions. For our aggregate sample, the following findings are clear:

- Table 5 indicates that individual gang members are significantly more likely to be involved in the sales of crack cocaine, powder cocaine, marijuana, PCP, LSD/mushrooms, heroin, and crystal methamphetamine ("ice") than are non-gang/at-risk youth. The base rates for certain drug sales such as PCP, heroin, and crystal methamphetamine are relatively low (around one in ten gang members sell these drugs) compared to the other types of drugs.
- When gangs and comparable non-gang peer groups are examined (see Table 6), the data indicate again that gangs are

**TABLE 5. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang Member Drug Sales (Type)
(Aggregate Sample)**

Drug	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)	p¹
Crack Cocaine	52.1	5.5	* * *
Powder Cocaine	38.9	2.8	* * *
Marijuana	66.7	10.4	* * *
PCP	10.9	0.0	* * *
LSD/Mushrooms	29.2	0.7	* * *
Heroin	11.9	0.7	* * *
Crystal Methamphetamine ("Ice")	13.1	0.0	* * *

¹p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant), calculated for scaled responses, which were then dichotomized for this table.

TABLE 6. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang (Peer Group) Drug Sales
(Aggregate Sample)

Drug	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)	p ¹
Crack Cocaine	81.4	39.4	***
Powder Cocaine	75.5	24.1	***
Marijuana	94.3	48.3	***
PCP	32.1	5.5	***
LSD/Mushrooms	59.5	8.2	***
Heroin	37.5	6.9	***
Crystal Methamphetamine ("Ice")	31.4	6.9	***

¹p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant), calculated for scaled responses, which were then dichotomized for this table.

significantly more involved in the sales of all drugs listed. The drugs most commonly sold by gangs, according to our respondents, are (in descending order of magnitude) marijuana, crack cocaine, powder cocaine, LSD/mushrooms, heroin, PCP, and "crystal meth." For non-gang, at-risk youth, sales by their peers reportedly concentrate on three drugs: marijuana, crack cocaine, and powder cocaine, with far less involvement than occurs among gangs.

- As indicated in Table 7, the typical gang member in our sample who sells drugs (n=112) does so on a daily basis, while the typical non-gang/at-risk youth in our sample does not sell drugs. Those non-gang/at-risk youth who do report selling drugs (n=17) sell about one day per week.
- Table 7 also reveals that gang members who sell drugs report that they make, on the average, about two-thirds more in earnings per week (\$750 compared to \$450) with about 25 customers per week, while non-gang members who sold drugs reported that they had about 10 customers per week.
- Neither gang members nor their non-gang counterparts report using much, if any, of their drug profits to purchase drugs for their own use (Table 7 shows that the median for both subsamples is 0-5%).
- Gang members and non-gang peers differ significantly in the sources of their drug supplies (see Table 7). The most likely source of drugs for non-gang, at-risk youth is local, while gangs

TABLE 7. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang Member Drug Sales (Dynamics)¹
(Aggregate Sample)

	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)	p ²
Frequency (Days/Wk)	Med = Daily	Med = 1	***
Wages/Wk	Med = \$750	Med = \$450	***
Customers/Wk	Med = 25	Med = 10	***
\$ Kept for Own Drug Use	Med = 5%	Med = 0	***
Drug Source (Location) ³	Local: 13.2 Out of State: 25.7 In State: 8.8	Local: 20.6 Out of State: 9.2 In State: 9.2	***
Travel to Get Drug Supply	71.9	23.2	***
Legitimate Wage to Stop Selling Drugs (Per Hour)	Med = \$20.00	Med = \$20.00	
Who Controls Drugs?	Gangs: 7.6 Others: 80.2 Gangs & Others: 10.7	Gangs: 7.6 Others: 67.9 Gangs & Others: 12.2	**

¹Based on subsample who do sell drugs (n=112 for gang sample, 17 for non-gang sample).

²p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant) based on either dichotomous or scaled responses.

³Data reflect only single responses (combinations of sources not included).

tend to rely much more on out-of-state suppliers. Comparable proportions of both groups get drugs from other cities in their respective states. Far more gang members report traveling to get their supply of drugs (71.9% compared to 23.2%).

- Both gang and non-gang youth believe that it would require a significant legitimate wage to induce their peers to stop selling drugs. As indicated in Table 7, the median response to this question was \$20 for both samples. It should be noted, however, that although these median figures are the most representative responses, this means that 50% of both subsamples believed that a lower wage would be an acceptable inducement to stop selling drugs. Some respondents' answers to this question suggest that there are individuals who may be willing to stop selling drugs in return for legitimate wages that are not much higher than are currently being paid by fast-food restaurants. However, gang members have often told this researcher that they are unable to obtain a sufficient number of *hours* of work per week at legitimate wages to offset their *total* earnings from illegal drug sales. While this is often an accurate statement, it may also serve to reinforce the gang member's own convenient neutralization (rationalization) of his/her criminal behavior.
- Finally, neither gang members nor their non-gang counterparts believe that gangs control drug trafficking (less than 10% of each group hold that view, with about 70%-80% believing that other organizations control drugs). It is especially noteworthy that

gang members, who are much more likely to be involved in drug sales and, therefore, more likely to have better knowledge of the dynamics of drug markets are also more likely to believe that other organizations (such as foreign groups and organized crime) control drug markets.

Guns, Gangs, and Gang Resistance

Another question of interest is the extent to which gang members and comparable non-gang/at-risk youth possess guns and what types of guns they possess. Table 8 provides sobering evidence that guns are quite prevalent among both gangs and comparable non-gang peer groups. However, about three times more of our gang respondents (79.3% compared to 25.7%) indicated that most or nearly all of their fellow gang members own guns. The lethality of these weapons is even more sobering. Unlike gangs and youth groups of previous decades who fought with fists, clubs, "zip guns" made from broken radio antennas, and similar weapons, contemporary gangs and other youth are all-too-likely to have access to powerful and highly lethal weaponry. As Table 8 reveals, 42.7% of the non-gang/at-risk sample and nearly 9 out of 10 (89.9%) of the gang respondents report that members of their gangs/groups possess weapons that are more powerful than small caliber handguns. A close examination of our data document that most of these groups have members with weapons more powerful and more lethal than the standard weapons issued to law enforcement officers (often a 9mm or comparable handgun).

The data collected in our survey also permits us to examine the progression from "hanging out" with the gang (commonly known as

**Table 8: Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang (Peer Group) Gun Ownership
(Aggregate Sample)**

	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (Peer Group) %	p ¹
Own Guns	Most/Nearly All: 79.3	Most/Nearly All: 25.7	***
Type of Guns	>Small Caliber: 89.9	>Small Caliber: 42.7	***

¹p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant), calculated for scaled responses, which were then dichotomized for this table.

the gang "wannabe" or associate stage) to joining the gang to getting arrested. Table 9 depicts this progression in statistical terms. Our gang member respondents reported that they first began associating with the gang at about age 13. They joined, on the average, about a year later. They were then arrested for the first time at about age 14, one year after beginning to associate with the gang and about the same time that they joined.³

Table 10 presents important data concerning gang resistance and its consequences. We asked both samples whether they knew someone who had been approached to join a gang but had refused. Table 10 includes only the data for gang members, since they were more likely to know about these incidents. About two-thirds of the gang members in our sample knew someone who had resisted the gang's "invitation" to join. Many different techniques were mentioned, but the most prominent single technique was "said no" (respectfully declined), followed by "stopped associating." Other techniques mentioned included changing one's dress, activities, etc. Interestingly, of those cases for which our respondents had knowledge of what happened to these individuals who refused, the ratio of "nothing" (no harm) to physical harm was nearly 3:1. This means that an individual who resists gang involvement is nearly three times more likely to suffer no physical reprisals as he is to endure some physical harm. This finding takes on even more

³ It is worth noting that this same progression, give or take six months in age, has now been documented by this researcher in four different sites, since our data for Cleveland, Ohio, is nearly identical to the data in this NIJ study.

**TABLE 9: Age from "Wannabe" to First Arrest
(Aggregate Sample)**

1st Association with Gang:	$\bar{x} = 13.0$
Joined Gang:	$\bar{x} = 14.0$
1st Arrest:	Med = 14.0

Table 10: Gang Resistance and Consequences (%)
(Aggregate Sample)

Know Someone Who Refused to Join	65.7
Refusal Techniques	Said No: 21.2 Stopped Associating: 8.8
Consequences	Nothing: 33.8 Physical Harm: 12.9

meaning when one considers that most of our gang sample (56.1%) reported that the most common single gang initiation ritual involves fighting, usually getting "beaten in" (physically beaten) by gang members. Thus, if one joins a gang, he/she is quite likely to be severely assaulted physically just to become a member, while resistance is far less likely to result in physical harm.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS: AURORA, COLORADO

The final samples for Aurora, Colorado, consisted of 49 gang members and 50 non-gang, at-risk youth. In comparing the two samples (see Table 11), it is clear that the gang members were older (17.0 years of age, compared to 14.4 for non-gang/at risk youth); were slightly more likely to be male (83.7% to 76.0%); were slightly less likely to be African American (66.7% to 72.0%); had completed somewhat more education due to their age (10.1 grades compared to 8.6); had somewhat less work experience in the past year (51.0 to 66.0); and were even less likely than the non-gang sample to come from two-parent families (36.7% to 48%).

Table 11 also indicates that there is a large difference between the two samples with respect to total number of arrests. The median total number of arrests for gang members was 3.0, while the median for non-gang respondents was 0, since most had never been arrested. The median age at first arrest for both groups (including the 20 non-gang youth who had been arrested) was 14.0.

Gang vs. Non-Gang Member Activities

**TABLE 11. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang Member Samples
(Aurora)**

	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)
Age	x = 17.0	x = 14.4
Gender (% Male)	83.7	76.0
Race (% African-American)	66.7	72.0
Education Completed	x = 10.1	x = 8.6
Work (past yr)	51.0	66.0
Two Parent Family	36.7	48.0
# of Arrests	med = 3.0	med = 0
Age at 1st Arrest	med = 14.0	med = 14.0¹

¹Median for those arrested (n=20).

Table 12 suggests that with the exception of sporting events (where there is a statistically significant 19% difference in favor of *non-gang* youth participation), participating in dances and parties (77.3% for gang members, 71.7% non-gang youth), and "hanging out" (97.7% to 95.7%), gang members are significantly more involved in all of the activities listed. Although varying proportions of non-gang youth engage in these activities, Aurora gang members are significantly more likely to attend musical concerts; "cruise"; engage in fighting, drinking, drug use, and drug sales; and put up and cross out graffiti.

As in our aggregate sample, the differences between the samples become more pronounced as the behavior shifts toward illegal and/or violent behavior and such "gang markers" as putting up and crossing out graffiti.

Gang vs. Non-Gang Member Criminal Behavior

Table 13 presents the findings with respect to our individual gang and non-gang member respondents *as individuals*.

No significant differences between the two samples were discovered for check forgery, arson, kidnapping, sexual assault, rape, robbery, and intimidating/assaulting shoppers. Also, the Aurora non-gang sample reported no personal involvement at all in credit card theft, muggings, bribing police, burglarizing occupied dwellings, drug theft, kidnapping, sexual assault, rape, and homicide. This may be attributable, to a significant degree, to (1) the much younger average age of the non-gang, at-risk comparison sample and (2) the fact that

TABLE 12. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang Member Activities
(Aurora)

Activity	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)	p ¹
Dances, Parties	77.3	71.7	n.s.
Sports Events	78.6	93.3	*
Concerts	73.8	39.1	**
"Hang Out"	97.7	95.7	n.s.
"Cruise"	92.9	66.0	**
Fighting	93.2	23.4	***
Drinking	83.7	22.2	***
Drug Use	58.1	2.1	***
Drug Sales	65.1	4.3	***
Put Up Graffiti	71.4	18.0	***
Cross Out Graffiti	83.7	22.9	***

¹p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant), calculated for scaled responses, which were then dichotomized for this table.

TABLE 13. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang Member Criminal Behavior
(Aurora)

Crime	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)	p ¹
Shoplifting	57.1	26.5	**
Check Forgery	4.1	2.0	n.s.
Credit Card Theft	12.2	0.0	*
Auto Theft	44.9	8.2	***
Theft (Other)	59.2	12.2	***
Sell Stolen Goods	44.9	6.1	***
Assault Rivals	81.6	12.2	***
Assault Own Members	31.3	8.2	**
Assault Police	28.6	4.1	**
Assault Teachers	26.5	6.1	**
Assault Students	58.3	30.6	**
Mug People	26.5	0.0	***
Assault in Streets	42.9	12.2	***
Bribe Police	12.2	0.0	*
Burglary (Unoccupied)	26.5	2.0	***
Burglary (Occupied)	8.3	0.0	*
Guns in School	53.1	6.1	***
Knives in School	50.0	12.2	***
Concealed Weapons	87.8	20.4	***
Drug Use	49.0	2.0	***
Drug Sales (School)	26.5	4.1	**
Drug Sales (Other)	75.0	4.1	***
Drug Theft	31.9	0.0	***
Arson	12.2	8.2	n.s.
Kidnap	6.1	0.0	n.s.
Sexual Assault	4.1	0.0	n.s.
Rape	2.0	0.0	n.s.
Robbery	14.3	4.1	n.s.
Intimidate/Assault Victims- Witnesses	39.6	4.2	***
Intimidate/Assault Shoppers	31.3	16.7	n.s.
Driveby Shooting	51.0	2.1	***
Homicide	12.2	0.0	*

¹p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant), calculated for scaled responses, which were then dichotomized for this table.

the base expectancy rate of these offenses is generally low to very low for adolescents whether they are gang-involved or not. The personal criminal behaviors reported most frequently by individual members of the non-gang sample in Aurora were assaulting students (30.6%), shoplifting (26.5%), and carrying concealed weapons (20.4%), suggesting that the concerns of both schools and retail merchants extend beyond youth gang members. However, for most of the criminal behaviors listed in Table 13, the differences between our gang members and our individual non-gang respondents were clearly significant.

Table 14 compares the *collective* criminal behavior of Aurora gangs with the *collective* criminal behavior of non-gang peer groups, based on our respondents' reports of the behavior of their fellow gang members/peer group members. Table 14 indicates that with the exception of assaults on fellow students (note that nearly two-thirds of the non-gang sample report that their peer group is involved in assaults on fellow students) and arson, the differences in collective criminal behavior between gang and non-gang youth are significant. In terms of percentages reporting that their gang/peer group engages in specific types of crime, the differences range from 64% for shoplifting to 690% for driveby shootings, 820% for check forgery, 943% for credit card theft, 1,686% for burglary of an occupied dwelling, and 2,776% for homicide (excluding kidnapping, sexual assault, and rape for which the non-gang sample reported no involvement at all by their peers).

TABLE 14. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang (Peer Group) Criminal Behavior (Aurora)

Crime	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)	p ¹
Shoplifting	77.1	46.9	**
Check Forgery	18.4	2.0	**
Credit Card Theft	41.7	4.0	***
Auto Theft	93.9	18.0	***
Theft (Other)	87.8	35.4	***
Sell Stolen Goods	79.6	24.5	***
Assault Rivals	98.0	36.0	***
Assault Own Members	49.0	14.3	***
Assault Police	73.5	14.3	***
Assault Teachers	58.3	18.4	***
Assault Students	62.5	61.2	n.s.
Mug People	59.2	12.5	***
Assault in Streets	81.6	22.9	***
Bribe Police	32.7	4.2	**
Burglary (Unoccupied)	63.3	8.3	***
Burglary (Occupied)	37.5	2.1	***
Guns in School	93.9	31.3	***
Knives in School	79.6	31.3	***
Concealed Weapons	98.0	44.7	***
Drug Use	79.6	22.9	***
Drug Sales (School)	61.7	10.4	***
Drug Sales (Other)	95.9	14.9	***
Drug Theft	64.6	8.3	***
Arson	14.3	8.3	n.s.
Kidnap	19.1	0.0	**
Sexual Assault	12.2	0.0	*
Rape	16.7	0.0	**
Robbery	36.7	4.2	***
Intimidate/Assault Victims-Witnesses	67.3	8.3	***
Intimidate/Assault Shoppers	51.0	10.4	***
Driveby Shooting	83.7	10.6	***
Homicide	60.4	2.1	***

¹p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant), calculated for scaled responses, which were then dichotomized for this table.

Tables 15 - 17 present the results for those survey questions involving drug sales. The following findings are noteworthy for our Aurora samples:

- As Table 15 indicates, our non-gang sample reported no personal involvement in drug sales for six of the seven types of drugs listed. Individual gang members are significantly more likely to be involved in the sales of crack cocaine, powder cocaine, marijuana, and LSD/mushrooms than are the non-gang/at-risk youth. The differences between these two samples for lower-volume drug sales such as PCP, heroin, and crystal methamphetamine are statistically non-significant.
- When gangs and comparable non-gang peer groups are examined (see Table 16), the data indicate that gangs are significantly more involved in the sales of all seven types of drugs. The only notable involvement in drug sales by peers reported by non-gang respondents was for marijuana (30%) and crack cocaine (22%)
- As indicated in Table 17, the typical Aurora gang member in our sample (n = 41) sells drugs several days a week, while the typical non-gang/at-risk youth in our sample does not sell drugs. Those non-gang/at-risk youth who do sell drugs (n=3), report that they sell about one day per week.
- Table 17 also reveals that gang members who sell drugs report that they make, on the average, more than three times more in earnings per week (\$675 compared to \$200) and have about 30

TABLE 15. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang Member Drug Sales (Type)
(Aurora)

Drug	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)	p ¹
Crack Cocaine	57.1	0.0	***
Powder Cocaine	24.5	0.0	***
Marijuana	57.1	8.0	***
PCP	6.3	0.0	n.s.
LSD/Mushrooms	18.4	0.0	**
Heroin	6.3	0.0	n.s.
Crystal Methamphetamine ("Ice")	10.2	0.0	n.s.

¹p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant), calculated for scaled responses, which were then dichotomized for this table.

TABLE 16. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang (Peer Group) Drug Sales
(Aurora)

Drug	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)	p ¹
Crack Cocaine	87.8	22.0	***
Powder Cocaine	75.5	8.0	***
Marijuana	95.9	30.0	***
PCP	30.7	0.0	***
LSD/Mushrooms	59.1	4.0	***
Heroin	39.6	2.0	***
Crystal Methamphetamine ("Ice")	36.7	4.0	***

¹p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant), calculated for scaled responses, which were then dichotomized for this table.

TABLE 17. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang Member Drug Sales (Dynamics)¹
(Aurora)

	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)	p ²
Frequency (Days/Wk)	Med = Several Days	Med = 1	***
Wages/Wk	Med = \$675	Med = \$200	***
Customers/Wk	Med = 30	Med = 2.5	***
\$ Kept for Own Drug Use	Med = 0	Med = 0	n.s.
Drug Source (Location) ³	Local: 8.2 Out of State: 32.7 In State: 14.3	Local: 14.3 Out of State: 10.2 In State: 2.0	***
Travel to Get Drug Supply	75.5	10.4	***
Legitimate Wage to Stop Selling Drugs (Per Hour)	Med = \$20.00	Med = \$25.00	
Who Controls Drugs?	Gangs: 8.3 Others: 79.2 Gangs & Others: 12.5	Gangs: 6.8 Others: 68.2 Gangs & Others: 15.9	n.s.

¹Based on subsample who do sell drugs (n=41 for gang sample, 3 for non-gang sample).

²p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant) based on either dichotomous or scaled responses.

³Data reflect only single responses (combinations of sources not included).

customers per week (compared to 2-3 per week for non-gang peers).

- Neither gang members nor their non-gang counterparts report using much, if any, of their drug profits to purchase drugs for their own use (Table 17 shows that the median for both subsamples is 0).
- Gangs and comparable non-gang peers differ significantly in the sources of their drug supplies (see Table 17). While the most likely source of drugs for Aurora gang members is out of state (about one-third), that is the case for only one in ten of the non-gang drug sellers, whose major sources are local. Note that "local sources" ranks only third for the gang members who sell drugs, with other Colorado cities coming in second.
- Both gang and non-gang youth believe that it would require a significant legitimate wage to induce their peers to stop selling drugs. As indicated in Table 17, the median response to this question ranged from \$20 (for gang members) to \$25 (non-gang/at risk peers). It should be noted, however, that although these median figures are the most representative responses, this means that 50% of both subsamples believed that a lower wage would be an acceptable inducement to stop selling drugs.
- Finally, neither Aurora gang members nor their non-gang counterparts believe that gangs control drug trafficking (less than 10% of each group hold that view, with about 12%-15% believing that gangs control drugs along with other organizations). Both

gang members (79%) and their non-gang peers (68%) clearly believe that drug markets are controlled by organizations other than gangs.

Table 18 indicates that guns are far more prevalent among our gang sample than among the peers of our non-gang respondents. While nearly nine in ten gang members indicated that most or nearly all of their fellow gang members own guns, less than one in five non-gang respondents reported this extent of gun ownership among their peer group. And, as Table 18 reveals, more than one-third (35.5%) of the non-gang/at-risk sample and nearly 9 out of 10 (89.6%) of the gang respondents report that members of their gangs/groups possess weapons that are more powerful than small caliber handguns.

Table 19 portrays the progression in Aurora from "hanging out" with the gang to joining the gang to getting arrested. Aurora gang member respondents reported that they first began associating with the gang at about age 13. They joined, on the average, about a year later, and they were arrested for the first time about a year after they began associating with the gang and about the same time they decided to join.

Finally, as Table 20 indicates, nearly six in ten (59.2%) of the Aurora gang members in our sample personally knew someone who had been approached to join the gang but had refused. Of those refusal techniques specifically mentioned by our respondents, the most frequent were "stopped associating" (14.3%) and "said no" (10.2%). Most importantly, of those who refused (and about whom

Table 18: Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang (Peer Group) Gun Ownership (Aurora)

	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (Peer Group) %	p ¹
Own Guns	Most/Nearly All: 85.7	Most/Nearly All: 18.3	***
Type of Guns	>Small Caliber: 89.6	>Small Caliber: 35.5	***

¹p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant).

**TABLE 19: Age from "Wannabe" to First Arrest
(Aurora)**

1st Association with Gang:	x = 13.1
Joined Gang:	x = 14.2
1st Arrest:	Med = 14.0

TABLE 20: Gang Resistance and Consequences % (Aurora = Gang 49, Non-Gang 50)

Know Someone Who Refused to Join	59.2
Refusal Techniques	Stopped Associating: 14.3 Said No: 10.2
Consequences	Nothing: 36.7 Physical Harm: 6.1

our respondents had personal knowledge of the outcome), only 6.1% experienced any physical harm, while 36.7% were known to have suffered no consequences for their refusal. Thus, based on these data, a youth who is approached to join a gang in Aurora can use appropriate refusal techniques and is likely to have about a 6:1 benefit/cost ratio in terms of consequences. Further, it is important to note that 66.7% of our Aurora gang respondents indicated that gang initiation includes a requirement to fight (known as getting "beaten into" the gang). Thus, a youth is far more likely to avoid physical harm (as well as subsequent arrest, injury, and possibly even death) by refusing to join a gang.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS: BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

The final samples for Broward County, Florida, consisted of 50 gang members and 48 non-gang, at-risk youth. Table 21 presents data concerning selected demographic variables, education and recent work history, and arrest data for these two samples. Again, although we are quite confident that the gang members in our sample are really gang members and that the non-gang, at-risk youth really do reflect that category, difficulties that arose during the referral and recruitment processes resulted in the two samples being distinctly different with respect to a number of these variables. The gang members were older (18.5 years of age, compared to 15.2 for non-gang/at risk youth); were somewhat more likely to be male (92% to 81.3%); were most likely to be African American (58% to 14.6%); had somewhat more education (9.5 grades

**TABLE 21. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang Member Samples
(Broward County)**

	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)
Age	x = 18.5	x = 15.2
Gender (% Male)	92.0	81.3
Race (% African-American)	58.0	14.6
Education Completed	x = 9.5	x = 8.3
Work (past yr)	86.0	43.8
Two Parent Family	58.0	22.9
# of Arrests	med = 6.0	med = 1
Age at 1st Arrest	med = 14.0	med = 14.0 ¹

¹Median for those arrested (n=31).

to 8.3 grades) due to their older age; had considerably more work experience in the past year (86% to 43.8); and were actually *more* likely to have come from a two-parent family (58% to 22.9%).

Table 21 also indicates that gang members had been arrested far more frequently than their non-gang counterparts (median arrests = 6 for gang members, 1 for non-gang respondents). The median age at first arrest was 14 for both the gang sample and for the 31 non-gang respondents who had been arrested.

Gang vs. Non-Gang Member Activities

Table 22 suggests that with the exception of sporting events (which appear to involve at-risk youth in Broward County somewhat more than their gang counterparts) and "cruising" (no significant difference in involvement) gang members are much more involved in all of the activities listed. Although varying proportions of non-gang youth engage in these activities, gang members are significantly more likely to "party"; attend musical concerts; "hang out"; engage in fighting, drinking, drug use, and drug sales; and put up and cross out graffiti.

Gang vs. Non-Gang Member Criminal Behavior

Table 23 presents the findings with respect to the criminal behavior reportedly committed *as individuals* by members of our sample. As indicated in Table 23, our individual respondents are comparably involved in assaults on teachers; bribery of police; arson; kidnapping; sexual assault; and rape. For all other types of crime, the self-reported involvement of the individual gang members in our

TABLE 22. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang Member Activities
(Broward County)

Activity	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)	p ¹
Dances, Parties	88.0	59.6	**
Sports Events	66.0	77.1	n.s.
Concerts	72.0	34.0	***
"Hang Out"	100.0	89.4	*
"Cruise"	92.0	80.9	n.s.
Fighting	100.0	36.2	***
Drinking	100.0	29.8	***
Drug Use	96.0	18.8	***
Drug Sales	82.0	12.5	***
Put Up Graffiti	94.0	27.1	***
Cross Out Graffiti	94.0	16.7	***

¹p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant), calculated for scaled responses, which were then dichotomized for this table.

TABLE 23. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang Member Criminal Behavior
(Broward County)

Crime	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)	p ¹
Shoplifting	62.0	33.3	* *
Check Forgery	18.0	4.2	*
Credit Card Theft	46.0	6.3	***
Auto Theft	67.3	20.8	***
Theft (Other)	80.0	31.9	***
Sell Stolen Goods	70.0	20.8	***
Assault Rivals	94.0	10.4	***
Assault Own Members	40.0	18.8	*
Assault Police	22.0	6.4	*
Assault Teachers	16.3	10.4	n.s.
Assault Students	66.0	31.3	***
Mug People	52.0	8.3	***
Assault in Streets	56.0	8.3	***
Bribe Police	10.0	4.2	n.s.
Burglary (Unoccupied)	64.0	17.0	***
Burglary (Occupied)	34.0	2.1	***
Guns in School	46.0	12.5	***
Knives in School	58.3	10.4	***
Concealed Weapons	84.0	33.3	***
Drug Use	76.0	20.8	***
Drug Sales (School)	34.0	4.2	***
Drug Sales (Other)	58.0	16.7	***
Drug Theft	44.9	2.1	***
Arson	12.0	10.4	n.s.
Kidnap	4.0	2.1	n.s.
Sexual Assault/Molest	4.0	0.0	n.s.
Rape	4.0	0.0	n.s.
Robbery	30.0	6.3	* *
Intimidate/Assault Victims- Witnesses	46.0	6.3	***
Intimidate/Assault Shoppers	42.0	8.3	***
Driveby Shooting	68.0	2.1	***
Homicide	20.0	0.0	***

¹p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant), calculated for scaled responses, which were then dichotomized for this table.

sample ranged from twice as great for assaulting one's own gang/peer group members to nearly eight times greater for credit card theft; more than eight times greater for drug sales at school; nine times greater for assaulting rivals; more than 16 times greater for burglary of an occupied dwelling; more than 21 times greater for drug theft; and more than 32 times greater for driveby shootings. Our at-risk sample also reported no personal involvement at all for sexual assault, rape, and homicide.

Table 24 compares the *collective* criminal behavior of Broward County gangs with the *collective* criminal behavior of non-gang peer groups, based on our respondents' reports of the behavior of their fellow gang members/peer group members. The data in Table 24 indicate that with the exception of assaulting teachers, bribing police, sexual assault and rape, gangs are significantly more involved in criminal behavior, especially the most serious crimes of violence and major property crimes. The rates for gang members range from 60% greater for assaulting other students to about seven times greater for kidnapping; more than ten times greater for credit card theft, drug sales at school, and driveby shootings; and more than 25 times greater for homicide

The data in Tables 5 - 7 address questions concerning drug sales. For our Broward County sample, the following findings emerged:

- Table 25 indicates that individual gang members are significantly more likely to be involved in the sales of all drugs listed except

TABLE 24. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang (Peer Group) Criminal Behavior (Broward County)

Crime	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)	p ¹
Shoplifting	82.0	47.9	***
Check Forgery	30.0	8.3	**
Credit Card Theft	84.0	8.3	***
Auto Theft	94.0	54.2	***
Theft (Other)	96.0	54.2	***
Sell Stolen Goods	94.0	41.7	***
Assault Rivals	100.0	22.9	***
Assault Own Members	68.0	14.6	***
Assault Police	62.0	18.8	***
Assault Teachers	44.0	29.2	n.s.
Assault Students	90.0	56.3	***
Mug People	76.0	22.9	***
Assault in Streets	72.0	29.2	***
Bribe Police	16.0	4.2	n.s.
Burglary (Unoccupied)	94.0	43.8	***
Burglary (Occupied)	62.0	16.7	***
Guns in School	80.0	21.3	***
Knives in School	85.7	31.9	***
Concealed Weapons	96.0	53.2	***
Drug Use	98.0	40.4	***
Drug Sales (School)	70.0	6.5	***
Drug Sales (Other)	92.0	39.1	***
Drug Theft	76.0	12.8	***
Arson	32.0	8.5	**
Kidnap	14.0	2.1	*
Sexual Assault	16.0	4.3	n.s.
Rape	16.0	6.4	n.s.
Robbery	65.3	19.1	***
Intimidate/Assault Victims-Witnesses	76.0	21.3	***
Intimidate/Assault Shoppers	66.0	20.8	***
Driveby Shooting	92.0	8.5	***
Homicide	54.0	2.1	***

¹p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant), calculated for scaled responses, which were then dichotomized for this table.

TABLE 25. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang Member Drug Sales (Type)
(Broward County)

Drug	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)	p ¹
Crack Cocaine	38.7	16.7	n.s.
Powder Cocaine	51.0	8.4	***
Marijuana	73.5	18.8	***
PCP	14.3	0.0	*
LSD/Mushrooms	38.8	2.1	***
Heroin	17.0	2.1	*
Crystal Methamphetamine ("Ice")	14.6	0.0	*

¹p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant), calculated for scaled responses, which were then dichotomized for this table.

for crack cocaine, where the difference in frequency of sales, though not statistically significant, was also large in percentage terms. Gang members are most involved in selling marijuana, then powder cocaine, and then crack and LSD/mushrooms. Non-gang peers reported their most extensive involvement in sales of marijuana and crack.

- When gangs and comparable non-gang peer groups are examined (see Table 26), the data indicate that gangs are significantly more involved in the sales of all listed drugs. Based on the reports of our sample, gangs are most frequently involved in selling marijuana, then powder cocaine, then crack and LSD/mushrooms, while non-gang peers' drug selling appears to focus on marijuana, crack, and powder cocaine in that order.
- As indicated in Table 27, the typical gang member in our sample sells drugs on a daily basis, while the typical non-gang/at-risk youth in our sample does not sell drugs. However, those non-gang/at-risk youth who do sell drugs (n=11), report that they also sell on a daily basis.
- Table 27 also reports that gang members who sell drugs report that they make, on the average, about \$550 per week with about 15 customers, compared to non-gang peers who report making about \$700 per week, but with 45 customers. Thus, the average gross earnings per transaction for the Broward gang members is \$36.67, compared to \$15.56 per transaction for non-gang/at-risk youth. This finding is not unexpected, since our data indicate that

**TABLE 26. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang (Peer Group) Drug Sales
(Broward County)**

Drug	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)	p¹
Crack Cocaine	66.0	41.7	* *
Powder Cocaine	78.0	27.1	* * *
Marijuana	94.0	54.1	* * *
PCP	30.0	4.2	* *
LSD/Mushrooms	66.0	2.1	* * *
Heroin	31.3	4.2	* *
Crystal Methamphetamine ("Ice")	20.4	4.2	*

¹p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant), calculated for scaled responses, which were then dichotomized for this table.

TABLE 27. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang Member Drug Sales (Dynamics)¹
(Broward County)

	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)	p ²
Frequency (Days/Wk)	Med = Daily	Med = Daily	***
Wages/Wk	Med = \$550	Med = \$700	*
Customers/Wk	Med = 15	Med = 45	**
\$ Kept for Own Drug Use	Med = 20%	Med = 5%	**
Drug Source (Location) ³	Local: 22.4 Out of State: 14.3 In State: 10.2	Local: 14.9 Out of State: 6.4 In State: 17.0	***
Travel to Get Drug Supply	68.0	31.9	***
Legitimate Wage to Stop Selling Drugs (Per Hour)	Med = \$18.00	Med = \$13.50	
Who Controls Drugs?	Gangs: 10.6 Others: 78.7 Gangs & Others: 8.5	Gangs: 2.3 Others: 79.5 Gangs & Others: 4.5	n.s.

¹Based on subsample who do sell drugs (n=38 for gang sample, 11 for non-gang sample).

²p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant) based on either dichotomous or scaled responses.

³Data reflect only single responses (combinations of sources not included).

gang members are far more likely to be involved in selling higher-profit drugs such as powder cocaine, while non-gang/at-risk youth who do sell drugs generally sell only marijuana and/or crack, both of which are characterized by higher-volume, lower profit (per sale) transactions.

- Broward gang members, unlike their gang counterparts at our other two sites, report using an average (median) of 20% of their drug profits to purchase drugs for their own use, compared to 5% for the non-gang, at-risk youth in our sample (Table 27).
- Gangs and comparable non-gang peers differ significantly in the sources of their drug supplies (see Table 27). Although the most frequently reported source of drugs for gang members was local, they were more than twice as likely as non-gang respondents to rely on out of state (including other countries) sources. One must also note that "local" sources in south Florida are more numerous than in metropolitan Denver and most other areas of the United States, given the magnitude of the drug problem in south Florida and its status as a major port-of-entry for drugs.
- Both gang and non-gang youth believe that it would require a significant legitimate wage to induce their peers to stop selling drugs. As indicated in Table 27, the median response to this question ranged from \$13.50 (for non-gang youth) to \$18 (gang members). Again it should be noted that since these are median figures, this means that there are individuals who may be willing to stop selling drugs in return for legitimate wages that are not

much higher than are currently being paid by fast-food restaurants.

- Finally, Table 27 demonstrates that neither gang members nor their non-gang counterparts believe that gangs control drug trafficking. Both gang members and their non-gang peers clearly believe that drug markets are controlled by organizations other than gangs.

With respect to the important issue of gun possession and lethality of weapons, Table 28 provides data that guns are far more prevalent and more lethal among gangs, although there is no shortage among non-gang peers, as well. Two-thirds of our Broward County gang respondents indicated that most or nearly all of their fellow gang members own guns and more than nine ten gang members belong to gangs whose weapons are more lethal than small caliber handguns (compared to about one-fourth of the non-gang youth who responded that weapons were highly prevalent, with about half indicating that the weapons among their peer group are more powerful than small caliber handguns).

Table 29 presents the data concerning the progression from "hanging out" with the gang (commonly known as the gang "wannabe" or associate stage) to joining the gang to getting arrested. Our gang member respondents reported that they first began associating with the gang at about age 13. They joined, on the average, about one year later. They were then arrested for the first time at about age 14, one year after beginning to associate with the gang and about the same time that they joined.

Table 28: Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang (Peer Group) Gun Ownership
(Broward County)

	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (Peer Group) %	p ¹
Own Guns	Most/Nearly All: 66.0	Most/Nearly All: 25.0	***
Type of Guns	>Small Caliber: 92.0	>Small Caliber: 48.0	***

¹p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant).

**TABLE 29: Age from "Wannabe" to First Arrest
(Broward County)**

1st Association with Gang:	x = 13.3
Joined Gang:	x = 14.3
1st Arrest:	Med = 14.0

As reported in Table 30, nearly three-fourths of our gang sample knew someone who had been approached to join a gang but had refused. For those who refused, the most common specific refusal techniques, insofar as they were known to our respondents, were (1) "stopped associating" and (2) "changed routines/dress," which means that by no longer associating with gang members, no longer frequenting the same locations at the same times, and no longer dressing in a manner that is similar to gang clothing preferences, one can help increase the odds of gang resistance. As for the known consequences of gang resistance, 34% of our respondents indicated that the person who refused suffered absolutely no consequences, while 16% were aware of some physical harm that occurred (usually not serious). This benefit/cost ratio of better than 2:1, though not as favorable as in some other sites, is nonetheless an important rationale for gang resistance, especially in light of the fact that the main initiation ceremony required to join gangs in Broward County includes fighting, as reported by 46% of our gang sample (by far the single most frequent response).

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS: DENVER, COLORADO

As Table 31 suggests, our samples of gang and at-risk youth in Denver, as in the other sites, differed on several dimensions. Again, this was due to the specific referral sources utilized, the accessibility of referred youth, and their willingness to cooperate in our study. Our final sample for Denver consisted of 41 gang members and 47 non-gang, at-risk youth. This attrition from the originally proposed sample (50 in each category) was due to the

TABLE 30: Gang Resistance and Consequences % (Broward County = Gang 50, Non-Gang 49)

Know Someone Who Refused to Join	72.0
Refusal Techniques	Stopped Associating: 28.6 Changed Routines/Dress: 8.2
Consequences	Nothing: 34.0 Physical Harm: 16.0

TABLE 31. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang Member Samples
(Denver)

	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)
Age	x = 18.9	x = 16.2
Gender (% Male)	87.8	48.9
Race (% African-American)	51.2	68.1
Education Completed	x = 10.4	x = 9.0
Work (past yr)	70.7	55.3
Two Parent Family	19.5	27.7
# of Arrests	med = 5.0	med = 0
Age at 1st Arrest	med = 14.0	med = 14.0 ¹

¹Median for those arrested (n=16).

resignation of a key staff member (who was coordinating our referrals) in our main referral agency at a critical time when the data collection was concluding, so that no time remained to complete the interviews and no staff member could be designated at that late date (due to staff workload) to assume the role of referral coordinator for our study. The final gang sample consisted of individuals who were, on average, nearly three years older; were far more likely to be male; were less likely to be African-American; had completed somewhat more education (due to their age); and had more work experience during the past year. About one in five gang members in our sample came from a two-parent family (compared to about one in four non-gang youth).

Table 31 also demonstrates the tremendous disparity in the arrest stories of our two samples. Our Denver gang members had an average of five arrests each, while the typical non-gang youth in our sample had never been arrested. However, for those 16 non-gang youth who had been arrested, their age at first arrest was identical to that of the gang sample (14 years of age). These data provide additional support for the hypothesis that gangs are criminogenic, since the 16 non-gang youth who had been arrested (typically at age 14, the same age as gang members' first arrest) had not accumulated additional arrests in the same manner that had occurred to those who joined the gang, even allowing for the older average age of the gang sample.

Table 32 suggests that Denver gang members and non-gang but at-risk youth are comparably involved (no statistically significant differences) in dances, parties, and sports events. Having said that, the similarity ends at that point. Gang members are significantly more likely to attend concerts,

TABLE 32. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang Member Activities
(Denver)

Activity	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)	p ¹
Dances, Parties	71.1	63.6	n.s.
Sports Events	57.9	61.9	n.s.
Concerts	94.4	53.8	***
"Hang Out"	100.0	81.0	**
"Cruise"	89.2	57.1	**
Fighting	94.6	36.4	***
Drinking	94.6	40.0	***
Drug Use	78.4	8.7	***
Drug Sales	81.6	2.2	***
Put Up Graffiti	95.2	41.3	***
Cross Out Graffiti	92.9	35.6	***

¹p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant), calculated for scaled responses, which were then dichotomized for this table.

hang out, and cruise; engage in fighting, drinking, drug use, and drug sales; and put up and cross out graffiti than are non-gang but at-risk youth. Note that the disparities in certain of these behaviors were huge, in the case of our Denver sample (e.g., drug use was about nine times higher and drug sales, nearly forty times higher among gang members).

In assessing the criminal behavior of individual members of our gang and non-gang samples, we refer to Table 33. These data suggest that for certain crimes (shoplifting, check forgery, assaulting teachers, assaulting students, bribing police, sexual assault/molestation, and rape), the differences between our gang and our non-gang samples were not significant. Indeed, for certain crimes (check forgery, credit card theft, assaulting police, burglarizing an occupied building, drug sales at school, kidnapping, sexual assault, rape, driveby shootings, and homicide) our at-risk sample indicated that they were personally not involved in any of those crimes. Individual gang members were personally most involved in carrying concealed weapons (88.1%), assaulting rivals (71.4%), drug sales other than at school (64.3%), and auto theft (61.9%), while non-gang youth reported more personal involvement in shoplifting (39.1%), assaulting students at school (34.1%), and carrying concealed weapons (31.9%).

When we turn to the issue of collective crime by our respondents' gangs and peer groups (Table 34), we find that there are no statistically significant differences between the two samples for shoplifting, assaulting their own gang/group members, assaulting other students, and bribing police (the level of significance for rape, at .052, should also be noted, and nearly three times as many gang members admitted committing rape). The difference between

TABLE 33. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang Member Criminal Behavior
(Denver)

Crime	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)	p ¹
Shoplifting	45.0	39.1	n.s.
Check Forgery	4.8	0.0	n.s.
Credit Card Theft	9.5	0.0	*
Auto Theft	61.9	8.5	***
Theft (Other)	52.4	8.9	***
Sell Stolen Goods	52.4	8.7	***
Assault Rivals	71.4	10.9	***
Assault Own Members	26.2	8.7	*
Assault Police	31.0	0.0	***
Assault Teachers	26.8	21.3	n.s.
Assault Students	53.7	34.1	n.s.
Mug People	33.3	8.7	**
Assault in Streets	52.4	8.7	***
Bribe Police	11.9	4.3	n.s.
Burglary (Unoccupied)	42.9	6.4	***
Burglary (Occupied)	14.6	0.0	**
Guns in School	46.3	4.3	***
Knives in School	37.5	14.9	*
Concealed Weapons	88.1	31.9	***
Drug Use	51.2	12.8	***
Drug Sales (School)	38.1	0.0	***
Drug Sales (Other)	64.3	4.3	***
Drug Theft	23.1	2.2	**
Arson	14.3	2.1	*
Kidnap	9.5	0.0	*
Sexual Assault/Molest	0.0	0.0	n.s.
Rape	0.0	0.0	n.s.
Robbery	26.2	6.4	**
Intimidate/Assault Victims- Witnesses	47.6	4.4	***
Intimidate/Assault Shoppers	40.5	8.9	***
Driveby Shooting	50.0	0.0	***
Homicide	19.5	0.0	**

¹p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant), calculated for scaled responses, which were then dichotomized for this table.

TABLE 34. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang (Peer Group) Criminal Behavior (Denver)

Crime	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)	p ¹
Shoplifting	66.7	57.4	n.s.
Check Forgery	36.6	4.3	***
Credit Card Theft	51.2	15.2	***
Auto Theft	92.9	51.1	***
Theft (Other)	78.6	45.7	**
Sell Stolen Goods	83.3	34.0	***
Assault Rivals	97.6	47.8	***
Assault Own Members	52.4	34.1	n.s.
Assault Police	69.0	15.2	***
Assault Teachers	64.3	35.6	**
Assault Students	82.5	75.0	n.s.
Mug People	73.8	28.9	***
Assault in Streets	82.5	27.9	***
Bribe Police	38.1	20.0	n.s.
Burglary (Unoccupied)	73.2	25.0	***
Burglary (Occupied)	57.9	6.8	***
Guns in School	90.5	43.2	***
Knives in School	82.9	55.6	**
Concealed Weapons	97.6	64.4	***
Drug Use	85.4	43.2	***
Drug Sales (School)	83.3	27.3	***
Drug Sales (Other)	92.9	59.1	***
Drug Theft	66.7	18.6	***
Arson	38.1	18.2	*
Kidnap	26.8	0.0	***
Sexual Assault/Molest	23.8	2.2	**
Rape	24.4	8.9	n.s. (.052)
Robbery	62.5	15.6	***
Intimidate/Assault Victims-Witnesses	80.5	31.8	***
Intimidate/Assault Shoppers	54.8	20.9	**
Driveby Shooting	85.4	26.7	***
Homicide	82.5	15.9	***

¹p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant), calculated for scaled responses, which were then dichotomized for this table.

gang and at-risk youth participation for the other types of crime mentioned during the interviews range from about 50% for taking knives to school and carrying concealed weapons to more than five times greater for homicide, nearly nine times greater for check forgery, and nearly 11 times greater for sexual assault/molestation and for burglary of an occupied dwelling.

As in the other sites, we questioned our respondents about their personal involvement and their gang's/group's collective involvement in drug sales. Tables 35 and 36 report the results of these questions. On a personal level, our gang member sample was significantly more involved in the sale of all drugs listed except "crystal meth" or "ice," which has a low base rate of sales even among Denver gang members. In fact, only two individuals in our at-risk sample in Denver reported being personally involved in drug sales.

Thus, further comparisons on this issue become rather pointless. Most importantly, as indicated in Table 35, individual gang members report that their personal involvement in drug sales varies from crack cocaine and marijuana (most frequent) to PCP and heroin (least frequent).

Collectively, our Denver gang sample was significantly more involved than our at-risk peer group sample in the sales of all drugs listed (see Table 36). According to our respondents, their gangs were most involved in selling crack and marijuana (about nine in ten mentioned these two drugs) and least involved in selling "ice," heroin, and PCP (about four in ten). With respect to the non-gang, at-risk peer groups, their drug sales appeared to focus most on marijuana and crack and least on "ice," PCP, and heroin.

Table 37 provides further insight into the dynamics of drug sales in the Denver area by gang youth, but little information about drug sales by non-

TABLE 35. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang Member Drug Sales (Type)
(Denver)

Drug	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)	p ¹
Crack Cocaine	63.4	0.0	***
Powder Cocaine	41.5	0.0	***
Marijuana	62.5	4.3	***
PCP	12.2	0.0	*
LSD/Mushrooms	25.0	0.0	**
Heroin	14.6	0.0	*
Crystal Methamphetamine ("Ice")	9.7	0.0	n.s.

¹p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant), calculated for scaled responses, which were then dichotomized for this table.

TABLE 36. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang (Peer Group) Drug Sales (Denver)

Drug	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)	p ¹
Crack Cocaine	92.7	55.3	***
Powder Cocaine	75.0	38.3	**
Marijuana	90.2	61.7	**
PCP	43.5	12.8	**
LSD/Mushrooms	47.5	19.1	*
Heroin	43.9	14.9	**
Crystal Methamphetamine ("Ice")	39.1	10.7	**

¹p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant), calculated for scaled responses, which were then dichotomized for this table.

gang youth, since only two of our non-gang sample reported personal involvement in drug sales. The typical gang member in our sample reported selling drugs daily and making about \$1,000 per week with 30 customers. The two non-gang drug sellers sell drugs about one day per week, make about \$100, and have about 11 customers. Thus, the gross revenue per transaction for gang members was about \$33.33, while it was only about \$9.09 per transaction for non-gang youth. Neither sample reported using much, if any, of their drug money for their own drug use (the median was 0 for gang members and 5% for the two non-gang drug sellers).

As in our other sites, gang members report (Table 37) that the source of their drugs is much more often out-of-state than is the case for non-gang youth (31.6% to 11.1%). The non-gang youth, conversely, rely on local sources more often than do gang members (33.3% to 7.9%). Not surprisingly, then, nearly three-fourths of our gang sample (72.5%) report traveling to get their drug supply, compared to only 27.9% of the non-gang sample.

Table 37 also indicates that with respect to our "tipping point" question (how much would it take per hour in legitimate wages to give up selling drugs), the responses of our Denver sample were the highest among all our sites (\$25 per hour, according to our gang sample; \$50 per hour, according to our non-gang youth). Finally, both our gang sample and our non-gang sample clearly believe that organizations other than gangs control drugs. Gangs were mentioned by less than 3% of the gang youth and 14% of the non-gang sample, while more than eight in ten gang members and nearly six in ten non-gang youth indicated that "others" control drugs.

TABLE 37. Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang Member Drug Sales (Dynamics)¹
(Denver)

	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (%)	p ²
Frequency (Days/Wk)	Med = Daily	Med = 1	***
Wages/Wk	Med = \$1000	Med = \$100	***
Customers/Wk	Med = 30	Med = 11	***
\$ Kept for Own Drug Use	Med = 0	Med = 5%	***
Drug Source (Location) ³	Local: 7.9 Out of State: 31.6 In State: 0.0	Local: 33.3 Out of State: 11.1 In State: 8.9	***
Travel to Get Drug Supply	72.5	27.9	***
Legitimate Wage to Stop Selling Drugs (Per Hour)	Med = \$25.00	Med = \$50.00	
Who Controls Drugs?	Gangs: 2.8 Others: 83.3 Gangs & Others: 11.1	Gangs: 14.0 Others: 55.8 Gangs & Others: 16.3	n.s.

¹Based on subsample who do sell drugs (n=31 for gang sample, 2 for non-gang sample).

²p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant) based on either dichotomous or scaled responses.

³Data reflect only single responses (combinations of sources not included).

As in our other sites, a large proportion of Denver's gangs appear to be well armed (see Table 38). Nearly eight in ten gang respondents indicated that most or nearly all of their gang members own guns and that those guns are more powerful than small caliber handguns. For the non-gang sample, more than one-third stated that most or all of their peer group own guns and more than four in ten indicated that those guns are more lethal than small caliber handguns.

The progression from "wannabe" (associate) to gang member to first arrest in Denver, as revealed in Table 39, mirrors that found in our other sites. Our gang members first began hanging out with their gangs at about age 12 1/2 and joined about one year later. They were first arrested, on average, about six months after joining the gang. Again, these data provide significant information concerning the highly criminogenic nature of gangs, especially given the much higher number of total arrests for the gang sample. Even considering that the gang members in our sample were older than the non-gang respondents, the latter were nonetheless old enough to have experienced a greater number of arrests than occurred (since age at first arrest was 14 for both samples).

Finally, as in our other sites, our field interview data suggest some optimism concerning gang resistance. As reflected in Table 40, about two-thirds of our gang members personally knew someone who resisted joining the gang. The most frequent single technique known to our respondents was simply saying no to the invitation to join. As for consequences suffered by those whom they knew had refused, the benefit/cost ratio was nearly 2:1, with 30% known to have experienced no consequences whatsoever and 17.5%

Table 38: Comparison of Gang and Non-Gang (Peer Group) Gun Ownership (Denver)

	Gang (%)	Non-Gang (Peer Group) %	p ¹
Own Guns	Most/Nearly All: 87.8	Most/Nearly All: 34.1	***
Type of Guns	>Small Caliber: 87.5	>Small Caliber: 44.7	***

¹p=level of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; n.s.=not significant).

**TABLE 39: Age from "Wannabe" to First Arrest
(Denver)**

1st Association with Gang:	x = 12.4
Joined Gang:	x = 13.5
1st Arrest:	Med = 14.0

Table 40: Gang Resistance and Consequences (%)
(Denver)

Know Someone Who Refused to Join	65.9
Refusal Techniques	Said No: 25.6
Consequences	Nothing: 30.0 Physical Harm: 17.5

known to have suffered some physical harm (generally not serious). Again, this must be viewed along with the finding that the most frequent type of gang initiation ritual is getting "beaten in" (fighting), which was mentioned by 56.1% of our gang sample.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings presented in this report may have important implications for public policy in confronting the challenges presented by the recent proliferation of gangs and gang-related crime. We offer the following conclusions and recommendations, based on the data presented in this report and a parallel study recently completed by the principal investigator in Ohio⁴

- Those who join gangs tend to begin their association with gangs at about age 13, join about a year later, and get arrested about the same time that they join the gang (age 14, on average). This underscores the highly criminogenic nature of gangs and the vital importance of gang resistance education programs and other primary and secondary prevention initiatives directed at pre-teens. These initiatives are especially important for those young people who have significant exposure to multiple risk factors for

⁴ The Ohio study, funded by the (Ohio) Office of Criminal Justice Services with funds appropriated by the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, compared the criminal behavior of gang and non-gang, at-risk youth in Cleveland and included a longitudinal "tracking" study of the criminal behavior of Columbus gang leaders. The conclusions produced by the Cleveland gang/at-risk comparisons parallel the conclusions in this report. Furthermore, because the researcher had ten years of experience in conducting gang research in Cleveland and had much better-established referral networks, the Cleveland samples contained no significant differences between the gang and non-gang, at-risk samples with respect to age, gender, race, education completed, recent work experience, and family status. Thus, the sampling limitations encountered in the present study do not appear to impact significantly on the generalizability of either the conclusions or the implications when compared with the Cleveland samples (Huff, 1995, 1996).

delinquent and violent behavior (Hawkins, Lishner, Jenson, and Catalano, 1987). Such risk factors (all of which impact upon the samples used in this study) include economic deprivation (Farrington, 1991; National Research Council, 1993); neighborhood disorganization (National Research Council, 1993; Sampson, 1994); dysfunctional family structure and/or parenting (National Research Council, 1993); poor health and inadequate health care (National Research Council, 1993); school failure and inadequate schools (National Research Council, 1993); and the availability of weapons (Reiss and Roth, 1993), among others.

- Our data also demonstrate that, contrary to much of the common wisdom and folklore that surrounds the issue of gang resistance, young people can refuse to join gangs without incurring a substantial risk of physical harm. Furthermore, based on probability, they are far better off to resist joining gangs than to expose themselves to the beating they are likely to take upon initiation and to the increased risk of arrest, incarceration, injury, and death known to be associated with gang membership. It should also be noted that a recent study by Decker and Lauritsen (1996) provides empirical evidence that the process of gang *desistance* (leaving the gang) has also been surrounded by a great deal of misinformation and folklore. Their study demonstrates that the process of leaving the gang may be more common than previously thought and that many gang members may be more amenable to intervention efforts at a time when they are experiencing negative reactions to the violence associated with gang life.

- Since primary prevention and early intervention efforts will not deter all young people from associating with gangs, we must also address the

brief "window of intervention" that opens in that year between first association with the gang (the "wannabe" stage) and first arrest. It is imperative that we fund, develop, evaluate, improve, and sustain intervention programs that target this group of "wannabe" gang associates and successfully divert them from the gang into meaningful and effective programs during that one year window of opportunity (see, for example, Goldstein and Huff, 1993; Howell, Krisberg, Hawkins, and Wilson, 1995).

- In comparing the *prosocial* activity preferences of gang and non-gang youth, it is clear that both groups are highly attracted to and extensively participate in dances and parties, concerts, and sports events (in the latter case, the participation rate of non-gang youth actually *exceeds* that of the gang members). Thus, prevention and intervention programming should make extensive use of these activities, since they are known to be attractive to the target populations.

- Certain types of crimes are especially likely to involve gang members, and a sudden increase in those crimes may be viewed as a potential "distant early warning signal" that crime in the community may be increasingly gang-related. Crimes that may be especially worth monitoring closely are assaults involving rival groups; auto theft and credit card theft; carrying concealed weapons; taking weapons to school; assault/intimidation of victims, witnesses, and shoppers; drug trafficking; driveby shootings (see also Klein, 1995: 117-118); and homicide, all of which appear to involve gang members more frequently than non-gang youth and may serve as reasonably accurate "gang markers" in some communities at some points in time.

- Data from this study suggest that gang members are significantly more likely than non-gang peers to be involved in the sale of higher-profit drugs, likely to sell drugs on a daily basis, and make about two-thirds more in earnings from drug sales per week. This underscores the need for prevention and early intervention programs that are designed to divert "wannabes" before they have an opportunity to get "hooked" on the illegal earnings that are possible through illegal activities such as drug sales.

- Although many gang members and non-gang/at-risk peers indicate that it would require a legitimate wage of around \$20 per hour to induce a youth to stop selling drugs, a significant number of youth are likely to be amenable to far lower legitimate wages, especially if they can obtain a large number of hours of work per week in order to increase their total income.

However, this is difficult since many employers will offer only part-time jobs, partly to avoid paying the fringe benefits associated with full-time employment. We must, as a nation, develop more effective policies and programs that address the school-to-work transition problem, both in terms of vocational education and training and in terms of national employment and training priorities for youth.⁵ The United States will not be able to compete economically on a global scale if it does not have an educated, skilled work force. That work force will eventually consist entirely of today's youth and it will include increasing numbers of minorities. For example, about 45 percent

⁵ Note that the United States alone, among Western democracies, failed to develop extensive apprenticeship and job training programs for youth at the conclusion of World War II. Time series data for unemployment since that time suggest that U. S. job markets are highly segmented and that the youth unemployment problem has been one of the most persistent public policy challenges facing the United States.

of all net additions to the U.S. labor force in the 1990s will be non-white (Fullerton, 1987; Johnston, 1991).

- Gangs are likely to possess powerful and highly lethal weapons, despite the fact that many gang members are not yet old enough to drive a car legally. Efforts to reduce the number of illegal weapons possessed by youth and adults (such as the recent Kansas City experiment) should be emphasized and could have substantial impact in reducing gun-related crimes (see Cook and Moore, 1995, for a discussion of gun control strategies).

- Finally, gangs should be viewed not as *the* problem, but rather as a symptom of more complex and pervasive problems in our society. Addressing these problems will require, first, that we begin to develop integrated, coordinated, and carefully developed *youth policy*. The fact is that our youth are our nation's most valuable resource, yet we do not have carefully coordinated youth policy in our nation, our states, or our communities. The development of such policy, along with the establishment of *healthy communities* (see Hawkins and Catalano, 1992, for a discussion of a promising "Communities That Care" model) in which youth can develop into responsible and productive citizens, should be at the top of our public policy agenda. We must address these problems in the broader context of reconstructing our communities (Currie, 1993: 280-332) and providing community-based interventions and services (National Research Council, 1993: 193-234). Otherwise, the problems represented by gangs and drugs are likely to remain severe and our state and our nation are likely to decline in economic competitiveness because of our failure to cultivate an educated, skilled, and productive citizenry by insuring that our legitimate economic

opportunities are more available and more compelling than those illegitimate opportunities that are available to our youth. The Achilles heel of a free, democratic society is the inability to produce responsible and productive citizens. Gangs and the problems associated with gangs reflect this problem and underscore the importance of developing a coordinated public policy response that emphasizes the importance of healthy, functional communities.

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Appendix A:
Interview Instrument for Gang Members

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESEARCH CENTER

GANG RESEARCH INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
FORM #1: GANG MEMBER

Interviewer - - Read aloud for audio tape: "THIS IS [YOUR NAME] AND THE FOLLOWING IS INTERVIEW # _____."

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

First, I want to ask you some basic questions about yourself and your background. Some of these may be obvious, but since we are tape recording this instead of taking notes, we have to ask them for the record.

1. How old are you as of today? _____

2. What is your sex?

Male _____ Female _____

3. What is your race?

African-American/Black _____ White _____ Hispanic _____
Asian _____ Other _____ (specify)

4. What city do you live in? _____

5. What neighborhood do you live in? _____

6. What was the highest grade you completed in school? _____

7. What is your status in school now?

Graduated _____ [skip to Q9] Still enrolled _____ [skip to Q9]
Suspended (temporarily) _____ Dropped out, working on GED _____
Dropped out _____ Expelled (permanently) _____

8. If you dropped out or were suspended or expelled, why?

9. What was the last school you attended or now attend? _____

10. Have you worked during the past year?

Yes _____ No _____ [If no, skip to Q14]

11. What kind of work do you do? _____

12. How much money do you usually make per hour? _____

13. How many hours a week do you usually work? _____ [NOTE: Need specific number of hours, not range] [Skip to Q15]

14. If you don't have a job, why not?

15. What is your marital status?

Married _____ Common Law Marriage _____

Living with girlfriend/boyfriend _____

Separated _____ Divorced _____ Never Married _____

16. Do you have any children? Yes _____ No _____ How many? _____

17. As you were growing up, did you live with both your mother and your father? Yes _____ No _____ [If yes, skip to Section B]

18. Who did you live with? Mother _____ Father _____

Alternated (shared custody) _____

19. How often did you see your other parent? Often _____

Once in awhile _____ Seldom/never _____ Other parent deceased _____

B. GANG MEMBERSHIP AND ACTIVITIES

Next, I want to ask you some questions about your experience with gangs.

20. Are you:

___ Currently active in a gang? or ___ Formerly active in a gang?

[NOTE: If interviewee denies any current or previous gang involvement, terminate the interview by saying, "I'm sorry, but we must have been given inaccurate information about your involvement with the gang. These interviews are intended only for gang members, so we won't be able to go any further. However, you will still receive the things we promised you in return for your participation. Thanks."]

21. What is the name of your gang? What other names, if any, does your gang go by?

22. In your own opinion, what is a "gang?"

23. How old were you when you first began "hanging out" with your gang?

24. How old were you when you first became a member of the gang?

25. What was the most important reason why you joined the gang?

[NOTE: One reason only]

For protection ___ For material profit ___ For social status ___
 Intimidated by others to join ___ Encouraged by friend to join ___
 Encouraged by relative to join ___ Other (specify) ___

26. What did you have to do, if anything, to be initiated as a member?

27. Have you belonged to more than one gang? If so, how many and what were their names? Was it hard to change gangs?

28. Of all the "wanna' be's," or young people who hang around with gangs, what percentage would you say actually become active members in a gang? ____ %

[NOTE: If respondent has difficulty with percentages, ask: "Of every 10 'wanna' be's,' how many actually become active members?" Use similar probes for all questions involving percentages.]

29. Of those who joined the gangs you're familiar with, what percentage joined primarily: [NOTE: Must total 100%]

Because they wanted to ____ %

Out of fear or intimidation ____ %

30. Do you know people who were approached to join a gang, but refused?

Yes ____ No ____ [If no, skip to Q33]

31. How did they manage to stay out of the gang?

32. Did anything ever happen to them because they refused to join?

33. How many active members are there in your gang?

34. Does your gang have different "sets?" - - for example, a younger "set" or different "sets" in different locations in the area? If so, what are these "sets" based on, and how does a person move from one to another?

35. How could I tell that someone is a member of your gang? Are there any identifying colors, clothing, greetings, signs, tattoos, etc.?

36. Have these "gang symbols" changed over time? If so, how?

37. Are any of the following terms used to describe your gang?

[NOTE: More than one may apply]

Set ____ Posse ____ Clique ____ Homeboys ____ Other (specify) ____

38. How long has your gang been around?

39. How did it get started?

40. How old is the youngest member?
41. How old is the oldest member?
42. What is the average age of the members?
43. Racially, what percentage of your gang is: [NOTE: Must total 100%]
 White? ___ Black/African-American? ___ Hispanic? ___
 Asian? ___ Other? (specify) ___
44. Are there both males and females in your gang? What percentage is:
 Male? ___ Female? ___
45. Are the members of your gang from the same neighborhood or different neighborhoods? Which neighborhoods?
46. Of the original members of your gang, what percentage: [NOTE: Must total 100%]
 Are still active in the gang and not locked up? ___%
 Have left the gang but still live in the community? ___%
 Are dead? ___%
 Are in prison, jail, or a juvenile institution? ___%
47. Of the original members of your gang, what percentage have been arrested since they joined the gang? ___%
48. Does your gang claim any "turf?" If so, where? [NOTE: More than one answer may be given]
 Neighborhood/projects ___ Shopping centers ___ Schools ___
 Girls/boys ___ Skating rinks ___ Other (specify) ___ No turf ___
49. Does your gang have leaders? Yes ___ No ___ [If no, skip to Q53]
50. Is there one leader or more than one? [If one, skip to Q52]

51. What roles do these leaders play? (PROBE: Does each leader have responsibility for certain things?)
52. How does someone become a leader? What does it take?
53. Besides leaders, what other roles are there in the gang?
54. What role do you play in the gang?
55. Does your gang have regular meetings? Yes ___ No ___ How often?
56. What happens at a typical meeting?
57. Does your gang have rules? Yes ___ No ___ What are some of the most important rules?
58. Who makes these rules?
59. What happens if someone breaks the rules?
60. What happens if you no longer want someone in your gang?
61. What happens if someone no longer wants to be in your gang? Can that person get out of the gang? If so, how?
62. How many other gangs are you aware of in [Aurora] or [Denver]? What are their names?
63. Does your gang have a close working relationship with other gangs in Broward County or elsewhere? If so, which ones and why?
64. What is the nature of that relationship? What does your gang get from them and what do they get from your gang?
65. Are there gangs that your gang sees as "enemies?" If so, which gangs and why are they seen as the enemy?
66. What are the issues that your gang and other gangs fight over?

67. In your experience, have other gangs or members of other gangs come into your community to operate in an active way? If so, who were those gangs, where were they from, and what did they do?

68. Are (were) there gang activities in your school? If so, what kinds of activities? What, if anything, did the teachers and school officials do about gangs in the school?

69. What schools do, or did, the members of your gang attend?

70. When you are with your gang, what kinds of activities do you do together? Do you: [NOTE: More than one activity may be mentioned]

Go to dances? ____

Go to sports events? ____

Go to concerts? ____

Hang out? ____

"Cruise" for girls (boys)? ____

Fight? ____

Drink beer, wine, liquor? ____

Do drugs? ____

Sell drugs? ____

Assault others? ____

Steal, commit property crimes? ____

Other activities? (specify): _____

71. Do you belong to any other groups, besides the gang? If so, which groups and how much time do you spend with them, compared to the gang?

C. CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR

Next, I want to ask you some questions about specific behaviors. I want to emphasize that all of this is strictly confidential and that I will not be asking for anyone's name.

Please tell me how often the members of your gang do each of the following things. For each item, tell me if they do this often, occasionally, or never:

72. put up graffiti
73. cross out or write over other gangs' graffiti
74. shoplift
75. forge checks
76. steal credit cards
77. steal cars
78. steal any other property
79. sell stolen goods
80. assault rival gang members
81. assault members of your own gang
82. assault police
83. assault teachers
84. assault students (not gang members) at school
85. mug people for money, jewelry, etc.
86. assault people in the streets (not for money, jewelry, etc.)
87. offer bribes to police
88. burglarize homes when people are away
89. burglarize homes when people are at home
90. take guns to school
91. take knives to school
92. carry concealed weapons
93. use drugs
94. sell drugs at school
95. sell drugs at places other than school
96. steal drugs from others
97. set fires (arson)
98. kidnap someone
99. sexually molest someone
100. rape someone
101. rob stores/businesses/banks

102. get money, clothes, food, etc. from stores/businesses through intimidation, threats, or assaults
103. get things cheaper or for free from fellow gang members who work in stores or businesses
104. harass, intimidate, or assault victims or witnesses
105. harass, intimidate, or assault shoppers at shopping malls
106. participate in a drive-by shooting
107. kill someone

108. Does it matter to the members of your gang whether the persons they steal from or assault are black, white, Hispanic, Asian, or members of any other particular group? Why/why not?

109. How old were you when you were first arrested? What was that arrest for?

110. How many times have you been arrested and what were you charged with?

111. Have you ever done time? If so, where and for how long?

Since people don't always get arrested when they break the law, we're interested in how often you **actually** broke the law in the **past year** but did not get arrested. How many times in the **past year** did you:

112. put up graffiti?
113. cross out or write over other gangs' graffiti?
114. shoplift?
115. forge checks?
116. steal credit cards?
117. steal cars?
118. steal any other property?
119. sell stolen goods?
120. assault rival gang members?
121. assault members of your own gang?
122. assault police?
123. assault teachers?
124. assault students (not gang members) at school?
125. mug people for money, jewelry, etc.?
126. assault people in the streets (not for money, jewelry, etc.)?

127. offer bribes to police?
128. burglarize homes when people are away?
129. burglarize homes when people are at home?
130. take guns to school?
131. take knives to school?
132. carry concealed weapons?
133. use drugs?
134. sell drugs at school?
135. sell drugs at places other than school?
136. steal drugs from others?
137. set fires (arson)?
138. kidnap someone?
139. sexually molest someone?
140. rape someone?
141. rob stores/businesses/banks?
142. get money, clothes, food, etc. from stores/businesses through intimidation, threats, or assaults?
143. get things cheaper or for free from fellow gang members who work in stores or businesses?
144. harass, intimidate, or assault victims or witnesses?
145. harass, intimidate, or assault shoppers at shopping malls?
146. participate in a drive-by shooting?
147. kill someone?

148. Why do you believe you were able to "get away" with these things without being arrested?

149. Do you own a gun? Yes ___ No ___ How many and what types?

150. How many members of your gang own guns?
All/nearly all ___ Most ___ Some, but not most ___ Few or none ___

151. What types of guns do they own?

D. GANGS AND DRUGS

Next, I'm going to ask you some questions about the relationship, if any, between gangs and drugs. **Again, all of this is completely confidential and none of these questions will ask for any individual's name. We are interested in general patterns, not the identity of any individuals.**

152. First, does selling drugs increase a person's "juice," or influence, in your gang? How?

Next, please indicate how often, if ever, you and the other members of your gang sell each of the following drugs. For each type of drug, tell me first if you sell it often, occasionally, or never; then, tell me whether others in your gang sell that drug often, occasionally, or never.

- 153. Crack (rock) You? Gang?
- 154. Cocaine (powder) You? Gang?
- 155. Marijuana You? Gang?
- 156. PCP You? Gang?
- 157. LSD You? Gang?
- 158. Heroin You? Gang?
- 159. "Ice" (crystal meth) You? Gang?
- 160. Other (specify) You? Gang?

[If none of the above, ask: "Why have you and your gang decided not to sell any drugs?" - - then skip to Q173]

[NOTE: Q161 - Q166 should be asked only if the respondent acknowledges personally selling drugs]

161. How frequently have you sold drugs?

Daily _____ Several days/week. _____ 1 day/week or less _____

162. How many hours would you typically spend selling drugs each week?

163. How much money would you typically make each week?

164. How many customers would you typically have each week?

165. Which of the following most accurately describes your status as a drug seller? [NOTE: One answer only]

Work alone ___ Hire others ___ Act as middleman ___ Hired by others ___

166. Of the money you have made selling drugs, what % would you say you used in buying or keeping drugs for your own use? ___% [PROBE: "Of every \$100 you have made selling drugs, how much did you use in buying or keeping drugs for your own use?"]

167. Without giving me any names, how would you describe the source of the drugs sold by members of your gang, as far as you know or heard?

Local source ___
In-state but not local ___
Out-of-state ___

168. Again, without using any names, how would you describe these organizations, according to what you know or heard? (PROBE: Would you say they are a loosely-knit group? A gang? Mafia? Jamaicans? Asians?)

169. Do members of your gang ever travel elsewhere to get drugs to sell?

170. If so, where (what cities and states)?

171. Why do they sometimes go there to buy drugs? [PROBES: Interruption of supply locally? To get a cheaper price? Less threat from the police there?]

172. How would you describe the role of your gang in drug sales?

173. Is it your impression that there are gangs that control drugs or that gangs get the drugs from other organizations? Please explain.

174. What other gangs do you know have been involved in drug distribution and what was their role?

175. **Based on your experience with gangs, how would you describe the relationship between gangs and drugs?**

176. **Of the gang members you know who sell drugs, how much would they need to make per hour in a legitimate job in order to get them to give up selling drugs? Why?**

E. FINAL THOUGHTS

Finally, I want to close by asking you some broad questions.

177. **How would you summarize your experience with gangs, overall?**

178. **What are the most important positive things about gangs?**

179. **What are the most important negative things about gangs?**

180. **If you had it to do over, would you join a gang again?**

181. **Why/why not?**

182. **If your younger brother or sister was considering joining a gang and asked your advice, what would you say?**

183. **It seems that some gangs survive over time while others disappear. Why is that, in your opinion?**

184. **Is there anything else about gangs and gang life that is important for me to understand?**

185. **Who are your top three role models, or "heroes," and why?**

186. **How do you see your future life and why?**

Appendix B:

Interview Instrument for Non-Gang, At-Risk Youth

1

**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESEARCH CENTER**

**GANG RESEARCH INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
FORM #2: AT-RISK YOUTH**

Interviewer - - Read aloud for audio tape: "THIS IS [YOUR NAME] AND THE FOLLOWING IS INTERVIEW # _____."

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

First, I want to ask you some basic questions about yourself and your background. Some of these may be obvious, but since we are tape recording this instead of taking notes, we have to ask them for the record.

1. How old are you as of today? _____

2. What is your sex?

Male _____ Female _____

3. What is your race?

African-American/Black _____ White _____ Hispanic _____
Asian _____ Other _____ (specify)

4. What city do you live in? _____

5. What neighborhood do you live in? _____

6. What was the highest grade you completed in school? _____

7. What is your status in school now?

Graduated _____ [skip to Q9] Still enrolled _____ [skip to Q9]
Suspended (temporarily) _____ Dropped out, working on GED _____
Dropped out _____ Expelled (permanently) _____

8. If you dropped out or were suspended or expelled, why?

9. What was the last school you attended or now attend? _____

10. Have you worked during the past year?

Yes _____ No _____ [If no, skip to Q14]

11. What kind of work do you do? _____

12. How much money do you usually make per hour? _____

13. How many hours a week do you usually work? _____ [NOTE: Need specific number of hours, not range] [Skip to Q15]

14. If you don't have a job, why not?

15. What is your marital status?

Married _____ Common Law Marriage _____

Living with girlfriend/boyfriend _____

Separated _____ Divorced _____ Never Married _____

16. Do you have any children? Yes _____ No _____ How many? _____

17. As you were growing up, did you live with both your mother and your father? Yes _____ No _____ [If yes, skip to Section B]

18. Who did you live with? Mother _____ Father _____

Alternated (shared custody) _____

19. How often did you see your other parent? Often _____

Once in awhile _____ Seldom/never _____ Other parent deceased _____

B. FRIENDS, GANGS, AND ACTIVITIES

Next, I want to ask you some questions about your experience with friends and with gangs, if any.

20. Which of the following statements is most accurate about you:

- I am currently active in a gang.
 I was formerly active in a gang.
 I have never been active in a gang.

[NOTE: If interviewee admits any current or previous gang involvement, terminate the interview by saying, "I'm sorry, but we must have been given inaccurate information about your involvement with the gang. This part of our study is concentrating on non-gang members, so we won't be able to go any further. However, you will still receive the things we promised you in return for your participation. Thanks."]

21. Of all the "wanna' be's," or young people who hang around with gangs, what percentage would you say actually become active members in a gang? ____ %

[NOTE: If respondent has difficulty with percentages, ask: "Of every 10 'wanna' be's,' how many actually become active members?" Use similar probes for all questions involving percentages.]

22. Of those who joined the gangs you're familiar with, what percentage joined primarily: [NOTE: Must total 100%]

Because they wanted to ____ %
 Out of fear or intimidation ____ %

23. Were you ever approached to join a gang? [If no, skip to Q29]

Yes ____ No ____

24. If so, by which gang?

25. How did they try to get you to join?

26. What was your response?

27. What was their reaction to your response?

28. Did anything ever happen to you as a result of this?

29. If you were approached today to join a gang, given what you know, how would you react?

30. If you were teaching a D.A.R.E. program in the public schools, how would you advise other young people to react if they are approached to join a gang?

31. In your opinion, what would be the best way to prepare young people in school to deal with the issue of gangs? [NOTE: More than one activity may be mentioned.]

Discussion ____

Role Playing ____

Reading ____

Videotapes ____

Guest speakers who are ex-gang members ____

Other (explain) ____

32. Do you know other people who were approached to join a gang, but refused?

Yes ____ No ____ [If no, skip to Q35]

33. How did they manage to stay out of the gang?

34. Did anything ever happen to them because they refused to join?

35. How many gangs are you aware of in [Aurora] or [Denver]? What are their names?

36. In your experience, have other gangs or members of other gangs come into your community to operate in an active way? If so, who were those gangs, where were they from, and what did they do?

37. Are (were) there gang activities in your school? If so, what kinds of activities? What, if anything, did the teachers and school officials do about gangs in the school?

38. When you are with your friends, what kinds of activities do you do together? Do you: [NOTE: More than one activity may be mentioned]

- Go to dances? ____
 Go to sports events? ____
 Go to concerts? ____
 Hang out? ____
 "Cruise" for girls (boys)? ____
 Fight? ____
 Drink beer, wine, liquor? ____
 Do drugs? ____
 Sell drugs? ____
 Assault others? ____
 Steal, commit property crimes? ____
 Other activities? (specify): _____

39. Do you belong to any groups? If so, which groups and how much time do you spend with them?

C. CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR

Next, I want to ask you some questions about specific behaviors. I want to emphasize that all of this is strictly confidential and that I will not be asking for anyone's name.

Please tell me how often your friends do each of the following things. For each item, tell me if they do this often, occasionally, or never:

40. put up graffiti
41. cross out or write over gangs' graffiti
42. shoplift
43. forge checks
44. steal credit cards
45. steal cars
46. steal any other property
47. sell stolen goods

48. assault members of rival groups
 49. assault members of your own group
 50. assault police
 51. assault teachers
 52. assault students at school
 53. mug people for money, jewelry, etc.
 54. assault people in the streets (not for money, jewelry, etc.)
 55. offer bribes to police
 56. burglarize homes when people are away
 57. burglarize homes when people are at home
 58. take guns to school
 59. take knives to school
 60. carry concealed weapons
 61. use drugs
 62. sell drugs at school
 63. sell drugs at places other than school
 64. steal drugs from others
 65. set fires (arson)
 66. kidnap someone
 67. sexually molest someone
 68. rape someone
 69. rob stores/businesses/banks
 70. get money, clothes, food, etc. from stores/businesses through intimidation, threats, or assaults
 71. get things cheaper or for free from friends who work in stores or businesses
 72. harass, intimidate, or assault victims or witnesses
 73. harass, intimidate, or assault shoppers at shopping malls
 74. participate in a drive-by shooting
 75. kill someone
76. If you have friends who steal or commit assaults, does it matter to them whether the persons they steal from or assault are black, white, Hispanic, Asian, or members of any other particular group? Why/why not?
77. Have you ever been arrested?
78. How old were you when you were first arrested? What was that arrest for?

79. How many times have you been arrested and what were you charged with?

80. Have you ever done time? If so, where and for how long?

Since people don't always get arrested when they break the law, we're interested in how often you **actually** broke the law in the **past year** but did not get arrested. How many times in the **past year** did you:

81. put up graffiti?
82. cross out or write over gangs' graffiti?
83. shoplift?
84. forge checks?
85. steal credit cards?
86. steal cars?
87. steal any other property?
88. sell stolen goods?
89. assault members of rival groups?
90. assault members of your own group?
91. assault police?
92. assault teachers?
93. assault students at school?
94. mug people for money, jewelry, etc.?
95. assault people in the streets (not for money, jewelry, etc.)?
96. offer bribes to police?
97. burglarize homes when people are away?
98. burglarize homes when people are at home?
99. take guns to school?
100. take knives to school?
101. carry concealed weapons?
102. use drugs?
103. sell drugs at school?
104. sell drugs at places other than school?
105. steal drugs from others?
106. set fires (arson)?
107. kidnap someone?
108. sexually molest someone?
109. rape someone?
110. rob stores/businesses/banks?

111. get money, clothes, food, etc. from stores/businesses through intimidation, threats, or assaults?
112. get things cheaper or for free from friends who work in stores or businesses?
113. harass, intimidate, or assault victims or witnesses?
114. harass, intimidate, or assault shoppers at shopping malls?
115. participate in a drive-by shooting?
116. kill someone?
117. Why do you believe you were able to "get away" with these things without being arrested?
118. Do you own a gun? Yes ___ No ___ How many and what types?
119. How many of your friends own guns?
All/nearly all ___ Most ___ Some, but not most ___ Few or none ___
120. What types of guns do they own?

D. FRIENDS, GANGS, AND DRUGS

Next, I'm going to ask you some questions about friends, gangs, and drugs. **Again, all of this is completely confidential and none of these questions will ask for any individual's name. We are interested in general patterns, not the identity of any individuals.**

121. First, does selling drugs increase a person's "juice," or influence, among your friends? How? Does it give a gang member more "juice?"

Next, please indicate how often, if ever, you and your friends sell each of the following drugs. For each type of drug, tell me first if you sell it often, occasionally, or never; then, tell me whether your friends sell that drug often, occasionally, or never.

122. Crack (rock) You? Friends?
123. Cocaine (powder) You? Friends?
124. Marijuana You? Friends?
125. PCP You? Friends?
126. LSD You? Friends?

127. Heroin **You? Friends?**
 128. "Ice" (crystal meth) **You? Friends?**
 129. Other (specify) **You? Friends?**

[If none of the above, ask: "Why have you and your friends decided not to sell any drugs?" - - then skip to Q136]

[NOTE: Q130 - Q135 should be asked only if the respondent acknowledges personally selling drugs]

130. How frequently have you sold drugs?
 Daily _____ Several days/week. _____ 1 day/week or less _____
131. How many hours would you typically spend selling drugs each week?
132. How much money would you typically make each week?
133. How many customers would you typically have each week?
134. Which of the following most accurately describes your status as a drug seller? [NOTE: One answer only]

Work alone ___ Hire others ___ Act as middleman ___ Hired by others ___

135. Of the money you have made selling drugs, what % would you say you used in buying or keeping drugs for your own use? ___% [PROBE: "Of every \$100 you have made selling drugs, how much did you use in buying or keeping drugs for your own use?"]

136. Without giving me any names, how would you describe the source of the drugs sold by your friends, as far as you know or heard?

Local source _____
 In-state but not local _____
 Out-of-state _____

137. Again, without using any names, how would you describe these organizations, according to what you know or heard? (PROBE: Would you say they are a loosely-knit group? A gang? Mafia? Jamaicans? Asians?)

138. Do your friends ever travel elsewhere to get drugs to sell?

139. If so, where (what cities and states)?

140. Why do they sometimes go there to buy drugs? [PROBES: Interruption of supply locally? To get a cheaper price? Less threat from the police there?]

141. How would you describe the role played by gangs in drug sales, compared to the role played by you or your friends?

142. Is it your impression that there are gangs that control drugs or that gangs get the drugs from other organizations? Please explain.

143. What, if any, gangs do you know have been involved in drug distribution and what was their role?

144. Based on your knowledge of both gangs and drugs, how would you describe the relationship between gangs and drugs?

145. Of the gang members and others you know who sell drugs, how much would they need to make per hour in a legitimate job in order to get them to give up selling drugs? Why? Does the amount differ for gang members?

E. FINAL THOUGHTS

Finally, I want to close by asking you some broad questions.

146. How would you summarize your view of gangs, overall?

147. What are the most important **positive** things about gangs?

148. What are the most important **negative** things about gangs?

149. If you had a chance today, would you join a gang?

150. Why/why not?

151. If your younger brother or sister was considering joining a gang and asked your advice, what would you say?

152. It seems that some gangs survive over time while others disappear. Why is that, in your opinion?
153. Who are your top three role models, or "heroes," and why?
154. How do you see your future life and why?
155. Do you believe that you are "at risk" of involvement in gangs? Why/why not?
156. What are the most important things that will determine whether or not you get involved with gangs?
156. Are you "at risk" of involvement in crime? Why/why not?
157. What are the most important things that will determine whether or not you get involved with crime?
158. Are you "at risk" of involvement in drug sales or distribution? Why/why not?
159. What are the most important things that will determine whether or not you get involved in drug sales or distribution?
160. How much is your neighborhood affected by gangs? Explain.
161. How much is your neighborhood affected by crime? Explain.
162. How much is your neighborhood affected by drugs? Explain.

Appendix C:

Form for Request of Community Service Credit

REQUEST FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE CREDIT

In return for my participation in a research project, I hereby request that Professor Ronald Huff of Ohio State University contact the court to request that I be given a credit for completing a portion of the community service requirement that has been imposed on me. I understand that Professor Huff will contact me by telephone or will have someone else contact me to determine the name of the judge, the court, and the date I was sentenced to perform community service. To protect my identity, only my interview code number and the interviewer's name appear below:

INTERVIEW NUMBER: _____

INTERVIEWER'S NAME (PRINT): _____

INTERVIEWER'S SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

REQUEST FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE CREDIT

In return for my participation in a research project, I hereby request that Professor Ronald Huff of Ohio State University contact the following judge/court to request that I be given a credit for completing a portion of the community service requirement that has been imposed on me:

Judge: _____

Court: _____

Date of Community Service Requirement: _____

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D:
Human Subjects Solicitation Script
(Read to Each Interviewee)

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

GANG RESEARCH PROJECT INFORMED CONSENT

What is this research about and what will I be asked?

This study is about gangs, gang members, and young people who live in areas where gangs are active. I understand that I will be asked questions about my background, about gangs, and about my own personal behavior, both legal and illegal. I will not be asked for the names of any of my associates or the names of any victims of crimes I may have committed. I understand that these questions will be asked verbally by an interviewer and that, to save time, the interview will be recorded on audio tape instead of taking notes by hand.

What happens to the information we discuss?

The taped interview will be locked in a file cabinet and then typed by a secretary who does not work in any criminal justice agency. After the interview has been typed, the tape will be erased. My name will not appear on either the tape or the typed interview. A code number will be used in order to protect the confidentiality of this information, and my name will not appear with the code number on any list in Florida.

The information I provide is part of a large study involving hundreds of similar interviews. The information from my interview will be combined with information from the other interviews to assist in developing a better understanding of gangs, gang behavior, and neighborhoods where gangs are active. My answers will not be connected with my name, either on the audio tape or in any reports. I understand that the information I give will be used only for research purposes and that neither the interviewer nor the researcher will voluntarily share this information with anyone. The only exception to this would occur if I tell the interviewer that I plan to harm a specific individual in the future, in which case the interviewer would have an obligation to protect the lives of others. I also understand that in order to complete the statistical information for this study, the researcher will check my arrest record, but to protect my identity, this will be done as part of a larger list of names, including gang members, young people at risk of gang membership, and random names from the telephone directory .

Who is conducting this study and who is paying for it?

The study is being conducted by Professor Ronald Huff of Ohio State University with a research grant from the National Institute of Justice.

What will I be expected to do and what will I get in return?

I agree to complete an interview with an interviewer who will read the same questions that are being asked of other people who are being interviewed for this research project. I have the right to refuse to participate in this study and, if I do agree to participate, I have the right to refuse to answer any question and I have the right to stop the interview at any point. In return for my participation, I will be provided: (1) a letter from Ohio State University stating that I assisted Ohio State in a national research project (gangs will not be mentioned); (2) a \$10 coupon for local movie theaters; and (3) upon my request (form attached), a letter from the researcher asking the court to give me credit for community service hours (if such a requirement has been imposed on me) in return for my participation in this interview.

My participation is entirely voluntary.

The interviewer has read this information to me, has answered any questions I might have, and has explained it fully, to my satisfaction. I have voluntarily decided to participate in this study. To protect my privacy, I understand that I am not required to sign this form, but I am a witness to the signature of _____ (INTERVIEWER), who has signed this form in my presence.

INTERVIEW NUMBER: _____ DATE: _____
INTERVIEWER (PRINT): _____

Additional Certification for Minors:

I hereby certify that I am acting voluntarily in the capacity of "youth advocate" to ensure that all minors who participate in the above-described study are doing so voluntarily and are not being subjected to unacceptable risks.

Frank De La Torre
Supervisor, Juvenile Division
Broward County Public Defender
400 S.E. 6th Street
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33301

Appendix E:
Transcription, Coding and Data Entry Process

Transcription, Coding and Data Entry Process

Transcription

Each of the 286 interviews completed during this study required approximately 1 1/2- 2 hours to complete and was audiotaped for subsequent transcription. In each field site, a procedure was developed to coordinate the transfer of audio tapes to a secretarial assistant for transcription. Each secretarial assistant (one in the Denver area and one in Broward County, Florida) was provided a Macintosh PowerBook laptop computer on which all transcription occurred, to insure computing and software compatibility across all three sites and with the principal investigator. Final transcripts were then mailed to the principal investigator for review. Audio tapes were retained until accuracy of transcription could be assured.

Codebook Development

Although some of the variables (e.g., many demographic variables and those questions with yes/no responses) were in a format that allowed them to be coded without any transformation, many questions utilized in the field interview instruments (see Appendixes A and B) were of an open-ended nature that required the development of a coding scheme based on the responses received. For these variables (of which there were 56 overall), GOFER software was utilized to "tag" (insert brief identifiers) respondents' answers. This tagging process was completed as transcribed interviews were received. The coding scheme for each item was developed by utilizing GOFER searches of respondent

answers for the first 60 transcribed interviews received and tagged. Upon reviewing these initial responses, the responses were grouped together (by similarity of response) into categories that became the codes for that item.

Because 60 interviews comprised only about 20% of the total number of interviews planned for this study, we anticipated that there would be additional responses not included among the initial 60 interviews transcribed and that these responses would not fit into the coding scheme we had developed. Therefore, coders were instructed to be aware of this factor and that any response to a given question that did not precisely fit into the existing coding scheme for that question had to be brought to the attention of the researcher who was coordinating the coding process and to the other coders, so that the coding scheme could be appropriately modified and each coder would be knowledgeable about all modifications to the original coding scheme.

In addition to this aspect of codebook development for these 56 items there was, on 50 of these same items, the possibility of multiple responses to the question. For some items on the instrument, respondents provided as many as seven or eight different responses. Thus, in addition to the need for correctly categorizing each individual response, there was a need for coding multiple responses to the same question in order to completely capture the full response. It should be noted that researchers who "collapse" responses prematurely (often to facilitate coding) may artificially reduce the variance by doing this and therefore affect the

final interpretation of results, claiming more consistency in responses than may really exist in the raw data.

Thus, a format for coding combination responses was developed. All of the questions with potential combination responses required more than a one-column field for coding and entering the data into the computer datafile. From the responses identified as a result of the GOFER search process for these variables, it was possible to make an accurate determination of how many slots we would need for combination responses based on the number of different individual responses that were obtained. Most of these variables required a two-column field for coding/data entry, while some required a three-column field. In general, for a variable with a two-column field, we would allow the first 20 slots (codes 01-20) for the various individual responses. Then, the next 30 slots (codes 21-50) were set aside for any two-item responses; the following 20 slots (codes 51-70), for any three-item responses; the next 15 slots (codes 71-85) for any four-item responses; and the remaining 12 slots (codes 86-97) for any responses mentioning five or more items. Code 98 was reserved for questions where there was the possibility of a "not applicable" response (due to the response to the prior question), and code 99 was designated for missing data (when a respondent did not respond to the question).

Based on the responses obtained using the GOFER search process on the first 60 interviews received, we were able to identify the specific codes for some combination responses. The remaining slots, however, were simply left open for any combination responses that were to be obtained from the remaining interviews. Let's say,

for example, that for variable x we obtained twelve different individual responses, 10 two-item responses, 6 three-item responses, and 2 four-item responses, based on the first 60 interviews received. For that variable, the individual response codes 01-12 would be taken, and 13-20 would be left open; the two-item codes 21-30 would be taken, and 31-50 left open; the three-item codes 51-56 would be taken, and 57-70 left open; the four-item codes 71 and 72 would be taken, and 73-85 left open; and all of the 5+ item codes (86-97) would be left open. This is what the codebook for this particular variable would have looked like upon beginning the coding process.

The Coding Process

After the initial codebook was developed, based on the responses obtained from the first 60 interviews, the coding process was begun. A total of five different coders (including the researcher responsible for development and supervision of coding) worked on this project. The utilization of multiple coders, the complexity of the survey instrument, and the need to allow flexibility to accommodate those data collected subsequent to the initial codebook development - - all underscored the need for "quality control" in terms of coordination and inter-coder reliability. Throughout the coding process, there were group meetings among all coders at least once, and sometimes twice, a week as well as daily telephone contact between the various coders and their supervisor so that codebook modifications on individual responses and codebook updates with respect to combination responses would become known to all coders as soon as possible after such modifications and updates were made.

We also utilized the method of developing an ongoing ("floating") log of updated combination responses. Any coder would immediately log any new combination code on the master list of new combination responses as such responses were uncovered. Any other coder who arrived at a later time would check the master list and update his/her codebook and would, likewise, log onto the master list any new combination responses obtained during his/her coding session.

Checking for Coding Errors and Consistency

Given the possibility of coding error and possible inconsistency across coders in how they code any given question due to the somewhat subjective nature of the coding process (i.e., because some responses require human interpretation and thus are more difficult to code consistently across different human interpreters), an extensive amount of checking was undertaken by the researcher responsible for coding development and supervision. That researcher coded 148 interviews himself (52% of all interviews) and checked the coding of an additional 86 (62%) of those interviews coded by the other coders. Therefore, the total number of interviews either coded by or checked by that researcher equalled 82% of all interviews conducted during this study. This extensive personal involvement by the researcher overseeing the coding process is invaluable in assuring a high level of inter-coder reliability, thus preserving the integrity of the original data.

All survey items on which either coding errors or inconsistency was discovered were appropriately recoded. The percentage of errors/inconsistency uncovered was well within acceptable limits.

Thus, any errors or inconsistencies that exist within the other 52 interviews (18% of total) that were not individually checked are believed to be within acceptable limits as well, since the coders assigned to those interviews were the same as those who coded the other 82% of interviews that were checked closely.

The Data Entry Process

The data for all 286 interviews were entered into computer datafiles from the coding sheets. In an attempt to reduce data entry errors, one person read the numbers in blocks of four while a second person punched in the numbers read by the first person. To check for coding errors the data files were printed out and approximately 15% of all cases were randomly selected and checked for errors by comparing the printout with the original coding sheet. For that portion of the universe (15%) that were checked in this way, the error rate was less than 0.001 percent. Most of the cases checked were completely error-free.

PROPERTY OF
National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS)
Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20849-6000