



Results from the New Mexico Gang Threat Assessment

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RESULTS FROM THE NEW MEXICO GANG THREAT ASSESSMENT

Chapter 1: Introduction

Project Safe Neighborhoods began in 2001 as a federal initiative to reduce gun violence in the U.S. The initiative brings together local, state, and federal law enforcement partners with the goal of providing a comprehensive strategy for prevention, intervention, and suppression of gun related crime. In 2006, PSN added an anti-gang component to its existing strategy. In the District of New Mexico comprehensive data on gang-related crime and violence is limited, complicating efforts to shift the focus of PSN activities in the State towards anti-gang efforts. To facilitate this shift and determine how the current PSN infrastructure built through the anti-gun initiative could be expanded to include anti-gang activities, the District's PSN task force allocated a portion of its PSN research funds towards the development and implementation of a statewide gang threat assessment survey. The survey was designed to identify how law enforcement personnel across the state: 1) perceive the nature and extent of the gang problem in New Mexico; 2) collect information on gangs, gang members, and gang crime within their agencies; 3) identify resources available, both within their agencies and the community at large, for combating the gang problem in their jurisdictions, and 4) how they think the State should prioritize future anti-gang activities. This report was prepared for the New Mexico PSN Task Force for use in developing research driven policy and program initiatives, to serve as a benchmark for future gang threat assessment research, and to identify the direction of future research and media outreach campaigns.

Trends in Gang Research

The lack of systematically collected data on gang crime is a major obstacle for constructing anti-gang policies and practices. Many justice system agencies do not regularly monitor gangs and their members. Among those who do, the data collected are primarily focused on the identification and documentation of gang members for intelligence purposes (Curry, Ball, and Fox 1994). While such data are important for law enforcement practitioners, they do not necessarily provide the kind of information necessary for documenting the extent and/or nature of gang crime. Generally such data are collected and maintained at the case and or individual level and the details collected across case/individual are not necessarily consistent or comparable, making it difficult to aggregate and summarize such data. Moreover, such data collection efforts are often not routinized and the data may only be collected by specific units and/or officers so that not all gang members and/or gang crimes are necessarily captured in these data. This again complicates efforts to use such intelligence data to develop a comprehensive picture of the local gang problem.

To date, most of what we know about the nature and extent of gang crime is derived from surveys that measure the perceptions of criminal justice system personnel about gangs, gang members, and gang crime. Although, gathering "perceptions" is not the same as recording actual incidents of crime, this type of research is a good first step toward understanding gangs and their crimes. National-level research on personnel perceptions provides us with estimates for the number and size of gangs as well as insight into the distribution and nature of gang activity in the

U.S. These surveys also help us to put aside two myths about gang crime: 1) gang crime is only a problem in the nation's largest urban areas and 2) gang crime is synonymous with juvenile crime.

The oldest and most consistently collected data on gangs is the National Youth Gang Survey (NYGS), conducted annually by the National Youth Gang Center. The NYGS examines the perceptions of the youth gang problem among a nationally representative sample of county and municipal law enforcement personnel (Egley and Ritz 2006). The most recent data available come from the 2004 NYGS. These 2004 survey data suggest that:

- There are over 24,000 youth gangs and more than 760,000 gang members in the U.S.
- Gang activity is no longer confined to the nation's largest cities, law enforcement agencies in smaller cities, suburbs, and rural areas consistently report a gang presence in their jurisdictions.

There is little debate about the presence of gang problems in Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York. Prior to the crime peak in the mid-1990s, gang research focused almost exclusively on the urban youth gang problem. More recent research using data from the NYGS explores the impact of gangs on smaller less densely populated areas and suggests that the composition and organization of gangs as well as the impact of gang crime on the communities in which they are located varies with community size (Miller 2001; Short 2002; Curry and Decker 2003; Howell and Egley 2005; Howell 2006). For example, gangs in small towns and rural areas (with population below 25,000 people) exhibit more variability in terms of membership (more females, more middle-class, and more white members), longevity (emerged in the 1990's and are more susceptible to breaking up) and criminal offending (less violent) (Howell 2006). Although youth gang problems continue to be most persistent in large urban areas, the reporting of gangs in smaller cities and towns highlights the need for more systematic research examining variability in the patterns of gang activity.

Most research on gang crime assumes gangs are comprised predominantly of juvenile members. In fact, research has shown that the most serious, violent gang offenders are young adults, not juveniles. Juvenile gang membership is most frequently transitory; those who fail to transition out of the gang by the time they reach adulthood become the most serious offenders (Curry and Decker 2003; Howell 2006). A second source for information on gangs in the U.S. is the National Gang Threat Assessment (NGTA), published by the National Alliance of Gang Investigators' Associations in 2005. While less systematic than the NYGS¹, the NGTA seeks to obtain personnel perceptions of both youth and adult gang activity. These data suggest:

- In addition to youth gangs and their members, there are an estimated 1,600 security threat groups (prison gangs) with over 113,000 gang-involved inmates and more than 250 outlaw motor cycle gangs in the U.S.

¹ NGTA reports survey results for a non-representative national sample of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies.

- Gangs are believed to be the primary distributors of illegal narcotics (especially marijuana and methamphetamine).
- Law enforcement personnel report firearm-related gang activity is escalating.
- The U.S. is experiencing both growth in Hispanic gangs and expansion of gang activity in Indian country.²

The NGTA establishes the need for systematic research that is more inclusive than studies limited to youth gangs. The findings of recent self-report offending studies also evidence a need for more research on adult gang activity. These studies suggest that gang membership increases the seriousness and longevity of individual criminal careers. Gang members are also more involved in crime and delinquency than their non-gang counterparts (Curry and Decker 2003). Gang members offend more frequently, commit more serious crimes, and continue to be criminally active over a longer period of their lives (even after leaving the gang) when compared to non-gang members (Howell 2006).

While research on the perceptions of gang activity among law enforcement personnel does not provide us with official statistics on gang crime, these efforts highlight the need for research that goes beyond a single urban center. If gang activity is present in smaller cities, suburbs, and rural areas, then state-level assessments of the gang problem are needed. In 1998, the New Mexico Gang Task Force (NMGTF)³ released a Statewide Gang Assessment report. Similar to the national surveys discussed above, this report solicited the perceptions of law enforcement personnel in city, county, and state agencies. The NMGTF survey collected information on the number of gang members, the gangs present in each jurisdiction and the types of crime being committed by gang members. The findings suggest that at the time of the research:

- There were over 683 gangs and 13,799 gang members in New Mexico.
- A gang presence was reported in 23 of 33 New Mexico counties.
- The highest concentration of gangs and gang members was reported in the Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Metropolitan area. However, a significant gang presence was also reported in the southern counties (especially along the border) and the Four Corners area in the northwest (New Mexico Gang Task Force 1998).

The 1998 report shed light on the extent of the gang problem in New Mexico, however, it has not been updated and we know little about how the problem has evolved in the last decade. Furthermore, no prior research efforts examine other crucial areas of information (for example,

² New Mexico has large Hispanic and Native American populations relative to other states. The State also has a high concentration of tribal lands located within its boundaries. This does not necessarily mean these growth and expansion dynamics are occurring in the State. However, these are issues of particular concern to state policy makers and law enforcement practitioners in New Mexico.

³ Now the New Mexico Gang and Terrorism Task Force (NMGTF).

the availability of local prevention, intervention, and suppression efforts) needed to understand in what ways (and to what extent) law enforcement personnel are able to address the gang problems in their communities. Over the course of the past decade, anti-gang activities have appeared across the state of New Mexico. In December of 2006, the New Mexico U.S. Attorney's Office (and the PSN Taskforce) held an Anti-Gang Summit. The summit brought together law enforcement, prosecutorial, and corrections professionals from across the state to discuss strategies for interdiction, prevention, and suppression of gang crime in New Mexico. In addition to the PSN initiative, agencies have begun to form taskforce committees in order to collaboratively develop strategies for intelligence production and dissemination, as well as prevention, intervention, and other suppression activities. A number of law enforcement agencies have also developed special units to address gang problems. Considering the seriousness criminal justice stakeholders in the State attribute to gang crime, we need more recent data on gangs and gang crime across the state and we need more detailed information about local efforts and resources for combating gang problems in New Mexico.

The current research both updates and expands the findings of the 1998 assessment. We began this research with three primary objectives: 1) to provide an updated local, regional, and state level picture of gangs, gang members, and gang crime in New Mexico; 2) to identify agency, community, and state resource availability, utilization, and needs; and 3) to generate ideas regarding future directions in social and legislative policy as well as gang interdiction, prevention, and suppression strategies. Following the discussion of these objectives and the survey design and execution in the next chapter, the report is divided into three sections corresponding to the objectives provided above. Chapter 3 presents the findings for survey questions on gangs, gang members, and gang crime. In Chapter 4, we detail respondent knowledge and perceptions of agency, community, and state resources for addressing the gang problem. The final chapter provides a summary of the research findings and a discussion of the implications of these findings for future research, policy, and practice.

Chapter 2: Research Design

This report is based on a survey of law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies in New Mexico conducted in 2007. Research questions were constructed collaboratively by a Gang Survey Working group from the PSN Taskforce. The Working Group generated the following questions:

- What New Mexico communities are being affected by gang activity?
- By what kinds of gangs and how many?
- What criteria are local agencies using to identify gangs, gang members, and gang crime?
- What types of criminal activities are attributable to gangs in communities across the state?
- How are local agencies documenting and disseminating information about gangs and gang members?
- What kinds of resources are available to/used by/needed by local justice system agencies?
- What kinds of interdiction/prevention/suppression strategies are being employed in these communities?

Survey Construction

The data for this report were collected using a survey instrument adapted from prior research projects assessing personnel perceptions of gang activity. We consulted the NYGS, the NGTA, and one state-level survey, the 2005 Arizona Law Enforcement Gang Survey. We selected items from each of these surveys and adapted them to focus on issues of importance to the PSN Taskforce and of particular relevance for the State of New Mexico. The completed survey instrument is located in Appendix A. Members of the PSN Gang Threat Assessment working group reviewed preliminary drafts of the instrument. Once the survey questions were finalized, we converted the survey into a web-based format using Opinio on-line survey software.

Survey Distribution and Response

Our original sampling strategy was to send invitations to all known municipal, county, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement agencies, as well as all district and federal prosecutorial offices in the State. Invitations were faxed to a total of 120 agencies from the U.S. Attorney's Office. The invitation contained instructions for accessing the survey and asked that at least two designees from each agency complete the survey. The invitation is presented in Appendix B. In order to increase response, reminders letters were faxed to these same agencies on two occasions.

Additionally, invitations were distributed to individual law enforcement agents using the New Mexico Police and Sheriff’s Association list-serve. The on-line survey was accessible to respondents from April 17, 2007 to July 31, 2007. During this time, 165 surveys were completed on-line and 2 hard copy surveys were completed and returned via U.S. mail or fax.

The survey respondents represent a wide variety of law enforcement agencies. Although the survey was originally intended for Law Enforcement officers and District Attorney prosecutors, we received responses from Corrections officers and Children Youth and Families Department employees as well. We initially solicited 97 municipal police and county sheriff’s offices, 13 district attorney’s offices, and both the Albuquerque and Las Cruces USAOs. Of these agencies we received completed surveys from individuals representing 41 law enforcement offices, 7 District Attorney’s offices, and both branches of the USAO. This resulted in an agency response rate of 45%. Table 2.1 presents the distribution of respondents by agency type and jurisdiction level.

TABLE 2.1. Survey Respondents by Agency Type and Jurisdiction Level

	N	%
<i>Agency Type</i>		
Law Enforcement	117	70.1
Prosecution	15	9
Corrections	35	20.9
Total	167	100
<i>Jurisdiction Level</i>		
County	25	15
Municipal	48	28.7
State	47	28.1
Tribal	5	3
District	13	7.8
Federal	29	17.4
Total	167	100

Of the 167 respondents, 96% (n = 153) reported that there were active gangs present in jurisdiction in 2006. The remaining 4% either indicated that there were no gangs active in their jurisdiction in 2006 or that they did not know if any gangs were active during this time. Of the 14 respondents who did not report the presence of active gangs, half responded definitively that there were no active gangs and half reported that they did not know if there were gangs present in their jurisdiction. Of these cases, 9 are either municipal or county law enforcement officers representing jurisdictions in 8 different counties. In four of these counties, at least one other officer reported a gang presence. Others reporting either no gang presence in 2006 or that they did not know represented a tribal agency, a university police department, the aviation police, and the U.S. Marshal’s Office. In either case, these respondents were excluded from the final sample. Therefore, in the analyses that follow the total sample size is 153. Because some respondents did not answer all of the questions, the sample size for each question may be different. For this reason, the number of participants responding to each question is noted in all tables and figures.

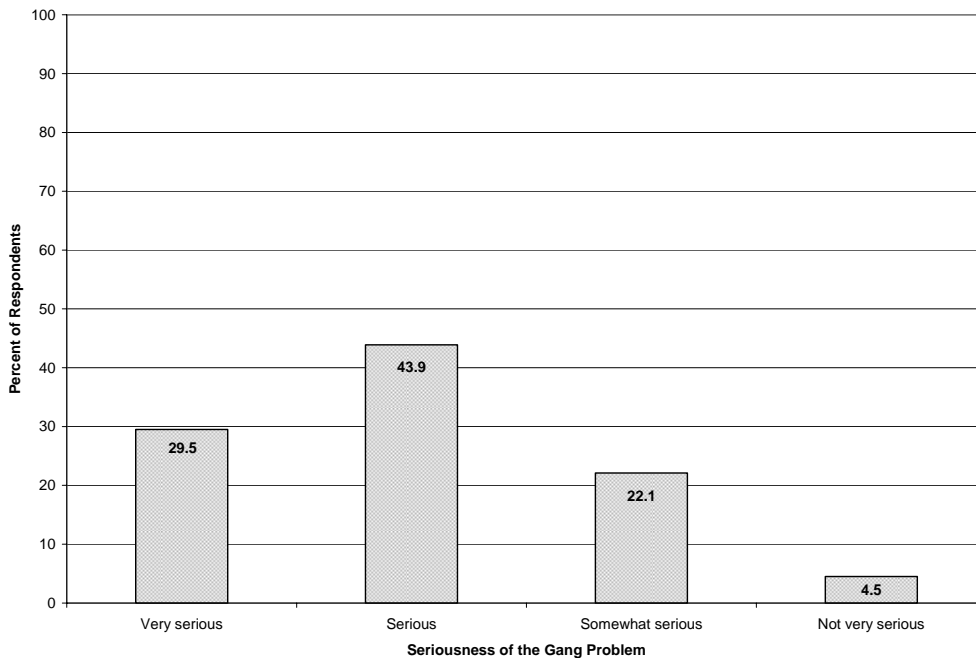
Chapter 3: Gangs, Gang Members, and Gang Crime

This chapter reports on survey questions that correspond to the first research objective: **to provide an updated local, regional, and state level picture of gangs, gang members, and gang crime in New Mexico.** In the following sections, we present respondent perceptions and knowledge on: the seriousness of the gang problem, the definition of gangs and gang crime, the membership composition of gangs in New Mexico, and the nature of the gang problem.

Seriousness of the Problem

Law enforcement personnel responding to this survey believe that the gang activity is a serious problem. Figure 3.1 shows that over 73% of survey participants report the gang problem as either “serious” or “very serious,” with less than 5% of respondents characterizing the gang problem as “not very serious.” No jurisdictional and/or agency type pattern existed differentiating those answering “not very serious” from the others. Additionally, each “not very serious” response was countered with at least one response of “serious” by someone else working in the same jurisdiction. In two cases, contradictions existed among employees of the same agency.

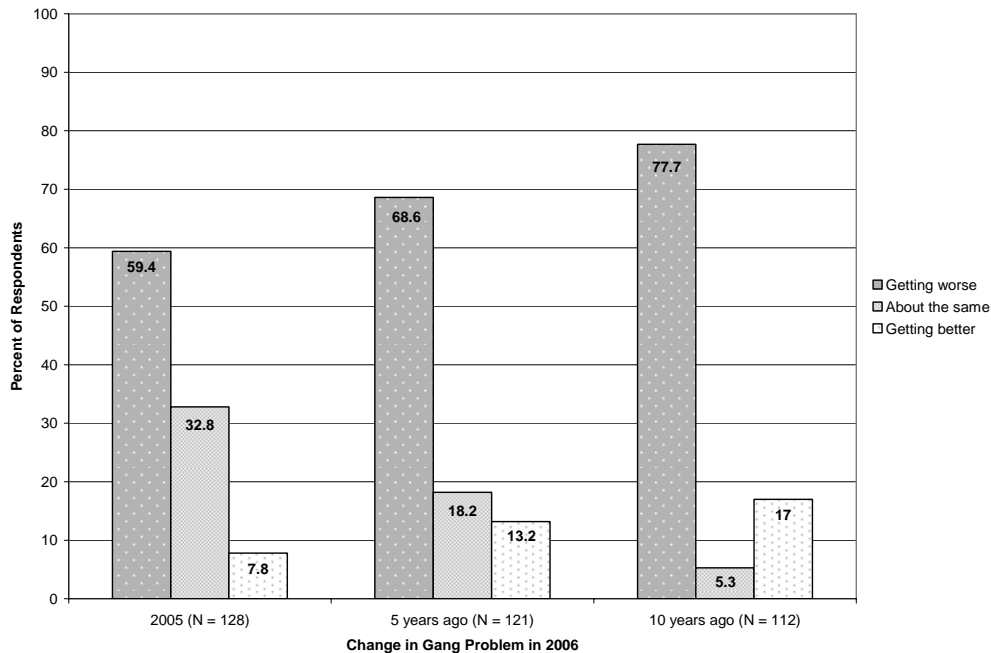
FIGURE 3.1. Perceived Seriousness of the Gang Problem (N = 132)



Not only are gangs and gang crime perceived as a serious problem, but respondents characterize these problems as getting worse over time. As is demonstrated in Figure 3.2 below, in all three comparative time categories (in the past year, 5 years ago, 10 years ago), the majority indicates that the gang problem is worse today than it was in years past. Almost 78% report the gang problem as getting worse when compared to 10 years ago; 69% identify the problem as worse than it was 5 years ago; and 59% believe the problem to have been worse in 2006 than it was just one year prior. Seventeen percent of respondents suggest that the gang problem has actually

gotten better when compared to mid 1990s (compared to 10 years ago). Respondents noting improvements are primarily persons located either in Southern jurisdictions or in the Albuquerque-Metropolitan area and surrounding counties.

FIGURE 3.2. Changes in the Extent of the Gang Problem



Regardless of location, jurisdiction, and agency type, the majority of survey respondents perceive gang activity to be a serious problem that is getting worse. Although some respondents view gang activity as “not very serious” and still others perceive the problem as “getting better,” we observed contradictory perspectives both within jurisdiction and to a lesser extent within single agencies. That individuals in the same jurisdiction and/or agency have such divergent perceptions of the seriousness and progression of gang activity suggests the need for better data on gangs, gang crime, and their persistence at both the local and state levels.

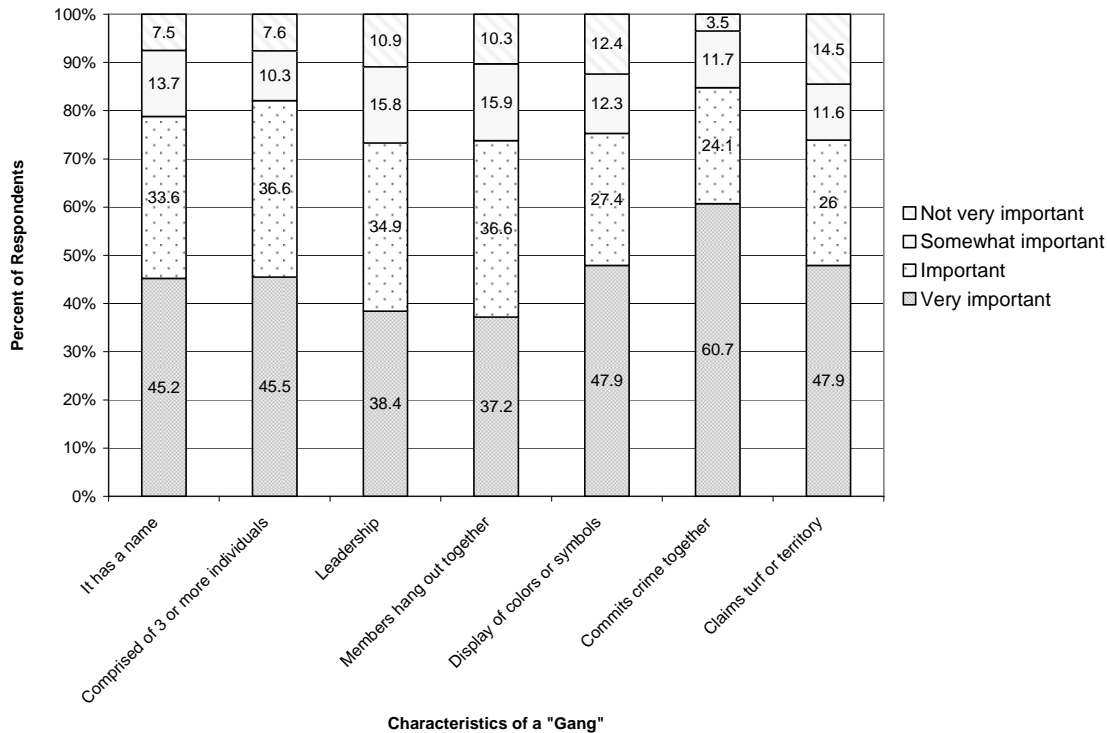
Defining Gangs and Gang Crime

New Mexico does not have a statute defining “gangs” or “gang crime.” One objective of this research was to get a sense of how agency actors are defining these terms for the purpose of carrying out prevention, intervention, and suppression activities. The NMGTF encourages law enforcement agencies to use a standard definition. However, it is unclear how uniformly law enforcement agencies have adopted this definition. The NMGTF defines a gang as:

“an ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, which has a common name and/or common identifying signs and symbols, whose members individually and/or collectively engage in any pattern of criminal activity” (NMGTF 1998).

In the introduction to the survey, we instructed respondents to think of a “gang” as: “a group of youths or adults in your jurisdiction that you or other responsible persons in your agency or community are willing to identify or classify as a gang.” We then asked the survey participants to rank seven characteristics in terms of the importance of each in their agency’s conceptualization of a gang. The characteristics include: it has a name, it is comprised of three or more individuals, it has a leader or several leaders, the group hangs out together, the group displays or wears common colors or other insignia, the group commits crimes together, and the group claims a turf or territory of some sort. As is evidenced in Figure 3.3, participants agree that each of these characteristics is an important element in the definition of a gang.

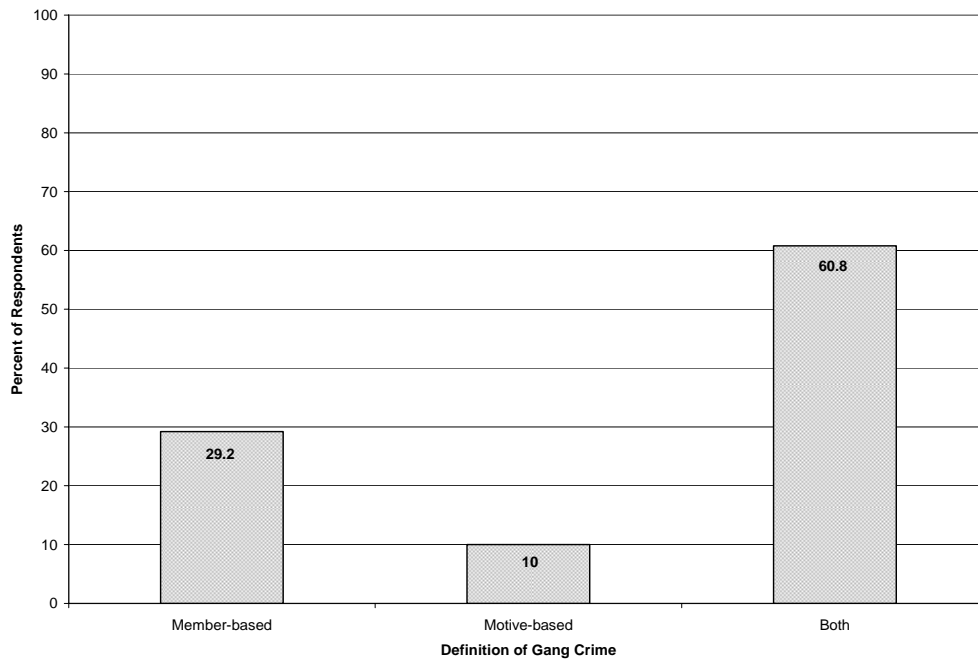
FIGURE 3.3. Characteristics of a Gang (N = 146)



The characteristic most frequently rated as either “important” or “very important” is that the group commits crimes together, with 24% of participants responding “important” (n = 35) and almost 61% of participants saying this is “very important” (n = 88). Over 82% ranked the characteristic of “comprised of 3 or more individuals” as either “important” or “very important” (n = 119). While participants consistently ranked each characteristic as important, four characteristics (leadership, hangs out together, displaying common symbols, and claims a turf or territory) were more often reported as either “not very important” or “not at all important” when compared to the distribution of responses for the other characteristics. This perception is consistent with previous gang research, which suggests that gang organization is becoming more diffuse and less recognizable as the stereotypical street-gang organizations of the past (Hagedorn 1998).

While participants generally define a gang in the same way, there is some variation in respondent reports of how their agency defines “gang crime.” Prior research has suggested that gang crime is defined in two ways: member-based/gang-involved or motive-based/gang-related (see Maxson and Klein 1990; Curry and Decker 2003). In practice, a member-based/gang-involved definition includes any crime in which a gang member(s) is either the perpetrator or the victim, regardless of the motive. Motive-based/gang-related crime would count only those crimes committed by a gang member(s) in which the underlying reason is to further the interests and activities of the gang. Figure 3.4 presents the percentage of responses for each definition type. The majority of survey participants report that their agency uses both member-based/gang-involved and motive-based/gang-related definitions of gang crime (60.8%, n = 79). Slightly more than 29% report their agency relies exclusively on a member-based/gang-involved definition (n = 38), and 10% report the exclusive use of motive-based/gang-related criteria.

FIGURE 3.4. Criteria for Defining Gang Crime (N = 130)



An additional 5 respondents indicated that their agency uses some other criteria for identifying gang crime. These respondents noted that either the criteria for classification are at the employees’ discretion or the agency does not actively engage in specifying gang crime as distinct from other offenses. Thirteen respondents reported that they did not know the criteria by which their agency defined gang crime.

The ways in which agencies define gang crime have implications for what is known and what can be known about the impact of gangs on their respective communities. One study of the effect of the definition of gang crime on reported homicide rates found that estimates of gang crime using a motive-based definition were about 50% lower than estimates using membership-based criteria (Maxson and Klein 1990). In addition to routine and systematic reporting

practices,⁴ the collection and comparison of official crime statistics across jurisdictions require a standardized definition. At this time, the State has not adopted a statutory definition for “gang crime,” making it difficult to assess the reliability of both respondent perceptions of the problem and any estimates of the frequency of gang crime in New Mexico.

Gangs and Gang Members

We asked survey participants to estimate the number of gangs and gang members as well as to provide sex, age, and racial/ethnic composition estimates for gangs and gang members within their jurisdictions. The estimated number of gangs in each responding jurisdiction ranged from 0 to 500 with an average of 48 for the study sample (N = 93). Notably, thirty-six percent of participants (N = 53) answered “do not know” when asked to specify the number of gangs in their jurisdiction.

In order to get a sense of how the presence of gangs differs across the state, we broke down the number of reported gangs by county population size,⁵ focusing only on the responses from individuals employed in either a county or municipal agency⁶. Table 3.1 reports the range and the average estimated number of gangs by population size. As would be expected, participants from smaller counties generally report fewer gangs than those from larger counties. Estimates of the number of gangs in jurisdictions between 50,0001 and 100,000 range from 16 to 84 (with an average of 16) while those from jurisdictions over 200,000 report a minimum of 8 and maximum of 500 gangs, with an average of 182. Though the trend towards more gangs being reported by respondents from larger jurisdictions is consistent with expectations, the range in actual number of gangs reported by jurisdiction size again reinforces the limitations of current data and intelligence. Though we would not expect all jurisdictions of a give size to have the same number of gangs, we would expect the range to be fairly narrow. Moreover, the “greater than 200,000” category represents a single jurisdiction and, at the same time, the broadest range of responses. The lack of agreement across respondents within a single jurisdiction indicates how limited our knowledge of the true nature of the gang problem really is.

TABLE 3.1. Estimated Number of Gangs in Jurisdiction by County Population Size

	N	Minimum	Average # of Gangs	Maximum
Less than 50,000	13	2	7	30
50,001 to 100,000	12	2	16	84
100,001 to 200,000	13	2	15	40
Greater than 200,000	8	8	182	500

Survey participants also varied widely in their estimations of the number of gang members within their respective jurisdictions. For the entire study sample, the estimated number of gang members in respondents’ jurisdictions ranged from 3 to 8000, averaging 1271 gang members (N

⁴ Information collection issues are addressed further in Chapter 4.

⁵ County population size was retrieved from the U.S. Census Bureau, New Mexico—County GCT-T1 Population Estimates, Census 2000 (www.census.gov).

⁶ Municipal and county respondents work either for police departments or Sheriff’s offices. However, there is also one respondent who works in county corrections.

= 61). More than half of the respondents (n = 77) could not estimate the number of gang members in their jurisdiction. We also disaggregated the estimated number of gang members by county population size. Table 3.2 shows the minimum, average, and maximum number of gang members reported by municipal and county level officers by county population size. As was the case with gangs more broadly, estimates of gang members are smaller in smaller jurisdiction, but vary widely within jurisdictions of a given population size.

TABLE 3.2. Estimated Number of Gang Members in Jurisdiction by County Population Size

	N	Minimum	Average # of Gang Members	Maximum
Less than 50,000	15	3	194	678
50,001 to 100,000	8	4	795	5600
100,001 to 200,000	13	40	409	1500
Greater than 200,000	8	200	5100	8000

The estimates for number of gangs and number of gang members also evidence disparate perspectives on the gang problem within single jurisdictions. While the first three population size categories in the tables above contain multiple jurisdictions, as noted above, the fourth category contains only respondents from Albuquerque/Bernalillo County. Within this single county, the estimated number of gangs ranges from 8 to 500 and the estimated number of gang members ranges from 200 to 8,000. There are similar discontinuities among multiple respondents in smaller jurisdictions as well. For example, in the *100,001 to 200,000* category one County Sheriff’s officer and four municipal police officers all working within the same county report between 40 and 500 gang members. Just among the municipal officers themselves the range is from 40 to 200 members. The variation of responses for these two basic questions highlights the need not only for more routine and standardized data collection, but also better analysis of existing information and improved dissemination of intelligence among law enforcement officers.

Along with the appearance of gangs in smaller cities and non-urban areas, the composition of gangs (age, sex, and racial/ethnic) has changed somewhat over the past two decades. One such change is an observed increase in both independent and “auxiliary⁷” female gangs⁸ (Maxson and Whitlock 2002; Moore and Hagedorn 2001) and an increase in the average age of gang members⁹ (Howell, Moore, and Egley 2002). In order to get a sense of the demographic characteristics of gang members in New Mexico, we asked respondents to describe both gangs and the gang population by sex, race/ethnicity, and age.

⁷ Auxiliary gangs are defined as those that are comprised of female members but that are affiliated with male gangs (see Miller 1975).

⁸ While an increase in the number of “female gangs” has been observed, this may be due to the recognition of and increased attention toward female gangs and gang members rather than a shift in the actual participation of women and girls in gang activity (Maxson and Whitlock 2002).

⁹ To some extent, the observed increase in the average age of gang members may be attributed in part to the nature of data collection by law enforcement agencies, where persons who leave gangs are not purged from intelligence collection systems and continue to be included when descriptions of gangs and gang members are produced. The increase in the age composition of gangs is also thought to differ by sex and race/ethnicity (Howell, Moore, and Egley 2002).

With regard to the gangs themselves, respondents were asked to estimate the percentage of gangs within their jurisdictions that were: 1) comprised primarily of female members and 2) comprised primarily of a single racial/ethnic group. Table 3.3 shows the minimum, average, and maximum percentages reported by survey participants for sex and racial/ethnic composition of gangs. Few respondents identified female gangs in their jurisdictions and the majority of gangs are perceived to be comprised of members from a single racial/ethnic group. Again we see a number of respondents (36%) answering “do not know” when asked the percentage of gangs comprised primarily of female members; additionally, 29% answered “do not know” for the racial/ethnic composition of gangs¹⁰.

TABLE 3.3. Sex and Racial/Ethnic Composition of Gangs

	N	Minimum	Average	Maximum
% Gangs comprised primarily of female members	81	0	1.86	30
% Gangs comprised of members of one race/ethnic group	103	0	58.18	100

Given the information gap highlighted by estimates of the number of gang members, it is not surprising that survey participants also had trouble estimating the percentage of gang members by sex, age, and race/ethnicity. When asked to estimate the percentage of gang members by sex, approximately 35% of respondents answered “do not know” (N = 48). A similar pattern of “do not know” responses were given for percentage of gang members by age (44%; N = 59) and percentage of gang members by race/ethnic group (37%; N = 50). The 1998 New Mexico gang survey reports that gang members in the state range from 7 to 54 years of age. This report also identified about 12% of gang members as female. In addition the report indicates that the majority of gang members in New Mexico are Hispanic (74%) followed by White (9%), Native American (8%), Black (6%), some other race/ethnicity (3%) and Asian (< 1%), respectively (NMGTF 1998).

The minimum, average, and maximum estimated percentages of gang members reported by respondents by sex, age, and racial/ethnic group are presented in Table 3.4. For participants providing estimates of gang members by sex and race/ethnicity, the average response tends to mirror the findings of the 1998 study reported above. Between 70 and 100% of gang members are thought to be male, with an average of female gang members estimated at 12%. Just over 32% of participants reporting sex composition of the gang member population estimate that 20% or more of the population is female. There are no observable patterns by jurisdiction type, size, or location for responses on sex composition.

¹⁰ The total sample size for this question is 145.

TABLE 3.4. Sex, Age, and Race/Ethnicity of Gang Members

	N	Minimum	Average	Maximum
% Male	89	70	89	100
% Female	78	0	12	30
% Under age 15	65	1	18	60
% Age 15 to 17	75	4	39	80
% Age 18 to 24	75	5	35	85
% Over age 24	68	0	17	75
% Caucasian/White	69	0	14	96
% African American/Black	59	0	10	40
% Hispanic/Latino	85	2	72	100
% Native American	48	0	16	95
% Asian	31	0	3	10
% Other	17	0	6	50

To some extent the age estimates differed due to age-specific populations served by the respondent's agency. Among respondents that work with juvenile populations (juvenile probation and parole and other CYFD employees) the estimated percentage of gang members under the age of 18 ranged from 5 to 85% with an average of 62% (N = 12).¹¹ Among respondents who work exclusively with juveniles (e.g. juvenile probation/parole, Children's Court prosecutor, etc...), the estimated percentage under age 18 ranged from 5 to 90% with an average of 52% (N = 62). Respondents reporting the highest percentages of gang members over the age of 18 were those employed by the Department of Corrections (DOC). A juvenile probation officer estimated that 85% of gang members were between the ages of 18 to 24, with 9 others estimating 50% or more of gang members are in this age group. Three participants estimated that 50% or more of the gang members in their jurisdiction were over the age of 24; again these respondents were probation and parole officers with the DOC. Two respondents reported that 0% of the gang population in their jurisdiction was over the age of 24. Both of these respondents work exclusively with juveniles. While these estimates are clearly tied to the context within which the respondent works and as such cannot be used to infer the actual distribution of gang members by age across the state, responses do suggest that the gang population these respondents come into contact with are primarily comprised of older youth (age 15 to 17) and young adults (age 18 to 24).

Participants reported that Hispanic/Latino persons account for the majority of gang members in their jurisdiction (average of 72%), followed by Native American, Caucasian/White, African American/Black, some other race/ethnicity,¹² and Asian respectively. Notice in the Table 3.4 that some racial/ethnic categories have extremely high percentages. Eleven respondents estimated that 99-100% of all gang members in their jurisdiction are Hispanic/Latino. In five cases, competing estimates were provided by someone else working within the jurisdiction. In fact, in Albuquerque/Bernalillo County respondents working for the same agency provided widely disparate estimates of the racial/ethnic composition of gang members. One respondent

¹¹ One respondent's total percentage of gang members under age 18 was excluded from this calculation because the total percentage for all age categories summed to 175%.

¹² The respondents identify some other race/ethnicity did not specify other racial/ethnic groups.

suggested that 96% of gang members are White/Caucasian, while another suggested 40% are African American/Black, and yet another respondent in the same jurisdiction reported that 100% of gang members are Hispanic/Latino. Respondents estimating large proportions of Native American gang members (35 to 95%, N = 7) were either Tribal law enforcement agents or employed by law enforcement agencies in counties contiguous to Native American Reservation lands.

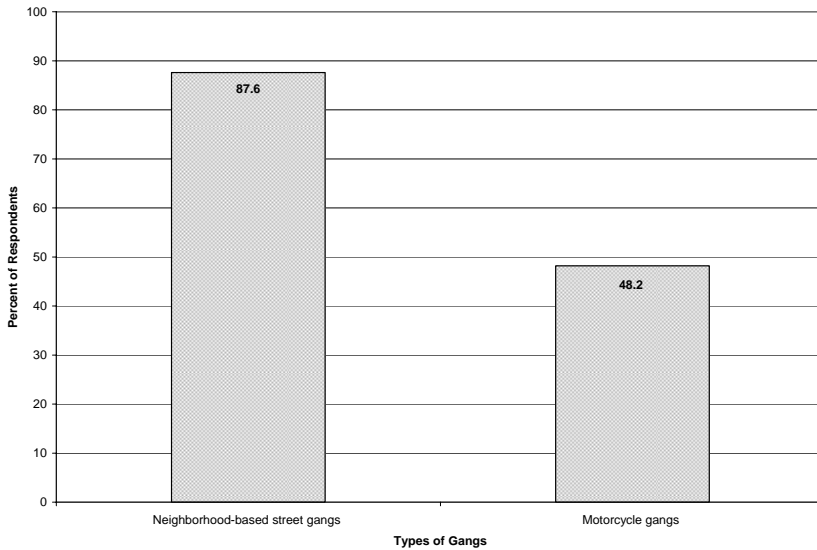
Many respondents could not estimate the number of gangs and gang members present in their service area; and among those providing estimates there are within jurisdictional discrepancies. The estimates provided indicate that respondents perceive the gang population as being primarily male, Hispanic, and older youth/young adult members. It is important to note, however, that there wide variation in perceptions of the demographic composition of gangs across the State and within jurisdiction, a reminder that perceptions are not an accurate reflection of the actual demographic distribution of gang members. Moreover, a number of respondents could not estimate the sex composition of the gangs in their jurisdiction and, less than half of the study sample responded to questions on race/ethnicity and age of gang members. Unfortunately, without more reliable, consistent data, these perceptions are the best estimate we have of the demographic profile of gang members in New Mexico.

Nature of the Gang Problem

We asked the respondents a series of questions aimed at identifying the types of gangs that are active in their jurisdictions. As is shown in Figure 3.5 below, the majority of respondents identified local neighborhood-based street gangs as contributing to their jurisdiction's gang problem.¹³ The participants unaccounted for in the chart below either reported these problems as absent from their jurisdiction or responded that they did not know. Less than 1% of respondents indicated that neighborhood street gangs did not contribute to gang activity in their area, with 11% responding "do not know." Just under half of survey participants also reported the presence of at least some motorcycle gang activity, with 35% responding that there were no motorcycle gangs in their jurisdiction and just under 17% answering "do not know."

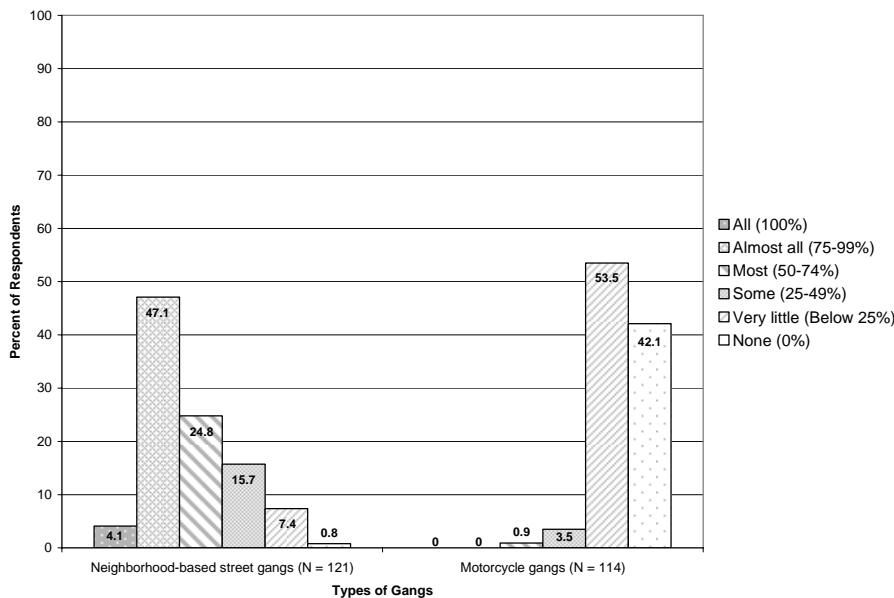
¹³ By contribution it is meant that the respondent did not indicate "none" in response to the question. Respondent indicated either "all", "almost all", "some", or "very little" of the jurisdictions gang problem is attributable to the dynamic represented in the question.

FIGURE 3.5. Types of Gangs Observed in Jurisdiction (N = 137)



Where respondents reported the presence of a particular type of gang, we asked them to estimate the contribution of that type of gang to the local gang problem. Figure 3.6 presents the full range of responses for the questions on neighborhood-based street gangs and motorcycle gangs. Approximately 50% of respondents report neighborhood-based gangs as comprising either “all” or “almost all” of the local gang problem. Among those recognizing the presence of motorcycle gangs in their jurisdiction, this type of gang activity is perceived as accounting for “very little” of the current gang problem.

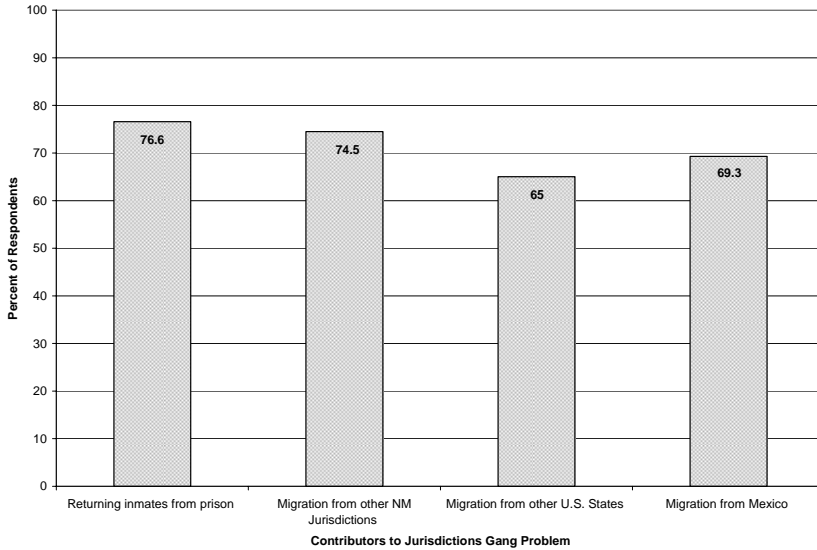
FIGURE 3.6. Contribution of Gang Types to Jurisdictions Gang Problem



In addition to asking about the types of gangs present in the jurisdiction, we also asked respondents to comment on the contribution to their gang population of either persons returning from prison or those migrating from areas outside of the jurisdiction more broadly. As you can

see in Figure 3.7 most respondents report at least some¹⁴ of their gang population as consisting of returning inmates from prison (77%), migrating gang members from other jurisdictions within the state (75%), migration of gang members from other states in the U.S. (65%), or migrating gang members from Mexico (69%). The participants unaccounted for in the chart below either reported these problems as absent from their jurisdictions or responded that they did not know. For each of the four outside sources of gang members, more participants answered “do not know” rather than suggesting a complete absence of migration dynamics.¹⁵

FIGURE 3.7. Perspectives on Gang Migration (N = 137)

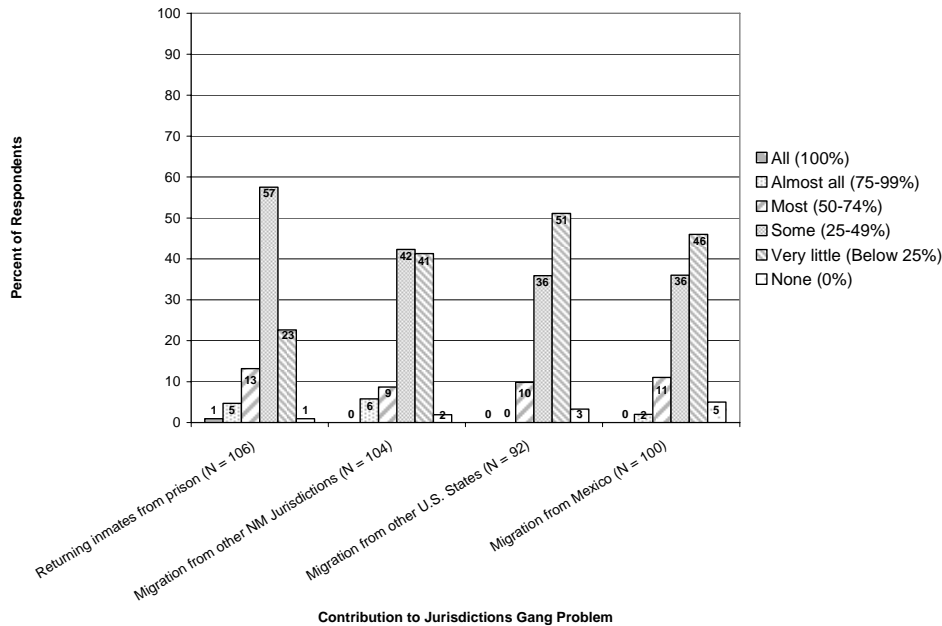


The extent to which these migration dynamics are perceived as contributing to the gang problem in respondents’ respective jurisdictions varied by source. For each of the questions on migration, the most frequent responses were split between “some” and “very little.” Survey participants more often reported returning inmates from prison and migration from other jurisdictions in New Mexico as contributing at least “some.” However, migration from areas outside of New Mexico was characterized most often as contributing “very little” to the local gang problem. Figure 3.8. demonstrates the distribution of responses for each question on the migration of gang members.

¹⁴ By “some” it is meant that the respondent did not indicate “none” in response to the question. Respondent indicated either “all”, “almost all”, “some”, or “very little” of the jurisdictions gang problem is attributable to the dynamic represented in the question.

¹⁵ Answering “do not know” for these questions: returning inmates from prison (22.6%), migration from other jurisdictions in NM (24.1%), migration from other states in the U.S. (32.8%), and migration from Mexico (27%).

FIGURE 3.8. Contribution to Gang Problem



In sum, respondents identify the majority of their gang problem as neighborhood based and suggest that the gang problem is not the result of migration of gang members from outside of the jurisdiction. This suggests that for most jurisdictions, the gang problem is “home grown” and likely linked to local community dynamics as opposed to external forces.

Gang Crime

One of the primary obstacles to generating effective strategies for combating gang crime is the lack of available data on crimes attributable to gangs or their members (Curry, Ball and Fox 1994). Because there is currently no standard definition or requirement for agencies to collect, compile and disseminate this information in New Mexico, we are unable to provide a concrete picture of the types of crimes in which gangs and their members are involved. We are also unable to determine the amount of crime attributable to gangs in the State. In order to get a sense of the types and amount of crime committed by gangs and their members, we asked respondents to provide us with their perceptions of the most frequently committed crimes as well as the proportion of their overall crime problem attributable to gangs and their members.

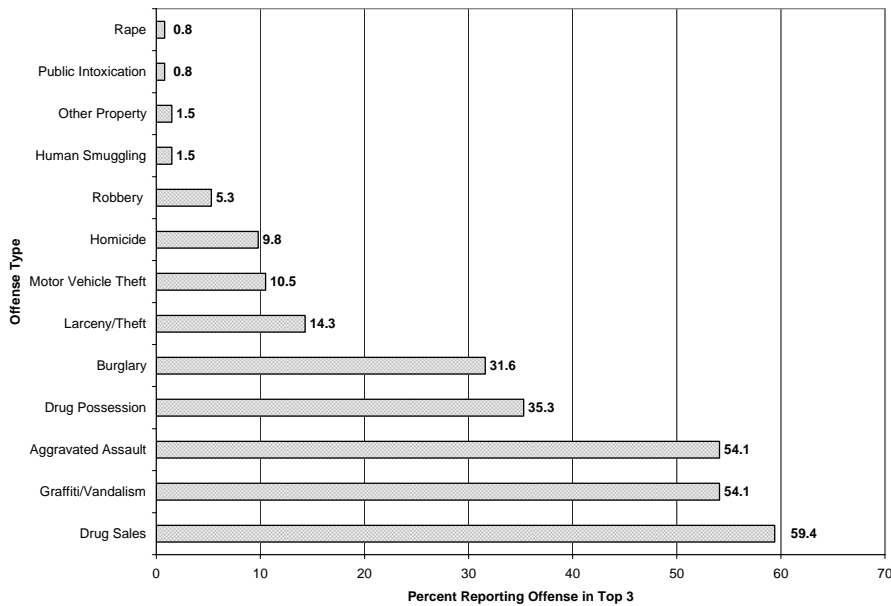
Table 3.5 details the distribution of responses to the question asking participants to rank the three most frequently committed crimes by gang members in their jurisdiction. Thirty percent of respondents place “Drug sales” on the top of the list. This is followed by “Graffiti, Vandalism, Property” and “Aggravated Assault,” with 24% and 17%, respectively, reporting each as the number one crime committed by gang members. Looking across the columns in Table 3.5 it becomes clear that drug crimes (both sales and possession), property crimes (graffiti, vandalism, property, and to some extent burglary), and aggravated assault are thought to be the crimes most frequently committed by gang members.

TABLE 3.5. Types of Crime Most Frequently Committed by Gang Members in 2006

1 st Most Frequently Committed Crime		2 nd Most Frequently Committed Crime		3 rd Most Frequently Committed Crime	
Offense	%	Offense	%	Offense	%
Drug Sales	29.4	Drug Sales	25.6	Graffiti, Vandalism, Property	21.8
Graffiti, Vandalism, Property	23.8	Aggravated Assault	22.4	Aggravated Assault	17.7
Aggravated Assault	16.7	Drug Possession	16	Burglary	15.3
Burglary	11.9	Graffiti, Vandalism, Property	12.8	Drug Possession	9.7
Drug Possession	11.9	Larceny/Theft	7.2	Drug Sales	8.1
Homicide	2.4	Burglary	6.4	Motor Vehicle Theft	8.1
Larceny/Theft	2.4	Homicide	3.2	Homicide	5.6
Other	1.6	Motor Vehicle Theft	3.2	Robbery	4.8
		Robbery	1.6	Other	4
		Other	1.6	Rape	4
N = 126		N = 125		N = 124	

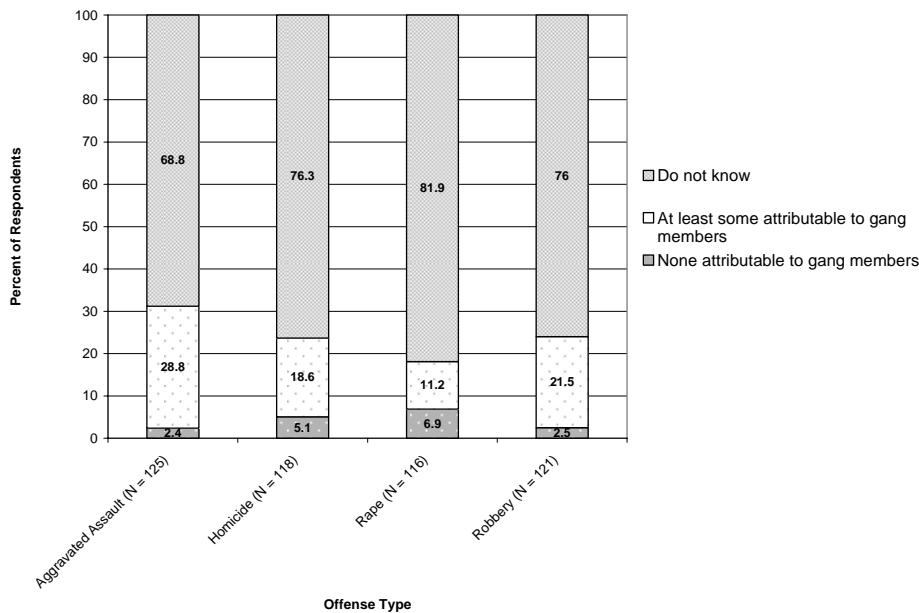
We consolidated the responses to this question, producing a figure that demonstrates the offenses most often ranked in the top three for crimes most frequently committed by gang members (Figure 3.9). As suggested by the tables above, the three offenses most often ranked in the top three are drug sales, graffiti/vandalism, and aggravated assault. Homicide, robbery, and rape were the offenses least frequently reported in the top three. This makes sense since these are relatively infrequent offenses overall. Public intoxication, human smuggling, and other types of property crime (i.e. automobile burglary) were written in by survey participants as crimes frequently committed by gang members in their jurisdiction (N = 1, N = 2, and N = 2, respectively).

FIGURE 3.9. Offenses Ranked in the Top 3 Most Frequently Committed by Gang Members (N = 133)



Although the majority of survey participants report a gang problem—one characterized as both serious and worsening—in their jurisdictions, and they have some opinion on the crime types most frequently committed by gang members, it seems this is all they know. Respondents were generally unable to provide a clear picture of the quantities of crime attributable to gang activity. We asked respondents to estimate the percentage of each type of crime they believed to be either gang-related or gang-involved in 2006. The offense types examined in this question include violent crimes (aggravated assault, homicide, rape, and robbery), drug crimes (possession and sales), and property crimes (burglary, graffiti, vandalism and other property, larceny/theft, and motor vehicle theft). For each offense type, the most frequent response was “do not know.” Figure 3.10 shows the percentage of respondents who provided estimates for the amount of violent offending in their jurisdiction attributable to gang members as well as the percentage who answered “do not know.”

FIGURE 3.10. Percent Reporting Violent Crime Attributable to Gang Members



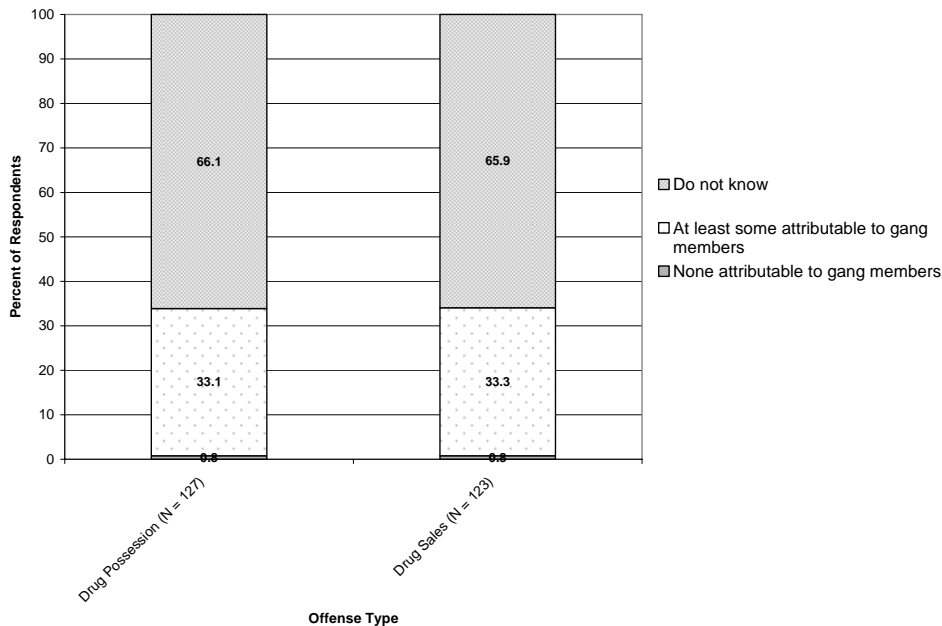
Among those providing an estimate of the proportions of violent offenses attributable to gang members, the distribution of responses shows a great deal of variation. On the one hand, for each offense type, the minimum reported percentage was zero. On the other hand, some respondents indicated that almost all aggravated assault, homicide, and robbery offenses in their jurisdiction were gang-involved. The range and average of estimates for the proportion of violent offenses that are gang-involved is reported in Table 3.6.

TABLE 3.6. Percent of Violent Offenses Attributable to Gang Members

	# reporting estimate	Minimum%	Average%	Maximum%
Aggravated Assault	39	0	34.6	95
Homicide	28	0	38	100
Rape	21	0	12.7	50
Robbery	29	0	32.7	90

We document a similar pattern of responses for drug related offenses (possession and sales). As shown in Figure 3.11, approximately 33% of respondents report at least some of the drug possession and drug sales offenses in their jurisdiction are perpetrated by gang members.

FIGURE 3.11. Drug Crimes



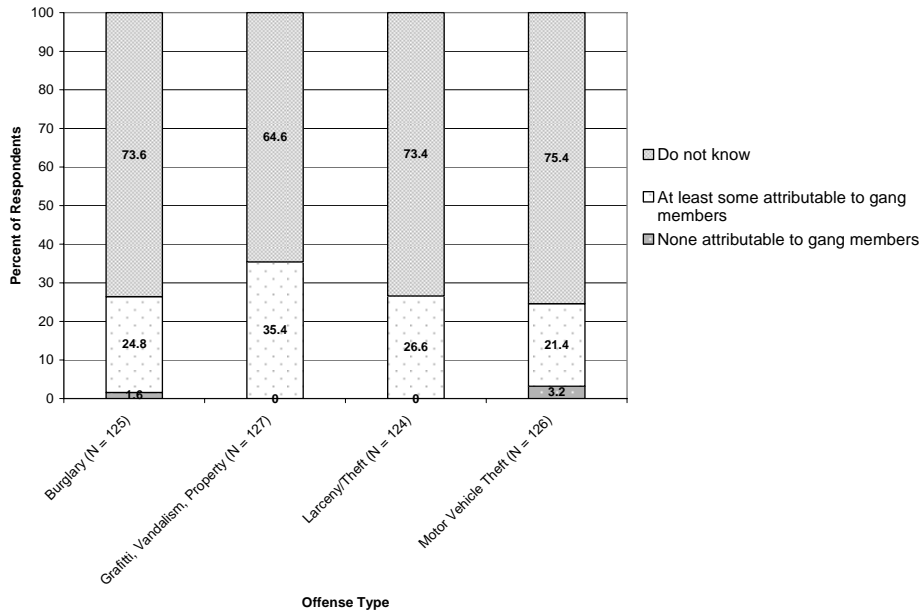
Among those providing an estimate for the proportion of gang-involved drug crimes in the jurisdiction, we again see a wide range of responses. Survey participants reported that gang members accounted from 0 to 95% of all drug possession offenses, with an average of 45%. The proportion of drug sales offenses believed to be gang-involved also ranged from 0 to 95%, with the average of responses at 50%.

TABLE 3.7. Percent of Drug Offenses Attributable to Gang Members

	# reporting estimate	Minimum%	Average%	Maximum%
Drug Possession	43	0	45	95
Drug Sales	42	0	50	95

We also asked survey participants to estimate the proportion of property crimes, including: burglary; graffiti, vandalism, and other property offenses; larceny/theft; and motor vehicle theft. Estimates of the percentage of these offenses attributable to gang members follow the same patterns observed for violent crimes and drug offenses. Most respondents indicated that they did not know the proportion of these crimes that were gang-involved. Figure 3.12 shows the percentage of respondents providing an estimate of the extent of gang member perpetrated property crime and the percentage who answered “do not know.”

FIGURE 3.12. Property Crimes



Among those providing estimates, we again observe a large range of responses. For burglary, responses ranged from 0 to 80%, with an average of 34.2% of burglaries estimated to be gang-involved. The range for estimated gang-involvement in larceny/theft offenses was from 1 to 95%, with an average of 33%. The proportion of motor vehicle thefts estimated as gang-involved ranged from 0 to 95%, with an average of 37.1%. Survey participants reported anywhere from 10 to 100% of graffiti, vandalism, and other property crime were attributable to gang members. However, the average of reported percentages for this category, at more than 73%, is much higher than the average for other offense types. The use of gang symbols and signatures in graffiti likely makes this type of crime easier to identify as gang-involved, but still 65% responded “do not know.”

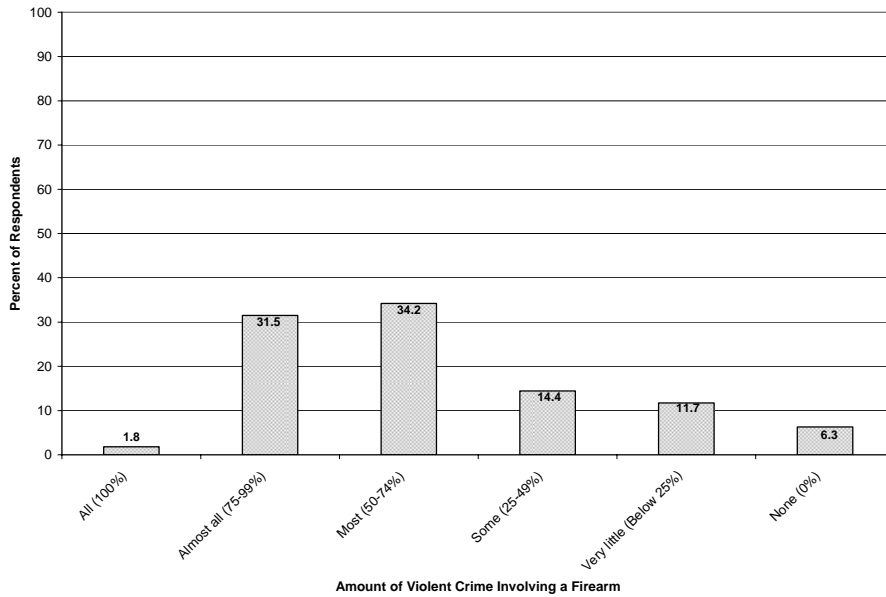
TABLE 3.8. Percent of Property Offenses Attributable to Gang Members

	# reporting estimate	Minimum%	Average%	Maximum%
Burglary	33	0	34.2	80
Graffiti, Vandalism, Property	45	10	73.4	100
Larceny/Theft	33	1	33.3	95
Motor Vehicle Theft	31	0	37.1	95

Gang crime is increasingly associated with gun crime (Miller 2001; Bjerregaard and Lizotte 1995). We asked respondents two questions regarding gangs and firearms. The first question asked respondents to estimate the proportion of violent crimes involving gang members that also involved the use of a firearm. Figure 3.13 shows the distribution of responses for this question. Approximately 32% of survey participants estimated “almost all” or “all” violent crimes involving gang members also involved the use of a firearm (N = 37). An additional 34% suggested that “most” violent crimes involved guns (N = 38). Among respondents reporting that “none” of the gang crime in their jurisdiction involves firearms (N = 7), for most the response is

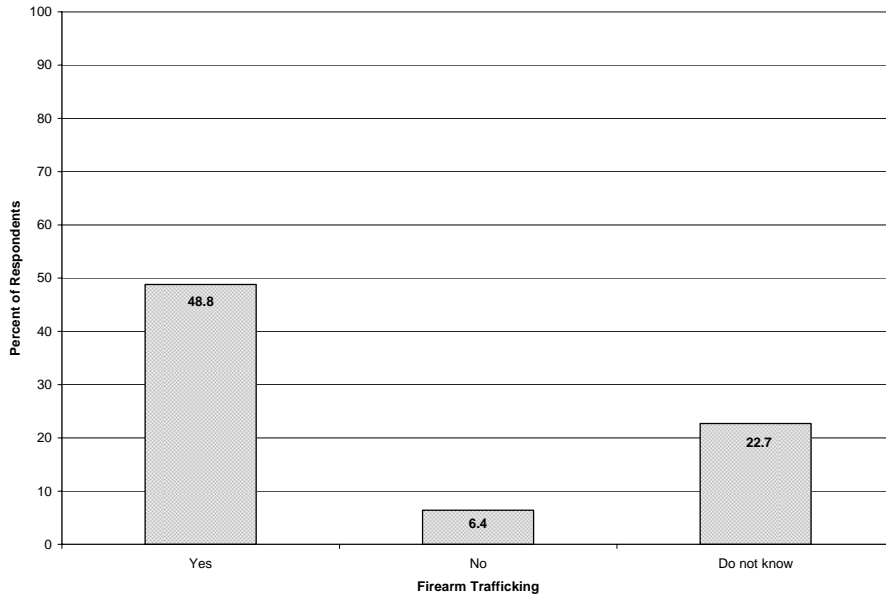
not unrealistic. Three of the seven are DOC employees working in detention facilities, and one other is from the Aviation police. In both settings access to firearms is restricted.

FIGURE 3.13. Crimes Committed by Gang Members Involving a Firearm (N = 111)



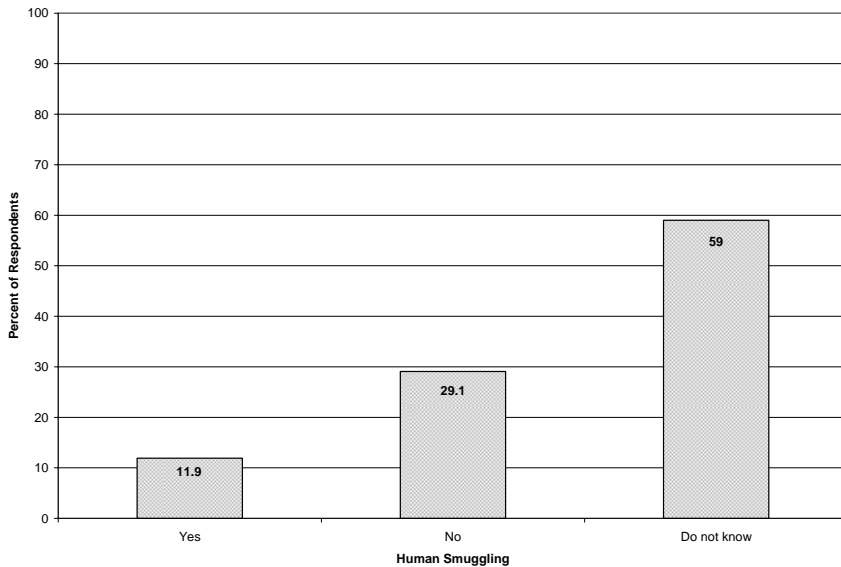
The second firearm question asked respondents whether or not gang members in their jurisdiction were engaged in the trafficking of firearms. As shown in Figure 3.14 more than 48% of respondents believe that gangs are engaged in firearm trafficking. Six percent reported that gangs were not involved in firearm trafficking and the remaining respondents answered “do not know.” There are no discernable patterns by agency jurisdiction or agency type with regard to identifying gang involvement in firearm trafficking. Notably, one respondent citing no gang involvement in firearm trafficking was an agent for the ATF. However, 13 ATF agents indicated that gang members are involved in firearm trafficking.

FIGURE 3.14. Firearm Trafficking (N = 134)



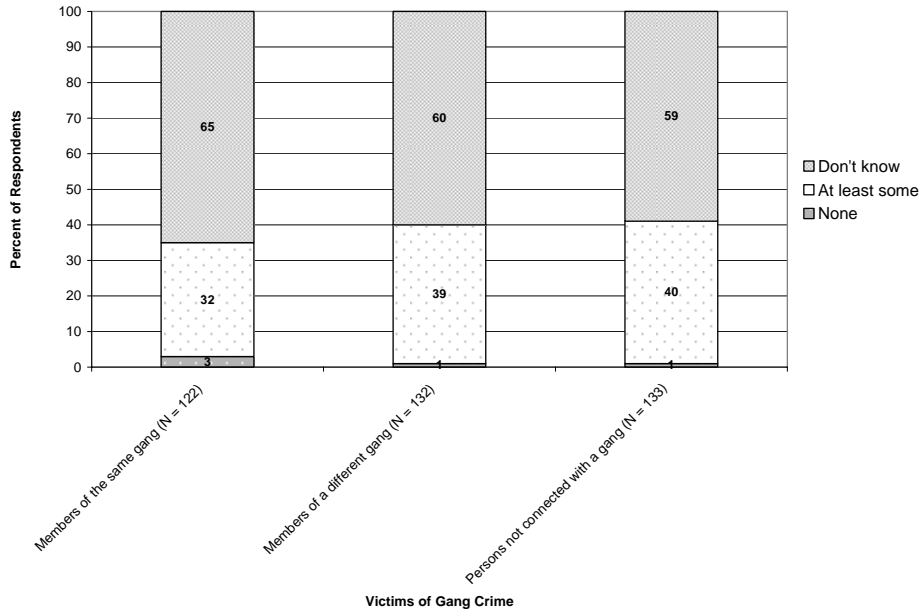
We also asked respondents if they believed gangs within their jurisdiction to be involved in human trafficking. Recall that two respondents wrote in human trafficking as one of the top three offenses committed by gang members. Figure 3.15 shows that this is another area where survey participants did not have the knowledge to respond. Fifty-nine percent of respondents reported “do not know.” Among those who did provide a response, the majority suggested that gang members were not involved in human trafficking. Nine of the 16 respondents identifying gang involvement in human trafficking work in agencies that serve U.S./Mexico border regions—Municipal and County officers in border counties, agents from the U.S. Marshal’s Officer, and members of the U.S. Border Patrol.

FIGURE 3.15. Human Trafficking (N = 134)



We also wanted to get a sense of who is being victimized by gang crime. In particular we asked respondents to estimate the percentage of victims of gang crime who were either members of a gang (victimized by their fellow gang members as well as by members of other gangs) or non-gang members. As shown in Figure 3.16, the majority of respondents were unable to provide an estimate. At least 60% reported “do not know” for each victim category.

FIGURE 3.16. Victims of Gang Crime



When we examine the responses of those who provided an answer other than “do not know,” we find a great deal of disparity in the estimations. Survey participants reported that anywhere from 0 to 90% (average of 16.4%) of gang crime involved a victim and a perpetrator who are members of the same gang (N = 43). Similarly, victims who are members of a different gang are estimated to account from 0 to 100% of all gang crime victims (N = 53). Victims that are not connected with a gang are estimated to be anywhere from 0 to 95% of gang crime victims, with an average of 42% (N = 55).

TABLE 3.9. Victims of Gang Crime by Gang Affiliation

	# reporting estimate	Minimum%	Average%	Maximum%
Members of the same gang	43	0	16.4	90
Members of a different gang	53	0	43.5	100
Persons not connected with a gang	55	0	41.6	95

Chapter Summary

In this chapter we reported findings on survey respondents’ perceptions and knowledge of gangs, gang members and gang crime. Participants generally define gangs and gang crime very broadly. The majority report that their agency uses both member-based/gang-involved and

motive-based/gang-related definitions for gang crime. They also generally agree that the gang problem in their jurisdiction is both serious and getting worse. They identify drug sales, graffiti/vandalism, and aggravated assault as the offenses most often committed by gang members.

However, most respondents were unable to estimate either the extent or nature of gang activity in their respective areas. Survey participants were largely unable to provide estimates of the number of gangs, the number of gang members, or the sex, race/ethnicity, and age composition of the gang population. This suggests the need for more standardized and consistent documentation of gang intelligence.¹⁶ Additionally, intelligence activities should include more frequent analysis and reporting of trends to law enforcement personnel. With the exception of the question that prompted respondents to rank offense types in terms of those most frequently committed by gang members, the most common answer to all questions on the nature of gang activity was “do not know.” In other words, the majority of survey participants could not estimate the proportion of crime in their jurisdiction attributable to gang members. It is important to note here that while respondents were invited to simply estimate these numbers as best as they could, they were also instructed that they were free to refer to any data on hand at their agency. Those who could not provide estimates, then, come from agencies that do not collect such data, or agencies that do not make such data widely or conveniently available to agency personnel and/or do not disseminate summaries of the available data within the agency.

Without official crime statistics on gang crime we cannot know the proportion of crime in New Mexico attributable to gangs and their members. Incident-based reporting of gang crime is needed. This could involve adding check boxes to incident reports for: offender is a gang member, victim is a gang member, and/or whether or not the offense is gang motivated. This type of documentation will require a statewide definition of gang crime as well as a mandated record keeping and reporting requirement for law enforcement agencies.

¹⁶ There is a statewide database for the collection of gang intelligence. GangNET is maintained by the New Mexico Department of Public Safety. The NMGTTTF provides training for law enforcement agencies with clearance to add and search this database for information on gangs and suspected/documented gang members. A more in-depth discussion of intelligence collection and dissemination will be provided in Chapter 4.

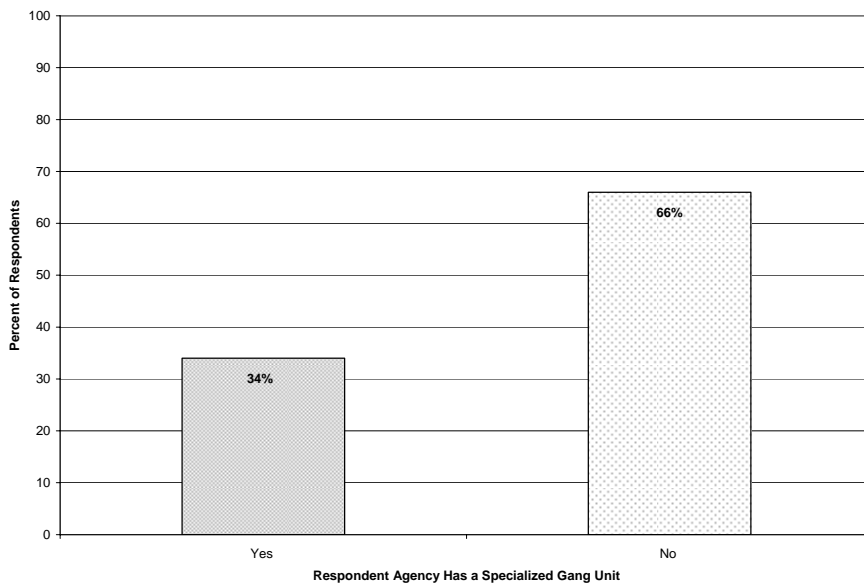
Chapter 4: Agency, Community, and State Resources

Another goal of the PSN initiative is to identify and strengthen existing resources for fighting both gang and gun crime. In this chapter, we report on survey questions that pertain to the second research objective: **to identify agency, community, and state resource availability, utilization, and needs**. We also document respondent knowledge of state-wide anti-gang initiatives and their opinions on State policy priorities.

Agency Resources

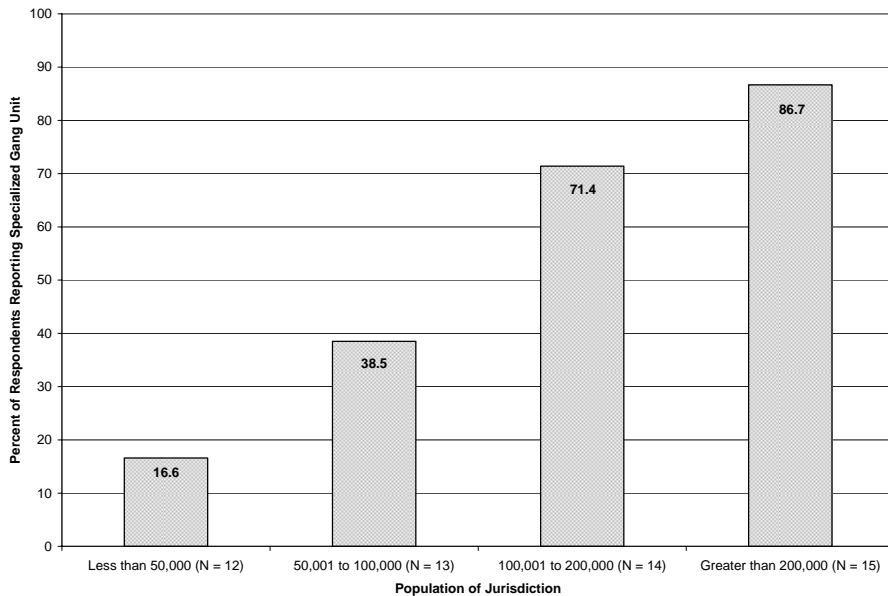
One strategy used by law enforcement agencies to address gang crime is the establishment of a specialized gang unit. Gang units allow law enforcement agencies to address the specific challenges of fighting gang crime by providing training for officers and dedicating personnel to the identification and monitoring of gangs, their members, and their associated crimes (Decker 2007). As shown in Figure 4.1, 34% of survey participants work in an agency with a specialized gang unit (N = 45).

FIGURE 4.1. Works in Agency with a Gang Unit (N = 132)



Gang units are more prevalent in areas with concentrated populations. Figure 4.2 shows the percentage of county and municipal law enforcement agents reporting a gang unit within their agency, by county population size. Twenty-nine of the 45 respondents indicating they are employed by an agency with a gang unit work in a jurisdiction with a county population greater than 100,000 persons.

FIGURE 4.2. County and Municipal Agents Reporting Gang Unit by County Population Size



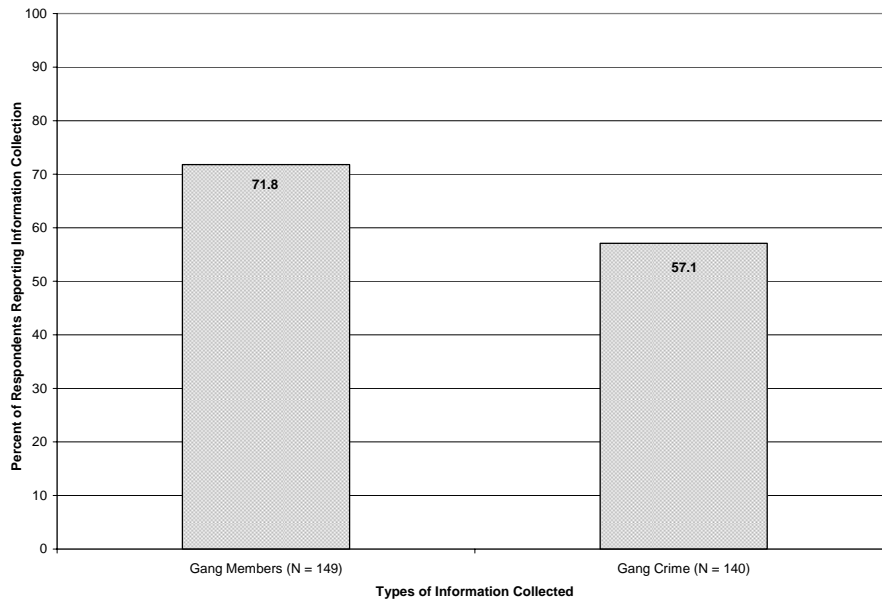
We asked those respondents who are working in agencies with a gang unit to identify the year in which the unit was formed and to describe the personnel making up the unit staff. The formation of gang units dated as far back as 1982, with other units appearing as recently as 2007. The majority of units identified in the survey were established after 1998.

We also asked respondents to identify the number of gang unit personnel who are: full-time sworn officers/attorneys, part-time sworn officers/attorneys, full-time civilian staff, and part-time civilian staff. Although few responded to this question (N = 37), those who did reported that gang units in their respective agencies were comprised of anywhere from one to 33 persons. Of those providing the number of personnel, 34 reported at least one full-time sworn officer/attorney assigned to the gang unit. Six participants reported at least one part-time sworn officer/attorney; six identified a gang unit with at least one full-time civilian staff member; and six participants reported at least one part-time civilian staff member. Notice that these numbers sum to more than the 37 responses received for the question. The number reporting at least one staff member in each category overlaps because some agencies have multiple types of personnel working in the gang unit. In total, 12 respondents indicated that the gang unit was comprised of some combination of full-time and part-time officers and/or civilians.

One task frequently assigned to specialized gang units is the gathering of intelligence on gangs and their members. Data collection for intelligence purposes usually involves identifying gangs by name, location, symbols, etc...and documenting their individual members and/or associates. This information is used by law enforcement personnel for identifying, locating, and apprehending suspects/offenders (Katz 2003). While the intelligence collected by law enforcement officers is often the only source of information available on gang activity, this information cannot tell us about the nature and extent of gang crime in any given community. In order to produce gang crime data, law enforcement agencies must identify crime incidents as either gang-involved, gang-related, or both. Figure 4.3 demonstrates the percentage of respondents reporting that their agency collects detailed information on gang members and gang

crime. The majority of respondents indicate that their agency engages in intelligence collection, with nearly 72% of survey participants reporting that their agency collects information on gang members. A slightly lower percentage (57%), report that their agency collects information on gang crime. Ninety percent of respondents indicate that the information collected on gang members and gang crime is stored electronically.

FIGURE 4.3. Collecting Information on Gang Members and Gang Crime



As you can see in Tables 4.1 and 4.2, the percentage reporting either that their agency collects intelligence or tracks gang crime is significantly different depending on whether or not the agency has a gang unit. Almost all of those reporting a gang unit, also report that the agency collects detailed information on gang members. It is perhaps not surprising that this group is significantly more likely than those reporting no gang unit to report collecting intelligence (93%, N = 42 compared to 60%, N = 50). Respondents who work in an agency with a gang unit are also significantly more likely than those who do not to report collecting detailed information on gang crime (72%, N = 31 compared to 50%, N = 40).

TABLE 4.1. Percent Reporting Agency Collects Intelligence by Presence of a Gang Unit

	N	% Collecting intelligence
Gang Unit	45	93
No Gang Unit	84	60

$\chi^2 = 16.375$, $df = 1$, $p = .000$

TABLE 4.2. Percent Reporting Agency Tracks Gang Crime by Presence of a Gang Unit

	N	% Tracking gang crime
Gang Unit	43	72
No Gang Unit	80	50

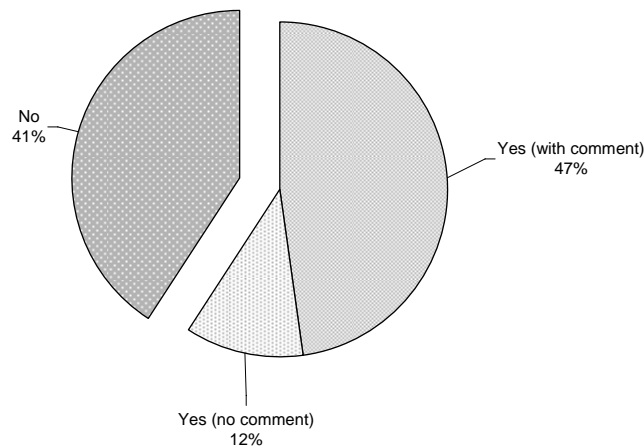
$\chi^2 = 5.594$, $df = 1$, $p = .018$

Research on gang units as a tool for reducing crime suggests that these units are most effective when they combine intelligence gathering with other community and agency efforts to combat crime (Decker 2007). In the previous chapter, we documented a gap in knowledge among survey respondents that in part may be explained by inadequate dissemination of intelligence and the inability to systematically record gang crime. A single focus on intelligence gathering can lead to the isolation of gang units from units of the agency itself and further inhibit understanding of the broader context in which gang crime occurs (Decker 2007). Official incident based statistics on gang crime could provide some of this context. Additionally, integrating anti-gang intelligence gathering and briefings with routine agency activities may prevent the isolation of gang units and provide a more consistent perspective on the nature and extent of the gang problem.

Community Resources

A large component of the PSN initiative is locating and collaborating with agencies that are already engaged in anti-gun and anti-gang activities. The questions on community resources for prevention, intervention, and suppression of gang activities then serves two purposes: 1) identifying existing resources and 2) identifying what kinds of (and where) intervention, prevention, and suppression activities are needed. Respondents were asked to comment on their knowledge of any such programs operating within their jurisdiction. Figure 4.4 presents the distribution of respondents by their demonstrated awareness of community resources. Forty-one percent of the study sample replied that they did not know of any anti-gang prevention, intervention, and/or suppression activities currently operating in their jurisdiction. The remaining 59% reported awareness of programs, with 47% of respondents providing a description of known activities.

FIGURE 4.4. Percent Reporting Intervention, Prevention, and Suppression Activities (N = 130)



In examining the comments, we found that the strategies identified by respondents can be grouped into four broad categories. The first category, **Special Gang Patrols**, includes the formation/existence of gang units within agencies, the use of targeted patrols, warrant sweeps, and special event saturation patrols. Operations sponsored by the Weed and Seed and Project Safe Neighborhoods initiatives were mentioned. The second category is **Education and Prevention Programming**. This includes school programs, community programs, or gang member initiatives focused on educational interventions. One education/prevention program frequently recognized was the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) program, which is a national curriculum facilitated by law enforcement officers in school classrooms. The third category is **Agency Training and Collaboration** and includes any mention of agency activities meant to improve agency responses to the gang problem. For example, participation in a local or state gang task force and/or training officers in gang identification. Participants highlighted efforts by the NMGTF and the Pecos Valley Drug Task Force. The final category, **Intelligence Gathering**, includes activities like interviewing gang members, creating gang cards, entering data into GangNET, and monitoring graffiti.

In the table below, the numbers and percentages reported refer to whether or not a comment contained reference to an activity that fits within one of these four categories. It is possible that one respondent identified multiple strategies in his/her jurisdiction such that the percentage in the total column will exceed 100%. The coding began with 61 respondent comments. Two comments were not categorized because neither comment directly addressed the survey question, thus the percentage of total is calculated out of 59 comments.

TABLE 4.3. Types of Known Intervention, Prevention, and Suppression Activities

Response	N	% of Total
Special Gang Patrols	37	63.8
Education and Prevention Programming	16	27.6
Agency Training and Collaboration	15	25.9
Intelligence Gathering	9	15.5

As evidenced in the table above, the activities respondents were most familiar with are suppression activities—specifically the implementation of gang units and specialized “targeted” patrols. The majority of the education/prevention activities were taking place within the schools but some also identified intervention programs like those offered by Youth Development Inc.¹⁷ and La Plazita.¹⁸

In a separate question we explicitly asked respondents if there were any gang prevention and/or intervention programs for youth referral in their communities. Few respondents were able to provide any information on such programs operating in their jurisdiction. Thirty-seven survey participants reported knowledge of programs for referral, with 28 respondents providing a description of such programming. A review of these descriptions suggests that even those

¹⁷ Youth Development Inc. is non-profit youth service organization that oversees a number of programs for children, youth, and families. The YDI Gang Intervention Program consists of education, counseling, recreation, and community involvement for gang-involved youth and their families. At present, YDI Gang Intervention is only operating in Bernalillo County. See www.ydinm.org.

¹⁸ La Plazita is an intervention organization located in Bernalillo County’s South Valley. The program uses Native American cultural/spiritual tools to help reintegrate troubled youth back into the community.

commenting are not aware of programs to which “at risk” youth can be referred for prevention and/or intervention activities. As you can see in Table 4.4¹⁹ respondent comments most often referenced non-referral **Education Programming**, like G.R.E.A.T, where all students are targeted with an anti-gang message. While an almost equal number of respondents identified **Intervention Programs**, only two programs external to the justice system were mentioned, Y.D.I. and La Plazita (N = 9) and these programs operate only in the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County area. Comments identifying interventions also referred to programs internal to the justice system—probation and parole monitoring, specialized courts, and corrections activities either inside of detention centers or boot camps. It may be that more intervention/prevention programs are operating around the state, but it is clear that the agency personnel who interact with gang involved populations are not aware of these programs and, as such, have few resources at their disposal for facilitating intervention.

TABLE 4.4. Types of Programs for Youth Referral

Response	N	% of Total
Education	16	57
Intervention	14	50
Recreation/Social Groups	7	25

The third category, **Community Recreation/Social Groups**, includes programs aimed at providing preventative activities for youth. In particular, participants mentioned neighborhood based groups like the Boys and Girls Club, community centers (specifically those acting as Safe Havens) and church groups that provide after school activities for youth. While these programs may be characterized as prevention, most are not equipped to intervene with youth who are already involved in criminal gang activity.

Following questions on respondents’ knowledge of community programs, we asked participants to comment on the types of prevention, intervention and suppression programs they believe are needed within their jurisdiction. Seventy-two responses were recorded. Six of these comments indicated that the respondent either did not know or was unsure about programs operating in the community. Nine additional comments were eliminated because they were too vague (i.e. “gang programs”, “programs for teens”) for identifying a type of activity. The remaining comments were examined and coded for both the types of activities needed to curb growth in the gang problem and where in the community programs could/should be located (N = 57).

In examining the comments, we were able to group the programs identified by respondents into five activity type categories. Table 4.5 presents the number and percentage of comments that include suggestions for each activity type.²⁰ The first category, **Education Activities**, includes activities that provide anti-gang awareness instruction, drug awareness programs, mentorships for youth, and educating parents, children, and community members on identifying gang members. Almost 50% of the comments called for some type of education activity (N = 28). The second category is **Suppression Activities**. This category includes programs and activities

¹⁹ Again, the numbers and percentages reported refer to whether or not a comment contained reference to an activity that fits within one of these four categories. It is possible that one respondent identified multiple strategies in his/her jurisdiction such that the percentage in the total column will exceed 100%.

²⁰ Eleven comments were coded for multiple types of activities.

aimed at increasing penalties for gang-involved offenders, additional personnel dedicated to suppressing gang activity, improved intelligence gathering and dissemination, more justice system interventions for gang-involved offenders, and the development of neighborhood watch/citizen patrols. Thirty percent of comments suggested more suppression activities are needed in their jurisdiction (N = 17). The third category, **Extracurricular/Recreation Activities**, includes programs aimed at providing social activities for children and youth. In particular, participants mentioned a wide range of sporting leagues, interest clubs (camping, hiking, chess, etc...), community centers, and community service opportunities. The overall perspective given was that there are not enough free/low cost activities for children after school and during intercession breaks (23%, N = 13). The fourth category can be classified as **Strengthening Families Activities**. Some respondents expressed belief that broken homes, exposure to violence in the home, and a lack of parental supervision contributes to criminality among children. These respondents recommend developing programs that educate parents on gang membership and encourage increased parental involvement with children. Strengthening families activities were recommended in 14% of the coded comments (N = 8). The final category is **Economic Development Activities**. In addition to those highlighting the lack of free/low-cost activities for youth, 7% of those providing comment suggested that poverty reduction in the community as a whole, activities aimed at providing jobs for youth and adults alike, and programs teaching job skills were needed (N = 4).

TABLE 4.5. Types of Prevention, Intervention, and Suppression Activities Needed (N = 57)

Response	N	% of Total
Education Activities	28	50
Suppression Activities	17	30
Extracurricular/Recreation	13	23
Strengthening Families	8	14
Economic Development	4	7

We examined these same comments a second time, noting where or in what types of agencies respondents recommended developing or implementing programs. Table 4.6 documents the percentage of comments that suggested implementing programs in the justice system, schools, and/or the community more broadly.²¹ Thirty-four percent of the responses indicate the need for both education and suppression activities by agents of the **Justice System** (N = 19). In particular, some comments suggest anti-gang awareness education for incarcerated offenders or those also on probation/parole, while most suggest addressing personnel shortages and the wide range of suppression activities mentioned above. Thirty-six percent of comments called for more programming in **Schools** (N = 20). Schools were largely identified as providing preventative education activities. However, a few comments recommended training teachers on identifying gang members and instituting school policies on dress code to penalize the display of gang symbols and colors. Respondents suggested that all types of identified activities should be implemented in the **Community** at large. Some suggested that community members get involved in suppression activities by becoming knowledgeable about identifying gang members and forming citizen patrols or neighborhood watch groups. Many cited the need for after school

²¹ In addition to the 9 comments eliminated for vague program descriptions, another comment was excluded from coding because it lacked specificity in regard to the location of programming, bringing the sample size to 56. Nine comments were coded for multiple categories.

and summer recreation activities expanding local community sports models to include a wider variety of activities (hiking, camping, reading/tutoring, non-sports game play, etc...). Others noted the need for community members, groups, and local/state governments to become involved in strengthening families and providing economic opportunities, for youth especially. Forty-eight percent of the coded comments pinpoint the need to involve individuals, groups, and agencies that fall outside of the justice and school systems in prevention, intervention, and suppression activities (N = 27).

TABLE 4.6. Location of Needed Prevention, Intervention, and Suppression Activities (N = 56)

Response	N	% of Total
Justice System	19	34
Schools	20	36
Community	27	48

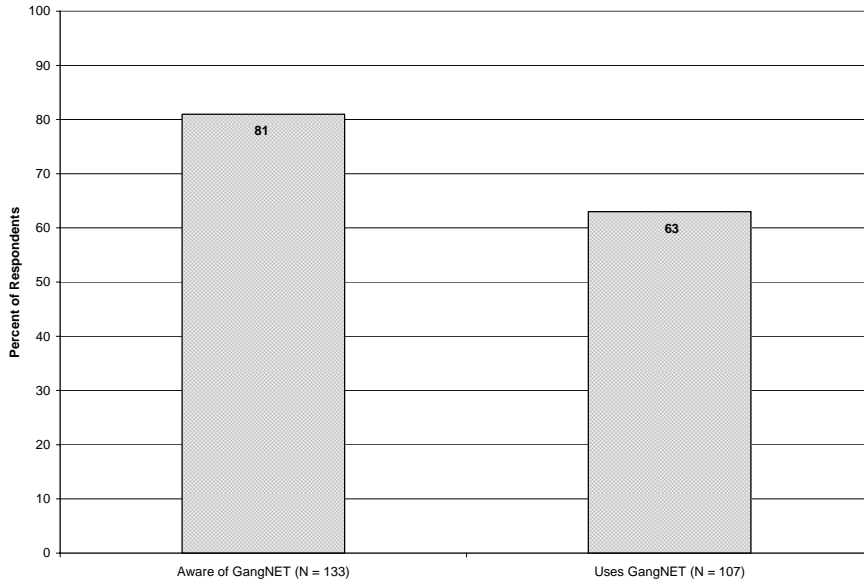
Twenty percent of survey participants were not aware of any anti-gang programs operating within their jurisdiction. Among those who expressed an awareness of such programs, law enforcement suppression-related activities were the most frequently cited programs. Other than those designed for offenders already involved with the justice system, respondents are not aware of any intervention programs to which gang-involved youth can be referred to outside of Albuquerque/Bernalillo County. Respondents suggested that a wide range of prevention, intervention, and suppression activities are needed both within justice system agencies and in schools and the community more broadly.

GangNET Utilization

New Mexico has a statewide database for collecting and disseminating gang intelligence. GangNET is a gang intelligence database, modeled after a system used in California (CALGANG), housed and maintained by the New Mexico Department of Public Safety. The goal of the statewide database is to collect information on gangs and gang members locally and to make that information available to law enforcement agents throughout the state. We noted earlier that the majority of respondents indicated that their agency collects and stores intelligence on gang members active in their jurisdictions. However, it is unclear how this information is disseminated both within and across agencies. If used systematically, a centralized repository for gang intelligence could standardize the collection of intelligence and aid in training and education efforts.

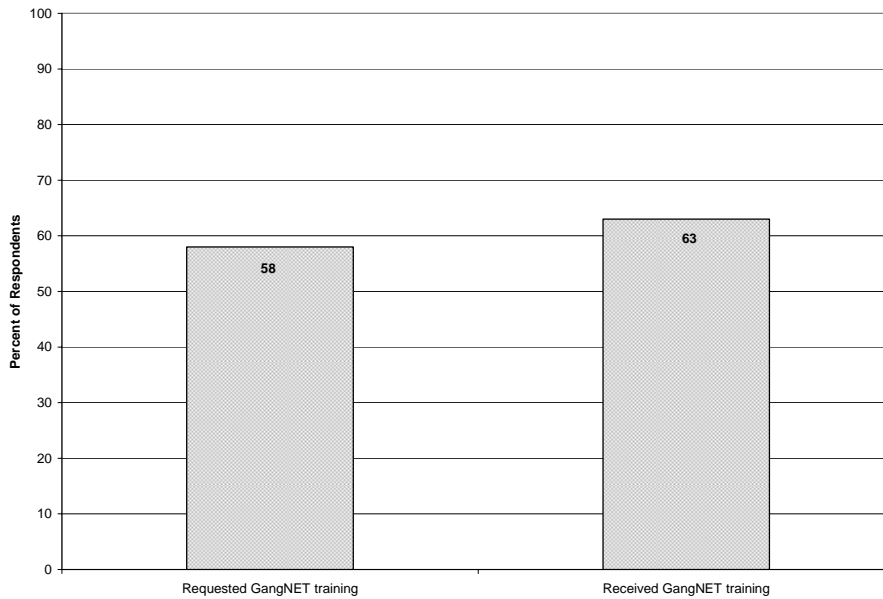
The survey queried respondents on both their awareness of GangNET and whether or not their agency uses the database. Figure 4.5 presents the distribution of respondents answering affirmatively for each question. Over 80% of survey participants report that they are aware of GangNET. While 63% responded that their agency uses the database.

FIGURE 4.5. Knowledge and Use of GangNET



In order to access GangNET, law enforcement agencies must have personnel take part in training on how to use the system. This training is coordinated through the New Mexico Gang and Terrorism Task Force (NMGTTF). As shown in Figure 4.6, 58% of participants report that their agency has requested GangNET training from the NMGTTF (N = 62). Sixty-three percent report that at least one person at their agency has received this training (N = 67).

FIGURE 4.6. Request and Receipt of GangNET Training (N = 107)

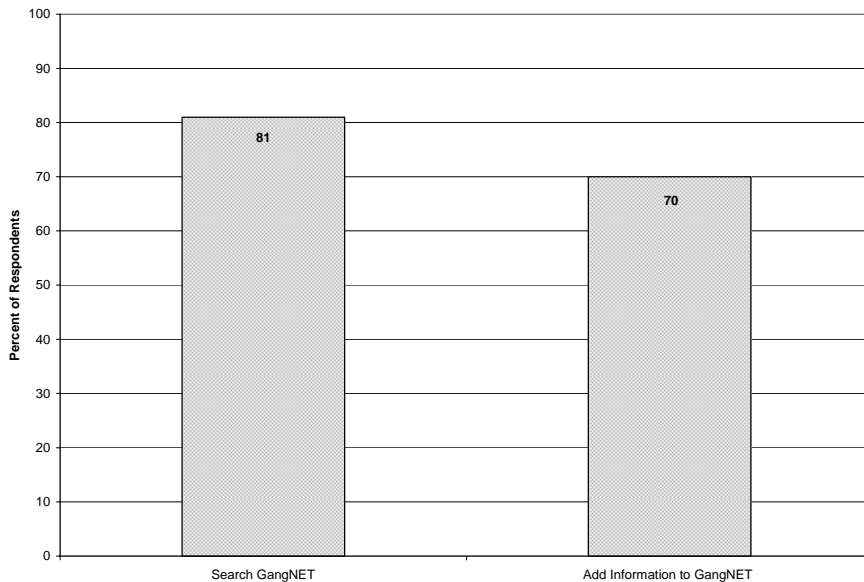


The NMGTTF also provides training and support for state law enforcement partners through conferences each year. Seventy-one percent of respondents (N = 93) have attended a NMGTTF conference. We suspect that this is not representative of law enforcement agents as a whole, our

survey respondents are likely those who are most interested in learning about and addressing the gang problem in their respective jurisdictions.

GangNET utilization involves both adding intelligence to the database and searching the database for information on offenders who are suspected gang members. Persons authorized to use the database may engage in one or both of these activities. As shown in Figure 4.7, 81% of respondents who use GangNET report that they search the database for information on offenders (N = 54). Seventy-percent of respondents indicate that they add information to the database (N = 47).

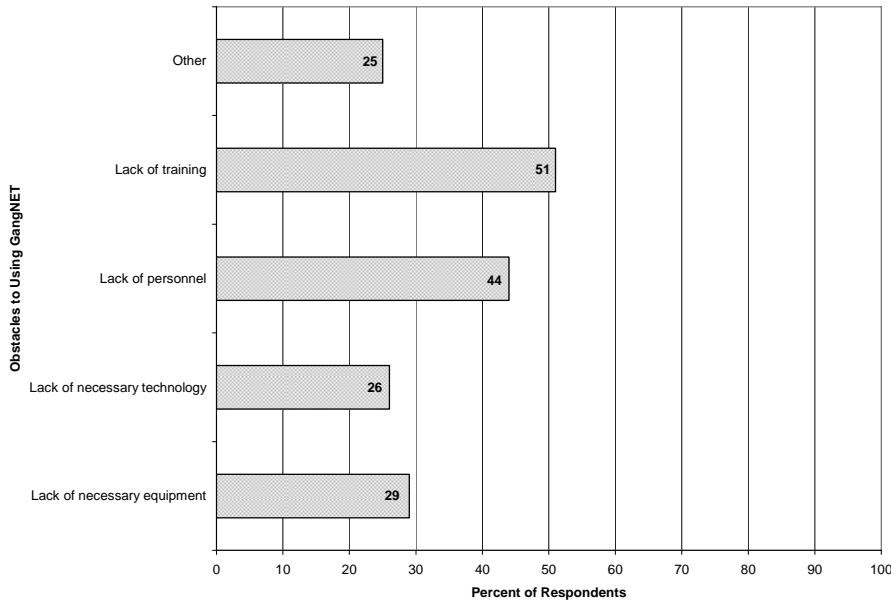
FIGURE 4.7. Nature of GangNET Use (N = 67)



Although 63% of respondents report that their agency uses GangNET, agency capacity to make full use of the system appears to be quite limited. We asked respondents to identify the obstacles agencies encounter that either limit or prevent them from using the GangNET system. Twenty-five percent of survey participants report that they are unaware of the factors preventing/limiting their agencies use of GangNET (N = 24). The remaining respondents (N = 73) cite equipment, technology, personnel, and training deficiencies. Figure 4.8 presents the distribution of responses for each issue.²²

²² Respondents were instructed to check all items that were applicable. Therefore, percentages represent the proportion of respondents identifying each area out of the total number of respondents answering the question. These percentages do not sum to 100%.

FIGURE 4.8. Obstacles to Using GangNET (N = 73)



The most frequently cited obstacle to GangNET usage was training, with 51% of respondents reporting training deficiencies (N = 37). Forty-four percent report lack of personnel as a limitation (N = 32). The lack of necessary equipment and technology were reported by 29% (N = 21) and 26% (N = 19), respectively. Twenty-five percent of respondents indicated that their agency experienced some “other” limitation (N = 18). Among those responding other, 10 reported GangNET is not an agency priority, 5 identified insufficient financial resources, and 3 commented that they worked for an agency that cannot access the database.

We also asked survey participants to describe what they felt would be necessary to overcome these obstacles. The review of responses shows that comments addressed these same issues (equipment/technology, personnel, and training deficiencies) as well as limitations due to agency access to GangNET and agency priorities. Table 4.7 summarizes the percentage of comments that reference each of the obstacles identified.²³

TABLE 4.7. Comment Topics on Obstacles to Using GangNET (N = 47)

	N	% of Total
Training	26	55
Equipment and Technology	14	30
Access	12	26
Personnel	19	40
Priority	10	21

The most frequently cited obstacle is a lack of **Training** (N = 26). Some noted the need for initial GangNET training, while others indicated the need to train additional (or all) officers. Remember, a number of respondents stated that someone at their agency is trained to use

²³ The numbers and percentages reported refer to whether or not a comment contained reference to an activity that fits within one of these five categories. It is possible that one respondent identified multiple strategies in his/her jurisdiction such that the percentage in the total column will exceed 100%.

GangNET; however, most feel the burden of data entry is too great for just one or a few officers. The location of training was also cited as an issue. Participants suggested in-office or localized training to decrease the scheduling conflicts and financial resources associated with sending officers to training at outside locations. Respondents also mentioned the need for follow-up or refresher training and interaction with trainers who use the system on the job—showing them how the system can be put to use within the agency. Finally, a number of participants reported that they needed more training in general about identifying and documenting gang members. Again, this training was suggested on the local level so that the entire staff could receive the training—conference training was characterized as too infrequent and exclusionary, since not all officers are able to attend out of town events.

The second obstacle to using the GangNET system is a lack of **Equipment and Technology** (N = 14). Specifically, survey participants reported that their offices need dedicated computers for using GangNET. They also need laptops for field work, scanners and digital cameras for intelligence documentation, dedicated phone lines for internet access, security features (firewall) necessary for accessing GangNET, software for processing and uploading images, software necessary for running GangNET. While the system requires specific software and security measures, many respondents (especially those working in smaller, rural jurisdictions) reported major deficits in equipment and technology more generally. In fact, some reported sharing computers and internet connections with other city and county offices.

Comments about system **Access** also identified more systemic issues (N = 12). While a few indicated that they had technical GangNET access issues, more frequent was the observation that the use of the system could be facilitated if more officers were trained and the system was accessible in the field (provided the necessary field equipment was available). A number of participants suggested that field access would eliminate the need for dedicated in-house personnel and computers for using the system. Additionally, not all agencies have clearance for GangNET. Corrections employees noted that DOC personnel are denied access to the system. This was especially troubling to CYFD Juvenile Probation and Parole officers²⁴, who expressed the sentiment that their job puts them in a unique position not only to identify and document gang members but also to engage in prevention and intervention activities. However, these activities are limited due to personnel shortages and agency priorities.

Forty percent of participants commenting on obstacles indicated that **Personnel Shortages** were a primary impediment to using GangNET (N = 19). In general respondents suggested that their agencies need more personnel and specifically they indicated the need for personnel dedicated to gang units and/or anti-gang activities. A few respondents noted that specialized gang and narcotics units were eliminated because of city/county budget cuts. Personnel shortages also mean that it is not feasible to dedicate one or more personnel to data entry for GangNET.

Finally, a number of participants commented that their agency's use of GangNET would continue to be limited because either gang crime or the documentation of gangs and their members was neither an agency nor a State **Priority** (N = 10). Agencies were characterized as often unwilling to commit to documentation, especially using GangNET because of personnel,

²⁴ Twenty of the 35 Corrections personnel participating in the survey are CYFD Juvenile Probation and Parole Officers.

training, and/or equipment and technology resource expenditures. Even where there is agency willingness, many expressed that they are behind the times on understanding the gang problem and the strategies necessary for pro-activity. Others suggested that the State’s lack of support excluded them from participating in gang intervention and suppression activities (again, this was especially notable among CYFD personnel).

While the majority of survey respondents say that their agency uses GangNET, the system is not being utilized to its full potential. This is demonstrated by two patterns observed in this survey. First, there is the lack of knowledge about gangs and gang members among survey participants. Second, respondents focused a large amount of attention on questions about obstacles to using the system. Given the lack of knowledge about gangs and gang members demonstrated by survey participants, we have recommended increased analysis and dissemination of intelligence among law enforcement personnel. If used consistently and systematically by law enforcement officers across the state, the GangNET system could facilitate these activities.

State Policy Priorities

We asked survey participants to rank in order of importance three priorities for New Mexico policy makers that they think will aid in addressing the gang problem. The four most frequently ranked priorities all focus on providing more resources for addressing the gang problem, either through legislation that assesses penalties specific to gang crime or by providing funding for increased prevention, intervention, and suppression efforts. Table 4.8 presents the percentage of respondents reporting each issue in their top three priorities.²⁵

TABLE 4.8. Percent Reporting State Policy Priority in Top Three

State Priority	% reporting priority in top 3
Legislation that enhances penalties for gang-motivated/gang-related crimes	69.6
Funding for more specialized gang units within law enforcement agencies	48.8
Legislation that provide penalties for those who try to recruit individuals to join a gang	33.6
Funding for more youth gang intervention/prevention programs	32.8
Better intelligence sharing across agencies	32
Training on gang identification, gang trends, and/or gang investigations	28
Funding for more gang prosecution	20
Better data on gang activity, locally and statewide	16
Training on officer safety	10.4
Other	4.8
N	125

Almost 70% of respondents placed “legislation that enhances penalties for gang-motivated/gang-related crimes” in their top three priorities (N = 87). Funding for more gang units was the second most frequently ranked priority with just under 50% of respondents placing it in the top three (N = 61). Thirty-three percent ranked “legislation that provide penalties for those who try to recruit individuals to join a gang” in the top three (N = 42), and almost 33% suggested the

²⁵ A table presenting the percentage of responses by 1st priority, 2nd priority, and 3rd priority can be found in Appendix C.

allocation of funding for more prevention and intervention programming (N = 41). Approximately one-third of survey participants also suggested increased sharing of intelligence across agencies should be a priority (N = 40). Interestingly, most say they want more legislation, resources, and intelligence sharing across agencies but as this report has demonstrated we cannot reliably document gang crime trends in the State and intelligence dissemination is lacking even within agencies. Only sixteen percent of respondents ranked “better data on gang activity locally and statewide” as one of the top three priorities (N = 20). However, such data are needed to justify the priorities respondent note here and to evaluate the effect of any implemented anti-gang efforts.

Chapter Summary

When asked about the resources of their respective agencies, most survey participants reported at least some attention was being given to gangs and gang crime. Over two-thirds of respondents said their agency collects detailed information on gang members, while more than half report their agency collects detailed information on gang crime. Thirty-four percent of participants work in an agency with a gang unit, and these respondents are more likely than others to report collecting information on gang members and gang crime. Additionally, 63% report that someone in their agency uses GangNET, but most believe the database would be better utilized with more accessible and frequent training and by resolving personnel shortages within their agencies.

Participant preferences for State policy priorities focused on securing more resources for fighting the gang problem; for example, legislation that enhances penalties for gang-motivated/gang-related crimes and funding for more specialized gang units within law enforcement agencies. Participant comments suggest that they would also like more support from their own agencies and from the community as well. A number of respondents commented that gang issues were not given priority in their agency. Some suggested the lack of attention was due to personnel and resource shortages; however, others documented agency and/or officer apathy toward the gang problem. Furthermore, survey participants expressed the desire for more community involvement in developing and implementing solutions to the gang problem. Some suggested parents and teachers should take some responsibility for prevention and intervention; while others highlighted the need for community economic and infrastructural development that would provide more recreation and employment opportunities for youth. Notably, though respondents could provide very little detail on the nature and extent of gang crime in their jurisdictions, few highlighted the need for more or better data on gangs and gang crime.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

This report documents law enforcement perceptions of New Mexico's gang problem as well as the available resources for addressing this problem. One of the overarching objectives of this effort was to use the results of the survey to: **generate ideas regarding future directions in social and legislative policy as well as gang interdiction strategies**. To this end, this chapter summarizes the findings and recommendations for policy and practice contained in this report. We conclude with a discussion of future research directions.

Summary of Findings

Gangs, Gang Members, and Gang Crime

- Law enforcement, prosecutorial, and correctional personnel from around the state share the perception that a gang problem exists in their respective jurisdictions, the gang problem is serious, and that it has been getting worse when compared to years past.
- Respondents indicate that gang members are most commonly involved in drug sales, graffiti/vandalism, and aggravated assault.
- Participants report that gangs are involved in firearm trafficking and frequently use guns during the commission of violent crimes.
- Most respondents characterize the gang problem as a “home grown,” local problem rather than a result of “migration” from other jurisdictions.
- Although, participants report collecting information on gangs, gang members, and gang crime—they are, for the most part, unable to: estimate the number of gangs and gang members, describe the characteristics of the gang population, identify the nature of gang crime, and estimate the proportion of crime in their jurisdiction attributable to gangs and gang members.

Agency, Community, and State Resources

- While only 34% of respondents are employed by an agency with a gang unit, over 70% report that the agency collects information on gang members and 57% collect information on gang crime. However, the extent to which these data are analyzed and disseminated is questionable, especially in light of survey participant responses to questions on gangs, gang members, and gang crime. Also, because agencies define gang crime differently, these records will be largely incompatible for comparison.
- When it comes to knowledge about prevention, intervention, and suppression programs, survey respondents are most familiar with law enforcement suppression related activities. Outside of the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County area, respondents are not aware of any programs (other than those designed for system involved offenders) that provide intervention for active gang members. Respondents would like to see more community-

based programs and the involvement of persons outside of the justice system in prevention and intervention programming.

- Most respondents indicated that their agency uses the GangNET system in some way, however there was a great deal of commentary on obstacles and limitations to using the system. The two most frequent obstacles noted were training and personnel issues.
- Although respondents were unable to either quantify or describe the nature of the gang problem, most believe the State should assign more resources to anti-gang priorities. Participants ranked legislation assessing penalties for gang crime and recruitment, funding for more gang units, and funding for more prevention and intervention programming at the top of their priority lists.

Implications for Research Policy and Practice

New Mexico law enforcement personnel, regardless of location and size of jurisdiction, perceive gang crime to be a serious problem that is getting worse. They also express the need for more resources and personnel to dedicate to anti-gang activities. And while most report that their agency collects “information” about gangs and gang members, these respondents were unable to describe this population and the crimes attributable to them. This suggests the need for better analysis and dissemination of the information and intelligence currently being collected. Intelligence gathering is largely focused on documenting individuals, their associations, and criminal history. Periodic briefings on the number and characteristics of gangs, their members, and their activities could provide agents with a better sense of the scope of the problem. These activities could be greatly facilitated by more consistent and systematic use of the GangNET intelligence gathering system.

When asked how the State could best respond to the gang problem, respondents indicated that they would like to see more legislation designed to deter gang involvement and gang crime and more funding for specialized gang units. Very few respondents indicated a need for better data on gang activity, locally and statewide. This suggests that respondents do not clearly understand the value of data for their daily operations or for more long-term agency planning and evaluation. Reliable data would allow agencies to monitor and track the gang crime problem in their jurisdiction and to strategically plan and evaluate the effect of various interdiction efforts. Moreover, though legislation and specialized gang units might help reduce the State’s gang problem, without data there is little evidence that such strategies are necessary nor will there be any way to monitor the effects of such strategies once implemented.

Developing a systematic data collection strategy for gang crime in New Mexico is, we realize, not a simple task. In order to accomplish this, statewide standardized criteria for what constitutes “gang crime” would need to be adopted and combined with a reporting requirement for law enforcement agencies. The NMGTTF has constructed and disseminated a standard definition of a gang. Respondents in this survey indicated that their agency utilizes this definition for the most part. However, when it comes to classifying particular incidents as “gang crime” some agencies utilize gang-involved/membership-based criteria, others use gang-related/motive-based criteria, and yet others use both definitions to classify offenses as gang

crime. This lack of standardization makes it difficult to compare gang crime across agencies and jurisdictions. Furthermore, as long as there is no record keeping requirement for documenting gang-involved or gang-related crime incidents, we cannot know the proportion of crime in the State attributable to gangs and their members. The remedy for this lack of data requires the State to adopt a gang-crime definition. Additionally, incident-based reporting forms would need to include gang member and/or gang motivated designations.

Until official crime statistics on gangs are available, research will largely continue to focus on the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of justice system personnel. Because the PSN initiative has a holistic approach, with a focus not just on suppressing crime but also preventing it, the next stage of research will focus on surveying prevention, intervention, and treatment service providers statewide to address a similar set of questions: what are provider perceptions of gangs, gang members, and gang crime; to what extent (and in what locations) are there existing community resources for combating local gang problems and what types of resources are needed by these service providers to better their ongoing anti-gang initiatives.

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Appendix A: Survey Instrument

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Drs. Lisa Broidy and Tim Wadsworth, from the Institute for Social Research at the University of New Mexico. This study is being conducted in collaboration with New Mexico Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) initiative and the New Mexico Gang and Terrorism Task Force (NMGTTF). You were identified as a prospective respondent in the study because we are interested in how law enforcement agencies and District Attorney Offices around the state of New Mexico are affected by and respond to the gang crime problem. Your job gives you important insights into the gang problem in your jurisdiction that we hope you will share with us.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to document the gang crime problem across the state of New Mexico. The research is being funded under the Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) initiative, which is a federally funded program designed to help federal jurisdictions around the country develop intervention strategies to reduce the toll of gang violence in our communities. The New Mexico Gang and Terrorism Task Force (NMGTTF) is a PSN partner and is also very interested in the survey results. The information you provide will help the NMGTTF and the PSN task force understand how gangs are affecting crime in New Mexico and will aid their efforts to design intervention strategies that take into account the unique dynamics of the gang problem in New Mexico communities. The PSN task force will also use the results of the survey to help design their media outreach campaign to combat gang violence statewide and to develop relevant intervention strategies and the NMGTTF plans to use the information to help develop gang specific legislation to introduce in the legislature.

PROCEDURES AND ACTIVITIES

If you agree to participate in this research, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire asking you about the gang problem in your jurisdiction. Specifically the survey asks how your agency defines gangs and gang crime, how much of a problem such activity is in your jurisdiction, how your agency has responded to the problem, and various obstacles to combating gang violence in your community. The survey also asks about your agency involvement with the NMGTTF and your use of statewide gang resources such as GangNET. The survey is hosted on a secure server operated by the Information Technology Services at the University of New Mexico. It should take about 30 minutes to complete. You are welcome to consult available data and statistics in responding to the questions, but if you are able to respond without consulting such sources that is fine too. There are no incentives for participation and your participation is entirely voluntary. You may skip any questions you are not comfortable answering and may decide to withdraw your participation at any time (even after you have consented and begun the survey or after your survey responses have been submitted). None of the survey questions ask you to reveal any personal or individual level information, however, please note that your responses to the survey will not be entirely confidential. Though you will not be identified by name in any related presentations or publications, it may be possible for individuals to link you to your responses simply by knowing the jurisdiction from which the data were generated and your general job title.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The risks to you for participating in this research are minimal. Though it may be possible for individuals to connect you to your responses, none of the information you provide is personal, so such a link should not compromise your safety or provide any discomfort to you.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

The information you provide will help the NMGTTF and the PSN task force identify critical areas for intervention in the gang problem around the state. The PSN task force will also use the results of the survey to help design their media outreach campaign to combat gang violence statewide and to develop relevant intervention strategies that your agency may find useful in combating the gang crime problem. Moreover, the NMGTTF plans to use the information to craft statewide gang crime legislation that could help you and other agencies respond to the gang problem. Moreover, your agency may be able to use the results of the survey to identify and partner with jurisdictions whose problems and priorities are similar to your own.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The data we collect in connection with this survey will remain confidential, in that we will not use your name in any reports or publications associated with this research. However, your responses will be linked to your general jurisdiction and at times it may be necessary for us to identify you by general job title (i.e., a law enforcement officer in a supervisory position). From this, some people may be able to link you to these responses. Again, none of the information you provide is personal and any link between you and your responses should in no way compromise your safety or security. To further ensure the general confidentiality of the data, all of the information you provide will be stored on password protected computers accessible only by project personnel.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to participate in this study or not. If you volunteer to participate, you may withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS AND REVIEW BOARD

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact: Dr. Lisa Broidy, Institute for Social Research, University of New Mexico, 2808 Central Ave, SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106, (505) 277-4269. If you have other concerns or complaints, contact the Institutional Review Board at the University of New Mexico, 1717 Roma NE, Room 205, Albuquerque, NM 87131, (505) 277-2257, or toll free at 1-866-844-9018.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study.

Signature of Research Participant

____/____/_____
Date

2007 New Mexico Law Enforcement Gang Survey

Please answer each question to the best of your ability. For the purpose of this survey, a “gang” is defined as: **a group of youths or adults in your jurisdiction that you or other responsible persons in your agency or community are willing to identify or classify as a gang.** Please base your responses on your records, your personal knowledge, and/or consultations with other agency personnel who are familiar with gangs. The completion of this survey and your comments will give us a better understanding of prevalence and activities of gangs in New Mexico and provide a picture of law enforcement resources and needs with regard to gang and gang member information collection. You may also take this password protected survey on-line: <https://esurvey.unm.edu:443/s?s=1548>

The password is *gangs*. If you have any questions regarding this survey, please contact Tamara Barnard at (505) 875-3516 or tbarnard@cabq.gov or Dr. Lisa Broidy at lbroidy@unm.edu

Please return the completed survey to:

**New Mexico Statistical Analysis Center
Institute for Social Research
University of New Mexico
2808 Central Avenue, SE
Albuquerque, NM 87106
FAX: (505) 277-4215**

AGENCY INFORMATION

Name of Jurisdiction Served: _____

Law Enforcement Agency Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ County: _____ Zip Code: _____

Name of Person Completing Survey: _____ Title/Rank: _____

Unit or Section: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Telephone Number: () _____ Fax Number: () _____

2007 New Mexico Gang Survey

PLEASE NOTE: Police Departments should report only for their city/town. Sheriff's Departments should report only for their unincorporated service area. Please exclude any contracted jurisdictions.

1. During 2006, were there any gangs active in your agency's jurisdiction?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Do not know

IF YOU ANSWERED "NO" OR "DO NOT KNOW" PLEASE RETURN THE SURVEY VIA MAIL OR FAX TO THE ADDRESS ON THE SURVEY COVER PAGE.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

2. Does your agency have a system in place for the collection of detailed information on GANG MEMBERS?
 - Yes
 - No (skip to Question 4)
 - Do not know (skip to Question 4)
3. If yes, is the **gang member** information and/or intelligence collection system:
 - Hard copy (non-computerized)
 - Computerized
 - Both
 - Do not know
4. Does your agency have a system in place for the collection of detailed information on GANG CRIME?
 - Yes
 - No (skip to Question 6)
 - Don't know (skip to Question 6)
5. If yes, is the **gang crime** information and/or intelligence collection system:
 - Hard copy (non-computerized)
 - Computerized
 - Both
 - Do not know

CRITERIA FOR DEFINING GANGS AND GANG CRIME

6. Please rank how important each of the following characteristics are to your agencies definition of a gang. Please circle the number that corresponds to your response.

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not At All Important	Do Not Know
It has a name	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is comprised of 3 or more individuals	1	2	3	4	5	6
It has a leader or several leaders	1	2	3	4	5	6
The group hangs out together	1	2	3	4	5	6
The group displays or wears common colors or other insignia	1	2	3	4	5	6
The group commits crimes together	1	2	3	4	5	6
The group claims a turf or territory of some sort	1	2	3	4	5	6

Please list any other characteristics of a “gang” that are important in how your agency defines a “gang”:

For the purpose of this survey, gang crime is defined as either:

***Member-based/Gang-involved*—A crime in which a gang member(s) is either the perpetrator or the victim, regardless of the motive; or**

***Motive-based/Gang-related*—A crime committed by a gang member(s) in which the underlying reason is to further the interests and activities of the gang.**

7. Which of these gang crime definitions does your agency most frequently use?

Member-based/Gang-involved

Motive-based/Gang-related

Other (please define): _____

Do not know

GANGS AND GANG MEMBERS ASSESSMENT

The following questions ask about gang members and gang crime in your jurisdiction. We recognize that you may not have adequate data to provide exact figures. In the case where official records are not available, we request that you provide your best estimates in response to each question.

8. How many gangs (as defined on the survey cover page) were active in your jurisdiction during 2006?

_____(number of active gangs)

Do not know (skip to Question 11)

9. What percentage of the gangs reported in Question 8 are made up mostly (more than 50%) or entirely of females?

_____% of gangs are mostly or entirely comprised of female members

Do not know

10. Some gangs are comprised almost exclusively of one racial/ethnic group, while others are more mixed. In your jurisdiction, what percentage of gangs reported in Question 8 are made up exclusively of members from a single racial/ethnic group?

_____% of gangs have members comprised exclusively from one racial/ethnic group

Do not know

11. How many gang members were active in your jurisdiction during 2006?

_____ (number of active gang members)

Do not know (skip to Question 15)

12. What is the percentage of all gang members reported in Question 11 who are:

_____ % Male

_____ % Female

Do not know

13. Considering all the gang members reported in Question 11, what is your estimate of the percentage who are:

_____ % Under Age 15

_____ % Age 15-17

_____ % Age 18-24

_____ % Over Age 24

Do not know

14. Listed below are terms often used to describe the race/ethnicity of gangs and gang members. For your jurisdiction, what percentage of all gang members in Question 11 do you estimate are:

_____ % Caucasian/White

_____ % African-American/Black

_____ % Hispanic/Latino

_____ % Native American

_____ % Asian

_____ % Other (please specify) _____

Do not know

For Questions 15 to 24 please choose only one response by checking the box that most closely applies.

15. How much of the gang problem in your jurisdiction in 2006 was attributable to neighborhood-based street gangs?
- All (100%)
 - Almost all (75-99%)
 - Most (50-74%)
 - Some (25-49%)
 - Very little (Below 25%)
 - None (0%)
 - Do not know
16. How much of the gang problem in your jurisdiction in 2006 was attributable to motorcycle gangs?
- All (100%)
 - Almost all (75-99%)
 - Most (50-74%)
 - Some (25-49%)
 - Very little (Below 25%)
 - None (0%)
 - Do not know
17. How much of the gang problem in your jurisdiction in 2006 was attributable to the return of gang-involved inmates from prison?
- All (100%)
 - Almost all (75-99%)
 - Most (50-74%)
 - Some (25-49%)
 - Very little (Below 25%)
 - None (0%)
 - Do not know
18. How much of the gang problem in your jurisdiction in 2006 was attributable to the migration of gang members from other jurisdictions in New Mexico?
- All (100%)
 - Almost all (75-99%)
 - Most (50-74%)
 - Some (25-49%)
 - Very little (Below 25%)
 - None (0%)
 - Do not know

19. How much of the gang problem in your jurisdiction in 2006 was attributable to the migration of gang members from other states in the U.S.?

- All (100%)
- Almost all (75-99%)
- Most (50-74%)
- Some (25-49%)
- Very little (Below 25%)
- None (0%)
- Do not know

20. How much of the gang problem in your jurisdiction in 2006 was attributable to the migration of gang members from Mexico?

- All (100%)
- Almost all (75-99%)
- Most (50-74%)
- Some (25-49%)
- Very little (Below 25%)
- None (0%)
- Do not know

21. In your estimation, how serious is the gang problem in your jurisdiction?

- Very serious
- Serious
- Somewhat serious
- Not very serious
- Not at all serious
- Do not know

22. Compared to **2005**, was the gang problem in 2006:

- Getting worse
- Getting better
- About the same
- Do not know

23. Compared to **five years ago**, was the gang problem in 2006:

- Getting worse
- Getting better
- About the same
- Do not know

24. Compared to **ten years ago**, was the gang problem in 2006:

- Getting worse
- Getting better
- About the same
- Do not know

GANGS AND GANG MEMBERS' CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

25. Using the list provided below, please identify the **three** types of criminal activity most frequently committed by gangs in your jurisdiction in 2006 and write them in the space provided.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Homicide | Aggravated Assault |
| Robbery | Rape |
| Burglary | Motor Vehicle Theft |
| Larceny/Theft | Drug Sales |
| Graffiti, Vandalism, other property | Other (please specify) _____ |
| Drug Possession | |

1st Most frequently committed crime _____
 2nd Most frequently committed crime _____
 3rd Most frequently committed crime _____

Do not know

26. What percentage of the following offenses committed in your jurisdiction in 2006 were committed by gang members?

<i>Crime</i>	<i>% Attributable to Gang Members</i>	<i>Do Not Know</i>
Homicide	_____ %	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aggravated Assault	_____ %	<input type="checkbox"/>
Robbery	_____ %	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rape	_____ %	<input type="checkbox"/>
Burglary	_____ %	<input type="checkbox"/>
Motor Vehicle Theft	_____ %	<input type="checkbox"/>
Larceny/Theft	_____ %	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drug Sales	_____ %	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drug Possession	_____ %	<input type="checkbox"/>
Graffiti, Vandalism, other property	_____ %	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify below)	_____ %	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other Crime Type: _____

27. Of all the crimes in your jurisdiction attributed to gang members in 2006, what percentage of their victims were:

_____ % Members of the same gang as the perpetrators
 _____ % Members of a different gang
 _____ % Persons not connected with a gang

Do not know

28. Are gang members in your jurisdiction involved in human smuggling?
- Yes
 - No
 - Do not know
29. Are gang members in your jurisdiction involved in trafficking firearms?
- Yes
 - No
 - Do not know
30. During 2006, how much of the violent crime committed by gang members in your jurisdiction involved the use of a firearm?
- All (100%)
 - Almost all (75-99%)
 - Most (50-74%)
 - Somewhat (25-49%)
 - Very little (Below 25%)
 - None (0%)
 - Do not know

AGENCY RESOURCES

31. Does your agency have a specialized gang unit?
- Yes
 - No (skip to Question 34)
 - Do not know (skip to Question 34)
32. In what year was the specialized gang unit organized? _____
- Do not know
33. How many personnel does the specialized gang unit currently have?
- _____ Full-Time Sworn Officers
 - _____ Part-Time Sworn Officers
 - _____ Full-Time Civilians
 - _____ Part-Time Civilians
 - Do not know
34. Is your agency aware of the state gang database (GangNET) housed and maintained by the New Mexico Department of Public Safety?
- Yes
 - No (skip to Question 40)
 - Do not know (skip to Question 40)

35. Does your agency use GangNET?

- Yes
- No (skip to Question 37)
- Do not know (skip to Question 37)

36. How does your agency use GangNET? Check all that apply.

- Search the database for gang information
- Add gang information to the database
- Other (please specify)_____
- Do not know

37. What factors either prevent or limit your agency from using GangNET? Check all that apply.

- Lack of necessary equipment
- Lack of necessary technology
- Lack of personnel
- Lack of training
- Other (please specify)_____
- Do not know

For each item you checked above, please use this space to indicate what your agency would need to overcome this obstacle and utilize GangNET. For example, if you checked “lack of equipment,” please specify the equipment you would need to be able to use GangNET.

38. Have you or anyone at your agency requested GangNET training from the New Mexico Gang and Terrorism Task Force?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

39. To the best of your knowledge, has anyone at your agency received GangNET training from the New Mexico Gang and Terrorism Task Force?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

40. Have you or anyone at your agency attended a New Mexico Gang and Terrorism Task Force Conference?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

41. Are you aware of any gang interdiction, intervention, or suppression strategies that have been enacted in your jurisdiction?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please identify and briefly describe the gang interdiction, intervention, or suppression strategies currently operating in your jurisdiction.

42. Are youth gang intervention/prevention programs available to your community for local referral?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

If yes, please identify and briefly describe these youth anti-gang programs.

43. What youth intervention/prevention programs would you like to see implemented within your community?

44. Using the list below, please identify and rank in terms of priority the three activities that you feel would be most beneficial to New Mexico in dealing with criminal gang activity. Write your responses in the space provided.

- Legislation that enhances penalties for gang-motivate/gang-related crimes
- Legislation that provide penalties for those who try to recruit individuals to join a gang
- Training on gang identification, gang trends, and/or gang investigations
- Training on officer safety
- Funding for more specialized gang units within law enforcement agencies
- Funding for more gang prosecution
- Funding for more youth gang intervention/prevention programs
- Better intelligence sharing across agencies
- Better data on gang activity, locally and statewide
- Other (please specify)_____

1st Priority _____

2nd Priority _____

3rd Priority _____

Appendix B: Letter of Invitation



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
District of New Mexico*

Post Office Box 607
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103

505/346-7274
FAX 505/346-7296

January 29, 2008

Subject: New Mexico Gang Threat Assessment

Dear Law Enforcement Partner:

We are contacting you to invite you and others in your agency to participate in the *New Mexico Gang Threat Assessment Survey*. This study is being conducted by Drs. Lisa Broidy and Tim Wadsworth from the Institute for Social Research at the University of New Mexico. We are conducting this research in collaboration with New Mexico's Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) initiative and the New Mexico Gang and Terrorism Task Force (NMGTTF). You were identified as a prospective respondent in the study because we are interested in how law enforcement agencies around the state of New Mexico are affected by and respond to the gang crime problem. Your job gives you important insights into the gang problem in your jurisdiction that we hope you will share with us.

At the end of this invitation is a link to a web-based survey we would like you and at least 2 designees from your agency to complete. The survey is hosted on a secure server operated by the Information Technology Services at the University of New Mexico. It should take about 30 minutes to complete. After reviewing the consent form and agreeing to participate, respondents will be asked to complete a questionnaire about the gang problem in your jurisdiction. Specifically the survey asks how your agency defines gangs and gang crime, how much of a problem such activity is in your jurisdiction, how your agency has responded to the problem, and various obstacles to combating gang violence in your community. The survey also asks about your agency's involvement with the NMGTTF and your use of statewide gang resources such as GangNET. You are welcome to consult available data and statistics in responding to the questions, but if you are able to respond without consulting such sources, that is fine too.

Please forward this invitation to at least two others in your agency and encourage them to complete the survey. If your agency works directly with School Resource Officers (SROs) in your jurisdiction, please also forward this letter to at least one of these officers and encourage them to participate. We would like to have responses from individuals with varying job responsibilities within your agency (e.g., supervisors, field officers, and others deemed appropriate for the task) since individuals with distinct job tasks likely have different insights into the local gang crime problem and we want to get as complete a picture of the problem as we can.



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
District of New Mexico*

Post Office Box 607
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103

505/346-7274
FAX 505/346-7296

January 29, 2008

Page 2
Subj: NM Gang Threat Assessment

Your participation is invaluable to us. The information you provide will help the NMGTTF and the PSN task force identify critical areas for intervention in the gang problem around the state. The PSN task force will also use the results of the survey to help design their media outreach campaign to combat gang violence statewide and to develop relevant intervention strategies that your agency may find useful in combating the gang crime problem. Moreover, the NMGTTF plans to use the information to craft statewide gang crime legislation that could help you and other agencies respond to the gang problem. Your agency should also be able to use the results of the survey to identify and partner with jurisdictions whose problems and priorities are similar to your own.

To link to the secure survey website type the following address into your web browser: <https://esurvey.unm.edu:443/s?s=1548> Enter password: gangs

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Lisa Broidy, Ph.D., Director, Institute for Social Research, University of New Mexico (505-277-4269 or lbroidy@unm.edu), Tamera Barnhard of the NMGTTF (505-875-3516) or Law Enforcement Coordinator Ron Lopez of the PSN Task Force (505-244-1466).

Thank you,

RUMALDO R. ARMIJO
Executive Assistant United States Attorney

RRA/rl

Appendix C: Additional Tables

Chapter 4

State Policy Priorities (N = 125)

1 st State Policy Priority		2 nd State Policy Priority		3 rd State Policy Priority	
	%		%		%
Legislation that enhances penalties for gang-motivated/gang-related crimes	50	Legislation that provides penalties for those who try to recruit individuals to join a gang	24	Funding for more youth gang intervention/prevention programs	17
Funding for more specialized gang units within law enforcement	13	Funding for more specialized gang units within law enforcement agencies	19	Funding for more specialized gang units within law enforcement agencies	17
Funding for more youth gang intervention/prevention programs	11	Better intelligence sharing across agencies	14	Better intelligence sharing across agencies	12
Training on gang identification, gang trends, and/or gang investigations	8	Legislation that enhances penalties for gang-motivated/gang-related	13	Training on gang identification, gang trends, and/or gang investigations	12
Better intelligence sharing across agencies	6	Training on gang identification, gang trends, and/or gang investigations	8	Better data on gang activity, locally and statewide	11
Training on officer safety	4	Funding for more gang prosecution	8	Funding for more gang prosecution	11
Legislation that provides penalties for those who try to recruit individuals to join a gang	3	Funding for more youth gang intervention/prevention programs	6	Legislation that enhances penalties for gang-motivated/gang-related crimes	7
Other	2	Better data on gang activity, locally and statewide	3	Legislation that provide penalties for those who try to recruit individuals to join a gang	6
Better data on gang activity local and statewide	2	Training on officer safety	3	Training on officer safety	1
Funding for more gang prosecution	1	Other	2	Other	1