MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

27 January 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 16 January 2025, requesting a PDF copy of a report commissioned by the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) entitled:

- ***Gilbert J and G Newbold (2006) Youth Gangs: A review of the literature prepared for the Ministry of Social Development. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.***

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

Please find attached a copy of the report. In the spirit of being helpful, I attach the report in both the requested PDF and Word versions.

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

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Anna Graham
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services

YOUTH GANGS:
A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A Report Prepared for the Ministry of Social Development

January 2006

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Preface

This report was commissioned by the Ministry of Social Development in November 2005. It is structured under headings supplied by the Ministry. We acknowledge the assistance and feedback of Mike Roguski, Juan Tauri, Catherine Love and Rachel Winthrop. Where we have felt it appropriate – and as time has permitted - we have amended the work to include the issues that have been raised by them.

We have two points of caution. First, the timeline for the completion of this project was tight (less than eight weeks) and so decisions have had to be made in relation to prioritising content. In a research area as complex and multifaceted as this, there are a number of investigative paths available. We have selected the ones we see as the most important in order to give a rounded understanding of the points in question. Second, due to the dearth of local research, this paper is heavily reliant upon material from overseas, some of which is not wholly applicable to this country. One common finding of international investigators is the need for specific understandings of the different types of gangs that exist in different areas, recognising their unique make-up and the conditions that affect them. We would therefore encourage further research focused on the streets of New Zealand.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Definition

- Definitions of gangs are difficult but important. The way gangs are defined influences how they are viewed and how they might be responded to.

- Gangs may be usefully viewed as progressing through, or fixed within, three different stages of organisational development: 'Scavenger', 'Territorial' and 'Organised'.

- A working definition of youth gangs is as follows.

> *A group of youths, often from disadvantaged backgrounds, with a loose structure, a common identifier (colours, a name, hand signals etc) whose activities are not primarily criminal but involve (mostly) petty crimes, and who identify themselves as a gang and are identified as such by others in the community (Gilbert, 2006).*

2. Socio-Political and Economic Context of Maori and Pacific Migration to Counties Manukau and the Current Socio-Economic Situation in Counties Manukau

- Acute and rapid migration of Maori and Pacific Peoples occurred in many areas of Counties Manukau and other urban areas of New Zealand in the 1960s and 1970s.

- The difficulties that occurred in the adjustment from rural (and/or village) to urban environments, mixed with the economic downturn of the 1970s, created significant social problems that assisted the development of gangs.

- Many parts of Counties Manukau today are burdened with conditions that are associated with gang membership. Economic deprivation data show problems in poverty, transience, overcrowding and unemployment in many parts of Counties Manukau. These areas also have high concentrations of Maori and Pacific Peoples who are negatively represented in a range of social indices.

3. Historical Review of Youth Gangs

- Youth gangs began to be recognised as a problem in New Zealand in the 1950s. These immature 'Scavenger' gangs had many characteristics in common with the youth gangs of today.

- In the 1960s motorcycle gangs began to wear 'patches' (an emblem, name and territory that represent the gang and is worn on the backs of members) and develop an increasing degree of organisation. This was continued by street gangs in the 1970s. The 1970s marked a transformation of many gangs from Scavenger to Territorial status, and was characterised by a significant increase in violence.

- By the 1980s and 1990s, many established gangs had evolved further into 'Organised' status as they began to focus on making profit through crime. The average age of membership also grew significantly. These established gangs still remain a recruitment vehicle for youthful gang prospects.

- In the 1990s new youth gangs, based on Los Angeles-style street gangs, became prominent. If, in the future, these groups mature they may prove to be more violent and profit driven than the youth gangs of the past.

4. Historical Responses to Gang Culture and Associated Violence.

- Despite government reports acknowledging the need for a response to gangs involving a broad range of social measures, gangs in New Zealand, as overseas, have largely been viewed as a problem of law and order.

- With the possible exception of some detached youth worker programs, the Group Employment Liaison Schemes of the 1980s were the only systematic social initiative aimed at problems associated with gangs. Despite a governmental report suggesting merit in the schemes, they became controversial and were eventually ceased.

- Laws targeting gangs often reflect the changing perception of gangs from randomly violent and anti-social, to groups involved in organised criminality.

5. Theories on the Development of Youth Gangs, Psycho-Social Factors Contributing to Membership and the Influences of American Popular Culture

- Gang members are often subject to the negative realities of modern life and membership in a gang can fill members' needs for belonging and status.

- Gang membership involves a number of 'push' and 'pull' factors. 'Push' factors include family instability, poor schooling, poverty, new or unsettled communities, and poor employment prospects. 'Pull' factors include prestige, thrills, power, and a need for belonging and protection.

- An American influence on New Zealand's youth is not new, nor is the concern that often stems from it. Popular and news media sources, as well as the establishment of a Hell's Angels chapter in New Zealand in 1960, educated early New Zealand gangs as to how they might be structured, appear, and act.

- Some of the new youth gangs mirror American gangs and could become more violent and materialistic than youth gangs of the past.

- There are a multitude of individual and community-based factors that either encourage or discourage gang membership.

6. Gang-Related Intervention Models with a Specific Focus on Gang Offending

- It has been argued that, compared with many forms of crime, crime by youth gangs should be easily addressed. Despite this, there have been very low levels of success among the different interventions implemented to date.

- Both internationally and in New Zealand, gang problems have most recently been left for the police to solve, although suppression through law enforcement has proven largely unsuccessful.

- Other responses have had mixed results. Single faceted approaches have seldom been effective. The most likely success comes from multi-pronged strategies that accept the idea that gangs are not *the* problem but a symptom of wider social concerns.

- Gang programs and strategies that are often categorised as Prevention, Intervention and Suppression, can be further refined further as:

1. Community Organisation
2. Social Intervention
3. Opportunities
4. Suppression
5. Organisation Development and Change.

Of these, *Community Organisation* and *Opportunities* strategies have been found to provide the greatest chances of success, particularly when combined with other initiatives.

- A broad approach to the problem of gangs is required to achieve any level of efficacy and will involve: a central governing body with community coordinated approaches that include a number of governmental and non-governmental bodies; centrally determined goals; and adequate and ongoing funding.

YOUTH GANGS: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

1. Definitions and Categorisation of 'Gangs' and 'Gang Culture'

Gangs were first systematically studied in America in 1927 by Thrasher, who defined them by way of the process in which they formed:

> The gang is an interstitial group originally formed spontaneously, and then integrated through conflict. It is characterized by the following types of behavior: meeting face to face, milling, movement through space as a unit, conflict, and planning. The result of this collective behavior is the development of tradition, unreflective internal structure, esprit de corps, solidarity, morale, group awareness, and attachment to a local territory (Thrasher, 1963/1927: p. 46).

Over time, definitions of gangs have changed to reflect an element of criminality; expressed most notably by Klein in 1971 who defined (youth) gangs as:

> Any denotable adolescent group of youngsters who: (a) are generally perceived as a distinct aggregation by others in their neighbourhood [sic]; (b) recognize themselves as a denotable group (almost invariably with a group name) and (c) have been involved in a sufficient number of delinquent incidents to call forth a consistent negative response from neighbourhood [sic] residents and/or enforcement agencies (Klein, 1971: p.13).

Klein's definition was influenced by interviews with police and thus has a strong law enforcement component. The problem in using such an approach is that often it means gangs become regarded as an issue of law and order rather than as an entity in themselves, creating a tendency to look at the symptoms of the problem rather than at the problem itself.

In an effort to focus attention away from simple criminality, Hagedorn offers the following definition:

> Gangs are organizations of the street composed of either 1) the socially excluded or 2) alienated, demoralised, or bigoted elements of a dominant racial, ethnic, or religious group (Hagedorn, 2005).

The above definitions highlight how differently one can frame the issue of gangs. Despite attempts like Hagedorn's to shift away from a law and order focus, most definitions of gangs used today contain such an element. This is perhaps unsurprising, since if gangs did not engage in criminal behaviour they would be unlikely to attract attention. The danger with law enforcement type definitions is that they tend, erroneously, to characterise criminality as being the gang's primary defining feature. In truth, gangs form in a way that is little different to how many other human associations form. To a greater or lesser extent, crime may be part of the gang's activity, but seldom is it central to it, nor is crime the gang's primary *raison d'etre*.

It is hard to pinpoint exactly when a group of youths who hang around together with the same lifestyle and culture, become a gang (Goldstein & Kodluboy, 1998). An added problem is that the term 'gang' applies to a wide variety of groups, from relatively small, organised and exclusive motorcycle clubs such as Highway 61 and the Hell's Angels, to semi-organised mass groups like the Mongrel Mob and Black Power, to the disorganised and amorphous associations of kids on the street.

In an attempt to solve this problem, Carl Taylor (1990) has described three categories of gangs which are useful for our study. These gangs he labels 'Scavenger', 'Territorial' and 'Organised'.

- Scavenger Gangs are defined by impulsive behaviour and crimes that are usually petty, senseless, and spontaneous. These groups have no particular goals or purpose and they usually come from the lower classes. Youthful street gangs are typical of this type.[1]

- Territorial Gangs stake out a 'patch' and 'rule' it. The territory is widely known to 'belong' to the gang and the gang polices it thus. The gang monopolises the criminal trade (usually drugs) in that area and wars with anybody who tries to enter their turf. Some chapters of the Mongrel Mob and Black Power fall into this category.

- Organised Gangs are well structured groups that have very strong leaders and clear organisational structure and goals. Membership is based on service to the group and promotion is by performance, not personality. Crimes are committed for practical purposes rather than for fun. Examples include 'Outlaw' motorcycle gangs (OMGs), as well as some chapters of the Mongrel Mob and Black Power.

While there have been some criticisms as to how Taylor arrived at his categorisations (eg Klein, 1995: p. 134), his format allows us an important and flexible interpretation of gangs. Horowitz (1990) provides a compelling argument for why multiple definitions can be advantageous, in that they often provide opportunities to explore alternative aspects of the gang experience. But the vast majority of gang experts insist on the need for a standardised definition (eg Lafontaine, Ferguson & Wormith, 2005; Maxson & Klein, 1996; Curry, Ball & Decker, 1996; Spergel, 1995; Maxson & Klein, 1990). A standardised definition means that comparisons can be made between localities, as well as allowing for assessment of fluctuations in gang numbers and gang crimes.

A working definition of youth gangs can read as follows:

> *A group of youths, often from disadvantaged backgrounds, with a loose structure, a common identifier (colours, a name, hand signals etc), whose activities are not primarily criminal but involve (mostly) petty crimes, and who see themselves as a gang and are identified as such by others in the community (Gilbert, 2006).*

2. Socio-Political and Economic Context of Maori and Pacific Migration to Counties Manukau and the Current Socio-Economic Situation in Counties Manukau

After the Second World War, New Zealand experienced a booming economy that lasted until the 1970s. This created a significant demand for workers. The Pacific nations to New Zealand's north, with largely subsistence economies, provided a pool that supplied this need. As a result, whereas in 1945 fewer than 2,000 Pacific Peoples lived in New Zealand, by 1956 the number had grown to over 8,000 and by 1966 it was over 26,000 (Thorns & Sedgwick, 1997: p. 56). Despite these rapid increases, the percentage of Pacific Peoples living in New Zealand remained comparatively small, at less than one percent of the total population. However, the new migrants overwhelming settled in just a few Auckland suburbs – initially Grey Lynn and Ponsonby and then Counties Manukau - giving them a significant presence in those areas. The migrant districts were characterised by substandard housing and crowded tenancy which contributed to negative social effects, like gang

[1] Scavanger gangs are also referred to as Wannabes (for example, Lafontaine, Fergusson & Wormith, 2005).

membership, becoming visible by the early 1970s. In 1981, as a result of continued influx, Pacific people numbered nearly 90,000 and had risen to almost three percent of the total population (Thorns & Sedgwick, 1997: p. 56).

At the same time there was an increase in the Maori population. Maori birth rates began to rise significantly in the 20th century, particularly in the post war period. Moreover, improved immunity to disease, better housing conditions and advances in health care, increased average life expectancy (Belich, 2001: p. 467). Thus, the Maori population grew from 99,000 in 1945 to over 200,000 in 1966. Like the Pacific Peoples, after the war, Maori moved in increasing numbers to the cities in search of work. The ratio of Maori living in cities and boroughs grew from 17 percent in 1945 to 44 percent in 1966. Since then the drift has continued so that by the 1990s almost 60 percent of Maori lived in urban areas (Thorns & Sedgwick, 1997: p. 54).

Like Pacific Peoples, Maori have tended to be employed in manual occupations and to be concentrated in lower class sectors. Educationally they perform poorly relative to other groups. As early as 1961 a governmental report known as the Hunn Report found educational participation among Maori to be well below that of non-Maori, leading to under achievement in post-primary and university education (Hunn, 1961: p. 25). Thus Maori tended to work in low-paid occupations and to become 'ghettoised' in lower class and state housing areas. Efforts to assist integration by dispersing state housing largely failed (Walker, 1992: p. 501-2). In the Counties Manukau suburb of Otara, for example, by the late 1960s Maori made up a third of the total population. It is within depressed or disorganised communities that gangs are likely to flourish (Miller, 1990: p. 282; Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte, Smith, & Tobin, 2003: p. 57).

In order to preserve some sense of cultural and spiritual identity some Maori leaders organised community support facilities, uplifting traditional structures and transplanting them in the urban environment. In 1965, for example, the first urban marae was built in Mangere. Other means of maintaining Maori culture were more adaptive of the urban environment and included Maori sections of the orthodox churches, urban establishment of Maori protest churches such as Ringatu and Ratana, and formation of oratory clubs, singing groups, arts and crafts groups, Maori committees, Maori wardens and Maori councils (Walker, 1992: p. 503). Despite these efforts, many Maori adjusted poorly and without the tight kin and tribal bonds of their rural homelands, crime and delinquency became apparent. This was reflected in prison numbers, with the percentage of incarcerated Maori growing from approximately 20 percent in 1945 to 37 percent 30 years later.

The significant and swift increase of Maori and Pacific Peoples living in low income city areas changed the makeup of urban New Zealand. Initially the difficulties in adjusting to urban life proved relatively minor and up until the mid-1970s New Zealand managed to avoid many of the significant problems encountered overseas (Webb, 1973: p. 328). This, however, was soon to change as a result of a series of economic blows that accompanied the 1970s. These included the decision of our major trading partner, Britain, to enter the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1971, followed by rocketing fuel prices after the oil shocks of 1973 and 1979.

The economic difficulties that struck the country in the 1970s hit working-class people the hardest; and ethnic communities, already struggling with the trials of urban life, bore a significant burden. The ingredients of social dislocation, married with economic depression in Counties Manukau, created fertile ground for gang activity which began to grow as the 1970s progressed.

Currently, Counties Manukau is one of the most culturally diverse areas of New Zealand. It is also one of the poorest. Manukau City, which encompasses much of Counties Manukau, is a large

conglomerate of more than 250,000 people and is home to over 55 different cultures. Manukau is also youthful, with 43 percent of its population under 25 years of age and 35 per cent under 20 (http://www.manukaudistrict.co.nz/manukau.cfm).

This young population faces considerable challenges in the future. A recent study of Manukau conducted on behalf of the Ministry of Social Development has concluded that "a vicious cycle of poverty and lifelong, if not intergenerational, under-achievement is at work in some areas of Manukau" (Lang Consulting, 2005: p. 5-6).

Economic deprivation data indicates that some areas of Manukau, notably in the northern and eastern wards, are economically advantaged. However, the southern wards of Mangere, Manurewa, Otara and some parts of Papatoetoe, have a high score of economic deprivation as measured by poverty, transience, overcrowding, and unemployment. The areas scoring poorly in economic deprivation are also the most ethnically diverse (Salmond and Crampton, 2002).

The high proportion of Maori and Pacific Peoples that exist in Manukau is important. Maori and Pacific Peoples feature poorly in many important social indices such as health, education, crime and overcrowded housing. These indices reflect the inherent problems of depressed and marginalised communities.

It is suggested that good health is critical to wellbeing. Without good health, people are less able to enjoy their lives to the fullest extent, their options are limited, and their general levels of contentment and happiness are reduced (Ministry of Social Development, 2005: p. 22). Maori and Pacific Peoples are over represented in health morbidity statistics. Related to ill health, particularly among Maori, is lower life expectancy. Maori in general live eight-and-a-half years less than non-Maori (Ministry of Social Development, 2005: p. 26-7). Young Maori are also more likely than non-Maori to kill themselves. The suicide rate for Maori youth in 2002 was 31.2 per 100,000, compared with the non-Maori rate of 13.7 per 100,000 (Ministry of Social Development, 2005: p. 29. Much of this appears to be related to factors associated with living in lower socio-economic strata. Half of all Maori, for instance, occupy the three most deprived deciles of eight to ten (Tobias & Howden-Chapman, 2000: p. 28-9).

Interestingly, though, socio-economic conditions do not fully explain the health/poverty link as there are differences between ethnic groups within the same socio-economic areas. It has therefore been argued that, "part of the explanation may lie in the institutional rules of society – the way our societal arrangements, reflecting our colonial past, continue to favour the majority ethnic group and so perpetuate the historic inequalities between ethnic groups" (Tobias & Howden-Chapman, 2000: p. 29).

Another contributing factor is culture and lifestyle, and part of the pattern in Maori/Pacific health is related to this. Pacific Peoples and particularly Maori are significantly more likely to smoke than other ethnic groups. Moreover, since the early 1990s, smoking prevalence has declined slightly for European/Other ethnic groups but has remained relatively unchanged for Maori and Pacific Peoples (Ministry of Social Development, 2005: p. 30-1).

Age-standardised prevalence of cigarette smoking, by sex and ethnicity, 2002

	Percentage in each ethnic group who smoke cigarettes			
	Mäori	Pacific Peoples	European/Other	Total

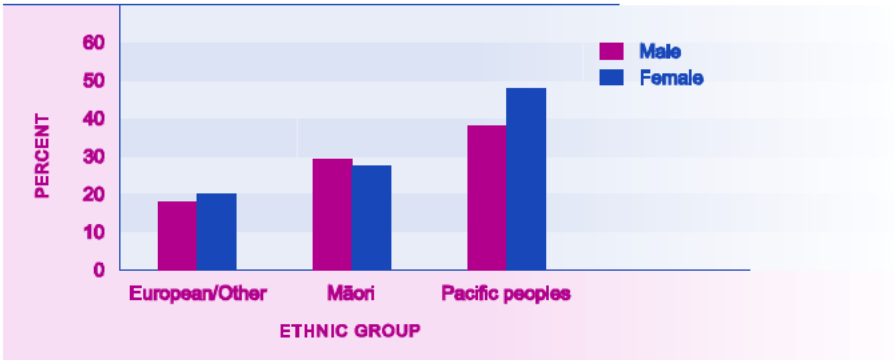
Male	39.3	34.6	23.8	26.2
Female	51.9	28.5	20.6	25.5
Total	46.4	31.9	22.1	25.8

Source: Ministry of Health (2003b): Cited in Ministry of Social Development, 2005: p. 31).

Note: Rates are age-standardised using the WHO world population

Similarly, lifestyle-related obesity is a more pressing issue among Pacific Peoples and Maori than other ethnic groups. Among adults, obesity prevalence rate is 48 percent for Pacific females and 38 percent for Pacific males. For Maori adults, the figures are 28 percent for females and 29 percent for males. This compares with 20 percent for European/Other females and 18 percent for European/Other males.

Age-standardised prevalence of obesity, population aged 15 and over, by ethnic group and sex, 2002/2003



Source: Ministry of Health (2004a: Cited in: Ministry of Social Development, 2005: p. 33)
Note: Rates are age-standardised using the WHO world population

Similar trends exist in the obesity rates of children (Ministry of Social Development, 2005: p. 33).

Both international and national research shows that the early years of a child's development are crucial to their future development and ability to learn (Ministry of Social Development, 2005: p. 36). While their rates are improving, Maori and Pacific year one students are still significantly less likely to attend an early childhood education service than European students. Nearly all European Year One school students (98 percent) have received early childhood education compared with only 89 percent of Maori and 85 percent of Pacific Peoples.

Early childhood education attendance by Year One students, by ethnic group, as at 1 July 2000–2004

	European	Māori	Pacific	Asian	Other	Total
2000	95.4	84.8	76.1	89.2	83.0	91.0
2001	96.0	85.3	76.3	89.8	84.1	91.3
2002	96.6	86.5	79.4	92.1	86.6	92.3
2003	97.4	88.4	83.4	92.4	88.9	93.5
2004	97.6	89.3	84.7	94.1	89.4	94.0

Source: Ministry of Education. Cited in Ministry of Social Development, 2005: p. 37)

Note: These figures exclude cases for which attendance was unknown and differ from those published in The Social Report 2003

This inequality is maintained throughout school and tertiary education. Despite increases by Maori and Pacific school leavers with qualifications higher than NCEA Level 1, they still lag behind other ethnic groups that have also enjoyed improvements in recent years. There is a particularly noticeable difference between ethnic groups in the proportions leaving school with Bursary or similar higher qualifications. In 2003, only four percent of Maori and Pacific school-leavers gained an A or B Bursary or National Certificate at Level 3 or above, compared with 23 percent of European and 42 percent of Asian school leavers.

Proportion (%) of school leavers with higher qualifications by ethnic group, selected years, 1991–2003

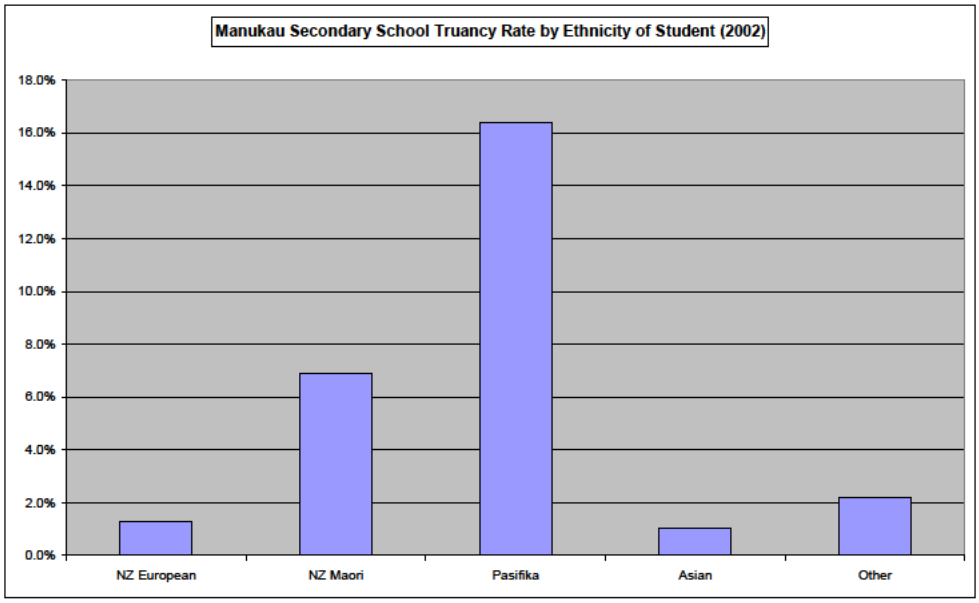
	European	Mäori	Pacific	Asian	Other	Total
Sixth Form Certificate/NCEA Level 2 or higher						
1991	NA	37.4	52.2	NA	Na	66.3
1996	68.9	37.4	53.7	81.5	60.0	62.7
2001	68.5	40.6	54.7	84.7	63.7	63.6
2002	68.4	38.9	53.5	84.4	67.7	63.3
2003	71.6	45.0	58.9	86.4	70.7	67.1
Bursary or higher						
1991	NA	5.1	7.4	NA	Na	22.3
1996	23.7	4.1	5.8	41.7	18.8	19.9
2001	21.2	4.0	4.7	42.2	20.5	18.4
2002	22.2	3.9	4.2	41.3	21.1	19.1
2003	22.7	4.5	4.4	41.9	20.4	19.7

Source: Ministry of Education (Cited in Ministry of Social Development, 2005: p. 39)
Notes: [1] Bursary or higher includes: A or B Bursary, Scholarship (to 1989) and National Certificate Level 3 or above (from 1996) [2] Sixth Form Certificate/NCEA Level 2 or higher includes Higher School Certificate and Entrance Qualification

While they have recorded the fastest growth rates in recent times, Maori and Pacific adults (aged 25-64) are still much less likely than European and "Other" ethnic groups to have tertiary qualifications. Just six percent of Maori and seven percent of Pacific adults hold a tertiary qualification at bachelor's degree level or above, compared to 16 percent of Europeans (Ministry of Social Development, 2005: p. 41).

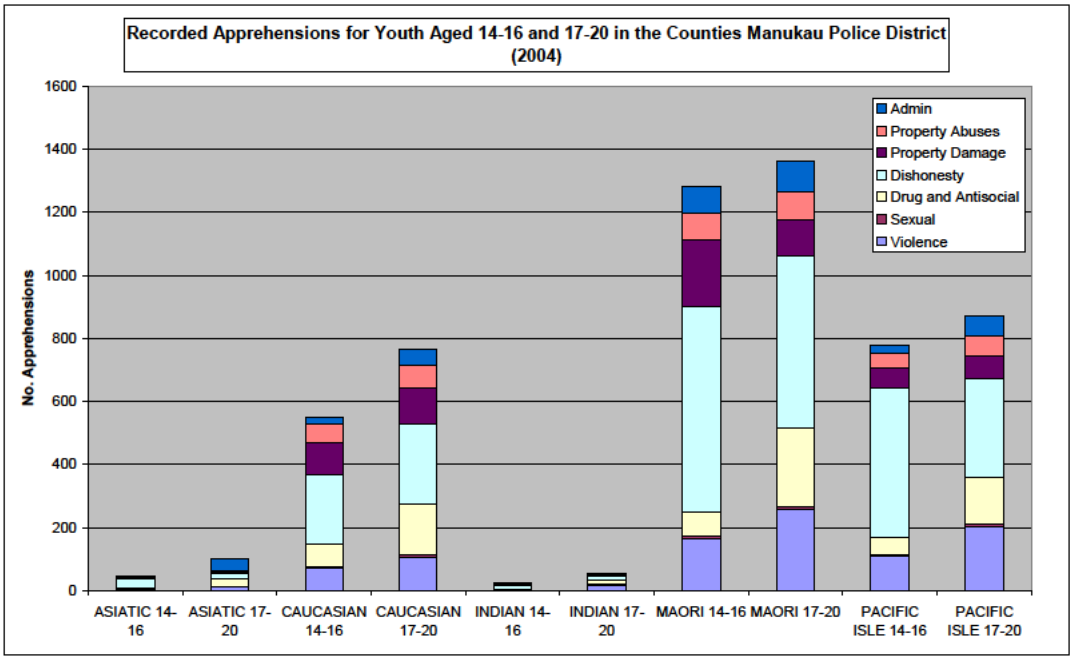
Today, 16 percent of Manukau City school leavers depart with no qualifications at all. Within this group a disproportionate number are Maori (35%) and Pacific Peoples (23%). The same trend is also reflected in truancy and youth offending.

Manukau Secondary School Truancy Rates by Ethnicity (2002)



Source: Ministry of Education (Cited in Lang Consulting, 2005: p. 27).

Recorded Apprehensions for Youth in the Counties Manukau Police District (2004)



Source: Counties Manukau Police (Cited in Lang Consulting, 2005: p. 27).

Another correlate of under-achievement and poverty is youthful pregnancy. Maori and Pacific women are likely to have children at an early age. Although rates have dropped in recent years, births to Maori and Pacific females under 18 years remain significantly above average. The national birth rate for females under 18 years is 14.9 per 1,000 compared with 40.1 for Maori. For Pacific females under 18 the rate is 22.9 (Ministry of Social Development, 2005: p. 17).

Perhaps related to this, is that Maori and Pacific children are more likely to live in single parent households and in larger households (Crothers, 2002: p. 60). Overcrowding is also a concerning issue. Pacific Peoples are far more likely to be living in crowded households than other ethnic

groups. In 2001, a total of 43 percent of Pacific Peoples lived in overcrowded conditions. Maori, too, (23 percent) have a high prevalence of overcrowding (Ministry of Social Development, 2005: p. 71).

Negative effects of gambling may also present a problem in parts of Counties Manukau. A Ministry of Health study has found that 50 percent of gaming machines are in the three poorest socioeconomic levels (Rankine & Haigh, 2003: p. 12). The same report concluded that Manukau was particularly vulnerable to the negative social impacts of gambling due to its high proportion of Maori, Pacific and young people, combined with low income levels (ibid: p14).

Census data (Statistics New Zealand, 2001) from one of Manukau's most deprived areas, Mangere – an area of focus of this study – give a snapshot of its unique ethnic makeup. Of the 61,860 people who live there, 52.0 percent are Pacific Peoples, 29.5 percent are European, 20.5 percent are Maori, and 1.6 percent are Asian. In comparison, national census figures reveal an overall New Zealand population that is 80.1 percent European, 14.7 percent Maori, 6.5 percent Pacific Peoples, and 6.6 percent Asian. Clearly, there is a heavy concentration of Polynesian minorities in this area. People in Mangere also tend to be poor. The median income of those over 15 in Mangere is just $15,700 compared to a national average of $18,500. Just five electoral districts in New Zealand have a lower median incomes than Mangere and they tend to be rural. Unemployment is also disproportionately high. 2001 census data show Mangere had nearly double the national average rate of people out of work (14.2% against the national average of 7.7%). Twelve percent of households in Mangere have no motor vehicle and ten percent are without a telephone (Lang Consulting, 2005: p. 33).

Areas such as Mangere – like other parts of Counties Manukau - have had high incidence of socio-economic marginalisation since at least the 1970s. While there have been improvements in a number of indices the obvious problems that remain are social ingredients for gangs. In this way, gangs are a clear symptom of much greater social problems. Klein's (1995) comments on America are particularly pertinent here:

> Until we dedicate the. . . [Government]. . . resources necessary to alter these community structures, gangs will continue to emerge despite value transformation, suppression, or other community efforts. I'm talking about the most obvious resources – jobs, better schools, social services, health programs, family support, training in community organisation skills, and support for resident empowerment. That's easy to say but obviously not easy to do (Klein, 1995: p. 153).

3. Historical Review of the Emergence of Youth Gangs

Styles associated with the youth gangs of Counties Manukau is based on contemporary fashion and reflects the social environment within which the gangs live. However, their activities – and the concerns that lie behind them - are nothing new. A review of the history of New Zealand gangs highlights this and also shows the transitions that gangs have made from Scavenger, to Territorial, and (in some cases) to Organised gangs proposed by Taylor (1990).

The 1950s

Youth gangs came to be identified as a social concern in the 1950s with 'bodgies' and their female counterparts 'widgies' and 'milkbar cowboys' who rode motorcycles. Two reports were written on the youth gang problem at the end of the 1950s, one out of Auckland by Levett, the other in

Wellington by Green. By the end of the fifties there were 41 reported gangs in Auckland, involving between 486 and 730 members (Levett, 1959: p. 1). In Wellington there were 17 gangs reported (Green, 1959: p. 27). Both authors suggested that their figures may have been conservative due to problems of data collection.

Both studies found that most gang membership was male and situated within the working classes. Gang members often came from poor families (Green, 1959: p. 42; Levett, 1959: p. 4), and in Wellington, 43 percent were from broken homes (Green, 1959: p. 43). Significantly, both studies found gang members to be overwhelmingly of European descent. The lack of Maori and Pacific Peoples in the gangs of the day is striking and in marked contrast to now. In Auckland a gang called the Red Ram Rockers was described as predominantly Maori, but this was rare. One notable exception – not recorded in reports - was a small Pacific island group in Ponsonby called the King Cobras, a gang that still exists today. In Wellington only ten Maori were reported in gangs (Green, 1959: p. 35). Pacific Peoples did not constitute a category at all. These figures reflect the fact that numbers of Maori and Pacific Peoples living in the cities at the time were small. It also highlights the point that youth gangs are not a factor of ethnicity, but of circumstance (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993).

It appears that much gang activity in the fifties was indistinguishable from that of many youths of the time: listening to Rock 'n' Roll music and going to movies were staple activities, as were drinking parties that would occasionally result in prosecutions for drunkenness, disorderly conduct, wilful damage or sex offences (Green, 1959: p. 9). Despite crime not being a major focus for the early gangs, in certain groups, criminality was a badge of honour and press cuttings were kept of incidents or court appearances that made the newspapers (Green, 1959: p. 22). All of the groups studied enjoyed a rebellious freedom and regarded authority with hostility (Levett, 1959: p. 3). This defiance was shown in the types of crime committed which were largely petty in nature and reflected boisterous adventurism rather than a concern for profit. In one exception, however, Howman cites a 1950s gang called the Saints which committed burglaries to a value of £30,000 (Howman, 1972: p. 21).

The immaturity of the gangs of the fifties is reflected in the age of members, which usually ranged from the mid to late teens. But despite this youthfulness, certain traits and behaviours that were soon to become important elements of New Zealand gangs were already evident. A sense of camaraderie and brotherhood is one such feature. Green noted "quite a strong co-operative spirit". "Members share money when they have it and will provide sleeping accommodation (often on the floor) for those who have lost their board" (Green, 1959: p. 19). Some gangs were also reported to have established strict rules and codes of behaviour (Green, 1959: p. 23; Manning, 1958: p. 19), although details are limited.

It was the Auckland gangs which, more than anywhere else, provided the stage for later developments. The gangs in Auckland had set themselves apart from others by adopting names such as the Bats, the Ghosts, the Rebels, and the Earth Angels. Some of the names highlighted what they saw as their 'turf', such as the Avon Theatre Boys, the Kingsland Roughs or the Pt Chevalier Saints. Further to this, a handful were using common identifiers such as emblems or names painted on jackets to advertise their membership. The vast majority of gangs in Auckland also had a clear leader and some were engaging in initiation rites such as having to have sex (preferably with a virgin) or being urinated on by existing members (Levett, 1959: p. 8).

The activities of these early gangs show immature development and thus they fit the 'Scavenger' profile described earlier. Indeed, their profile bears resemblance to many of the youth gangs of South Auckland today.

The 1960s

The features associated with today's more mature gangs were introduced into New Zealand in the early 1960s when an American migrant established a chapter of the Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club in Auckland. It was this development that allowed local youths a greater understanding of how gangs could look and operate. Media out of America also reflected the style and activities of gangs and this soon influenced New Zealand motorcycle gangs. Local gang structure, leadership, rules, code of conduct, and mode of dress, were all copied from America. Back patches, the concept of a president, vice-president, treasurer and sergeant-at-arms were all adopted. An unkempt style based around 'ridgies' - the original clothes members were patched in – was the common uniform.

Despite these changes, and some significant incidents involving motorcycle clubs, the sixties gang scene was relatively small, having evolved little from the 1950s. The true proliferation of motorcycle gangs began at the end of the sixties and progressed into the 1970s - about the same time as the membership of Maori and Pacific gangs began to explode. These, too, soon began to emulate some of the features of American motorcycle clubs. The current American influence on New Zealand gangs is therefore by no means new. In fact, it can be said that popular youth culture generally has been dominated by American styles of music and dress since the end of the Second World War.

1970s

While predominantly Pakeha motorcycle gangs were the focus of a great deal of public concern through the 1960s, a primary feature of the early 1970s was the rapid expansion of ethnic gangs. This occurred in depressed rural areas as well as in urban settings such as Counties Manukau and Porirua. General fears about urban crime deepened as well, with the Mayor of Auckland declaring he was no longer prepared to walk the streets at night and Grey Lynn Opposition MP, Eddie Isbey, claiming that race relations in Auckland could easily deteriorate and spawn a New Zealand equivalent of Black Panther movement (Edwards, 1971: p. 175).

In May 1970, there was an incident involving as many as 250 youths 'rampaging' through the Counties Manukau town of Papatoetoe, fighting and smashing windows (*NZ Herald*, 20-5-1970). Many of the participants were members of the Storm Troopers, a new group of mostly young Maori who had taken on many of the features associated with the Hells Angels and other OMGs. The Storm Troopers wore rough back patches that were painted onto jackets, often with armbands and swastikas. They had an established hierarchy, identification and calling cards, and at least four different chapters, in Mangere, Otara, Otahuhu and Manurewa. Still in an embryonic state, the gang's membership was young, with some recruits reportedly as young as eleven (*NZ Herald*, 20-5-1970).

In the early 1970s the Chairman of Auckland's District Maori Council estimated gang membership at 2,000 (Edwards, 1971: p. 176). This figure may have been exaggerated, but it indicates how seriously the problem was perceived at the time, and it resulted in a full investigation by television journalist Brian Edwards for a *Gallery* program in July 1970. This gave most New Zealanders their first glimpse of the world of the new ethnic gangs but the attendant publicity also boosted recruitment. Some months later, a violent incident at a rock festival in Peke Peke involving a young gang called the Mongrel Mob produced the same effect. Howman (1972: p. 11) suggests that in the aftermath of media coverage of Peke Peke, 'every Maori youth who came into contact with

officialdom, was to claim he was a member of the Mongrels'. As a response, in 1974 a Police Task Force established, focusing much of its attention on Counties Manukau (Butterworth, 2005: 192).

As predominantly Maori and Pacific gangs gained notoriety they also became increasingly violent, struggling to establish supremacy within particular localities. Moving from 'Scavenger' to 'Territorial' status, violent and anti-social incidents escalated to previously unknown levels. In 1971 an enormous brawl between several gangs occurred in Symond Street in Auckland and at Easter the next year a battle erupted between bikers and the Mongrel Mob. During 1974-75 the first war raged between the Devil's Henchmen and the Epitaph Riders in Christchurch and in 1975 a member of Highway 61 was shot to death in Auckland by the Hell's Angels. The following year a Mongrel Mobster was shot to death in a confrontation with police in Taumaranui. The decade ended with the worst event of its kind in New Zealand history in the Northland town of Moerewa. Here, in 1979, a dispute between the Counties Manukau Storm Troopers and Black Power escalated into a full-blown riot during which police officers were badly injured. The outcome was significant public concern and two government reports investigated the problem of gangs in 1979 and 1981.

The 1980s

By the 1980s, Counties Manukau was home to a number of well established Maori and Pacific gangs, including the Black Power, Mongrel Mob, the Storm Troopers and the multi-ethnic Highway 61 Motorcycle Club. Since this time, most Maori youth who join gangs have been absorbed into one of these groups. Far from being a temporary dalliance of adolescence and early adulthood - as had been the case in the past - membership of the gangs now began to demand lifelong commitment and often criminal undertakings.

In the early 1980s a government investigation established a tripartite classification of gangs in 'Bikie', 'Ethnic' and 'Other European' gangs (Committee on Gangs, 1981: p. 5-6). The inquiry identified 20 bikie gangs with 630 members, the largest being Highway 61 and the Devil's Henchmen. Ethnic gangs numbered 57 with a total of 1,650 members, the largest being Black Power and the Mongrel Mob. Other European gangs had an unclear membership. Overall, gang numbers were estimated at 2,300. Interestingly, the relatively new 'Other European' gangs failed to survive in the long term but the majority of the bike and ethnic gangs who had established themselves in the late 1960s and 1970s proved resilient and still exist today.

Because of the permanency of the established gangs, length of membership increased and so did the average age of members. No longer could they be describes as 'youth gangs'. Before long the sons of members were coming of age and a second generation of gang families was established. Nevertheless, these gangs still attracted young 'prospects' and so were the predominant vehicle for youth gang recruitment (Gilbert, 2006).

With drug- and other offending proving increasingly lucrative, some members began to engage in profit-driven crime. By 1987, this change was visible enough for the police to compare some gangs with organised criminal groups like the Mafia. Certain gangs, police suggested, had "multimillion-dollar international connections, sophisticated computer systems, and developments in organised criminal activity involving theft, extortion, protection rackets and drug dealing" (Dennehy & Newbold, 2001: p. 180-181).

The 1990s

During the 1990s, with an explosion in the amphetamine trade, the criminal element of the established gangs became more pronounced. A transformation from territorial to organised groups was clearly occurring. Drug importation, cultivation, manufacture and dealing became more

widespread and sophisticated (Dennehy & Newbold, 2001: p. 185). 'Tinnie' houses, whereby gangs would sell tinfoil wrapped marijuana from windows of houses or slots in fences, grew common and earned significant revenue. During 1994 and 1995 in Christchurch, Highway 61 was selling marijuana to up to 72 people per day. At the same time and in another part of the city, Black Power was selling up to 70 tinnies and 50 LSD tabs per day (Dennehy & Newbold, 2001: p. 185-186).

The large amounts of cash being made by certain gangs created some battles over turf, but cooperation became increasingly evident. On the whole, the battles between the gangs subsided as it became clear that the wars of the past were bad for business. This trend was also aided by the rising average age of gang membership. Some members also began making (mostly vain) efforts to move gang culture in positive directions (Gilbert, 2006).

A further development in the early 1990s was the rise of Pakeha street gangs with neo fascist and white power tendencies. Perhaps influenced by further economic downturn in the 1980s and 1990s as well as by trends from overseas – for instance, as evidenced in the film *Romper Stomper* – racist gangs of disaffected Pakeha youth now became more prominent; particularly in Christchurch (Dennehy & Newbold, 2001: p. 188). An influx of Asian migrants since the 1980s has also brought Asian youth gangs to prominence. Although the latter can attract significant numbers and they have been involved in brawls (usually with other Asian groups), Asian youth gangs have yet to prove a serious problem for police. As in all countries, immigrant groups concentrated within the lower social strata tend to produce youthful gangs (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996; Klein, 1995; Spergel, 1995).

But perhaps the most notable trend for our purposes is the fact that the late 1990s also saw the emergence of a new style of youth gang based on modern American street gangs which have been influenced by Hip-Hop and the music style of Rap (see Section 5 for further discussion).

2000 and Beyond

The new style of youth gang which came about in the late 1990s is that which is currently of concern in Counties Manukau. Unpublished police documents suggest that up to now, these groups have been inclined to be transient, with loose membership and undefined structure - much like the gangs of the 1950s and early 1960s. Similarly, their behaviour is disorganised and spontaneous. Activity - some of it criminal, some of it not - is based around pursuit of excitement and fun. It is perhaps in this area that more research is most urgently needed.

Without informed knowledge, one can only speculate that the majority of youths associated with these groups will fade out as they grow older and alter their perspectives – as has generally happened in the past. Inevitably, however, some will gravitate toward the more organised gangs as they grow older and their horizons widen. There is also the possibility of youth gangs with stable membership transforming into permanent and organised structures as happened with some gangs of the 1960s and 1970s (Gilbert, 2006).

Perhaps the most important factor influencing the gangs of the future is economics. A significant downturn in the economy would almost certainly worsen the gang situation in a way reminiscent of the 1970s. While gang membership in one form or another appears permanent in Counties Manukau, the size of the problem is strongly related to financial matters. As we have seen, gangs tend to proliferate in economically deprived areas and the larger these areas grow, the greater the problem is likely to be.

4. Historical Review of Responses to Gang Culture and Associated Violent Crime

In 1954 New Zealand was confronted for the first time with problems associated with delinquent groups. The first scandal began that year as a missing persons inquiry for a young girl who was part of a crowd called Elbe's Milkbar Gang. The boys in the gang met at Elbe's Milkbar in Upper Hutt every Sunday and the missing girl would join them and let the boys have sex with her to "gain popularity". She would not do it, she said, "if there was anything better to do on weekends". When found by police, living a house with 14 motorcycles parked outside, she said, "I've had it. Sex, sex, sex. I want to get away from it" (Yska, 1993: p. 65). The affair created great public outcry and a Commission of Inquiry was established to investigate the problem. The subsequent report, known as the Mazengarb Report, was sent to every New Zealand household and suggested the problems of errant youth stemmed from a lack of Christian guidance, the decline in family life through working mothers, media influences, "unsettlement" following two world wars, increased use of contraceptives, the broadening of divorce laws, an increase in pre-marital sexual relations, and even the spread of new psychological ideas undermining traditional morality (Special Committee on Moral Delinquency in Children and Adolescents, 1954). Three amendments to existing laws were passed making contraception unavailable to people under 18 years, girls under 16 could be deemed delinquent if they engaged in sex (the law already existed for boys), and sales restrictions were placed upon on books and other reading material that tended to "deprave persons of any class or any group, or unduly emphasises matters of sex, horror, crime, cruelty, or violence" (*NZ Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 304, 1954: p. 1,944).

As the activity of gangs grew through the 1960s and exploded violently in the 1970s, the gang problem was framed as a critical issue of law and order. Before the 1972 general election Norman Kirk declared he would attack the problem by introducing laws to confiscate gang members' bikes. Once elected the government did introduce unlawful assembly laws aimed at gangs but did not follow through with the initial plan. He was dogged by his decision not to do so and hounded by the Opposition. In 1976, the new Prime Minister Rob Muldoon, did introduce watered-down legislation that allowed for the confiscation of motor vehicles used in the commission of offences (Kelsey & Young, 1982: p. 101). This was a slightly softer approach from a Prime Minister who had, only five years earlier, called for the banishment of young 'Maori louts' to the countryside (Kelsey & Young, 1982: p. 102).

Around the same time Gideon Tait, District Commander of Christchurch police, declared that he would tackle the gangs with force. His most visible effort was to order 25 carloads of police to close down a rowdy biker gang party on New Year's Eve 1973. Eighty-one people were subsequently charged, mostly with unlawful assembly. Although initially convicted by a Stipendiary Magistrate, all were subsequently acquitted on appeal to the Supreme Court (Dennehy & Newbold, 2001: p. 170).

Despite this apparent failure, a hard-line approach proved popular and Tait was later promoted to Auckland as Assistant Commissioner. Tait took control of the police Task Force that had been established in Auckland in 1974 to curb public drunkenness and violence. As we have seen, these tactics had little impact on the burgeoning gang problem and five years later, when the research officer for the police association, Graham Butterworth, claimed in the Police Association Newsletter that gangs were beyond the control of police (*NZ Herald*, 20-1-1979) it caused great public anxiety. In the aftermath the Police Commissioner had to reassure the public that the police could in fact deal with the gangs, and that they did have matters under control (*NZ Herald*, 24-1-1979).

One person who changed his ideas about gangs was former hard liner, Rob Muldoon. As Prime Minister from 1975 he began to have close contact with them, and with his support a number of initiatives were put in place in 1976. Work cooperatives under the Temporary Employment Programs running at the time were targeted at gangs. Also, detached youth workers were employed by the Ministry of Recreation and Sport to work with gangs.

After the riot in Moerewa in 1979 new legislative measures were put in place. One gave police the power to stop and search any vehicle suspected of carrying an offensive weapon; the other was aimed at banning patched gang members from drinking in bars. The same year a Select Committee on Violent Offending found that "the gang organisation can provide a constructive and productive means of drawing people, mostly young, whose loss of identity through migration to urban areas, absence of family or tribal influence, socio-economic disadvantage, unemployment or resort to alcohol or drugs cause them to fail to fit into accepted social environments" (Select Committee of Inquiry into Violent Offending, 1979: p. 35). However, the report went onto say that since violent confrontations were of concern to the public, efforts should be made to dissolve gangs and reintegrate members back into the community.

In pursuit of further understanding, in 1981 the government commissioned an 11-person committee to write another report which was presented to parliament just four weeks later. It acknowledged social causes of gangs that were similar to those in the report of 1979. It also highlighted the fact that many gang members had failed educationally, the need for community programs to change the social conditions that give rise to gangs, the need for sporting and recreation activities, and the fact that media portrayals of gang battles give 'mana' to their members. But its most significant finding was that unemployment was the most pressing issue affecting gangs and its suggestion that specific gang employment programs were needed. It was from these recommendations that the Group Employment Liaison Scheme (later Service) (GELS) was established.

Building on the work of detached youth workers, GELS was set up in 1982 with a number of goals, a primary one being to engage disadvantaged groups – including gangs - in government-funded schemes such as the Project Employment Programme (PEP). GELS workers – some of whom were gang members themselves - also attempted to broker peace in gang-on-gang disputes. Notwithstanding the detached youth worker enterprise, GELS was perhaps the most significant social intervention initiative that specifically targeted gangs. In 1987 a Committee of Inquiry into Violent Offending examined the gang problem and efforts to dispel it through GELS and other efforts. The committee's report concluded that "on evidence produced to us, many of those schemes had positive results in reducing the offending and anti social behaviour of those who participated in them" (Committee of Inquiry into Violence, 1987: p. 88). However, police and other researchers were critical of the PEP schemes which, due to administrative failings, allowed some gangs to misuse them. A number of high profile incidents - including a media report of a robbery by the Mongrel Mob in a vehicle bought with government money - made the schemes controversial. As unemployment levels grew during the 1980s, these programs that apparently favoured gangs grew unpopular and political support for them declined. In 1987 GELS was restructured out of existence and replaced by programs of a more general nature. While gangs had always been a focus of law and order, from the time GELS ceased, suppression became the government's primary strategy.

Since at least the 1970s, a number of community initiatives have also been run by non-governmental organisations. Community based initiatives such as work trusts and co-operatives have been established by people in or involved with gangs from the mid 1970s and were important precursors to GELS. Similar initiatives – such as the Consultancy Advocacy and Research Trust

(CART) – are fulfilling similar, albeit small scale, roles today. Little literature exists on these endeavours and so their efficacy is unknown. However, it has been suggested in the US that evaluation of community initiatives may give clues as to how public resources might best be spent (Klein, 1995: p. 156).

From the time GELS was disestablished, political sympathy for gangs appeared to vanish; as did the sobering calls - previously expressed in government-commissioned papers - to acknowledge the gang problem in a wider social context. In this new environment, gangs were largely seen as a problem in themselves, rather than as a symptom of wider social concerns (Huff, 1996: p. 101). This is captured by Minister of Police John Banks' comments during the late 1980s and early 1990s, which described gang members "useless", "cowards", and "depraved mongrels in every sense of the word". To public acclamation, in 1989 he promised to introduce legislation to end the gangs' "reign of terror" (Newbold, 2000: p. 218).

But for the most part, after 1979 the gangs' so-called 'reign of terror' was naturally winding down as membership matured and the focus of some changed toward the business of making money. As noted, many entered the drug trade and wars were bad for business. In 1998, reflecting the changing focus, the last in a long line of legislative attempts to counter gangs was introduced. These were aimed at organised crime and gave police greater powers of interception, strengthened non association orders, and outlawed membership in 'organised criminal groups'.

The government's intentions notwithstanding, a single-faceted approach was not seen as a silver bullet by the select committee that examined the proposed legislation early in 1998. In its report on the forthcoming law it stated, "A longer term broader strategy to deal with gangs and their offending needs to be developed. This is likely to involve action on a number of fronts and to include measures that will not require legislation" (Justice and Reform Committee, 1997: p. 3). Despite this acknowledgement, such an approach has not eventuated.

5. Theories on the Development of Youth Gangs, Involvement and Offending Activity

i) Motivational and psycho-social factors contributing to gang membership

Thrasher's 1927 seminal study identified characteristics of gangs that are still relevant today. He recognised the evolutionary elements of gang development and also the influence the gang can have on individual behaviour. Conflict with other gangs serves to intensify solidarity within a gang - especially for new members. This sense of collectivity is further maintained by symbols, signs and slang language. Thrasher also identified the social isolation the gang creates by causing members to lose touch with mainstream economic, social and educational structures.

The post-war interest in the gang phenomenon produced a number of important theories, many based on general notions of crime and delinquency after the 1930s depression. These can largely be categorised in two groups: Anomie Theory and the Theory of Cultural Transmission.

Initially proposed by 19th century French sociologist Emile Durkheim, Merton (1938) developed the theory of anomie to describe deviant reactions that arise when the socially approved goals of society are out of reach to many people through socially acceptable means. Reactions often involve resorting to goal attainment via illegitimate and criminal behaviour. From this base Cohen (1955) developed the theory of status frustration to explain gang members' delinquent behaviour. Unable

to attain status through legitimate means, gang members define their own status in illegitimate activities.

Cultural transmission came out of the tradition of 'urban ecology' studies of Chicago in the 1930s and was advanced by Shaw and McKay (1942) who suggested that criminal behaviour, like conformist behaviour, is learned. They argued that certain localities within cities have a culture of crime that is passed on intergenerationally, despite changes in the population base. This is because there are socialising systems within certain neighbourhoods that perpetuate criminal culture. Related to this, Sutherland (1947) argued that criminal behaviour can be explained through Differential Association, with criminals learning criminal behaviour in the same way that non-criminals learn conventional behaviour. In other words, criminals are not under-socialised, they are just socialised differently. Miller (1958) applied this to gangs, rejecting the idea of a single set of cultural values, and suggesting that the lower classes possess values that are relevant to their own lives and experiences. Gang behaviour, he said, is merely an extension of this culture.

These two theoretical approaches were dominant during the peak of gang research in the 1950s and 60s and also significantly influenced the course of modern inquiry when it began its resurgence in the 1990s.

It is well documented that gangs are a normal working class phenomenon, born of abject conditions (see Fagan, 1990; Jankowski, 1991; Short, 1996; Vigil, 1991). However, as Sutherland noted, it is also prudent not to place an over-reliance on socioeconomic conditions as a single cause of gang membership. Different communities have different cultures and some societies with similar social and economic conditions have differing degrees of gang problem. Thus, it is argued, there is a multitude of factors within communities that either encourage or discourage gang membership (Miller, 1990: p. 281).

Some researchers have studied gangs from a social psychological standpoint, attempting to identify what membership offers for a potential recruit. Carlie (2002), for example, has described the allure of the gang in terms of needs fulfilment. Gangs, he says, fulfil:

- Lower level needs:
  Physiological needs (hunger, thirst, shelter, sex, and other bodily needs); and *Safety related* needs (security and protection from physical and emotional harm).

- Higher level needs:
  Belongingness (affection, belonging, acceptance, and friendship); *Esteem* (self-respect, autonomy, achievement, status recognition); and *Self-actualization* (the drive to fulfil one's potential).

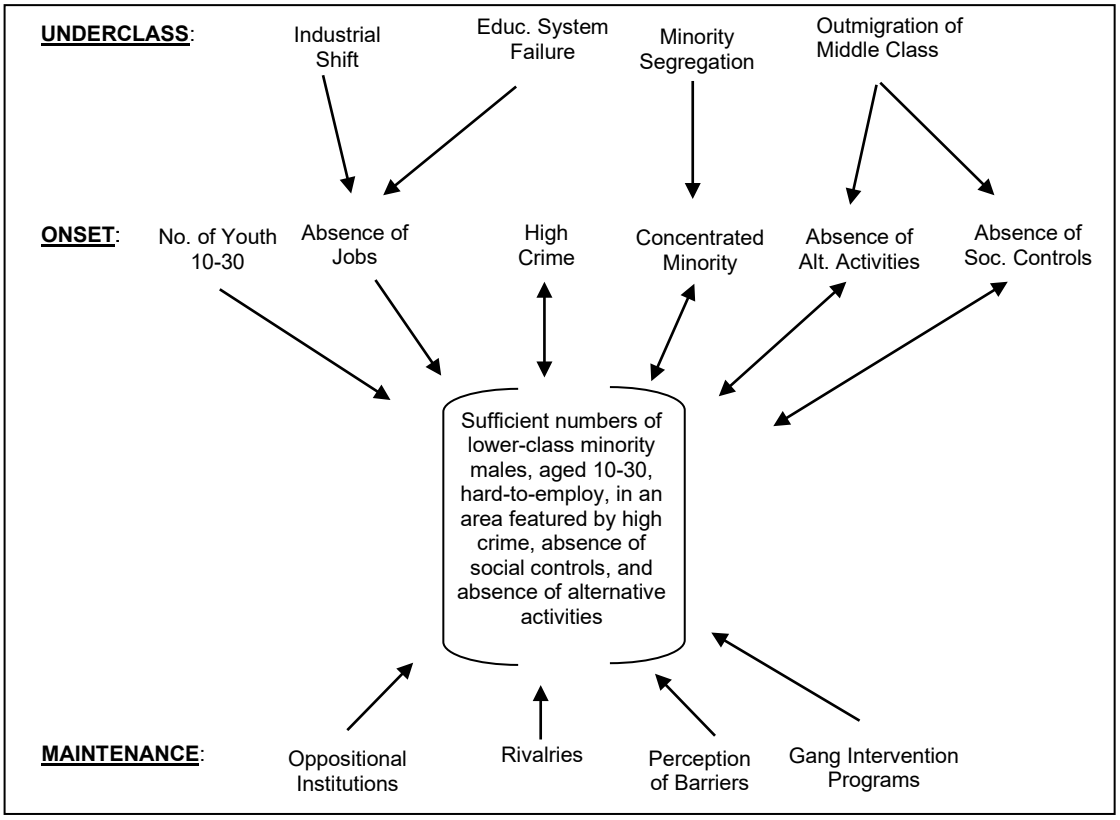
Thus, Carlie argues, gangs serve a purpose and are therefore functional. Their members "derive psychological benefits of recognition and respect" and gain in "self-esteem and in social status" as a consequence of acceptance within a gang (Carlie, 2002). Joining a gang, therefore, can be seen as a rational decision (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996: p. 17).

Gang membership involves both 'push' and 'pull' factors (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996). The 'push' factors relate to external forces within the wider community while the 'pull' is the perceived benefits of membership. Expanding on this analysis, pull factors can be related to prestige, thrills, power, belonging and protection; while push factors can be seen as the negative social forces that are prominent in gang areas, such as family instability, failure at school, poverty, life in new or

unsettled communities, and having poor employment prospects. Seen in this way, motivation for joining gangs in Counties Manukau is rather straightforward – as we have seen above, the economically deprived often face significant difficulties and hardships, to which the gang provides a remedy.

Klein's (1995: p. 198) Structural Variables Model below, highlights many of these issues.

Structural Variables Model



Thus, for Klein, structural Underclass variables explain the emergence of gangs within young male minorities from working- and lower-class sections of cities. Two other variables, Onset and Maintenance, both contribute to the emergence of gangs; the former being structural and the other psychological (for further explanation see Klein, 1995: p 197-202). Of note, Klein says gang intervention programs can act as a maintenance variable. This is further explored in Section Six.

Lafontaine, Ferguson & Wormith (2005: p. 29-30) summarise the risk factors of gang membership within four domains: individual, familial, community, and school. Their research suggests that gang youth have more risk factors than non-gang youth in several domains. These are:

- Individual Risk factors:
    - Previous acts of delinquency
    - Negative peer associations
    - Pro-violent approaches to conflict resolution
    - Low self esteem
    - Lack of attachment to ethnic background
- Family Risk Factors
    - Poor family management

    - Low level attachments and poor supervision
    - Violent siblings
    - Parental involvement in violent activities
    - Abuse and maltreatment
- Community Risk Factors
    - Increased levels of criminal activity
    - Gang presence
    - Lack of opportunities including economic, social and recreational
    - High drug trafficking areas
- School Risk Factors
    - Lack of attachment to school, including teachers
    - Negative teacher perception of the student
    - Low achievement
    - Learning disabilities
    - Negative labels on the student

For many youths, the initial contact with a gang or the desire for membership simply occurs out of a quest for enjoyment and belonging. Hanging about with a group of friends provides something to do, and in many areas associating with friends means getting involved with a gang (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996: p. 14). However, once a gang is established in an area and begins to build a reputation, the fear it generates can force a defensive reaction. Easily exploited, isolated individuals may feel pressured to join a gang for their own protection (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996: p. 23). Often, then, gang membership begets gang membership.

Numerous overseas studies show that gang members have a significantly higher rate of delinquency than non-gang members (Thornberry et al., 2003: p. 96; Howell, 1998: p. 284; Klein, 1995: p. 112). However, it is unclear whether this criminality is due to the gangs themselves or to the breakdown of state and social controls in the communities within which gangs exist (Fagan, 1990: p186). In other words, it is possible that offending is incidental to gangs and that much of the crime committed by members would exist without gang membership.

Formal membership of gangs is overwhelmingly a male privilege. Female gangs have traditionally been rare and their role within male dominated gangs has been marginal (Klein, 1995: p. 65). Jankowski found that in all the gangs he studied, "women were considered a form of property" (Jankowski, 1991: p. 146). More recent research shows the role of females may not be so subservient and that they may be more prominent and active in gang activities (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996; Chesney-Lind, Shelden & Joe, 1996). Regardless of their exact status and role, female gang members and associates are influenced by similar psycho/social factors that influence male membership (Klein, 1995: p. 66; Spergel, 1995: p. 96) and, on-the-whole, gang programs targeting males are just as applicable to females (Miller, 2002).

The fact that the majority of New Zealand youth gangs involve Maori and Pacific Peoples does raise the issue of the importance of ethnic factors. Some kaupapa Maori research argues that the cultural degradation of Maori and the racism of colonisation are responsible for the economic deprivation of many Maori communities and are thus linked to Maori offending (Jackson, 1987/8). However, while some established gangs, notably Black Power and the King Cobras, have adopted a strong ethnic identity, their formation was related primarily not to ethnic interests but to individual communities. The advent of Pakeha gangs from depressed communities supports this idea. A similar pattern is replicated overseas (Klein, 1995: p. 70; Bursik & Grasmick, 1993). Youths growing up in areas such as Counties Manukau are likely to have friends or family that are gang

members or associates. In these contexts, gang membership is 'normal' activity and, in the tradition of cultural transmission theory, becomes part of the ordinary socialisation process. Issues surrounding ethnicity, therefore, may be important in understanding how and why derivation exists in some communities but it is not – on its own – a precursor for gang membership.

ii) The influence of American popular culture

American influence on New Zealand youth is not new; nor is the concern that often stems from it. American popular culture has heavily influenced trends in music and fashion since the end of the Second World War. In 1954 the Mazengarb Report fixed upon undesirable American comics and books as just part of wider concern about negative influence of American culture. Rock 'n' Roll made its debut the same year and a booming post-war American economy identified the teenager as a growing and valuable market. Thus, in 1954 there were 65 British films shown in New Zealand compared to 279 from America (Yska, 1993: p. 110). Many of these films targeted youth and were thought to reflect looser American morals.

The Wild One (1954), a movie inspired by motorcycle gangs in the US, was banned by Chief Censor, Gordon Miriams, in an action which met with significant public approval. Of it the Auto Cycle Union, governing body of motorcycle sport in New Zealand, said, "this film can do damage to the motorcycling movement and boost the egos of our comparatively tame cowboys" (Yska, 1993: p. 111).

Other films, too, were controversial, but were partially censored rather than banned. Two such films released in New Zealand in 1956 were *Blackboard Jungle* and James Dean's *Rebel Without a Cause*. Miriams objected strongly to these, fearing that the behaviours they portrayed could adversely affect the country's youth. It was in the interests of social sanitation that the New Zealand Broadcasting Service (NZBS) banned a number of Rock 'n' Roll songs from airing on public radio, and those deemed acceptable were given just half an hour every Thursday evening. However, what was prohibited from the air was permitted in milkbar juke boxes and in halls where local musicians played covers of the favourite American songs. Music that the NZBS banned like Little Richard's *Tutti Frutti*, were not heard on public radio but they were still publicly available.

Some were happy to exploit the shady social profile that many of the films had. In 1956 when America's latest youth film, *Rock Around the Clock*, debuted in Auckland's Regent Theatre, the proprietor promoted the film by declaring that theatres in Great Britain had banned it. He also posted the foyer walls with newspaper clippings of the riots that had occurred in Britain when it first screened there (Yska, 1993: p. 108). This movie was to prove one of New Zealand's biggest box office hits of the 1950s. Music, like film, was becoming a profitable industry. In 1955 sales of 45 rpm singles in New Zealand numbered just 200. In 1956, 20,000 were sold and just one year later that number soared to 576,000. Businesses were soon aware of the attraction of anything American, as a wave of young people swept up the new styles of hair and clothing. Some youths even started to speak with American accents and mimic the gangsters they read about in books (Yska, 1993: p. 184).

In this way, juvenile crime in the 1950s was directly influenced by the images depicted in American music and film. Although this influence is undeniably, it should not be mistaken as causal. Without the overseas influence, this country – to a greater or lesser extent - would still have had gangs. New Zealand, therefore, did not import the problem of gangs from overseas, rather the problem that was here adopted a common style. The establishment of a Hell's Angels Motorcycle

Club chapter in Auckland in 1960 is a clear example. This event, added to by popular media sources, educated New Zealand gangs about how to look, act and operate. From 1960 onward, most New Zealand gangs identified to some extent with the style, structure and code of American outlaw motorcycle clubs.

Referring to today's youth gangs, Eggleston believes that the Americanisation of New Zealand has been increasingly influential on the country's youth. He sees the new 'gangsta' style being mimicked by the new groups as a feature that demarcates them from existing "well established" New Zealand gangs (Eggleston, 2000: p. 2 & 9). As we have seen, however, New Zealand's traditional gangs also had their genesis in American culture.

Whatever the case, the trends we now see in youth gangs do reflect a modern vogue coming out of America, this time based on Hip-Hop and Rap. This music is pushed by an enormous - and expanding - multi-million dollar industry. In 1999, for example, Americans purchased more than $1.5 billion dollars worth of Rap and Hip-Hop music alone. In 2000 this climbed to $2 billion (Richardson & Scott, 2002: p. 2). Hip-Hop is seen as a wider cultural trend within the context of poor African American communities and includes speech patterns, 'Mcing', 'Djing', graffiti, dance, ideals and music. Rap music is a part of Hip-Hop culture.

Among the different forms of Rap music, Gangsta Rap consistently contains the most violent lyrics as well as misogynous themes and hypermaterialism (Richardson & Scott, 2002: p. 2). The behaviour of some of its artists has attracted significant publicity, in fact several celebrated Rap artists have participated in gang violence and been killed. That Rap is often brutal, and equates violence to masculinity and problem solving (Ro, 1996), is significant. Glamorised violence and an emphasis on ostentatious wealth – achieved via crime - is a potential driver of New Zealand's developing youth gang culture. To what extent this is occurring is unclear.

6. Intervention Models with a Specific Focus on Gang-Related Offending

Compared with other forms of criminal activity, offending by youth gangs, in theory at least, should have a much better chance of being reduced. According to Miller there is a number of reasons why this may be so, for example the fact that youthful groups are seldom committed to membership in the way that adult gangs are, and that youth are more easily swayed by external influences. Moreover, the ostentatious visibility of youth gangs and their activities makes it easy for social agencies to identify and target them (Miller, 1990: p. 265).

Despite this, in practice, gang (both youth and adult gangs) interventions have had strikingly low rates of success (Klein, 1995: p. 137; Miller, 1990: p. 267). In fact, it has been said that "[t]he history of efforts to solve the youth gang problem in the United States is largely filled with frustration and failure" (Howell, 1998: p285).

The reasons are varied. Gangs are seldom seen as a priority for state spending (Miller, 1990: p. 275); communities with a gang problem often deny the existence of the problem (Trump, 1996: p. 278-9; Klein, 1995: p. 87); and there is a paucity of systematic analysis into what actually works and what does not (Spergel, 1995: p. 172; Miller, 1990: p. 267; Howell, 1998: p285).

This latter point is crucial and inhibits the understanding of effective gang interventions and controls. For instance, in a concerted effort at combating the gangs in the early 1990s, the California's Office of Criminal Justice Planning spent $6 million dollars in one fiscal year on 60 separate projects. Included were school programs, street work programs, community mobilisation,

diversion alternatives and a wide array of criminal justice initiatives. Yet, as Klein (1995: p. 138) explains, "not a dollar went on an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of these projects." Sixty wasted opportunities to assess these efforts, to Klein, is "an inexcusable exercise in public irresponsibility" (Klein, 1995: p. 138). Because of a lack of data – not just from California but from anywhere - we are reliant on the few researchers who have undertaken reviews of programs. Although these investigators question the quality of much existing information, they do – with minor exceptions – reach similar conclusions.

Strategies to reduce or eliminate gangs are commonly grouped into three areas, namely: Prevention, Intervention and Suppression.

Prevention programs look to discourage at-risk youth from joining gangs. Strategies include community organisation, improving conditions for youth, early childhood programs, school-based programs, youth clubs, and after school programs. Prevention programs have a long history in the US. Early prevention programs were based on community organisation and reform that would improve neighbourhood conditions. One of the first was the Chicago Area Project (CAP) of the 1930s. Despite the absence of empirical evaluation the program is still running – suggesting it has a high perceived value in Chicago (Howell, 2000: p. 5). Another is the New York Mobilisation For Youth project (MFY). The MFY project, which has been assessed, has been described as a "controversial and massive failure to achieve lasting reform" (Klein, 1995: p. 141).

Less ambitions strategies, such as education in schools, are also part of the prevention agenda. Such programs can involve Universal/Primary Prevention, which targets a whole population; Selected/Secondary Prevention aimed at higher-risk populations; or Indicated/Tertiary Prevention, aimed at specified high-risk populations such as peripheral or 'wannabe' gang members (Lafontaine, Ferguson & Wormith, 2005: p. 35). Miller (1993: cited in Howell,1998: p. 299) believes education programs need to start very early, concentrating on three groups: preschoolers (age 1-5); preadolescents (age 6-11); and adolescents (age 12-19). Huff (1996: p. 99-100) found that in America youths tend to begin their association with gangs about age 13, to join six months later and to get arrested about six months after that. This, he suggests, lends importance to pre-teen preventions. Such programs have faced their own difficulties, however, as they require knowledge of the predicators and causes of gang membership. Because these are many, broad and interconnected, they are difficult to isolate and treat. Also, Klein (1995: p. 137) suggests that, because status and identity are important drivers of gang membership, programs that specifically target potential gang members often worsen the very problems they attempt to prevent.

In the 1990s the Gang Resistance Education and Training Program (GREAT) became popular. GREAT is a universal school-based program for middle school children (aged 9-13) taught by police. Being universal, the program escapes the problems raised by Klein while educating children in a number of areas such as the effects of drugs, conflict resolution, cultural sensitivity and understanding racism, decision making, and interpersonal skills. Although the program initially reported encouraging preliminary results, further research suggested that it had no significant impact on reducing gang membership or delinquency. However, some positive results were noticed after a 'lag' period of four years. These included negative views about gangs and more positive attitudes toward police (Esbensen, Freng, Taylor, Peterson & Osgood, 2002: p. 162).

The team that reviewed GREAT concluded that it was unlikely that there is any easy solution to the gang problem and noted that a single strategy of education was unlikely to be of much effect if the underlying causes of gang membership remained. The team also said that GREAT would be best served working in tandem with other programs as part of a "comprehensive strategy" aimed at

individuals, peer groups, family, school and the community (Esbensen, Freng, Taylor, Peterson & Osgood, 2002: p. 162).

Intervention programs have been more common than preventive ones. Intervention programs work with gang members to reform, rehabilitate, and channel existing or fringe members away from crime and toward more positive pursuits. In many cases the vehicle for this change has been seen to be the gang itself (Spergel, 1995: p. 174). Intervention programs have focused on education and work opportunities as well as counselling and health services. Perhaps the most renowned efforts have come from detached youth workers – an approach used (but not comprehensively evaluated) in New Zealand. Detached youth workers commonly form close bonds with gangs, advocate on their behalf and offer support and direction to members in what is called "curbside counselling" (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993: p. 164). In the past these programs have been unclear as to "whether the central goal was control of gang fighting, treatment of individual personality problems, provision of access to opportunities, alteration of basic values, or prevention of delinquency" (Spergel, 1995: p. 248). Although there are some who argue for the benefits of detached worker programs (Bursik & Grumsky, 1993; Cloward and Ohlin, 1960), two detailed by studies by Miller (1962) and Klein (1971) have shown that such schemes fail to impact greatly on gang crime. Klein even suggests that reform programs often "inadvertently increased gang cohesiveness and gang-related crime" (Klein, 1995: p. 137). Even when intervention programs have sought to avoid creating greater gang cohesiveness and, indeed, have worked to break it down, successes have been brief. One such program, for example, known as the Ladino Hills Project, had significant success while in operation but the results soon faded. Klein concluded that the lesson was obvious and important, "Gangs are by-products of their communities: They cannot long be controlled by attacks on their symptoms alone; community structure and capacity must also be targeted" (Klein, 1995: p. 147).

Suppression – based largely on the concept of deterrence – has become overwhelmingly the most common international approach since the 1980s. This has happened for a number of reasons including: the ineffectiveness of prevention and intervention, the proliferation of gangs in cities, and increases in gang crime including violence and drugs. Under the strategy of suppression the problem is seen as one for the police rather than for social agencies. This has certainly been the case in New Zealand. Nobody denies the need for police and judicial activity but as a lone force, suppression is costly and any gains are short term (Sherman in Howell, 1998: p. 294). On its own, in fact, suppression has proven perhaps the least successful of all interventions (Decker, 2002; Klein, 1996; Spergel & Curry, 1990). Suppression can even have a negative impact as members convert stigmatisation into a symbol of status (Klein, 1995: p. 186). A reliance on police as public commentators on gang issues can also be problematic as many police have a narrow view of gangs and criminality which may be perpetrated through the media. This can lead to simplified notions about how best to respond (Klein, 1995: p. 189). One element that is required is accurate police coding of gang crimes (Howell, 2000: p. 53). The data thus obtained would be useful in understanding gangs in different areas and any changes in their behaviour. Recognising the weakness of suppression, one experienced American police officer has commented that gangs "are not a law enforcement problem. Putting more kids in jail is not the answer to the gang problem any more than putting drug addicts in jail is the answer to the drug problem. There needs to be a strategy, a well thought-out, multi-disciplinary strategy involving all aspects of the community, not just law enforcement" (cited in Klein, 1995: p. 153).

Klein (1995: p. 138) concludes, "In sum, we have three different approaches that are based on different assumptions and that have goals difficult to achieve and procedures wrapped more in ideology than in empirical knowledge. The challenge is for preventers, reformers, and suppressors to use the available data to design intelligent programs with an empirical base". In recent years, this

has begun to occur as newer programs take on multifaceted approaches. Perhaps the most significant of these programs are only now being reviewed, but their genesis is in research that commenced more than a decade ago.

It was not until the late 1980s the first nationwide survey of youth gang programs in the US was conducted. Headed by Irving Spergel, researchers conducted a broad assessment of youth gang prevention, intervention and suppression strategies in 45 cities. Spergel broke down the gang initiatives, expanded on the dominant tripartite segmentation, and categorised them as: Community Organisation, Social Intervention, Opportunities, Suppression, and Organisational Development and Change.

1. Community Organisation: *local community organisation or neighbourhood mobilisation*. Community organisation efforts are used to bring about change among groups and organisations in regard to community problems or social needs. Goals or activities that encompass community organisation include:

- Cleaning up graffiti in the community
- Involving the schools
- Mobilizing the community
- Building community trust
- Involving parents in community programs
- Educating the community
- Changing the community.

2. Social Intervention: *youth outreach and street work counselling*. Social intervention includes detached youth work, recreational and sporting activities, counselling and advocacy. The strategies used are:

- Crisis intervention
- Service activities
- Diversion
- Outreach
- Providing role models
- Leadership development
- Inter-gang mediation
- Group counselling
- Temporary shelter
- Referrals for service
- Religious conversion, counselling of gang members
- Drug use prevention/treatment
- All psychological approaches
- All social work approaches
- Post sentencing social services
- Work with the gang structure
- Helping members leave the gang
- Tattoo removal.

3. Opportunities: *jobs, job training and education*. Opportunities is an approach that "emphasises large scale resource infusions and efforts to change institutional structures, including schools, job opportunities, political participation, and the development of a new relationship between

government and local neighbourhoods in the solution not only of delinquency but of poverty itself' (Spergel & Curry, 1990: p. 286-7). Opportunities provisions include:

- Job preparation
- Job training
- Job placement
- Job development
- School tutoring
- Education of gang youth.

4. Suppression: *arrest, incarceration, and supervision*. Suppression involves obvious techniques such as arrests, prosecution and imprisonment but also tactical patrols, intensive supervision, intelligence gathering and charting, publishing and sharing law enforcement information. Suppression includes:

- Enforcement
- Neutralisation
- Investigation
- Adjudication
- Apprehension
- Monitoring
- Restraint
- Arrest
- Discipline
- Intelligence
- Identification of suspects
- Legal consequences
- Removal from community
- Correctional placement
- Law enforcement liaison.

5. Organisational development and change: *institutional and policy adoptions and mechanisms*. This strategy refers to interagency collaboration and involves specialised service delivery strategies that target gang issues. These include:

- Internal agency coordination
- Improving organisational efficiency
- Program development
- Advocacy for legislation
- Specialised training
- Additional resources
- Case management
- Use of media.

Although suppression has been the most frequently employed strategy, Spergel and Curry (1990) concluded that Community Organisation and Opportunities are the two most effective interventions, despite being the least prevalent. Although their study conceded that social intervention, suppression and organisational change approaches also may be beneficial, they are only so when community organisation and opportunities provision are dominant strategies. They conclude:

> The implication of our finding is that more resources alone for police or even human service programs would not contribute much to dealing effectively with the youth gang problem. It is more likely that community mobilization and more resources for and reform of the educational system and the job market, targeted at gang youth or clearly at-risk youth, would be more cost effective as well as more effective in the reduction of the problem …
>
> Policy recommendations emanating from these findings would not necessarily require a renewed war on poverty, but rather a series of programs targeted specifically at the youth gang problem addressing not only issues of economic deprivation and lack of opportunities but the social disorganization and the mobilization of community institutions in a concerted attack at the problem. Distinctions in policy emphasis also would have to be made depending on the nature and the level of severity of the problem in particular cities (Spergel & Curry, 1990: p. 309).

Although the original research measured *perceived* improvements in the gang situation, in 1993 Spergel and Curry conducted a follow-up study to check the *actual* validity of their initial results. From a survey of 21 cities, empirical indicators including the numbers of gangs, gang members, gang related assaults, and gang related narcotics incidents, found that "perceptions correlated perfectly with the empirical indicators" (Howell, 1998: p. 296). The findings of the original research were thus vindicated.

From this work, Spergel and others created The Comprehensive Community-Wide Approach to Gang Prevention, Intervention, and Suppression – often called the Spergel Model. Based on the findings of the earlier research, the model requires the "development of interrelated strategies of community mobilization, social intervention, provision of social opportunities, suppression and organizational change, in a cluster of criminal-justice and social-service agencies, schools, and grassroots and other organizations working together to serve and control a target group of gang delinquents, as well as youth highly at risk for gang involvement" (Spergel, Wa & Sosa, 2005e: p. 11.1). Key to this approach is interagency communication and action and the mobilisation of different elements within the community. Local people (including ex gang members) work with police and probation officers, church groups, teachers and community leaders, non-profit organisations and sporting and recreation groups. A steering committee of local representatives oversees the initiatives which are targeted at the specific problems within the community. For example, an area with an already high amount of gang activity requires a different approach to one where gang activity is less obvious. Community responses must be informed by a thorough assessment of gangs, the crimes they commit, and the problems that exist within their environments. Local research and knowledge is therefore essential (see also Lafontaine, Ferguson & Wormith, 2005: pp. 11&104; Howell, 2000: p. 53; Klein, 1995: p. 71; Vigil & Long, 1990).

Spergel's approach has been tested in a number of places. The Little Village project in Chicago offers significant optimism with, among other things, a reported 40 percent reduction in violent crime in the sample group (*The University of Chicago Chronicle*, 19-1-2005). In 1999 the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority concludes that, "the project appears to have been a success" and that, "the cohesive team approach was probably at the heart of the project's success in reducing gang crime, particularly gang violence" (cited in Howell, 2000: p. 38). According to gang-member feedback, recreation and sports services were well regarded in the Little Village program and, along with job placement opportunities, were viewed as most helpful in curbing gang activity (Howell, 1998: p. 297).

Five similar projects run by the US Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) have produced mixed results. Two of the projects (Mesa and Riverside) found the program produced significant positive outcomes but the other three (Bloomington, San Antonio and Tucson) were found to have had little or no effect (Spergel, Wa & Sosa, 2005a, b, c, d, e). The programs that failed had difficulties in implementation. For instance, in Tucson there were problems in getting a coordinated approach – particularly with the Tucson Police Department – poor grassroots involvement, failure to provide education and employment opportunities, and failure to establish a "pro-active and sustaining Steering Committee" (Spergel, Wa & Sosa, 2005e: p. 11.6).

In spite of often conflicting outcomes, however, there are certainly enough data now to confirm that multi faceted approaches have the best chance of success.

The answers to problems surrounding gangs, therefore, are complex and difficult to determine. There is no single effective method and there are certainly no easy answers. Any realistic effort must take a flexible, broad and holistic approach. It will require:

- A central governing agency that will undertake research and guide and monitor regional efforts. A central agency is important to ensure that quality data bases are kept and information is shared between regions. It will also ensure definitional consistency and will monitor and review work at a regional level.
- Community coordinated approaches that incorporate a number of government and non-governmental bodies including; the police, educators, social workers, community leaders, and social and sporting bodies. Individual areas will have specific needs and these will have to be confirmed by research. A steering committee at community level will assess the region involved, guide coordination of agencies, and facilitate community involvement.
- Representatives at the community level who will feed into and adopt centrally-agreed philosophies and goals, and then manage their implementation.
- Adequate and ongoing funding
- Informed media representation.

It appears clear is that while we can learn much from the American experience, there is no templated response to local gang issues. Gangs in different areas create different social problems based on the unique situation of their environment. With this in mind, New Zealand needs its own research and its own solutions to address the problems that are specific to it.

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