

Criminal Partnerships:
The Effects of Intervention Strategies on
“Cartel Affiliated” Gangs

by
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ABSTRACT

Mexican drug cartels have been a difficult group to get official data on because of the clandestine nature of their operations and the inherent dangers associated with any type of research on these groups. Due to the close relationship that the United States and Mexico share, the United States being a heavy demander of illicit drugs and Mexico being the supplier or the transshipment point, research that sheds light on cartels and their effects is necessary in order to solve this problem. A growing concern is that cartels have been seeking to improve their international infrastructure. This could potentially be done by partnering with gangs located in the United States to help with the distribution of drugs. The author uses data from the 2009 and 2010 Arizona Gang Threat Assessment and three sets of analyses (dummy variable regression, change score, multinomial logistic) to shed light on the possible partnership between cartels and U.S. based gangs. Primarily using the varying level of intervention strategies practiced by police departments throughout the state of Arizona, this study is exploratory in nature, but attempts to find the effectiveness of intervention strategies on "cartel affiliated" gangs, as identified by federal authorities, and how police departments respond towards these same groups. With the current data, there was no significant evidence that suggests that intervention strategies were less effective on "cartel affiliated" gangs or that police departments were responsive towards these "affiliated" gangs.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The drug cartels in Mexico operated in their country relatively undisturbed for decades until Mexico's president from 2006-2012, Felipe Calderón, decided to launch an initiative to eradicate the cartels from his country (Rawlins, 2011). This, of course, was not well received by the cartels. Violence broke and roughly 50,000 people have been killed or gone missing from 2006 to 2011 (Molzahn, Rios, & Shirk, 2012). This period, known as the "Mexican Drug War", started in 2006 and is still happening in the streets of Mexico. This period has also been a large transitory stage for the cartels. There was a "civil" war amongst these groups to fight for drug trafficking routes to the United States (Beittel, 2013). These recent years have seen a massive upswing in visible cartel activity and their public desire to trade in the United States (Hanson, 2008).

Little research has been done on cartels because of the clandestine nature of their organizations. Through the use of secondary data, this study hopes to shed more light on these criminal organizations. According to the 2010 National Drug Threat Assessment, Mexican drug cartels often use U.S. based gangs to help with distribution (National Drug Intelligence Center, 2010). Since it is difficult and dangerous to directly observe cartels, this study uses secondary data to see the effects law enforcement intervention strategies have on "cartel affiliated" gangs and the responsiveness police departments have towards these groups. The guiding questions for this study are: Have gang intervention strategies differently affected the activity of U.S. gangs that have possible associations with Mexican drug cartels as opposed to those gangs which are not affiliated? Are law enforcement agencies more responsive with their intervention strategies towards these

groups? While this study is exploratory in nature, it hopes to be used as a stepping-stone to facilitate future scholastic cartel research. This study is important because of the prominence of the cartel problem in both the U.S. and Mexico. In 2009, over 1,665 tons of illegal drugs were seized along the southwest border of the United States (Longmire, 2011). Not only limited to drug trafficking, cartels practice human smuggling from Mexico into the United States as a revenue raising strategy. Arizona is chosen as the central state of analysis of this study because it shares a border with Mexico and is used as a corridor for smugglers (Quinones, 2009).

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mexican drug cartel activity has been steadily on the rise for decades, but has been exponentially growing since 2006 (Molzahn, Rios, & Shirk, 2012). There are estimates that suggest that there were 50,000 murders perpetrated by cartel groups in Mexico from 2006 to 2011 (Molzahn et al., 2012). Political heads in Mexico have waged a war against the cartels in Mexico. Felipe Calderon, Mexico's president from 2006-2012, planned to eradicate the drug cartels, but only succeeded in increasing the violence in his country (Rawlins, 2011). During this time, cartels amped up their activity and fought amongst each other for crucial trading routes to the biggest demander of drugs, the United States. Historically, drugs have moved from the south to the north while guns moved south (Decker & Townsend, 2008). This partnership has worked for four main reasons. First, guns are widely available in the U.S. (firearms are illegal in Mexico). Second, the U.S. has a high demand for illicit drugs. Third, several Mexican institutions, such as government and law enforcement, have suffered allegations of corruption, thus making the government lose legitimacy and law enforcement ineffective. Fourth, legal and illicit trade has been occurring between the U.S. and Mexico through Mexico's northern border for years (Decker & Townsend, 2008). Drug cartels have typically been known for smuggling marijuana, but have expanded their menu of illicit drugs smuggled into the United States to include cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine (National Drug Intelligence Center, 2010).

These cartels, looking for the most profit, often seek out the help of local U.S. gangs for distribution in the United States (Smith & Selee, 2013). Previous studies have

looked at the organizational structure of gangs and their ability to peddle drugs (Decker & Pyrooz, 2013). Federal reports have looked at the relationships between these more organized cartels and their seemingly less organized gang partners (NDIC, 2010; ONDCP, 2009). Also, studies have looked at how policing strategies, such as creating a gang unit, have affected the gang problem (Braga, Kennedy, Waring, & Piehl, 2001; Fritsch, Caeti, & Taylor, 1999).

Mexican Drug Cartels Defined

Mexican drug cartels have roots dating back to the early twentieth century. This was a time where the United States and other countries passed laws that reduced the production, distribution, and consumption of alcohol and mood-altering drugs (Smith & Selee, 2013). Their services were desired similarly to moonshiners during the prohibition era. On the onset, financial gain was the primary goal of cartels. According to Shiffman, cartels are businesses that are vehicles for power and wealth for the individuals that run them (House Subcommittee on Foreign Affairs, 2011). They only exist because of the massive amount of profit to be made from trafficking drugs into the United States (Longmire, 2011). To achieve this goal, cartels are expanding into global markets (U.S. Department of State, 2007). Instead of trading regular commodities, such as wheat or corn, cartels understand the market for illicit drugs and trade their “commodity” to gain wealth and power, violence just so happens to be a byproduct of business (House Subcommittee on Foreign Affairs, 2011).

Cartels are not restricted to drug smuggling and trafficking, but they have become more resilient by diversifying their means of revenue to include kidnapping, extortion, human smuggling and human trafficking (House Subcommittee on Foreign Affairs,

2011). Not only are they proving to be a scourge in Mexico, but they are proving to have reach in the United States as well. Through the illicit drug trade, legal businesses are undermined, hurting the U.S. economy (House Subcommittee on Foreign Affairs, 2011). Cartels handle the challenge of smuggling its commodities across the border while leaving simple retail distribution of drugs to U.S. gangs and other lower-level affiliates (Smith & Selee, 2013). Mexican drug cartels are ahead of Colombian, Chinese, and Russian mafias in terms of the sale and distribution of cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, and marijuana in the U.S. (NDIC, 2010). This has helped solidify the ties that cartels have with U.S. street and prison gangs (Brophy, 2008). Not only is the United States the primary customer for Mexico's illicit drugs, it is also where cartels obtain thousands of guns and the generator of billions of dollars in drug profits (Longmire, 2011).

When President Calderon took office in 2006, he declared war on the cartels and violence multiplied (Grillo, 2011). Calderon's objective was the complete atomization of the cartel criminal networks (Smith & Selee, 2013). He thought this could be best achieved by mainly targeting cartel figureheads. Calderon did not account for the upswing in violence as a result of the fractionalization (Smith & Selee, 2013). Once high profile leaders of cartels were arrested, there was a frenzy of fighting between cartels trying to obtain the trafficking routes that the "leaderless" cartels controlled. Not only were there heavy casualties amongst cartels, but there were numerous innocent civilians caught in the crossfire.

Many of the violent acts that cartels and their enforcement groups commit are similar in nature to those committed by terrorist organizations like al-Qa'ida and the

IRA, and with the intentions of sending a strong message to rivals or the government (Longmire, 2011). Because of this, there has been increasing literature comparing Mexican drug cartels to these other insurgent groups. The term Insurgency is defined as "an organized rebellion aimed at overthrowing a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict" (Devi & Joshi, 2014, p. 3171). In regard to the Mexican drug cartels, the goal of their insurgency is to roll back government power, protect cartel assets, and show Calderon and his successors that the cartels are not to be held lightly (Sullivan & Elkus, 2008). In 2008, instead of using normal law enforcement procedures against the cartels, the Mexican army and federal police used anti-insurgency tactics against the cartels (Longmire & Longmire, 2008). Organized crime literature likes to fit Mexican drug cartels under the same umbrella as other organized crime, but this label of "traditional organized crime" does not apply to drug cartels as they have evolved over recent years (Longmire, 2011, p. 176).

There are generally two models of how organized crime groups operate: the American Model and the Colombian model (Longmire, 2011). In the American model, groups like the Italian, Russian, and Chinese mafias operate with a civilized code of conduct, they like to operate under the radar, they eliminate rivals and traitors in a violent but discreet manner, and they make it a point to not touch family members of targets (Longmire, 2011). Mexican drug cartels align more with the Colombian model. In this model, groups combine criminal activity with insurgency against the law enforcement, government, and military (Longmire, 2011). Mexican drug cartels do not have a code of conduct and everyone is a potential target. They do not care about being covert, at least in Mexico. Both the United States and Mexico insist on labeling

Mexican drug cartels as “traditional” organized crime groups, but they are limiting themselves strategically by doing so (Longmire, 2011). The strategies involved with dealing with an insurgency are entirely different than the strategies involved with dealing with the mafia. In 2010, Mexico’s Chamber of Deputies passed an amendment under which Mexican drug cartels are designated as terrorist organizations (Longmire, 2011).

Gangs That Engage in Drug Dealing

Before detailing structure, it is important to establish a definition for a “street gang.” There is not a consensus among researchers on the definition of street gangs. This paper will adopt the definition that the researchers of Eurogang programme have developed. Gangs model five distinctive characteristics: 1. durable over time, 2. street-oriented lifestyle where activities are largely open to the public, 3. members around teens to early 20s, 4. participate in illegal activity, 5. identity stemming from illegal activities that group participates in (Klein & Maxson, 2006). The federal definition of a “street gang” is insufficient. The federal definition is broad and encompasses gangs, youth gangs, and street gangs, but this definition is too broad when trying to research street gangs specifically. Gangs are: 1. a group of three or more individuals, 2. members of these groups identify themselves by adopting group identifiers such as tattoos or colors, which are often used to illicit fear or intimidation, 3. these groups are, in part, created to engage in criminal activity, 4. their criminal activity revolves around enhancing the reputation of the gang (U.S. Department of Justice, n.d.). Outlaw motorcycle gangs use their affiliations with legitimate motorcycle clubs as a vehicle for criminal activity and achieve goals through violence and intimidation (U.S. Department of Justice, 1991). Prison gangs, as the name suggests, operate within the prison system and consist

of a select group of inmates who have created an organized chain of command and have created a code of conduct (Lyman, 1989). This type of gang attempts to control the prison environment through intimidation and violence geared towards other inmates (Lyman, 1989).

Not all gangs are identical. On one end of the spectrum there are highly organized gangs with hierarchical leadership structure and on the other end there are far less organized gangs that are more horizontal in nature (Decker & Van Winkle, 1995). Membership in street gangs can be a vehicle for friendship, revenge, and a way for peer acceptance (Decker & Pyrooz, 2013). Making money is not a major organizational goal of street gangs. Membership in street gangs serves a symbolic function. Any profit from money seeking ventures that gang members participate in is not pooled to profit the entire gang, but to keep for themselves (Decker & Pyrooz, 2011).

Organizational structure is important to look at because an organized infrastructure is necessary for the mass distribution of drugs. Gangs participate in many illegal activities such as burglary, assault, homicide, along with drug selling and many other endeavors. Most gangs are not formed with the primary intention to sell drugs. Individuals are more likely to join a gang for a sense of belonging. Highly organized and prepared for criminal conspiracy is a popular belief that comes with “gang” label (Howell, 2007). This is a misnomer. The majority of gangs fall into the less organized side of the spectrum, incapable of handling the mass distribution of drugs. Many believe that all gangs are well organized and control the distribution of drugs, but this is a myth that has hovered over the study of gangs (Howell, 2007). That is not to say that no street gangs are involved in drug selling activity. More organized street gangs are more likely to

participate in drug selling than their less organized counterparts (Pyrooz, Decker, & Webb, 2014). In a recent study, juvenile gang membership was estimated to be at one million in the United States (Pyrooz & Sweeten, 2015). Regardless of whether these groups are relatively unorganized, if juvenile member numbers are combined with adult gang member numbers the volume of these retail transactions begin to add up.

An increase of busts of Mexican nationals in possession of wholesale quantities of cocaine bricks, heroin, and crystal meth, have driven the cartels to increase their selling of drugs at the kilo level in order to reduce the threat of detection and reduce the risk of lost revenue (Grillo, 2011). This presents an obstacle when identifying the middlemen. If these middlemen are here illegally, they are not going to be easily identifiable. DEA agents have traced drugs in warehouses in Los Angeles and seen them pop up in the Midwest and the East coast, but it has not proved to be helpful in identifying these middlemen who move these drugs through corridors in the United States (Grillo, 2011).

The literature does not paint a clear picture of these distribution networks (Grillo, 2011). Once the drugs are smuggled into warehouses in the United States, there is little that could be said about the process that moves the smuggled drugs from bulk to retail quantity at distribution points. Even when they arrive at these distribution points, it is not clear how these drugs end up in the hands of drug peddlers on street corners. There were multiple studies in the 1990s that looked into the level youth gangs were involved in drug distribution. Maxson (1995) found that gang member presence in drug distribution in two suburban Los Angeles cities was substantial, enough to raise the eyebrows of law enforcement, but not enough to cause alarm. In an Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention bulletin, Howell and Decker (1999) point out that some youth

gangs are actively involved in street-level drug trafficking, but they do not appear to be in control of the drug trafficking operations. Howell and Gleason (1999) analyzed responses to the 1996 National Youth Gang Survey. Of the 1,039 law enforcement agencies that answered the question regarding gang control of distribution, Howell and Gleason (1999) found that youth gangs did not control or manage most of the drug distribution in these jurisdictions and only 15 jurisdictions reported that gangs controlled all the distribution of drugs in their jurisdiction. This means there are massive chunks of the drug trade network that are unaccounted by law enforcement agencies. This leaves the question of who is in control of distribution? Howell and Decker (1999) point out that most studies of youth gangs that are involved in drug trafficking revolve around their street-level distribution and not about upper-level management and control of drug-trafficking operations.

Research has been done about where these drugs are coming from and research has been done about gangs that deal these drugs, but the middle portion of how drugs trade hands from traffickers to the hands of sellers remains to be a mysterious black box. One thing to note is that these studies were done in the 1990s on the tail end of the cocaine boom of the 1980s and the crack cocaine epidemic of the 1990s (Fagan, 1993). Studies involving the drug distribution network need to be revamped to capture the nuances of the Mexican drug war era.

The informal structure of the majority of gangs does not offer enough infrastructure for the mass distribution of drugs. Gangs are usually spread out and motivated by personal interests (Decker & Curry, 2000). Most gang members, if they were to sell drugs, would sell drugs for themselves. The literature indicates that it is far more common for gang members to “freelance” as drug dealers (Decker, Bynum, &

Weisel, 1998). This means that if gang members were to sell drugs, they would sell them “on the side.” If an individual is a part of a gang, every crime they commit does not always have to be linked to their membership in the gang (Moreselli, 2009). Gangs are only organized to the extent that they fill the structural holes as drug suppliers (Decker et al., 1998). Street gangs are not really well organized and because of their nature they are not considered good business partners for organized crime groups (Decker & Pyrooz, 2013). Discussed further below are potential reasons why cartels overlook all of these characteristics and still form partnerships.

Gangs and Traditional Organized Crime Groups

Because of the disorganized nature of U.S. street gangs, they make unappealing partners for “traditional” organized crime groups. More specifically, gangs are unattractive because they have a lot of public exposure and are not particularly specialized in any criminal offense (Decker & Pyrooz, 2013). For example, a gang can partake in drug sales, robbery, assault, burglary, homicide, but they would not be particularly specialized in any offense. A street gang can be too risky to invest in for organized crime groups because the gang could lack the skills.

Gangs and organized crime groups differ widely in purpose and structure. Organized crime groups are generally better organized and more focused than street gangs (Decker, 1996). There are five major differences between gangs and organized crime groups: 1. Gangs usually pursue symbolic ends, while organized crime groups pursue economic ends; 2. Gangs have a looser organizational structure, mostly because gangs’ members are younger; 3. Organized crime groups are more clandestine because the presence of profit-making leads to as much organization that is necessary to

accomplish crime without drawing attention from law enforcement while gangs participate in whatever they can to make profit; 4. Gangs place more importance on “turf” and territory than organized crime groups; 5. Discipline is a big distinguishing factor between gangs that sell drugs and organized crime groups, the former lacking discipline (Decker & Pyrooz, 2013; Decker & Pyrooz, 2011). One of the few similarities that gangs and organized crime groups share is economic gain being a motive for violence (Decker & Pyrooz, 2013).

Why Drug Cartels and Gangs Could Work Together

This section attempts to address some of the concerns about gangs not being good partners for cartels. As mentioned in the previous section, the vast majority of gangs lack the capacity and infrastructure for the mass distribution of drugs. Cartels have this side of the business taken care of. The cartels handle the smuggling of drugs from Mexico into the United States and are also responsible for moving it to the major U.S. markets (Smith & Selee, 2013). What cartels need are feet on the ground that can take care of simple retail distribution that could move product on street corners.

Despite the literature implying that organized crime groups and gangs are widely different and that it would be unwise for the two to partner up, it does not mean that partnerships do not happen. Mexican drug cartels are a different beast and should not be expected to have the same logical reasoning as other organized crime groups because as mentioned in a previous section, Mexican drug cartels do not fall into the traditional organized crime umbrella.

There are examples of Mexican drug cartels partnering with U.S. gangs. In 1993, the Tijuana Cartel enlisted members of the Logan Heights gang, a U.S. street gang based

in San Diego, to help with the assassination of the Joaquín Archivaldo Guzmán Loera, the leader of the Sinaloa Cartel (Sullivan & Bunker, 2002). Although the assassination attempt failed, this still provides an example of Mexican drug cartels partnering with U.S. street gangs. If street gangs could be enlisted for the assassination of a major drug cartel leader, they should be able to handle the simple retail distribution of drugs. Another example of a U.S. street gang and Mexican drug cartel partnership is Barrio Azteca and the Juarez Cartel. Barrio Azteca, a street gang originating in El Paso, Texas, has been shown to have strong ties with the Juarez Cartel and even formed cells over in Juarez to deal directly with them (Grillo, 2011). They had a long history of selling drugs that the Juarez Cartel had been moving, which further strengthened their alliance (Grillo, 2011). Barrio Azteca would buy cocaine at cheaper rates while smuggling assault rifles down south to the Juarez Cartel (Grillo, 2011). Examples like the ones given above give reason for exploring relationships between cartels and street gangs.

Below are attempts to address some of the potential concerns about gangs not being good business partners for cartels. First, gangs usually pursue symbolic ends while organized crime groups are focused on profits (Decker & Pyrooz, 2013; Decker & Pyrooz, 2011). Gangs try and make a statement to rival gangs while typical organized crime groups are more driven towards profit (Decker & Pyrooz, 2013). Drug cartels have combined both of these. As seen in the skirmishes over trafficking routes, the profit motive has still been central because more routes means more income, but the public display of decapitated and mutilated bodies of rival cartel members serve as a statement to scare rivals and the government (Longmire & Longmire, 2008).

Second, gangs are said to not be good partners because their organizational structure is looser in nature (Decker & Pyrooz, 2013; Decker & Pyrooz, 2011). All gangs are organized to some extent. It is not a necessary condition for gangs to be as organized as drug cartels to handle simple retail distribution because if they were as organized then they could potentially be in the same position as cartels. Even the action of drug smuggling is not as highly organized as popularly believed (Decker & Pyrooz, 2011). It is entirely possible that cartels are looking for retail distribution partners through familial ties in the United States as opposed to some checklist of organizational structure. A study of cocaine smuggling from Colombia to the Netherlands by Zaitch (2002) showed that ethnicity and familial relationships played an integral part of the partnership. This relationship was based more on informal trust and rooted relationships rather than a formal contractual agreement. Many of the Hispanic gangs in the United States could potentially have familial roots in Mexico and, by extension, with the cartels, so the major agreement is not necessarily through gangs, but a correspondence between family members.

Third, gangs are not good partners for organized crime groups because gangs are very public in nature while organized crime groups like to operate more clandestinely (Decker & Pyrooz, 2013; Decker & Pyrooz, 2011). Drug cartels would like to stay off the radar in the United States, but within Mexico they are visible in nature and operate with little push back from authorities (Bonner, 2012). Sergeant Tommy Thompson of the Phoenix Police Department states:

In the United States, the cartels want to move their drugs and make money. Police are a hindrance to this. But the best tactic for gangsters is to try and keep a low profile to get off the police radar. If they commit a murder, the police will be on them. If they attack the policemen themselves, authorities will go crazy. And it is

a lot harder in the United States to buy off officers. (Grillo, 2011, p. 244)

This gives reason for drug cartels to partner up with U.S. gangs for simple retail distribution. If one of their gang partners is caught and implicates a cartel member, there is little to no way for American authorities to conduct an investigation in Mexico. It is less damaging to the cartels if some low-level drug peddler is caught than someone who is integral to the actual logistics of distribution. The bravado and violent tactics that cartels operate with in Mexico have proven to be difficult for Mexican authorities to deal with. A big concern that citizens have is that U.S. gangs could adopt cartel tactics of violence (Grillo, 2011). If gangs begin to operate with similar bravado as cartels, it is possible that U.S. law enforcement could experience the same ineffectiveness that Mexican authorities experience.

Fourth, gangs engage in multiple forms of offending and do not specialize in one particular form, hinting that their skills are not up to the quality required by organized crime groups (Decker & Pyrooz, 2013). Gangs participate in a bevy of offenses including drug sales, robbery, assault burglary, auto theft, intimidation, and homicide (Decker & Pyrooz, 2013). Mexican drug cartels also engage in multiple revenue seeking ventures. They do not only specialize in drug smuggling and trafficking, but human and weapons trafficking, kidnapping and extortion and a plethora of other revenue generating practices (Quinones, 2009). Drug cartels do not necessarily need gangs to help with some of the more nuanced offenses, but with simple retail drug sales, which more organized gangs have experience with (Decker & Pyrooz, 2011). If desired, cartels could pull gang members into other operations such as the assassination attempt mentioned earlier.

Fifth, discipline is important for the continued successful operation of organized

crime groups. Organized crime groups rarely choose gangs because they are typically undisciplined (Decker & Pyrooz, 2013; Decker & Pyrooz, 2011). In Mexico, cartels subcontract local crooks to help with operations and it is not rare to “execute” these hired workers who step out of line (Grillo, 2011, p. 257). More scholastic research needs to be done on the discipline structure of Mexican drug cartels in regard to U.S. affiliates, but based on the brutal nature of cartels, it is not too much of a jump to conclude to that gangs who partner with cartels are not easily left with just a slap on the wrist when discipline is required.

For the cartels to gain profit, it is not necessary for them to have well-organized gangs. The cartels handle the upper level logistics while the simple peddling of drugs could be left to low level gang members. In a report produced by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP, 2009), the authors identified four types of structures that cartels establish in the United States to help distribute their drugs. First, cartels would establish *branch offices* in the U.S. that are controlled by Mexicans in the U.S. and run from Mexico. Second, a *franchise* gives local distribution groups more autonomy and control over retail sales. Third, bulk quantities of drugs to wholesale groups are supplied by *market-based* structures. Fourth, supply and demand dictate structural linkages in a *pure market* (as cited in Decker & Pyrooz, 2010).

The process through which the wholesale product transfers hands to the mid-level distributors and then to the retail-level is still murky. Unless gangs already have a close relationship like the Logan Heights Gang or Barrio Azteca where they can get product directly from the cartels, other gangs would have to go through their local distribution groups, *franchises*, to get product and this process has little to no direct coordination with

the cartels. This is one of the many reasons why more cartel research needs to be done. Many federal reports, like the one used in this study, claim that there are gangs that are “affiliated” with Mexican drug cartels, but the level of “affiliation” between a gang that does assassination missions for the cartels is different than the “affiliation” level of a gang that just so happened to be selling drugs that were once held by a certain drug cartel. This study is more speculative in nature because of this very reason; the varying levels of cartel “affiliation” are not available with the current data.

Police and Community Response to Gang Problems

It is important to look at police and community responses to gang problems because as shown below, media may portray an inaccurate image of the gang problem in certain areas, which elicits concern from viewers. Katz (2001) examined why the gang unit in a Midwestern city was created. The findings suggested that the gang unit was created as a response to community and political pressures. Once the unit was created, maintaining legitimacy in the community drove its response to the gang problem. This suggests that other gang units in other cities could have been created out of community pressures and driven by similar motives instead of the police department actively seeking to improve the department and creating an efficient strategy to combating gangs (Katz, 2001). It is possible that a city could not be facing a legitimate gang problem, but if the community thinks that there is a problem they can force the hand of the necessary decision-makers. If the media showcases gangs that are “affiliated” with cartels, the community could begin to pressure law enforcement agencies and force their hand to become more responsive to these groups.

Although a district might face a genuine crime problem, police agencies could potentially have a vested interest in claiming that they have a gang problem or their current gang problem is getting worse (Bursik & Grasmik, 1995). An especially relevant study is Zatz' (1987) examination of the police response to gangs in Phoenix, Arizona. She used data from social workers, media reports, and court records and found that when the gang unit was created in the 1980s the city did not face a serious gang problem, but the police exaggerated the problem to solicit federal funding. The police along with the media convinced the public that Chicano gangs threatened the safety of the Anglo community. Through court records and social service agents, Zatz was able to prove otherwise.

When it comes to the current study, the Zatz (1987) study is important to consider because the drug war and the substance abuse problem in America is a priority. Law enforcement agencies could potentially take advantage of this fact and inflate the gang problem knowing that funding is readily available, especially in the case of gangs that are possibly affiliated with drug cartels. This study hopes to expand the literature that focuses on the effectiveness of policing strategies on gang activity. This study also hopes to serve as a stepping-stone in illuminating a clandestine cog of the drug network in America.

Effects of Policing on Gang Activity

The effects of policing on “cartel affiliated” gang activity is the focal point of this study. There have been plenty of studies on gang activity, but little research has examined the organized response to the gang problem. This study hopes to shed more light on this topic.

Operation Ceasefire in Boston was based on a “pulling levers” deterrence strategy where resources were concentrated on chronically offending gang-involved youth (Braga, Kennedy, Waring, & Piehl, 2001). The thought process behind this is that a large portion of crime stems from smaller groups of offenders. An impact evaluation found that Operation Ceasefire was associated with significant decreases in youth homicide victimization, shots-fired calls for service, and gun assault incidents in Boston (Braga et al., 2001).

Another study looked at the impact of the Dallas Anti-Gang Initiative (Fritsch, Caeti, & Taylor, 1999). Fritsch et al. (1999) found that aggressive curfew and truancy enforcement led to significant reductions in gang violence, but saturation patrol did not. Decker and Curry (2003) evaluated the Saint Louis Anti-gang initiative and found that the benefit of this program did not match the amount of effort and resources that were devoted to this initiative. This research has been helpful when observing the effects of intervention strategies on gangs, but no significant research has been done on the effects of cartel partnerships and how they can affect the performance of law enforcement intervention strategies.

There are multiple reasons why gang units are not as effective as they could be. Katz and Webb (2006) analyzed gang units in four large cities and found that although these units were commissioned to participate in community policing they were instead more focused on suppression and were without much direction and supervision. Most officers in these gang units were not specifically trained to deal with gangs and gang members, but were more or less left to figure it out themselves (Katz & Webb, 2006). For example, some officers were not trained to use computerized gang databases. Officers

from these units would often be called to expert advisors in community meetings or trials, but their discussion would largely revolve around cultural beliefs and past individual experience instead of empirical data (Katz & Webb, 2006). The now disbanded CRASH anti-gang unit of the Los Angeles Police department targeted young Latino and African-American males because they developed the mentality that every individual of these racial and ethnic groups were also involved in gang activity (Katz & Webb, 2006). It has been shown that other gang unit officers have stopped individuals based on their “racial profile” instead of their actual participation in criminal activity (Katz & Webb, 2006). This leads to biased data and statistics on racial and ethnic minority gangs because they are more heavily monitored. Despite this, law enforcement agencies that have specialized gang units can better measure gang activity than those who do not (Katz & Webb, 2006). They offer the best image of gang activity because officers interact with gangs and gang members and are able to devote to handling gang trends (Katz & Webb, 2006).

Gangs have garnered attention from law enforcement in large part due to media and community pressures. This image of violent drug dealing ethnic and racial minority gangs have been perpetuated by films such as *Colors* (1988) and *American Me* (1992) (Katz & Webb, 2006). Street gangs that cluster deviant 18-25 year olds can cause fear of victimization in a community. According to Decker and Pyrooz (2010), even though gang violence is mostly directed against other gang members it is still alarming to note that gang homicide rates are estimated at up to 100 times that of the normal population. Many police departments have created gang units dedicated to dealing with their jurisdiction’s gang problem. The Arizona Gang Threat Assessment, the data source for this study, looks

at the type of intervention strategies that law enforcement agencies use to combat gangs, gang units being one of those strategies.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

One way to think of criminal decision-making is a cost-benefit analysis.

Deterrence theory notes that crimes can be impeded when the costs of committing the offense are perceived by the offender to outweigh the benefits of committing the crime (Gibbs, 1975; Zimring & Hawkins, 1973). Deterrence is a two-fold mechanism, encompassing “general” and “specific” deterrence (Cook, 1980). General deterrence is a mechanism that deters the general population from committing certain crimes while specific deterrence is geared towards preventing specific offenders from offending in the future. For the purposes of this study, intervention strategies will act as both general and specific deterrents. Intervention strategies, practiced by law enforcement agencies in the state of Arizona, have the goal of reducing gang activity.

Prior research has had a difficult time pinning down a theoretical framework when trying to explain the police’s official response to gang activity. Neither the Braga et al. (2001) study nor the Fritsch et al. (1999) piece offers any hints in regard to theoretical framework. There has been little consensus on the reason why specialized gang units are created (Katz, Maguire, & Roncek, 2002). The most discussed theories of gang unit creation are: contingency theory, social threat theory, and resource dependency theory. Contingency theorists contend that organizations are developed and arranged to achieve desired goals (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Mastrofski, 1998). These organizations continually seek to improve efficiency and performance (Mastrofski & Ritti, 2000). Once these organizations become inefficient or they are not achieving goals, then they change structures to adapt to regain efficiency (Donaldson, 1995). In regard to the creation of

gang units, those police agencies with higher levels of gang activity would create gang units to improve efficiency when dealing with gang issues or achieving goals that are gang-focused (Jackson & McBride, 1985; Burns & Deakin, 1989; Huff & McBride, 1990; Rush, 1996; Weisel & Painter, 1997). For social threat theory, police departments create gang units as a response to the perceived threat that the dominant group feels from minority groups (McCorkle & Miethe, 1998; Zatz, 1987). For example, the gang unit in Phoenix was created in the 1980s because the public was convinced by the media and the police that Chicano gangs threatened the safety of the Anglo community (Zatz, 1987). In resource dependency theory, organizations understand that they need resources to survive. Organizations form symbiotic relationships with other organizations to exchange resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Where these exchanges exist, organizations change their structure or behavior to ensure the flow of resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). By creating a gang unit, law enforcement agencies are sending beaconing that they have a gang problem and need more resources (Katz et al., 2002).

This study will adopt structural contingency theory (Donaldson, 1996) when trying to explain police responsiveness to gang activity. Contingency theory maintains that organizations must modify their structures to appropriately acknowledge to their unique environments (Zhao, 1996). So in theory, if police agencies have gang problems in their jurisdiction they will respond to them by implementing gang intervention strategies to be more effective in dealing with the gang issue. If they do not have a significant gang problem, then they do not necessarily have to adapt.

CHAPTER 4

HYPOTHESIS

This study is more speculative in nature because the exact quality of ties between “cartel affiliated” gangs is not known with the current data. Ideally, policing strategies would have a negative relationship on levels of U.S. gang activity; as enforcement increases or becomes more stringent, the level of gang activity decreases, or at least keeps stable (Huff & McBride, 1993; Owens & Wells, 1993; Rush, 1996). Four sets of hypotheses will be explored. Hypothesis one and three will determine if there is a relationship between the variables in question and hypothesis two and four will determine if that relationship differs for “cartel affiliated” gangs and non-cartel affiliated gangs. The hypotheses are as follows:

H1: Anti-gang law enforcement strategies reduce gang activity.

H2: Anti-gang law enforcement strategies are less effective for “cartel affiliated” gang activity than they are for non-cartel affiliated gangs.

H3: Law enforcement agencies respond to higher gang activity by increasing anti-gang intervention strategies.

H4: Law enforcement agencies are more responsive to “cartel affiliated” gang activity than they are to non-cartel affiliated gang activity.

CHAPTER 5

METHODS

Data

Due to the nature of the Arizona Gang Threat Assessment (GTA) survey, the unit of analysis for this study are law enforcement agencies in the state of Arizona. This study seeks to determine the relationship between law enforcement intervention strategies and the activity of U.S. gangs in Arizona. The Arizona GTA asks every law enforcement agency in the state of Arizona the level of gang activity in their jurisdiction¹. When it comes to police gathering gang activity data, the size of the population of the population that the law enforcement agency serves and the where the agencies are located are environmental variables that effect the potential bias (Katz, Fox, Britt, Stevenson, 2012). What has been found in prior research has been that larger jurisdictions are more likely to have gang problems (Klein & Maxson, 2006) and these agencies are more likely to be large themselves and have the proper structural mechanisms to record gang activity to some extent (Katz et al., 2002).

The survey has a list of roughly 27 gangs² that the respondent from the agency will respond with the level of activity that specific gang has in their jurisdiction. Using an identifying list of U.S. gangs that are “affiliated” with Mexican drug cartels from the FBI’s 2011 National Gang Threat Assessment (Federal Bureau of Investigations, 2010),

Notes

¹ In regard to data on the number of gangs, gang members, and gang homicides recorded by law enforcement agencies across the United States, it is fairly robust and is generally reliable enough to be used by policymakers and academics (Katz et al., 2012).

² The number of gangs examined in each survey fluctuated depending on the year the survey was taken, but the number of gangs stayed roughly around the 27 mark. They include street gangs, outlaw motorcycle gangs, and prison gangs.

the author has compiled a list of gangs in the Arizona GTA that will be the focus of the analysis. Of these 27 gangs in the Arizona GTA, 10 are from the FBI's National Gang Threat Assessment list of "cartel affiliated" gangs. The degree of this affiliation is still murky. These U.S. gangs include: *Bloods*, *Crips*, *Latin Kings*, *Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13)*, *Hells Angels*, *Bandidos*, *Mexican Mafia*, *Texas Mexican Mafia (Mexikanemi)*, *Texas Syndicate*, *La Nuestra Familia*. The effects of policing strategies on the level of activity of these 10 gangs will be described and analyzed using the 2009 and 2010 survey data. The 2008 data was not used because it was filled with more open-ended questions and the responses that were most commonly referred to were aggregated to become standardized measures for later surveys. The 2012 data were not used because it did not include some gangs that were included in the 2009 and 2010 survey. The 2007 data was not provided by the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission.

The Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (AZCJC) is a statutorily mandated entity that is authorized to research the various administration and management of criminal justice programs in the state of Arizona. The Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) is the research arm of the AZCJC and is the one that administers the Arizona GTA. The SAC is the state equivalent of the national Bureau of Justice Statistics. The target population of the survey is law enforcement agencies in the state of Arizona. These surveys were sent out to county sheriff's offices, municipal police agencies, marshals, and tribal police departments. The chief would be asked to fill out the survey³. Law enforcement agencies are not mandated by the state to fill out the Arizona GTA.

³ Or someone the chief appoints that is knowledgeable of the jurisdiction's gang activity and is capable of filling out the survey.

Researchers from the SAC try to assure a response by letting the agencies know the importance of the survey and the positives that could come out of it. In spite of this, the Arizona GTA has seen a decline in response rates every year. In 2009, they sent 113 surveys and received 81 back (71.68%). One of the first questions asked is if the agency has gang activity in their jurisdiction, and if they do not then the agency does not fill the rest of the survey. Of the 81 agencies that returned their surveys back, 19 marked that they did not have gang activity in their jurisdiction, leaving the sample size of this study to the 62 agencies that had activity and filled out the rest of the survey. Follow-up surveys, emails, and phone calls are sent to the agencies to improve the response rates, but the rates are still declining.

Table 5.1 Arizona Gang Threat Assessment Response Rate

Year	Surveys Sent	Received (%)	Marked “Yes” for Gang Activity
2008	113	99 (87.61%)	69 (69.70%)
2009	113	81 (71.68%)	62 (76.54%)
2010	111	64 (57.66%)	46 (71.88%)
2012	109	64 (58.72%)	50 (78.12%)

The decreasing response rate is a limitation of the study because reporting of gang activity in the state becomes less accurate. The survey data is broken down into the 15 counties of Arizona and this response rate can affect the accuracy of the gang activity image in these counties. For example, high response rates would be pivotal in a small county like Greenlee, which has only two law enforcement agencies. If agency A does not respond and agency B marks that it has moderate levels of gang activity, then the county would be labeled as having moderate levels of gang activity where it could be entirely possible that the district agency A covers has zero gang activity, thus lowering the average of gang activity in the county.

The years that these surveys have been administered are significant. The drug cartels in Mexico had a relatively undisturbed existence in their country for decades until their president from 2006-2012, Felipe Calderón, decided to launch an initiative to eradicate the cartels from his country (Grillo, 2011). These years have seen a massive upswing in visible cartel activity and their public desire to trade in the United States. Coincidentally, the dates the surveys were administered were 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2012; the same time frame as the Mexican Drug War. Activity should be different among gangs that are “affiliated” with cartels versus their non-affiliated counterparts.

Measures

Each agency is asked how much gang activity is in their jurisdiction. These responses are based on a Likert scale of “High”, “Moderate”, “Low”, “None” and “Unknown”. In the survey data, these numbers were originally coded as 1 = High, 2 = Moderate, 3 = Low, 4 = None, and 5 = Unknown. For ease of interpretation, “None” and “Unknown” were combined and the scales were reversed, now 3 = High, 2 = Moderate, 1 = Low, 0 = None/Unknown. The reason for combining “None” and “Unknown” is because these measures are not perfectly ordinal. If the author were to keep the measures as is then there would have been an assumption that the distance between “High” and “Moderate” is the same as “None” and “Unknown”. By combining these two, the author is assuming that it is the most appropriate to couple these two as opposed to any other value because an “Unknown” value is more likely to be closer to “None” as opposed to “High” because if the “Unknown” level of activity were truly high then it should have been noticed by local law enforcement. The reason for reversing the number of the coding is because it is more intuitive to conceptualize higher rates of crime with larger

numbers. The amount of missing data for the measure of number of gang members will result in a loss of statistical power. Researchers may be less likely to detect a causal relationship when one exists (Katz et al., 2012).

Some might argue that having “Unknown” as a response choice is unnecessary, but the author contends that it is important to capture this. Some counties are smaller and have less funding. It is possible that these small counties, like Santa Cruz, do not have the capability to capture gang activity in their district as a larger county, like Maricopa, has. These small counties can suffer from furtive gang operations, but just do not have resources to identify them. Table 5.2 shows the amount of law enforcement agencies that marked “Unknown” for each gang in this study. The 2010 data suffers the most because of its lower response rate. It would be interesting to see if the agencies from smaller counties are the ones that are more often marking the “Unknown” response. If this is the case then it is important to give these counties adequate gang identifying resources because cognizant cartel operations can become keen to this fact.

Table 5.2 Agencies Responding “Unknown” for Listed Gang

Gangs	2009 N=62	2010 N=46
Bloods	7 (11.29%)	4 (8.70%)
Crips	6 (9.68%)	2 (4.35%)
Latin Kings	7 (11.29%)	4 (8.70%)
Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13)	8 (12.90%)	5 (10.87%)
Mexican Mafia	7 (11.29%)	4 (8.70%)
Texas Mexican Mafia (Mexikanemi)	11 (17.74%)	6 (13.04%)
Texas Syndicate	12 (19.35%)	5 (10.87%)
La Nuestra Familia	12 (19.35%)	7 (15.22%)
Hells Angels	4 (6.45%)	5 (10.87%)

Table 5.2 Agencies Responding “Unknown” for Listed Gang, Continued

Gangs	2009 <i>N</i> =62	2010 <i>N</i> =46
Bandidos	7 (11.29%)	7 (15.22%)
UBN (United Blood Nation)	13 (16.05%)	11 (23.91%)
Vice Lords	11 (20.97%)	6 (13.04%)
Almighty Black P. Stone Nation	10 (16.13%)	6 (13.04%)
Sureños	3 (4.84%)	1 (2.17%)
Norteños	5 (8.06%)	3 (6.52%)
18th Street Gang	6 (9.68%)	5 (10.87%)
La Raza	7 (11.29%)	8 (17.39%)
Border Brothers	6 (9.68%)	4 (8.70%)
Pagans	7 (11.29%)	6 (13.04%)
Outlaws	8 (12.90%)	10 (21.74%)

Using these responses, new variables were created. For this study, the author looked at how the activity level of “cartel affiliated” gangs in 2009 and 2010 were affected by intervention strategies. The author will also use the other gangs in the survey that have not been identified as cartel affiliated as a control group for comparison.

Table 5.3 “Cartel Affiliated” and Non-Cartel Affiliated Gangs

“Cartel Affiliated” Gangs <i>N</i> =10	Non-Cartel Affiliated Gangs <i>N</i> =10
Bloods	UBN (United Blood Nation)
Crips	Vice Lords
Latin Kings	Almighty Black P. Stone Nation
Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13)	Sureños
Mexican Mafia	Norteños
Texas Mexican Mafia (Mexikanemi)	18 th Street Gangs
Texas Syndicate	La Raza
La Nuestra Familia	Border Brothers
Hells Angels	Pagans
Bandidos	Outlaws

Table 5.4 Gangs Not “Affiliated” with Drug Cartels, 2009

Gangs	None/Unknown = 0	Low = 1	Moderate = 2	High = 3	Number of Agencies
Sureños	11 (18.64%)	14 (23.73%)	20 (33.90%)	14 (23.73%)	59
Norteños	28 (47.46%)	23 (38.98%)	6 (10.17%)	2 (3.39%)	59
Border Brothers	40 (68.97%)	16 (27.59%)	2 (3.45%)	—	58
Outlaws	49 (84.48%)	7 (12.07%)	2 (3.45%)	—	58
18th Street Gang	42 (71.19%)	16 (27.12%)	1 (1.69%)	—	59
Vice Lords	52 (88.14%)	6 (10.17%)	1 (1.69%)	—	59
UBN (United Blood Nation)	52 (89.66%)	5 (8.62%)	1 (1.72%)	—	58
Almighty Black P. Stone Nation	55 (93.22%)	4 (6.78%)	—	—	59
La Raza	51 (86.44%)	8 (13.56%)	—	—	59
Pagans	53 (91.38%)	5 (8.62%)	—	—	58

Table 5.5 Gangs “Affiliated” with Drug Cartels, 2009

Gangs	None/Unknown = 0	Low = 1	Moderate = 2	High = 3	Number of Agencies
Bloods	22 (37.29%)	20 (33.90%)	9 (15.25%)	8 (13.56%)	59
Crips	22 (37.29%)	17 (28.81%)	11 (18.64%)	9 (15.25%)	59

Table 5.5 Gangs “Affiliated” with Drug Cartels, 2009, Continued

Gangs	None/Unknown = 0	Low = 1	Moderate = 2	High = 3	Number of Agencies
Mexican Mafia	20 (33.90%)	23 (38.98%)	9 (15.25%)	7 (11.86%)	59
Hells Angels	21 (35.59%)	19 (32.20%)	16 (27.12%)	3 (5.08%)	59
Latin Kings	40 (67.80%)	18 (30.51%)	1 (1.69%)	—	59
Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13)	31 (52.54%)	25 (42.37%)	3 (5.08%)	—	59
Bandidos	47 (79.66%)	11 (18.64%)	1 (1.69%)	—	59
La Nuestra Familia	50 (84.75%)	7 (11.86%)	1 (1.69%)	1 (1.69%)	59
Texas Syndicate	57 (96.61%)	2 (3.39%)	—	—	59
Texas Mexican Mafia (Mexikanemi)	57 (98.28%)	1 (1.72%)	—	—	58

Table 5.6 Gangs Not “Affiliated” with Drug Cartels, 2010

Gangs	None/Unknown = 0	Low = 1	Moderate = 2	High = 3	Number of Agencies
Sureños	9 (20.00%)	14 (31.11%)	8 (17.78%)	14 (31.11%)	45
Norteños	19 (42.22%)	18 (40.00%)	5 (11.11%)	3 (6.67%)	45
Border Brothers	31 (86.36%)	12 (26.67%)	2 (4.44%)	—	45
Outlaws	38 (84.48%)	6 (13.64%)	—	—	44
18th Street Gang	32 (72.73%)	12 (27.27%)	—	—	44

Table 5.6 Gangs Not “Affiliated” with Drug Cartels, 2010, Continued

Gangs	None/Unknown = 0	Low = 1	Moderate = 2	High = 3	Number of Agencies
Vice Lords	40 (88.89%)	4 (8.89%)	1 (2.22%)	—	45
UBN (United Blood Nation)	41 (93.18%)	1 (2.27%)	1 (2.27%)	1 (2.27%)	44
Almighty Black P. Stone Nation	43 (95.56%)	1 (2.22%)	1 (2.22%)	—	45
La Raza	39 (88.64%)	3 (6.82%)	—	2 (4.55%)	44
Pagans	44 (97.78%)	1 (2.22%)	—	—	45

Table 5.7 Gangs “Affiliated” with Drug Cartels, 2010

Gangs	None/Unknown = 0	Low = 1	Moderate = 2	High = 3	Number of Agencies
Bloods	13 (28.89%)	13 (28.89%)	9 (20.00%)	10 (22.22%)	45
Crips	11 (24.44%)	14 (31.11%)	12 (26.67%)	8 (17.78%)	45
Mexican Mafia	15 (33.33%)	12 (26.67%)	8 (17.78%)	10 (22.22%)	45
Hells Angels	16 (35.56%)	17 (37.78%)	11 (24.44%)	1 (2.22%)	45
Latin Kings	25 (56.82%)	18 (40.91%)	1 (2.27%)	—	44
Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13)	22 (50.00%)	22 (50.00%)	—	—	44
Bandidos	39 (86.67%)	5 (11.11%)	1 (2.22%)	—	45

Table 5.7 Gangs “Affiliated” with Drug Cartels, 2010, Continued

Gangs	None/Unknown = 0	Low = 1	Moderate = 2	High = 3	Number of Agencies
La Nuestra Familia	39 (90.70%)	4 (9.30%)	—	—	43
Texas Syndicate	41 (93.18%)	2 (4.55%)	1 (2.27%)	—	44
Texas Mexican Mafia (Mexikanemi)	42 (93.33%)	3 (6.67%)	—	—	45

This study uses dummy variable regression, change score analysis, and multinomial logistic regression. Dependent and independent variables vary according to which analysis is being looked at.

Dummy Variable Regression.

The point of a multivariate regression is to estimate the relationships among the variables. In this study, the author used a dummy variable regression to estimate the relationship of intervention strategies on the level of gang activity. Using Stata, the author generated a new variable, *Ogang09*, which combined all the gangs in the study (listed above) and divided it by the total number of gangs, 20. This gets an overall average of gang activity. The author then generated a “cartel affiliated” gang variable, *Cgang09*, which combined all the cartel affiliated gangs in the study and divided it by the total number of gangs in the group, 10. This gets an overall average of gang activity for “cartel affiliated” gangs. The final variable generated was one for the non-cartel affiliated gangs. *Ngang09* combined all the non-cartel affiliated gangs in the study and divided it by the total number of gangs in the group, 10. This gets an overall average of gang

activity for non-cartel affiliated gangs. The *Ngang* group is a control group and gives the *Cgang* group something to compare to. This process was then done for the 2010 data and labeled accordingly. The newly generated variables are the dependent variables.

Table 5.8 2009 Gang Activity Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Observations	Mean	SD	Min	Max
<i>Ogang 09</i>	32	0.552	0.371	0.05	1.55
<i>Cgang 09</i>	35	0.651	0.405	0.10	1.60
<i>Ngang 09</i>	33	0.458	0.394	0.00	1.50

Table 5.9 2010 Gang Activity Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Observations	Mean	SD	Min	Max
<i>Ogang 10</i>	33	0.539	0.342	0.00	1.30
<i>Cgang 10</i>	34	0.676	0.417	0.00	1.50
<i>Ngang 10</i>	35	0.380	0.331	0.00	1.60

The effects that law enforcement intervention strategies have on gang activity will then be assessed. Each law enforcement agency is asked if they use nine different types of enforcement strategies. The responses are recorded as simple binary variables of “Yes” or “No”. These nine different types of enforcement strategies, tactics, programs and strategies which include: “Law Enforcement”, “Identification of Gang Members”, “GIITEM⁴”, “Joint Efforts with Other Agencies”, “Gang Crime/Intelligence Data Analysis”, “Law Enforcement Gang Units”, “School Programs”, “Community Programs”, and “Special Prosecution Programs”. The usual coding of binary responses is 1 = Yes and 0 = No. These will be grouped as strategies for the remainder of the study. The issue with this portion of the data was that it was coded where 1 = Yes and a period

Notes

⁴ GIITEM stands for “Gang and Immigration Intelligence Team Enforcement Mission.” It is a statewide multi-agency task force that consists of five districts. It provides gang and illegal immigration enforcement and intelligence services.

equaled “No”. This is problematic when trying to perform regression models on the data. This portion of the data had to be recoded so that 0 = No. A table for the frequency that law enforcement agencies mark that they do practice a certain intervention strategy is included.

Table 5.10 Gang Intervention Strategies Practiced by Law Enforcement Agencies

Intervention Strategy	2009	2010
	N=62	N=46
	Number of Agencies	Number of Agencies
Law Enforcement	47 (75.81%)	40 (88.89%)
Identification of Gang Members	40 (64.52%)	38 (84.44%)
GIITEM	36 (58.06%)	31 (68.89%)
Joint Efforts with Other Agencies	30 (48.39%)	27 (60.00%)
Gang Crime/Intelligence Analyses	22 (35.48%)	21 (46.67%)
Law Enforcement Gang Units	20 (32.26%)	19 (42.22%)
School Programs	17 (27.42%)	12 (26.67%)
Special Prosecution Programs	13 (20.97%)	8 (17.78%)
Community Programs	8 (12.90%)	11 (24.44%)

The independent variables are dummy variables. A new variable was created to capture the departments that increased their number of anti-gang strategies from 2009 to 2010, *Increased*. A second dummy variable was created to capture the departments that had no change in their number of anti-gang strategies from 2009 to 2010, *NoChange*. A third variable was created to capture the departments that decreased their number of anti-gang strategies from 2009 to 2010, *Decreased*. By regressing the 2010 gang variables

with dummy variables, the reader could potentially see if the changes in anti-gang strategies were related to the 2010 gang activity.

Table 5.11 Intervention Strategies Changed Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Observations	Mean	SD	Min	Max
<i>NoChange</i>	47	0.255	0.441	0	1
<i>Increased</i>	47	0.426	0.500	0	1
<i>Decreased</i>	47	0.319	0.471	0	1

Change Score.

Change scores for *Ogang*, *Cgang*, and *Ngang* were created for the second analysis. For example, subtracting *Ogang09* from *Ogang10* will net the change score for *Ogang*. This was done for the other gang variables as well. The dummy variables above were then regressed on the change scores. The change scores are the dependent variables while the dummy variables are the independent variables. This will determine if the changes in anti-gang strategies are related to changes in gang activity.

Table 5.12 Change Score Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Observations	Mean	SD	Min	Max
<i>ChangeOgang</i>	27	-.0740741	.349827	-1	.7
<i>ChangeCgang</i>	31	-.0451613	.3845679	-1	1
<i>ChangeNgang</i>	29	-.1206897	.3478293	-1	.5

Multinomial Logistic Regression.

A multinomial logistic model is used to see if the surveyed law enforcement departments are responsive to the level of gang activity they are reporting. The *Increased*, *NoChange*, and *Decreased* dummy variables would be the dependent variables and the 2009 gang variables would be the independent variables. The dummy variables were combined to create a new categorical variable, *Changed*. This analysis could help

determine whether or not the jurisdictions with higher levels of gang activity respond by increasing their levels of intervention strategies.

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS AND ANALYSES

Dummy Variable Regression

Table 6.1 shows the summary statistics for *Ogang10*. *NoChange* means that the amount of intervention strategies that law enforcement agencies remained the same between 2009 and 2010. *Increased* means that the amount of intervention strategies that law enforcement agencies went up in number from 2009 to 2010. *Decreased* means that the amount of intervention strategies that law enforcement agencies went down from 2009 to 2010. For example, the mean *Ogang10* score for the 14 law enforcement agencies that increased in intervention strategies from 2009 to 2010 was 0.554. The mean *Ogang10* score for the 5 law enforcement agencies that did not change the amount of intervention strategies from 2009 to 2010 was 0.760. A lower mean translates to lower levels of gang activity. As a reminder, the Likert scale was recoded to 0-3, 0 being none/unknown and 3 being high in gang activity.

Table 6.1 Summary of *Ogang10*

Response	Mean	SD	Frequency N=33
<i>NoChange</i>	0.760	0.160	5
<i>Increased</i>	0.554	0.353	14
<i>Decreased</i>	0.446	0.357	14
Total	0.539	0.342	33

Table 6.2 shows the summary statistics for *Cgang10* and the changing intervention strategies from 2009 to 2010.

Table 6.2 Summary of Cgang10

Response	Mean	SD	Frequency N=34
<i>NoChange</i>	0.980	0.277	5
<i>Increased</i>	0.667	0.478	15
<i>Decreased</i>	0.579	0.356	14
Total	0.676	0.417	34

Table 6.3 shows the summary statistics for *Ngang10* and the changing intervention strategies from 2009 to 2010.

Table 6.3 Summary of Ngang10

Response	Mean	SD	Frequency N=35
<i>NoChange</i>	0.540	0.114	5
<i>Increased</i>	0.400	0.280	15
<i>Decreased</i>	0.307	0.410	15
Total	0.380	0.331	35

Table 6.4 shows the effects of law enforcement agencies increasing or decreasing their intervention strategies from 2009 to 2010 on all the gangs in 2010, which is variable *Ogang10*. Since this is a secondary data analysis just analyzing two years worth of data with a small amount of observations, it is difficult to tease out causal relationships and get significant results. With such a small sample size, the alpha level will be changed to .10. One coefficient is considered significant at the .10 level. If law enforcement agencies decreased their intervention strategies from 2009 to 2010, then the level of overall gang activity decreases by 0.314 units. This is contrary to deterrence theory. If law enforcement agencies decrease the amount of intervention strategies they practice, then the expected result, according to deterrence theory, would be an increase in gang activity, not a decrease in gang activity. This does not support the first hypothesis. Also note, the entire model should be interpreted with caution because the overall F statistic is not

significant. This caution also applies to the other models in the dummy variable regression section.

Table 6.4 *Ogang10* and *Increased & Decreased* Regression

Variable	b	SE	<i>t</i> statistic	<i>p</i> value
<i>Increased</i>	-0.206	0.175	-1.18	0.247
<i>Decreased</i>	-0.314*	0.175	-1.80	0.083
<i>Constant</i>	0.760	0.150	5.07	0.000

N = 33, Adj. R^2 = 0.0381, F = 1.63, p = 0.2122
*p<.10

Table 6.5 shows the effects of law enforcement agencies increasing or decreasing their intervention strategies from 2009 to 2010 on “cartel affiliated” gangs in 2010, which is variable *Cgang10*. One coefficient is considered significant at the .10 level. If law enforcement agencies decreased their intervention strategies from 2009 to 2010, then the level of “cartel affiliated” gang activity decreases by 0.401 units. These gangs were expected to act with more bravado by being affiliated with cartels making intervention strategies less effective against them, but this table presents a different picture. This finding does not support the second hypothesis that intervention strategies are less effective on “cartel affiliated” gangs.

Table 6.5 *Cgang10* and *Increased & Decreased* Regression

Variable	B	SE	<i>t</i> statistic	<i>p</i> value
<i>Increased</i>	-0.313	0.210	-1.49	0.146
<i>Decreased</i>	-0.401*	0.212	-1.89	0.068
<i>Constant</i>	0.980	0.182	5.38	0.000

N = 34, Adj. R^2 = 0.0460, F = 1.80, p = 0.1827
*p<.10

Table 6.6 shows the effects of law enforcement agencies increasing or decreasing their intervention strategies from 2009 to 2010 on non-cartel affiliated gangs, which is variable *Ngang10*. The results are not considered significant.

Table 6.6 Ngang10 and Increased & Decreased Regression

Variable	Coefficient	SE	<i>t</i> statistic	<i>p</i> value
<i>Increased</i>	-0.140	0.171	-0.82	0.419
<i>Decreased</i>	-0.233	0.171	-1.37	0.181
<i>Constant</i>	0.540	0.148	3.65	0.001

N = 35 Adj. R^2 = -0.0011, F = 0.98, p = 0.3859
*p<.10

Change Score Analysis

The point of a change score analysis is to determine if changes in the dependent variable from time 1 to time 2 are related to changes in the independent variable from time 1 to time 2. In this instance, a change score analysis could help determine if the increases or decreases in intervention strategies are related to the changes in gang activity.

Table 6.7 shows the summary statistics for *ChangeOgang*. *NoChange* means that the amount of intervention strategies that law enforcement agencies remained the same between 2009 and 2010. *Increased* means that the amount of intervention strategies that law enforcement agencies went up in number from 2009 to 2010. *Decreased* means that the amount of intervention strategies that law enforcement agencies went down from 2009 to 2010. For example, the mean *ChangeOgang* score for the 11 law enforcement agencies that increased in intervention strategies from 2009 to 2010 was 0.100. As a reminder for the reader, the change score variables in this section is a function that subtracts 2009 gang activity from 2010 gang activity. Negative averages in this column mean that gang activity was higher in 2009 than 2010.

Table 6.7 Summary of *ChangeOgang*

Response	Mean	SD	Frequency <i>N</i> = 27
<i>NoChange</i>	-0.080	0.340	5
<i>Increased</i>	0.100	0.311	11
<i>Decreased</i>	-0.245	0.331	11
Total	-0.074	0.350	27

Table 6.8 shows the summary statistics for *ChangeCgang* and the changing intervention strategies from 2009 to 2010. Those who increased their intervention strategies from 2009 to 2010 had higher levels of “cartel affiliated” gang activity in 2010 than in 2009. This could mean that increasing intervention strategies is positively related to changes in gang activity.

Table 6.8 Summary of *ChangeCgang*

Response	Mean	SD	Frequency <i>N</i> = 31
<i>NoChange</i>	0.040	0.182	5
<i>Increased</i>	0.086	0.372	14
<i>Decreased</i>	-0.233	0.405	12
Total	-0.045	0.385	31

Table 6.9 shows the summary statistics for *ChangeNgang* and the changing intervention strategies from 2009 to 2010. Those who increased their intervention strategies from 2009 to 2010 had lower levels of non-cartel affiliated gang activity in 2010 than in 2009. This could mean that increasing intervention strategies is negatively related to changes in gang activity.

Table 6.9 Summary of *ChangeNgang*

Response	Mean	SD	Frequency <i>N</i> = 29
<i>NoChange</i>	-0.200	0.505	5
<i>Increased</i>	0.000	0.311	13
<i>Decreased</i>	-0.227	0.294	11
Total	-0.121	0.348	29

Table 6.10 shows the effects of law enforcement agencies increasing or decreasing their intervention strategies from 2009 to 2010 on the change score between all the gangs in 2009 and 2010, which is variable *ChangeOgang*. Even with changing the alpha level to .10, there are no significant results. These findings should definitely be tempered because the *p* values are not significant and the overall F statistic for the model is also not significant.

Table 6.10 *ChangeOgang* and Increased & Decreased Regression

Variable	b	SE	<i>t</i> statistic	<i>p</i> value
<i>Increased</i>	0.180	0.175	1.03	0.314
<i>Decreased</i>	-0.165	0.175	-0.95	0.354
Constant	-0.080	0.145	-0.55	0.586

N = 27, Adj. R^2 = 0.1402, F = 3.12, p = 0.0625
 *p<.10

Table 6.11 shows the effects of law enforcement agencies increasing or decreasing their intervention strategies from 2009 to 2010 on the change score between all the cartel “affiliated” gangs in 2009 and 2010, which is variable *ChangeCgang*. Much like above, these results are diluted considering the lack of significant *p* values.

Table 6.11 *ChangeCgang* and Increased & Decreased Regression

Variable	b	SE	<i>t</i> statistic	<i>p</i> value
<i>Increased</i>	0.046	0.190	0.24	0.812
<i>Decreased</i>	-0.273	0.194	-1.41	0.171
Constant	-0.114	0.143	-0.24	0.808

N = 31, Adj. R^2 = 0.0978, F = 2.63 p = 0.0900
 *p<.10

Table 6.12 shows the effects of law enforcement agencies increasing or decreasing their intervention strategies from 2009 to 2010 on the change score between all the non-cartel affiliated gangs in 2009 and 2010, which is variable *ChangeNgang*. The results are not considered significant.

Table 6.12 ChangeNgang and Increased & Decreased Regression

Variable	Coefficient	SE	t statistic	p value
<i>Increased</i>	0.200	0.180	1.11	0.277
<i>Decreased</i>	-0.027	0.184	-0.15	0.884
Constant	-0.200	0.153	-1.31	0.202

N = 29, Adj. R² = 0.0330, F = 1.48, p = 0.2457
*p<.10

Confidence intervals also play a part in determining where the effects lie. None of the models had a 95% confidence interval that did not contain zero. This makes it difficult to see where the effect lies. These models do not contain statistically significant results, and so provide no evidence to prove if the increases or decreases in intervention strategies are related to the changes in gang activity.

Multinomial Logistic Regression

A multinomial logistic model is used to test the third and fourth hypotheses. This model will allow the reader to see if the surveyed law enforcement departments are responsive to the level of gang activity they are reporting. The coefficients in these models tell the reader that a one unit increase in the reported gang problems changes the odds of expanding the number of intervention strategies. The categorical variable will be 0 if law enforcement agencies decreased intervention strategies, a 1 if law enforcement agencies maintained the same amount of intervention strategies, and a 2 if law enforcement agencies increased in intervention strategies. In the models, no change in the number of enforcement strategies represents the base outcome.

Table 6.13 shows odds of law enforcement agencies being responsive, *Changed*, to all the gang activity in 2009, which is *Ogang09*. For example, if law enforcement agencies reported a 1 unit increase in all gang activity then the odds of them decreasing intervention strategies is -1.638. If law enforcement agencies reported 1 unit increase in

all gang activity then the odds of them maintaining the same amount of intervention strategies is 2.716. With such a small sample size, the alpha level will be changed to .10. With the alpha level at .10, a coefficient in the *Increased* category is considered significant because the p-value is .038. This means that if law enforcement agencies reported a 1 unit increase in all gang activity then the odds of them increasing interventions strategies is -3.477. According to structural contingency theory, police agencies will change their organizations to reflect changes in their environment. If they see increases in gang activity, then the odds they will respond by increasing their intervention strategies is negative.

Table 6.13 Changed and *Ogang09* Multinomial Regression

		Coefficient	SE	z	P> z	95% C.I.	
0	<i>Ogang09</i>	-1.638	1.516	-1.08	0.280	-4.610	1.334
	Constant	1.972	1.276	1.55	0.122	-0.528	4.473
1			(base outcome)				
2	<i>Ogang09</i>	-3.477**	1.672	-2.08	0.038	-6.753	-
	Constant	3.287	1.275	2.58	0.010	0.788	5.785

N = 32, Pseudo R² = 0.0901, LR Chi²(2) = 5.79, Prob> Chi² = 0.0553
 *p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01, ****p<.000

Table 6.14 shows the margins for the multinomial regression model in table 6.13. If a law enforcement agency reports no gang activity for the 20 gangs in this study, when *Ogang09* equals zero, then there is a 21 percent chance that the law enforcement agency will decrease their intervention strategies, 3 percent chance of no change in intervention strategies, and 77 percent chance that they will increase the number of gang intervention strategies. On the other hand, if law enforcement agencies report a relatively high level of gang activity, when *Ogang09* equals one, then they are more likely to decrease the

number of gang intervention strategies (43 percent) and less likely to increase (26 percent). Potential reasons will be discussed below.

Table 6.14 *Changed* and *Ogang09* Margins

Outcome	Values	Margin	SE	z	P> z	95% C.I.	
0	0	0.206*	0.125	1.65	0.099	-0.039	0.450
	.5	0.357****	0.091	3.93	0.000	0.179	0.536
	1	0.433***	0.142	3.05	0.002	0.155	0.712
	1.5	0.350	0.265	1.32	0.187	-0.170	0.869
1	0	0.029	0.034	0.83	0.404	-0.039	0.096
	.5	0.113*	0.064	1.77	0.077	-0.012	0.238
	1	0.310**	0.135	2.30	0.021	0.046	0.574
2	1.5	0.568*	0.295	1.92	0.055	-0.011	1.147
	0	0.766****	0.133	5.74	0.000	0.504	1.027
	.5	0.530****	0.095	5.56	0.000	0.343	0.717
	1	0.256*	0.131	1.95	0.051	-0.001	0.514
	1.5	0.083	0.098	0.84	0.399	-0.109	0.274

N=32

*p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01, ****p<.000

Table 6.15 shows odds of law enforcement agencies being responsive, *Changed*, to the “cartel affiliated” gang activity in 2009, which is *Cgang09*. A coefficient in the *Increased* category is considered significant because the p-value is .028. This means that if law enforcement agencies reported a 1 unit increase in “cartel affiliated” gang activity then the odds of them increasing interventions strategies is -3.517. According to structural contingency theory, police agencies will change their organizations to reflect changes in their environment. These findings seem contrary to that. If they see increases in gang activity, then the odds they will respond by increasing their intervention strategies are negative.

Table 6.15 *Changed* and *Cgang09* Multinomial Regression

		Coefficient	SE	z	P> z	95% C.I.	
0	<i>Cgang09</i>	-1.020	1.474835	-0.69	0.489	-3.910	1.871
	Constant	1.763	1.432176	1.23	0.218	-1.044	4.570
1			(base outcome)				

Table 6.15 Changed and Cgang09 Multinomial Regression, Continued

	Coefficient	SE	z	P> z	95% C.I.	
<i>Cgang09</i>	-3.517**	1.596	-2.20	0.028	-6.645	-
2	Constant	3.741	1.407	2.66	0.008	0.983
						6.500

N = 35, Pseudo R² = 0.1247, LR Chi²(2) = 8.62, Prob> Chi² = 0.0135
 *p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01, ****p<.000

Table 6.16 shows the margins for the multinomial regression model in table 6.15.

If a law enforcement agency reports no “cartel affiliated” gang activity for the 10 gangs in the group, when *Cgang09* equals zero, then there is a 12 percent chance that the law enforcement agency will decrease their intervention strategies, 2 percent chance of no change in intervention strategies, and 86 percent chance that they will increase the number of gang intervention strategies. On the other hand, if law enforcement agencies report a relatively high level of “cartel affiliated” gang activity, when *Cgang09* equals one, then they are more likely to decrease the number of gang intervention strategies (48 percent) and less likely to increase (29 percent). These findings are similar in nature to the previous margins model.

Table 6.16 Changed and Cgang09 Margins

Outcome	Values	Margin	SE	z	P> z	95% C.I.	
0	0	0.119	0.089	1.34	0.179	-0.055	0.293
	.5	0.298***	0.091	3.27	0.001	0.119	0.476
	1	0.483****	0.116	4.17	0.000	0.256	0.710
	1.5	0.510**	0.231	2.20	0.028	0.056	0.963
1	0	0.020	0.028	0.74	0.460	-0.034	0.075
	.5	0.085	0.059	1.47	0.142	-0.028	0.198
	1	0.230**	0.094	2.44	0.015	0.045	0.414
	1.5	0.403*	0.242	1.67	0.095	-0.070	0.877
2	0	0.861****	0.097	8.86	0.000	0.670	1.051
	.5	0.617****	0.098	6.32	0.000	0.426	0.809
	1	0.287**	0.112	2.56	0.011	0.067	0.507
	1.5	0.087	0.082	1.06	0.290	-0.074	0.248

N=35

*p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01, ****p<.000

Table 6.17 shows odds of law enforcement agencies being responsive, *Changed*, to the non-cartel affiliated gang activity in 2009, which is *Ngang09*. A coefficient in the *Increased* category is considered significant because the p-value is .099. This means that if law enforcement agencies reported a 1 unit increase in non-cartel affiliated gang activity then the odds of them increasing interventions strategies is -2.169. This is consistent with the other models. If law enforcement agencies see increases in gang activity, then the odds they will respond by increasing their intervention strategies are negative. This shows, to some extent, that law enforcement agencies are not more responsive to increased gang activity, let alone “cartel affiliated” gang activity.

Table 6.17 *Changed* and *Ngang09* Multinomial Regression

		Coefficient	SE	z	P> z	95% C.I.	
0	<i>Ngang09</i>	-1.788	1.359	-1.32	0.188	-4.452	0.876
	Constant	1.823	1.014	1.80	0.072	-0.165	3.811
1			(base outcome)				
2	<i>Ngang09</i>	-2.169*	1.316	-1.65	0.099	-4.749	0.411
	Constant	2.415	0.979	2.47	0.014	0.497	4.333

N = 33, Pseudo R² = 0.0455, LR Chi²(2) = 2.98, Prob> Chi² = 0.2252
 *p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01, ****p<.000

Table 6.18 shows the margins for the multinomial regression model in table 6.17. If a law enforcement agency reports no non-cartel affiliated gang activity for the 10 gangs in the group, when *Ngang09* equals zero, then there is a 34 percent chance that the law enforcement agency will decrease their intervention strategies, 5 percent chance of no change in intervention strategies, and 13 percent chance that they will increase the number of gang intervention strategies. On the other hand, if law enforcement agencies report a relatively high level of non-cartel affiliated gang activity, when *Ngang09* equals one, then they are less likely to decrease the number of gang intervention strategies (31%

percent) and more likely to increase (39 percent). These findings are not like the two previous models. Law enforcement agencies, at least when responding to non-cartel gang activity, act in an expected way. They are more likely to decrease intervention strategies when they experience no gang activity and they increase their intervention strategies when they experience relatively high numbers of gang activity.

Table 6.18 Changed and Ngang09 Margins

Outcome	Values	Margin	SE	z	P> z	95% C.I.	
0	0	0.337***	0.130	2.59	0.009	0.082	0.591
	.5	0.346****	0.086	4.01	0.000	0.177	0.515
	1	0.312**	0.142	2.20	0.028	0.034	0.591
	1.5	0.228	0.205	1.11	0.265	-0.173	0.630
1	0	0.054	0.049	1.11	0.265	-0.041	0.150
	.5	0.137**	0.064	2.12	0.034	0.010	0.263
	1	0.302**	0.140	2.16	0.031	0.028	0.576
2	1.5	0.539*	0.287	1.88	0.060	-0.023	1.101
	0	0.609****	0.134	4.55	0.000	0.347	0.871
	.5	0.517****	0.091	5.66	0.000	0.338	0.696
	1	0.386**	0.151	2.56	0.010	0.090	0.681
	1.5	0.233	0.200	1.17	0.244	-0.159	0.625

N=33
 *p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01, ****p<.000

Other analyses were attempted, but were abandoned when no effects could be seen. Instead of combining all the gangs into *Ogang*, *Cgang*, and *Ngang*, the author originally tried to split the gangs based on central identifying factors as well as “cartel affiliated” and non-cartel affiliated groups. For example, there are predominantly black gangs (e.g., Bloods and Crips), predominantly Hispanic gangs (e.g., MS-13 and the Mexican Mafia), and there are organized motorcycle gangs (e.g., Hells Angels and the Pagans). Putting gangs in these types of groups and regressing the intervention strategies would potentially show if intervention strategies were less effective against different gang groups. These groupings failed to produce significant results because the effects

were spread thinly due to the low observation numbers. Before creating the *Increased*, *Decreased*, and the *No Change* variables, the author attempted to regress all the intervention strategies separately to determine if certain intervention strategies had more of an effect on gang activity, but the effects were not significant so combining the intervention strategies and using two years worth of data was necessary. More nuanced questions could not be answered with the current data.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability.

The reliability of the data is improved by having two years of survey data available. If there were spikes in the data where some districts reported no gang activity in one year and then reported very high levels of gang activity the next year then it could pose a potential problem for reliability. Through initial screening of the data, there have been gradual increases and decreases in scores.

Internal Validity.

The models above are not being presented as unbiased or causal, but more exploratory and descriptive. The violations of assumptions are not going to undermine the goals of the study. The sampling issues could be discussed without running specification and heteroskedasticity tests. The declining survey response rate has decreased the amount of usable data because the departments that responded in 2009 had to respond in 2010 to be included in the study. The lack of observations in the models above is a major cause for concern because without a sufficient amount of observations the models are not significant. Any coefficients that were found to be significant have to be interpreted with caution because the overall models were not significant. Future

research might want to look at improving response rates for the surveys so more observations could be included in the models. Although there are multiple sets of data (2008, 2009, 2010, 2012), aggregating these data sets will provide more insignificant results because there is a wide range of participation amongst the survey takers. It would be highly unlikely for even more than 20 agencies to respond to the survey all four years.

The data source is another cause for concern. The dark figure of crime also applies to identifying gang members. No matter the amount of high-tech identification software, or however big the gang unit is, there are few departments that would claim that they have identified every gang member in their jurisdiction (Maxson, 1995). It is inevitable for gang members to fall through the cracks and escape detection. The level of gang activity reported cannot be taken with perfect confidence, but should be considered as a rough estimate. For instance, a car is stolen and is later recovered, but there are no suspects. Is this gang-related or are some high school youths looking for a joy ride? The department cannot definitively label this incident as gang-related. Despite this, law enforcement reports still represent the best estimation of gang activity. That being said, the level of gang activity might be under-represented or over-represented in certain jurisdictions because designation procedures are not perfect.

The list provided by the FBI of gangs that are “affiliated” with cartels is also a cause for validity concerns. The Crips in Arizona are not necessarily the same as the Crips in Texas. Perhaps it is appropriate to label that there is an “affiliation” between the Texas chapter of the Crips, but it is inappropriate to say that the Crips in Arizona are associated with cartels in the same way. Since this study is more exploratory in nature and not claiming unbiased results, this concern is not a damning one. If a study were

trying to present definitive results then the researcher would have to go through a more rigorous process of evaluating the “affiliations”.

External Validity.

The use of control groups lessens external validity problems. With the control group, *Ogang*, the author is able to compare the effects of intervention strategies on both types of gang groups. The quality of the control group is not perfect because as mentioned before the level of gang activity reported is only a rough estimate. If the sample size were large enough to yield statistically precise findings then perhaps the findings could be generalizable to the state of Arizona and to other southern states with “cartel affiliated” gangs.

If further research were to be conducted using this data then the declining response rates over the years would be a concern for external validity. This study used the 2009 data that had a 71.68% response rate, which is a high response rate, but if some sort of longitudinal study were to be done then the researchers must address the dismal response rates in 2010 and 2012. Lower response rates are an issue because identification of the gang issue becomes less accurate because fewer law enforcement agencies are returning their surveys. The Arizona Gang Threat Assessment has difficulty generalizing the gang threat in Arizona without a response from every law enforcement agency coupled with an already tricky population to identify. Possible fixes are discussed below.

CHAPTER 7

LIMITATIONS AND DISCUSSION

Limitations

Apart from the reliability and validity of this study, there are several limitations. First, the level of these gang intervention strategies and how they are enforced is not level across every agency. This could be problematic when one agency holds high standards and have benchmarks for what they consider a certain intervention strategy and then another agency that claims to practice particular intervention strategies, but have low standards for said strategies. This type of response can skew the effectiveness of certain intervention strategies. The GTA could list standards of criteria that an agency must check-off before stating that the agency practices a certain enforcement strategy. Although helpful, this could lengthen the time it takes to fill out the survey and thus hurt an already declining survey response rate.

Second, through this survey it is difficult, if not impossible, to view the resources or the capability of each agency to enact enforcement strategies. One could only assume that bigger counties can have bigger budgets so they can practice more intervention strategies while smaller counties have fewer resources. This poses a similar problem as mentioned above. This is not a big concern because the smaller counties are typically the ones that have lower levels of gang activity, which justifies the fewer resources. But of course, some could argue that these agencies from smaller counties do not have the resources or the capability to identify gang activity if they wanted to. This concern could be fixed by taking the average of agency budgets and number of officers.

A third limitation is the declining response rates. In 2008, the AZCJC enjoyed a very high response rate of 87.68%, but it has declined over the years to an underwhelming 57.66% in 2010 and 58.72% in 2012. There is no penalty for not filling out the survey. The agencies that do fill out the survey view the results as helpful or view their participation in the survey as helping their cause for grant funding or funding to help aid their gang problem. This harms the generalizability of the survey findings and studies that choose to use the data. To fix this issue, the state could mandate that law enforcement agencies fill out this survey, but for the state to see any reason to, the state must see the potential of this survey and data. The state must see an influx of researchers using this survey data in important studies to justify a mandate.

Fourth, there could have been potential error while answering the survey. The survey could be pushed down to a lower-level employee because it is not deemed important. The staff that the chief puts in charge of filling out the survey could have very little knowledge about the gang activity in the district. This lowered perception of importance can be illustrated by the declining response rates over the years. This issue should be downplayed because if the agencies did not view it as important then they would not waste time to return the filled out survey at all. To fix this concern, the AZCJC could send out two surveys to be filled out by two different people in the agency to test inter-rater reliability. The average of these surveys would suffice if they reached a certain threshold of agreement. Again, this prolongs the filling out process that could hurt the response rates.

Fifth, the responses for the level of gang activity for each gang are not measured in numbers, but on basic estimates, albeit informed by intelligence gathered through

intervention strategies. Nonetheless, one agency's "High" might be another agency's "Moderate". This subjective measure could pose a problem because some areas might be exaggerating gang problems while some areas might be underplaying gang problems (Zatz, 1987). This issue could potentially be fixed by offering ranges such as 0-25 or 100+ to indicate a better estimate of the amount of gang members in each individual gang. These values would be partnered with the Likert responses so ease of interpretation is present.

Sixth, this limitation raises a red flag with ethical implications. Some agencies could be claiming that there is more gang activity than is actually present in order to obtain more funding. Exaggerated levels of gang activity can be a concern for interpreting results, but it is tamed by the notion that law enforcement chiefs do not want to be the ones in charge of areas of "High" gang activity because that could harm their authority and the public's perception of the chief. This concern could be fixed by adding a second measurement of gang activity by another entity if a certain agency were in consideration for increased funding. This would make sure that agencies are truthful in their initial filling out of the survey.

Seventh, and most likely the biggest weakness of this study, is the assumption that each "cartel affiliated" gang has the same amount of affiliation with the cartels as any other "affiliated" gang. What needs to be clearer are the quality of these relationships between gangs and the cartels. It is one thing to say that a drug slinger in Yuma is selling drugs once belonging to the cartels. The relationship is entirely different if that Yuma slinger is on the payroll of the Sinaloa cartel. This is where connections need to be better investigated and researched. Possible solutions will be discussed below. Without

identifying the true quality of these partnerships, it is entirely possible that the cartel issue could be overblown and in turn unnecessarily incite fear in the citizens of America. Apart from the various limitations of the data, it still represents the best source at hand to answer the questions of this study.

Discussion

This study attempted to answer three questions. First, do law enforcement intervention strategies differently affect the activity of “cartel affiliated” gangs as opposed to those that are not affiliated with cartel? Second, are changes in the level of intervention strategies related to the changes in gang activity? Third, are law enforcement agencies more responsive towards cartel “affiliated” gangs? To answer these questions, the author attempted three sets of analyses: dummy variable regression, change score analysis, and multinomial logistic regression.

The dummy variable regression was to help answer the first question and find support for the first two hypotheses. For the dummy variable regression, the author created three groups: *Ogang*, *Cgang*, *Ngang* for 2009 and 2010. *Ogang* was created to see the weighted average effects of intervention strategies on all the gangs in the study. The groups of interest were *Cgang* and *Ngang*. *Cgang* had drug “cartel affiliated” gangs while *Ngang* had non-cartel affiliated gangs and acted as a control group for comparison. A dummy variable regression was used to see if increasing or decreasing levels of intervention strategies had an affect on the level of activity of the gangs analyzed.

Deterrence theory suggests that intervention strategies would impede gang activity because the cost of committing the crime would outweigh the benefits of committing the crime (Gibbs, 1975; Zimring & Hawkins, 1973). Increasing intervention

strategies should have a negative impact on gang activity, but the *Ogang* and *Cgang* models were able to reveal that decreasing intervention strategies had a negative impact on *Ogang* and *Cgang* gang activity at the .10 alpha level. This finding is contrary to the first and second hypotheses. Given the low number of observations, this finding is not generalizable. It is possible that with more years of data and with a higher response rate could show support for the hypotheses at lower alpha levels. This question was important to ask because the public has concern that cartels are invading or that gangs will be more cartel-like (Grillo, 2011). This finding shows, at least with this data, that “cartel affiliated” gangs are not becoming more brazen and they are not impervious to intervention strategies.

The change score analysis was to help answer the second question and find support for the third hypothesis. For the change score analysis, the author created change scores for the gang groups. *Ogang09* was subtracted from *Ogang10* to create *ChangeOgang*. This same process was also done to create *ChangeCgang* and *ChangeNgang*. This analysis would determine if the changes in the amount of intervention strategies were related to changes in gang activity. Unfortunately, with the small amount of observations in these models, it was difficult to get anything significant. Findings from this analysis would definitely be useful for law enforcement agencies. When it comes to the budget, law enforcement could count the cost of cutting potential intervention strategies to save money if it shown that reducing intervention strategies do not have a huge impact on the changes of gang activity.

The multinomial logistic regression was to help answer the third question and find support for the fourth hypothesis. For the multinomial logistic regression, the author

created the categorical variable, *Changed*. This simply combined the three dummy variables created for the dummy variable regression. This analysis would determine the responsiveness that law enforcement agencies show towards these groups. There were some significant coefficients in these models, but they were contrary to the hypothesis. In the margin models, law enforcement agencies reporting non-cartel gang activity behaved in a way that was expected, they were more likely to decrease intervention strategies if they reported no gang activity while they were more likely to increase intervention strategies if they reported relatively high levels of gang activity. This goes in tune with structural contingency theory, but the agencies that were reporting “cartel affiliated” gang activity behaved in an unexpected way. If a law enforcement agency reports no “cartel affiliated” gang activity then there is a 12 percent chance that the law enforcement agency will decrease their intervention strategies and 86 percent chance that they will increase the number of gang intervention strategies. On the other hand, if law enforcement agencies report a relatively high level of “cartel affiliated” gang activity, then they are more likely to decrease the number of gang intervention strategies and less likely to increase. According to structural contingency theory, organizations will change to respond to their environments to be more efficient (Donaldson, 1996). Law enforcement agencies could have perceived that they could be more effective by cutting some intervention strategies and focusing on a few strategies such as gang units and intelligence gathering. Or it is possible that some of these departments faced budgetary constraints and were not able to expand in intervention strategies.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

The four sets of hypotheses cannot be proven true given the lack of significant findings. These questions have to be set-aside for a different time for when the data is better. This section will explore a two-part process in which to improve the data. The first step is to have a standardized instrument to record responses. As great as the Arizona Gang Threat Assessment is, it does not offer direct insight about potential cartel and gang partnerships. Researchers and analysts that have been following the Mexican drug war would develop a new instrument. This survey instrument would ideally record which cartels are active in which areas of the United States and which gangs they are affiliated with. Saying that the Bloods are “affiliated” with the cartels is not sufficient. A specific instrument that records that the Sinaloa Cartel is working the Bloods in Arizona, but not the Bloods in Florida is useful and can be used by researchers and law enforcement agencies. It would be useful to have data regarding “cartel affiliated” gangs from other states. States without any noticeable cartel related activity would be able to serve as control groups because the intervention strategies they use will be against regular gangs. The data would ideally stretch back to before the Mexican drug war began so that the years prior could be used as a reference point as well, but seeing that the past cannot be changed, it will be important to keep track for future years to build up enough data to see possible trends.

As mentioned earlier, local law enforcement has a difficult time identifying gang activity, making observations they report about gang activity not entirely reliable, but since they do offer the best estimate of gang activity they remain vital in collecting gang

activity data. Many of these agencies with gang units lacked what typical programs or units in standard organizations would have such as mission statements, policies, procedures, and rules which reveals an unprecedented need for these units to be overhauled for restructuring because they are not equipped to deal with gang problem (Katz & Webb, 2006). This is where strong partnership between federal law enforcement and local law enforcement will be useful. Federal and local agencies would both fill out the survey in an attempt to improve inter-rater reliability. If the Department of Homeland Security, the federal department that deals mostly with border issues, and local law enforcement agencies work in close relation in regard to the cartel issue then identifying cartel activity and gang relations could potentially improve. For example, the Department of Homeland Security's Phoenix field office would collaborate with municipal law enforcement agencies in Arizona and it would be a symbiotic relationship where information is shared to help inform strategies and potential gang busts. This partnership would be incredibly useful for smaller agencies that might have a limited amount of resources.

Now that ways of reporting gang and cartel activity has improved, the next part is to improving the resources that agencies have to identify activity. The quality of these potential relationships between Mexican drug cartels and U.S. gangs need to be researched more because of the ongoing issues with the Mexican drug war and the drug trade in the United States. Better resources are needed to capture the nuances in these relationships, but how is this possible? Consider changing the label Mexican drug cartels have of "traditional organized crime groups" to insurgent or terrorists groups. Mexico recently changed their designation of these groups because traditional law enforcement

tactics were not effective against cartel activity in Mexico (Longmire, 2011). By changing the label, funding would come from different avenues to better strategize against these new insurgent groups.

The next question is how to change the label. The Department of Homeland Security would hold multiple discussions with leading researchers and analysts who have kept up with the drug war and discuss what it means to change the label (Longmire, 2011). Through this process, new strategies could then be developed on both sides of the border to combat cartels as an insurgency and a traditional organized crime group. This could help shed light on the drug distribution network and even help identify these mysterious middlemen. These new strategies would, hypothetically, make it safer for researchers on the front lines to gather data. The cartel literature would benefit by increasing the amount of official quantitative data. Future research might also want to add a qualitative component to illustrate the nature of these “partnerships”. It could be definitively stated whether or not these partnerships are blown out of proportion through this process. Researchers could talk to members of these gangs and ask about their experiences when dealing with the cartels and how they view the police. They could see if they felt more machismo being backed by the cartels. Of course, this is a dangerous approach and it could implicate them in multiple crimes, so it might be more feasible to talk convicted gang members who are in prison.

Urgency in this area is mostly increased by media portrayals of possible cartel-linked deaths of U.S. citizens while on U.S. soil. Once that story fades, the urgency wanes. A lack of urgency is warranted because overall crime in Arizona dropped 35 percent between 2004 and 2009, which lands in the same time frame as when the

Mexican Drug War began to ramp up (Grillo, 2011). The number of murders in Phoenix decreased from 167 in 2008 to 122 in 2009 (Grillo, 2011). The violence as a result of the war is not having the same effect in the United States as it is in Mexico. It could be possible that drug cartels are learning to better hide their operations in the United States or it could be the case that they are slowly moving to different areas to operate. No matter the level of their operations, cartels still pose a threat to public safety. Whether these concerns are warranted are still yet to be seen, but it is in the public's best interest to look into these groups more.

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