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# The Anti-Gang Initiative in Detroit: An Aggressive Enforcement Approach to Gangs

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## 9



# The Anti-Gang Initiative in Detroit

## An Aggressive Enforcement Approach to Gangs

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### SITE DESCRIPTION

The city of Detroit is located in the southeast region of Michigan. With its highly developed transportation infrastructure and proximity to Canada and Chicago, it has functioned as a key center in the manufacturing industry for nearly one hundred years. Detroit's population, 1,027,974 in 1990 and estimated to be just less than a million in 2000, has been steadily decreasing from its 1970 population of 1,511,336. Demographic data from the 1990 census indicated that 76 percent of Detroit's population is African American and 22 percent is white (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2000).

Data from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) indicates important and troubling trends in the socioeconomic status of Detroit's residents. Despite a decline in Detroit's estimated poverty rate between 1993 and 1995,<sup>1</sup> the figure remained more than double the 1969 rate of 14.7. Additionally, in 1989 approximately 40 percent of Detroit's population was considered low income, and only 11 percent was considered high income. The number considered low income was double the 1969 figure of approximately 20 percent. Most alarming, the median adjusted family income in 1998 dollars decreased from a high of nearly \$45,000 in 1969 to approximately \$30,000 in 1989. These data suggest an economic decline took place in Detroit during the 1970s and 1980s. Most of the economic downturn was associated with the dramatic decline in manufacturing, especially that related to the auto industry.

### CRIME PATTERNS

Detroit's crime trends show a mixed pattern. While the levels of some major crimes have attenuated in the past several years, the decline has not been as dramatic in other crime categories. Although the frequency and rate of violent crimes such as murder and robbery have decreased during recent years, there were troubling increases in aggravated assaults and burglary between 1995 and 1998.

Table 9.1 details changes in Detroit's crime between 1995 and 1999.<sup>2</sup> Data reflect both the total number of reported crimes in each crime category, and crime rates per 100,000. Considering Detroit's declining population in recent years, it is important to consider both of these figures. Detroit experienced an overall decrease in homicides between 1995 and 1999. The 453 homicides recorded in 1999 represent an approximately 16 percent decrease over the 1995 total, substantially lower (34 percent) than the 689 reported in 1987 (Michigan State Police, 1988). Although homicides have decreased dramatically in Detroit, the homicide rate, 47 per 100,000, remains substantially higher than the national average of 16 per 100,000 for cities of similar size (Fox and Zawitz, 2000).

### BRIEF HISTORY OF DETROIT

As with many other urban areas, the history of drugs and gangs in Detroit is intimately tied to its economic development. In his book *Dangerous Society*, Carl Taylor (1990) provides an interesting and detailed insight into the evolution of gangs in Detroit. During the industrial boom of the early 1900s to the mid-1930s, many immigrants were attracted to the lure of quality, well-paying factory jobs. As immigrants moved into the city in greater numbers, neighborhoods were established along ethnic lines. The earliest gangs in Detroit can be traced to the dynamics of these ethnic neighborhoods where loose groups of youth banded together to "protect" local merchants and neighborhood residents from outsiders. One such group that was formed primarily to protect Jewish merchants, the Sugar House Gang, eventually joined forces with another Detroit group to reap the financial rewards associated with distilling operations and other organized crime activities. Starting in the 1920s this new gang, the Purple Gang,<sup>3</sup> represented one of Detroit's first true organized gang syndicates.

Many African Americans migrated from the rural South to Detroit during the 1940s and 1950s. Like many European ethnic groups, African Americans were attracted by the promise of well-paying factory jobs. There were almost immediately tensions between the growing black population and whites. African Americans were generally restricted to living in a few neighborhoods in the eastern side of the city, and many found it difficult to gain quality employment. Growing tensions and distrust eventually resulted in two riots that would change Detroit forever.

Table 9.1 Numbers and Rates of Reported Crimes in Detroit, 1995–1999

Crime	1995		1996		1997		1998		1999	
	N	Rate per 100,000	N	Rate per 100,000	N	Rate per 100,000	N	Rate per 100,000	N	Rate per 100,000
Aggravated assault	13,546	1,368	13,470	1,368	13,212	1,353	15,074	1,555	13,752	1,425
Burglary	31,365	3,167	33,465	3,399	35,141	3,598	36,124	3,726	28,921	2,997
Drug (sales, possession, etc.)	2,938	297	2,836	288	3,037	311	3,086	318	3,009	312
Forgery/fraud	3,498	353	3,586	364	3,165	324	3,358	346	3,694	383
Larceny	35,132	3,547	30,050	3,052	29,163	2,986	28,107	2,899	24,619	2,551
Malicious destruction of property	18,282	1,846	18,024	1,831	16,753	1,715	16,412	1,693	13,842	1,434
Murder	526	53	435	44	494	51	460	47	453	47
Nonaggravated assault	4,373	442	4,622	469	4,501	461	4,860	501	4,940	512
Robbery	9,188	928	8,969	911	7,640	782	7,850	810	7,242	750
Auto theft	45,596	4,604	51,807	5,262	51,099	5,232	44,863	4,628	43,621	4,520
Weapon offenses	2,545	257	1,910	194	1,821	186	2,121	219	1,668	173

Two race riots in Detroit, in 1943 and 1967, have had a significant impact on the nature of race relations in the city. The riot of 1943, caused mostly by overcrowded conditions,<sup>4</sup> segregation, and racism (Farley, Danziger, and Holzer, 2000; McGraw, 1999), did little to change the economic situation of African Americans. In the post–World War II period Detroit's economy boomed. During the war, factory workers were paid generously and, because there was a lack of durable goods production, they usually saved a good portion of their wages. This, in conjunction with the growth in the national highway system, caused a major boom in auto manufacturing. However, little was done to incorporate African Americans in the ensuing economic windfall. A later riot in July of 1967 resulted in a dramatic withdrawal of many of the businesses and industries that were instrumental to Detroit's economy.

## GANGS IN DETROIT

### The Emergence of "Organized" Gangs

In the early 1970s several social changes occurred simultaneously that set the stage for a proliferation of street gangs in the city. Detroit's economy, along with that of several other Michigan cities such as Flint and Saginaw, suffered from tremendous cutbacks in the auto industry caused by the oil embargo and increased competition from Asian auto manufacturers. Around this same period, a highly addictive drug, heroin, invaded Detroit's local drug markets.

As traditional social controls eroded and drug use increased, a delinquent subculture started to pervade many once stable neighborhoods. Between 1971 and 1975 loosely affiliated groups of youth started to identify themselves with street names. According to Taylor (1990), these gangs, which he refers to as "scavenger" gangs, were composed of misfits.<sup>5</sup> The days of loosely organized gangs did not last for long. Starting around 1975, gangs began to organize, especially on the east side of Detroit. The Errol Flynns and the Black Killers (BKs),<sup>6</sup> two of the most recognizable organized gangs, were differentiated by their stylish clothes (Taylor 1990: 22). In 1979, allegedly with \$80,000 from an insurance payout for a murdered parent, two young men in their 20s started Young Boys Incorporated (YBI), a gang that would eventually take over the heroin and cocaine industry in Detroit.<sup>7</sup> This gang differed tremendously from other gangs in that members intentionally recruited young boys to serve as street dealers in their lucrative operation. Younger juveniles were recruited to avoid the increasingly punitive sanctions imposed on adults by criminal courts.

Using the pseudonym of Gang C-1 for the gang presumed to be the notorious Young Boys Incorporated, Taylor (1990) revealed several important characteristics of this group that clearly delineated it from others in Detroit. First, the gang had extensive operations that were carried out 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The operations were so extensive and elaborate that the gang actually employed on-call legal advice. Second, the gang actively recruited teen members with promises of financial reward, and eventually began to compete with

mainstream employers for "quality personnel." Third, gang members eventually became celebrities in the city, which increased the attractiveness of their organization. YBI's reach became so extensive, at one point "employing" hundreds of Detroit's youth that it began to undermine several fundamental institutions in the city. For example, the lure of high-stakes financial rewards diminished the perceived need for education.

A second and equally notorious drug organization developed during the same time. Although not organized as a street gang *per se*, the drug enterprises organized by the Chambers brothers remain important examples of the level of organization in the drug industry from the late 1970s until the late 1980s. Billy Joe and Larry Chambers, two young men who grew up in abject poverty in rural Arkansas, founded two interrelated drug organizations that, according to federal indictments, would eventually gross almost \$3 million *per day*. William Adler (1995) describes how these two entrepreneurs early on tried their hands at real estate and small-time marijuana sales until the enormous profits associated with the burgeoning crack market became apparent. The brothers became icons in the Detroit community, and at one point employed nearly 300 people and operated out of approximately 10 different locations. The level of organization in the enterprise was detailed to the point where there were formal procedures for processing payroll and established organizational rules, along with accompanying "fines" for failure to comply. For example, a poster found at one location identified the fine for stealing among the group to be \$300, speeding when dropping off or picking up drugs as \$100, and revealing secrets about the organization as \$500 (Adler, 1995: 240).

### Gangs and the Drug Industry

Organized gang activity were closely linked to the heroin epidemic that hit Detroit during the late 1970s and early 1980s (Mieczkowski, 1986). The traditional "dope pad" system of drug distribution in which a fixed location functioned as a "retail center" for narcotics was replaced by the "runner" method. The runner system was intended to take the narcotics to the customers (street corners, front of shops, parks, and curbside). Street-level sales of heroin were coordinated using the quasibureaucratic style of Young Boys Incorporated (YBI). According to Mieczkowski (1986), "the runner system is a multi-tiered, task-directed organization system which serves a heroin consuming clientele" (648). Runners were primarily younger males who were not regular users of "hard" drugs; none were heroin addicts. Mieczkowski (1986) points out that there were strict organizational norms discouraging drug use among members of YBI. Although recreational use of drugs such as marijuana was common, organizational imperatives strictly forbade the regular use of "hard" drugs such as heroin. YBI's system of heroin sales was highly organized and very lucrative.<sup>8</sup>

There is some indication that the influence of the YBI organization continued when crack made its way into Detroit's drug market (Phillips, 1991). However, research into Detroit's gang market contradicts this claim. Mieczkowski (1990) argued that the dynamics of Detroit's crack market were decidedly dif-

ferent than the heroin market. Detroit's crack market, at least the early crack market, was characterized by "units of small entrepreneurs rather than by any mega-organization that controls the crack trade" (Mieczkowski, 1990: 21). If Mieczkowski's observations about Detroit's early crack market are accurate, there are several important distinctions between it and the heroin market. First, organized gangs seem to have played a less prominent role in its development, and second, many crack hustlers were also crack users that sold crack as a means to support their own habit.

Mieczkowski's description of Detroit's crack market generally coincides with Adler's (1995) account of the two drug organizations run by the Chambers brothers. Adler's account reveals that the brothers operated in the eastern part of Detroit, and generally restricted their houses to a relatively small geographic area. Although the Chambers were major players in the crack market at the time, there remained local competition by other reasonably big dealers such as White Boy Rick Wershe, Frank Usher, Seal Murray, and Maserati Rick Carter.

### Assessing the Prevalence and Characteristics of Contemporary Gangs in Detroit

It is difficult to get a complete picture of contemporary gangs in Detroit. First, although Taylor's (1990) study is useful as a history of gangs in Detroit, much has changed since its publication. Additionally, indictments of several leaders of Young Boys Incorporated, the Chambers brothers, and others in the late 1980s and early 1990s diminished their controlling power over the drug industry in Detroit. Mieczkowski's (1990) research provides some evidence that Detroit's once hyperorganized drug industry is now more decentralized among various smaller "crews."

The National Youth Gang Survey (NYGS) was instituted by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to assess the extent of gangs in various jurisdictions around the nation. This survey of law enforcement officials collects data on the prevalence of gangs and their connection to crime. Officials reported, on average, 125 active gangs functioning in the city of Detroit between 1996 and 1998. Although there was consistency in the total number of gangs reported by the Detroit officials across years, there was considerable variation in the reported total number of active gang members. The total number of reported active gang members increased from 2,000 in 1996 to 3,500 in 1997, and then decreased precipitously in 1998 to 800. The 1996 and 1997 figures, however, are consistent with those of other cities of similar size. For example, cities with populations over 250,000 reported an average of 5,894 active gang members in 1995 and 5,120 in 1997 (OJJDP, 1999). While these numbers are greatly influenced by large numbers reported in Chicago and Los Angeles (city and county), they still suggest a considerable number of gang members per jurisdiction.

Data from the NYGS have consistently indicated that gang members in Detroit are intimately connected to the drug industry. Data from the 1996 survey suggested that almost one-fifth of all drug sales could be attributed to gang

members. According to data from the 1997 survey, approximately 50 percent of active gang members were involved in powder cocaine sales and 70–80 percent were involved in the sale of crack or marijuana. These figures, however, are substantially higher than reported by cities of similar size and other cities located in the Midwest. Statistics from 1997 indicated that approximately 50 percent<sup>9</sup> of youth gangs were involved in street sales of narcotics, as were 45 percent<sup>10</sup> of youth gangs in the Midwest (OJJDP, 1999: 23). Additionally, the 1997 unweighted average of youth gangs from the Midwest involved in the distribution of drugs was approximately 35 percent, and 37 percent for cities with populations over 250,000.

Data collected for the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring (ADAM) program is another important source of data on the relationship between gangs, drugs, and crime.<sup>11</sup> Approximately 12 percent of individuals interviewed in Detroit between 1995 and 1997 reported they were a member of a gang either presently or at some point in their past. Although methodological considerations preclude a definitive statement as to the overall prevalence of gang membership among arrested persons or the prevalence of criminal activity among gang members, these data serve as an interesting proxy for the nexus between gang membership and crime.

Interestingly, Detroit's ADAM data suggested no significant differences in the prevalence of drug use (as indicated by urinalysis results) between individuals reporting gang membership and those not reporting gang membership. Approximately 60 percent of both groups tested positive for any drug, just over one-third tested positive for marijuana use only, and approximately 25 percent tested positive for drugs other than marijuana. Huff (1996), finding contradictory evidence suggesting greater abuse of illegal substances by gang members, reported the use and sale of drugs was considerably higher among self-reported gang members.<sup>12</sup> Although no significant differences were found in levels of substance abuse among gang and non-gang members, ADAM data did reveal important differences relating to patterns in gun use.

Approximately 25 percent of ADAM respondents in Detroit who reported gang membership said they had stolen a gun for personal use at some point in their past compared to 7 percent for non-gang members. Moreover, nearly one-quarter of self-reported gang members indicated they had sold or traded a stolen gun in the past, compared to just 7 percent of non-gang members. Based on these findings, it is not surprising that self-reported gang members were significantly more likely to carry guns than non-gang members. Thirteen percent of gang members reported they carried guns most or all of the time compared to 4 percent of non-gang members.

### Gang-Related Crime in Detroit

It is difficult, using available data sources, to discern the exact level of gang participation in criminal activity. The Detroit Police Department's crime information system does not contain fields that denote "gang-related" crimes. Therefore, the authors decided to use a proximal measure of gang-related criminal activities that was based on particular types of crimes.

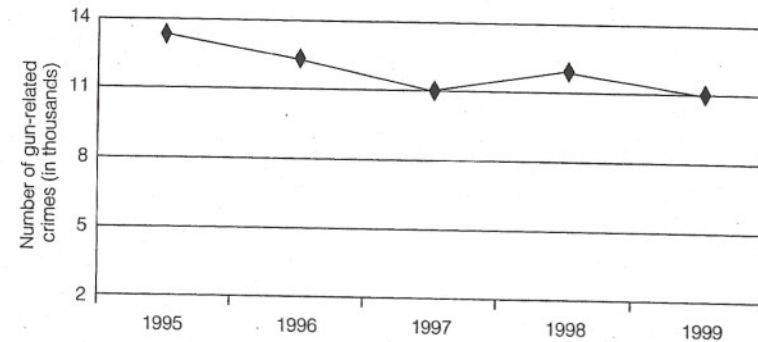


FIGURE 9.1 Gun-Related Crime\* in Detroit (1995–1999)

SOURCE: Detroit Police Department.

\*Murder, robbery, aggravated assault, and weapon offenses.

Table 9.2 Number of Gun-Related Crimes in Detroit, 1995–1999, by Type

Crime Type	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	1995–99 Difference (%)
Aggravated assault	5,416	5,293	4,795	5,356	5,030	–7
Murder	423	346	378	343	367	–13
Robbery	5,034	4,877	4,166	4,229	4,082	–19
Weapon offenses	2,468	1,801	1,729	2,047	1,575	–36
Total	13,341	12,317	11,068	11,975	11,054	–17

SOURCE: Detroit Police Department.

There is a well-established relationship between involvement in gangs and criminal activity. One study of gangs in Cleveland and Columbus, Ohio reported that gang members were heavily involved in violent and property crime (Huff, 1989). While the frequency of criminal offenses decreased with the seriousness of the crime, Huff (1989) reported that gang members in his study participated in property crimes, robbery, rape, group rape, drug sales and use, and murder. The authors considered violent crimes such as murder, robbery, nondomestic aggravated assault, and weapon offenses crime categories that are most likely associated with gang activity. We refined our definition of gang-related crimes to include the above-specified categories that involved the use of firearms. While not perfect, the use of these categories is consistent with findings from previous gang research.

Figure 9.1 demonstrates a downward trend in the total number of gun-related crimes in Detroit between 1995 and 1999. Gun-related crimes decreased approximately 10 percent during those years. A decrease of 621 gun-related assaults between 1995 and 1997 (see Table 9.2) was followed by a subsequent

increase, bringing the levels close to those of 1995. Although the numbers of murder, robbery, and weapon offenses experienced similar trends, increases between 1997 and 1998 were not large enough to nullify the downward trend. Thus, between 1995 and 1999 the rate of gun-involved crimes in Detroit exhibited a considerable decline.

### Gangs in Detroit: Conclusion

These data, in conjunction with the historical observations made by Taylor (1990), clearly indicate that gangs pose a significant problem in the city of Detroit. Although there is some evidence that contemporary gangs are not as organized as in the days of Young Boys Incorporated and the Chambers brothers, this does not suggest the net effects of their actions are any less serious. The decentralization of gangs may be associated with more rather than less violence. Descriptions of Detroit's gangs by Taylor (1990) and Adler (1995) suggest specific organizational structures with fairly elaborate communication channels. One would assume the communication channels included clear directives as to "ownership" of particular territories. Since a sizable amount of gang violence is associated with establishing territorial rights and with general competition between various gangs (Decker and Van Winkle, 1996), the current lack of a highly organized structure could result in an increasingly unstable drug market where violence is more likely. Whatever the eventual effect of these structural changes in gangs in Detroit over the past 15 years, data from the NYGS and ADAM program indicate that gang members continue to be heavily involved in the sale and distribution of drugs, and also much more likely to have extensive experience with illegal firearms.

## INITIATION OF DETROIT'S ANTI-GANG INITIATIVE

Detroit was one of 15 cities selected to participate in the Anti-Gang Initiative (AGI) funded through the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS). The COPS office targeted grant funding to cities with established and chronic problems with gangs and crime. The purpose of the AGI program was to foster the development of innovative and comprehensive strategies to combat gang-related disorder in several communities throughout the nation.

### Organizational Structure and Gang Enforcement

Officers from the Detroit Police Department's Special Crimes Section (SCS) have traditionally maintained responsibilities for gathering gang intelligence and targeting gangs and gang-related crimes in the city. Although the primary responsibility of the SCS is to provide a uniform effort to combat gang-related crime, its officers also serve an "on call" function where they are utilized for

special events and situations requiring intensive policing efforts. For instance, officers from the SCS were frequently used as a high-visibility security force during parades and festivals. Interviews with officers indicated that, at times, their "on call" status was detrimental to maintaining intensive gang investigation and enforcement.

Three principles were at the core of Detroit's AGI efforts. First, grant funds supported the development of a new unit within the SCS that would focus only on gang-related crime and disorder. Second, the project recognized the need for geographic integrity, or concentrating intervention efforts in an identified section of the city. Geographic integrity was important to Detroit's AGI program because previous gang enforcement efforts in Detroit were generally city-wide and rarely focused on small geographic areas for considerable periods. Two specific target areas, the Fourth and Ninth Precincts, were identified for the delivery of the intervention. Finally, Detroit Police Department (DPD) command staff argued it would be necessary to draw on the knowledge and expertise of both SCS officers and patrol officers in the Fourth and Ninth Precincts. Although SCS officers had comprehensive knowledge of Detroit's gangs, they often did not have the same level of knowledge about the day-to-day issues in each precinct that patrol officers had. Thus, the newly created unit actively recruited SCS officers and precinct patrol officers with knowledge of their respective precincts into a new unit called the Gang Specialist Unit (GSU).

The partnership between the SCS and patrol officers served several functions. Officers who were previously assigned as precinct patrol officers provided an in-depth understanding of the nature of crime in each of the two precincts, knowledge of actual offenders, including gang members, knowledge of the main geographic locations of gang-related activity, and knowledge of and contact with community groups and organizations in each precinct. Officers who were previously assigned to the SCS provided knowledge about citywide gang issues, including historical trends in intracity gang migration, specialized gang intelligence, and techniques effective for the successful investigation and prosecution of gang members. This partnership created an ideal marriage between knowledge of gangs and knowledge of the particular locations of gang activity.

Policing research continues to debate the efficacy of centralized versus decentralized policing functions. As with results from other cities, there have been both positive and negative consequences to this traditional centralized enforcement unit. Centralization can be useful to gather intelligence, coordinate intensive efforts, and ensure uniformity. In situations where danger is potentially imminent and control is desired, centralized command structures can be effective to gain compliance (Bayley, 1994). Earlier in the chapter we detailed characteristics of gangs in Detroit that make a centralized enforcement component attractive.

Many critics have strongly challenged the role of specialized units within police departments (Bayley, 1994; Walker, 1992). Informal working relationships in police departments tend to be based on day-to-day interactions with individuals from one's immediate work group. When and if conflict arises between various components of an organization, individuals tend to view the conflict

from the perspective of their unit (Eisenstein and Jacob, 1977). In police organizations, strong rivalries can also arise that not only create an unhealthy level of competition between units, but also can impede effective completion of job activities. DPD command staff felt the strategy of integrating members of the SCS with precinct patrol officers would help alleviate problems with interunit competition, which according to interviews with police officers was previously a problem in Detroit.

### Gangs in the Target Precincts

Gang activity in the Fourth and Ninth Precincts was in some ways similar and in others very different. The Headbangers gang is composed primarily of African Americans and tends to control a significant amount of the territory in the Ninth Precinct. This gang does not appear to be organized with any definitive structure, but their criminal activities tend to be somewhat more coordinated than those of other gangs. In general, however, the Headbangers gang is composed of loosely affiliated gangs identified by their control over certain streets. These various gangs tend to unify mostly when confronting a common enemy, such as an outside gang attempting to take over their territory. This type of loose alliance is similar to that explained by Spergel (1964: 64), in which white ethnic gangs would occasionally join forces to battle African American or Puerto Rican gangs. Compared to other gangs in Detroit, the Headbangers are more discrete in how they display their "colors," or identifying symbols such as clothing or jewelry. Gang members often wear subtle identifiers such as beaded necklaces with black and red beads or red shoelaces as insignias of their membership. It is not clear if this tendency is attributable to police enforcement efforts. Intelligence reports, crime data, and officers' perceptions suggested the Headbangers are more heavily involved in the use and trafficking of firearms. Additionally, intelligence reports indicated they are heavily involved in drug sales and home invasions.

In contrast, gangs in the Fourth Precinct are predominantly Hispanic or multiracial. The Latin Counts and Cash Flow Posse are the biggest gangs in the precinct, and members of both are much more likely to openly display "colors" or other insignias of membership. This was especially true prior to the AGI program. In many cases, each gang identifies itself with a particular college or professional sports team and adopts the team's color scheme and clothing for their gang. For example, members of the Cash Flow Posse are identified by their tradition of wearing University of North Carolina sports clothing. Non-gang members living in active gang areas are likely to not wear these clothing lines because of the common perception that the clothes denote gang membership.

Fourth Precinct gangs are more territorial than those in the Ninth Precinct. Gang disputes often result from perceived outsiders attempting to control particular city blocks. Fourth Precinct gangs are also heavily involved in other criminal activity such as drug sales, home invasions, assaults, and robberies. Intelligence reports suggest these gangs are less organized and are more likely to operate in an ad hoc fashion.

In general, the gangs in the target precincts can be characterized as quasi-scavenger gangs. As described by Taylor (1990), scavenger gangs are likely to be loosely organized with no clear organizational structure. However, there is some level of organization among these gangs. The Headbangers and Latin Counts, for example, were reported to have smaller groups with expertise in burglary, robbery, or drug sales. This characterization is consistent with Taylor's 1990 observations characterizing gangs in the Fourth and Ninth Precincts as scavenger gangs.<sup>13</sup>

### Suppression Component

Police strategies to combat youth gangs primarily involve the use of suppression strategies (Decker and Curry, 2000; Fritsch, Caeti, and Taylor, 1999; Spergel and Curry, 1990). Suppression strategies resemble a "crackdown," in which police use tactics such as saturation patrol and aggressive enforcement of ordinance violations to make it difficult for gang members to operate freely (Fritsch, Caeti, and Taylor, 1999; Spergel and Curry, 1990). A survey of 254 law enforcement agencies around the nation indicated suppression strategies were the primary method used by law enforcement agencies to combat gang-related disorder (Decker and Curry, 2000: 565).

The Anti-Gang Initiative in Detroit incorporated several of these elements into its program model. There were two primary components to the suppression strategy. The first involved traditional crackdown responses such as aggressive enforcement of city ordinances, including curfew and truancy sweeps. Since precincts are still rather large geographic areas, tactical patrol strategies were devised to target smaller geographic areas in each precinct referred to as "scout-car areas." Hot spots for gang activity within each precinct were identified from crime analysis and gang intelligence. Targeting scout-car areas made possible a more substantial impact on a smaller geographical area, thereby concentrating the effectiveness of the strategy. The suppression effort also incorporated a hybrid of the intensive supervision approach used by the Boston Police Department for Operation Night Light, which targeted violent juvenile offenders.

The Boston Police Department received national acclaim for its efforts to proactively intervene with violent youth crime (Boston Police Department, 1996). Under its Youth Violence Strike Force (YVSF), Boston implemented several programs, including Operation Night Light, Operation Ceasefire, and the Boston Gun Project, with the purpose of making the streets safer for the general community. Operation Night Light was of particular interest to members of the DPD because its purpose was to formalize a relationship between the police and probation officers. Members of the Detroit Police Department went to Boston to determine what core aspects of the YVSF's efforts could be integrated into the structure of the Anti-Gang Initiative.

Similar to Operation Night Light, the DPD established a cooperative agreement with the Michigan Department of Corrections to perform joint operations for the purpose of targeting gang members in the target areas. The probation officers participated in monthly ride-alongs with members of the Gang

Specialist Unit, together targeting suspected gang members to determine if they were abiding by the conditions of their parole/probation. Lists of suspected gang members were provided to probation and parole officers, who subsequently returned the list with information relevant to the Department of Corrections. These teams visited individuals targeted for intervention during ride-alongs that involved searches of the individuals and location. Probation revocation petitions were filed for individuals found to be in violation of their probation conditions. Violations usually involved use of proscribed substances such as alcohol or illegal narcotics, contact with restricted individuals, or spending time at restricted locations. Intelligence provided by GSU officers might also reveal behavior that violated restrictions.

Schools and school grounds were important locations for the suppression and intervention efforts of the Gang Specialist Unit. Schools are appropriate locations to target resources directed at delinquency because they are important during the developmental years of an adolescent's life (Gottfredson, 1998). Unfortunately, schools themselves are also the location of many crimes. A 1998 report to the National Institute of Justice indicated that 60 percent of participants in four middle schools in Detroit reported their school was located in gang territories, 41 percent reported they sometimes felt unsafe at school, 95 percent reported they had witnessed a crime in the past two months, and 66 percent reported they witnessed a student with a weapon at school (Bynum et al., 1998: 73-76).

Officers from the Gang Specialist Unit regularly (at least once a week) visited schools (usually middle schools) in the target areas. During each visit, officers would speak briefly with school administrators and security personnel to inquire about problem behavior. Officers regularly questioned individuals hanging around the perimeter of the school during school hours, and often arrested persons illegally on school grounds for trespassing and/or truancy. GSU officers spent considerable time informally talking with students while they were in school. They would sometimes target the schools immediately after school hours to increase their visibility and to informally interact with a larger number of students.

Spergel and colleagues (1994) identified five basic strategies for dealing with youth gangs: "(1) neighborhood mobilization; (2) social intervention, especially youth outreach and work with street gangs; (3) provision for social and economic opportunities, such as special school and job programs; (4) gang suppression and specialized probation units"; and (5) organizational change (p. 8). Neighborhood mobilization strategies dominated during the 1920s and 1930s, and eventually led into the social intervention approach of the 1940s and 1950s. Subsequently, as concern about delinquency rose in the 1960s, the opportunities-based approach developed with the intent of increasing economic opportunities for impoverished individuals. Finally, the authors argued, as neighborhood resources rapidly decreased during the 1970s and 1980s, strategic responses shifted primarily to police-initiated suppression efforts that focused almost exclusively on community safety.

Recent research, however, indicates that suppression efforts alone rarely have a sustained, long-term impact on crime. Although suppression strategies such

as zero-tolerance curfew policies are being implemented at unprecedented rates (Ruefle and Reynold, 1995), research continues to find that these strategies have only mixed results in deterring crime. Dallas reported some positive results from aggressive curfew and truancy enforcement, yet McDowall, Loftin, and Wiersema (2000), in their study of the institution of a curfew ordinance, found no significant differences in pre- and postintervention violent crime rates. This study is somewhat limited in that it compares rates before and after the institution of the ordinance but does not consider the extent to which the ordinance was actually enforced by patrol officers.

### Vertical Prosecution Component

Vertical prosecution can be defined as one assistant prosecutor or small group of assistant prosecutors handling one criminal complaint from start to finish through the entire court process. In contrast, horizontal prosecution is an organizational structure strategy whereby individual assistant prosecutors or a small group of assistant prosecutors are responsible for certain phases of the adjudication of criminal complaints (for example, pretrial hearings, motions, and arraignments). As early as 1980, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration was encouraging prosecutors to utilize vertical prosecution organizational strategies (Weimer, 1980). Today, many prosecutors' offices, especially in larger jurisdictions, have adopted vertical prosecution strategies to handle gang-related crimes (Johnson, Webster, and Connors, 1995). The Wayne County Prosecutor's Office designated a prosecutor to act as a liaison to the gang unit and oversee all gang-related prosecutions. This was a substantial change from the way gang-related criminal prosecutions were handled prior to the Anti-Gang Initiative.

### Intervention Strategies

For gang strategies to be effective, they must include efforts that provide positive interventions into the life circumstances that are ultimately responsible for delinquent cultures. Analyses of communities plagued by gang-related crime and disorder indicate they are beleaguered by extremely poor educational systems, high levels of crime, extensive levels of broken families, and a general lack of opportunity (Anderson, 1999; Decker and Curry, 2000; Decker and Van Winkle, 1996; Goldstein and Glick, 1994; Taylor, 1990; Thrasher, 1936). To have long-lasting effects in the life circumstances of high-risk juvenile offenders, efforts must address the underlying etiology of the problem behavior (Hill et al., 1999; Reynolds, Chang, and Temple, 1998). Intervention strategies can range from establishing alternative prosocial value systems for gang members (Goldstein and Glick, 1994) to providing safe places for at-risk youth to participate in recreational activities (Thurman et al., 1996).

The intervention efforts of members of the Gang Specialist Unit encompassed elements of both prevention and intervention. Information-based tactical deployment strategies were vital to the effectiveness of the DPD's Anti-Gang Initiative. Directed aggressive patrol techniques in "hot spots," small geographic areas with high levels of crime and community disorder, have proven effective



in both Kansas City and Minneapolis (Sherman and Rogan, 1995; Sherman and Weisburg, 1995). Maintaining geographic assignments in both the Fourth and Ninth Precincts remained a central focus throughout the duration of the program. Moreover, levels of gun- and gang-related crime were tracked on a daily basis so that AGI personnel could be regularly assigned to the smaller geographic areas (scout-car areas) experiencing the most severe problems. Patrol tactics involved zero-tolerance policies for city ordinances such as curfew, truancy, public consumption of alcohol, and gambling in public (for example, shooting dice). AGI officers also utilized aggressive enforcement of traffic laws, and made contact with the local known criminal element on a regular basis.

In addition to their patrol tactics, officers maintained regular contact with local community members and groups. Officers regularly spoke to community groups about the characteristics and dangers of gang-related behaviors in their neighborhoods. On multiple occasions the officers also participated in community forums that included academics, service providers, the police, community members, and former gang members. During interviews, the officers reported that attending the meetings was important to their sense of staying connected to the community. Additionally, attending meetings helped establish and encourage communication with the community.

Open communication with the community was important to this initiative. In the past, as police organizations made conscious efforts to be "professional" organizations, many departments adopted an organizational structure that stressed autonomy from the community (Greene, 1993). Public officials are increasingly aware of the need to foster positive, proactive police-community relationships. From the beginning of the development of the program, the Detroit Police Department stressed the need for increased responsiveness to the community. Effective lines of communication can result in enhanced community satisfaction with police services and additional intelligence gathering from community members.

Intervention specialists have recently been advocating increased resources for mentoring in order to offset potential serious delinquency (Anderson, 1994). The mentoring component of the DPD's Anti-Gang Initiative was not formally integrated into the program model, but was administered informally by several police officers. Several officers regularly participated in mentoring and tutoring programs offered throughout the city. Officers met with juveniles and assisted them with homework or simply spent time with them on weekends. The officers reported that mentoring was personally rewarding and helped them keep in touch with children living in their communities.

The Anti-Gang Initiative attempted to develop a comprehensive approach to youthful gangs. From a program design perspective, the implementation of the program closely resembled the program model. The most substantial successes were in designing a suppression strategy that integrated traditional approaches such as aggressive enforcement of criminal codes with contemporary approaches such as tactical geographic assignments and intensive supervision. The effects of these combined efforts strengthened this aspect of the program. However, the program implementation fell short of instituting comprehensive

intervention and prevention elements. Although the program was successful in including prevention efforts such as gang awareness presentations, meetings with community groups, and mentoring, these components lacked coordination and integration with other aspects of the project that could have increased the effectiveness of this intervention.

## METHODOLOGY

The evaluation used a quasi-experimental, case study approach to determine the effectiveness of the program in decreasing gang-related crime in the two target precincts. It was important to select an additional precinct not subject to the intervention as a comparison area. Based on consultation with SCS administrators, the Eighth Precinct was selected. This precinct, located in the northwest section of Detroit, is similar in geographic and population size to the Fourth and Ninth Precincts. Additionally, intelligence reports indicated gang structures in the control district were similar to those in the experimental area.<sup>14</sup>

The evaluation used four primary data sources: weekly arrest summaries prepared by the GSU sergeants responsible for each project precinct, police offense and arrest data, field notes from observation periods, and interviews with GSU officers. At the onset of the program, each sergeant maintained weekly logs that identified each week's target neighborhood and detailed all arrests made by the officers. This information was important because the information system could not extract the exact arrests made by members of the Gang Specialist Unit. These data were used to quantify the officers' activity.<sup>15</sup> An analysis was also conducted of Detroit's criminal offense and arrest data between 1995 and 1998. These data were utilized to reveal crime patterns for the target and comparison district, including the extent of gang-related and gun-related incidents. Additionally, the evaluation team used observation strategies to observe the tactics and strategies employed by members of the Gang Specialist Unit. These ride-alongs were important because they provided an opportunity for technical assistance with refining the program model and for assessing the extent to which many of the suppression and intervention strategies were operationalized. Finally, interviews were conducted with each member of the GSU. The interviewers sought officers' opinions about the characteristics of gangs in the Fourth and Ninth Precincts, the effectiveness of the AGI model in achieving program goals, the extent of problems associated with the implementation of the program, and suggested modifications to the program design.

It is important to once again note that it was difficult to determine gang-related criminal incidents from Detroit's incident data. Gang-related offenses are not among Detroit's crime classifications. The decision was made to use non-domestic gun-related crimes as proximal measures of gang crimes. As noted earlier, prior research indicates gang members are substantially more likely to use firearms in the commission of crimes. Although officers indicated in interviews that gang members in the Fourth Precinct were much less likely to carry firearms when compared to gang members in the Ninth, they did report that a

substantial portion of gun-related crimes in the Fourth are attributable to gang members. Thus, we are confident that gun-related crimes represent a conservative estimate of both gang crimes and crime that is of serious concern to the community.

## FINDINGS

Aggressive patrol and order maintenance were important components of the DPD's Anti-Gang Initiative. Similarly, Spergel and colleagues (1994) supported the consistent deployment of dedicated police units to small geographic areas. This strategy provided a comprehensive body of knowledge about the nature and characteristics of gangs and other delinquent groups in certain locations. AGI officers aggressively enforced what are commonly referred to as "order maintenance" violations. Although not criminal, order maintenance violations such as curfew, truancy, littering, loitering, public gambling, and public urination provide additional opportunities for officers to prohibit or curtail quality of life problems that detract from the health and safety of communities. Windel (1988), for example, reported that enforcement strategies that focused both on serious crime and quality of life problems were the most successful in creating positive change for highly disorganized communities.

The weekly summaries collected by each sergeant were compiled for 1997, the first full year of the AGI. Table 9.3 details the total number of arrests by crime type for each precinct. During the intervention period, the Fourth Precinct reported a total of 475 arrests. The majority of arrests were for disorderly conduct (28 percent) followed closely by drug arrests (21 percent). For the Ninth Precinct, arrests for disorderly conduct are substantially higher than for any other crime category (41 percent). Arrests for weapon offenses are the next largest category (13 percent), followed closely by curfew, personal, and drugs (11 percent). Important differences are revealed by these data. These data substantiate anecdotal evidence reported by officers about the nature of crime and gang activity in each precinct. Officers continually reported that gang members in the Ninth Precinct were more likely to carry firearms, and the data supported this contention. Data from the Fourth Precinct similarly support the opinions of officers that gang members were heavily involved in the drug market.

Arrests are not always the best measure of community disorder because they can be heavily influenced by officers' discretion as to when to invoke their authority. There are, for example, several alternatives available to police when confronted with criminal activity: outright release, release and submission of a field contact report describing the circumstances, citation, or arrest/detention (Piliavin and Briar, 1964: 208). There is reason to believe that the discrepancies in arrest frequencies, especially for drug arrests, might be a function of enforcement tactics. As noted previously, weapons were viewed as the principal problem in the Ninth Precinct. Correspondingly, the Ninth Precinct crews were more likely to make weapons arrests. Similarly, drugs were reported to be a ma-

Table 9.3 Arrests by Crime Type (Intervention Period)

	FOURTH PRECINCT		NINTH PRECINCT		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Personal *	36	8	33	11	69	9
Weapon	17	4	39	13	56	7
Burglary	15	3	1	0	16	2
Other property†	46	10	7	2	53	7
Drugs	101	21	35	11	136	17
Traffic-related	15	3	2	1	17	2
Other	26	5	8	3	34	4
Disorderly conduct/ loitering	133	28	126	41	259	33
Curfew	71	15	34	11	105	13
Other ordinance	15	3	21	7	36	5
Total	475	100	306	100	781	100

\*Includes murder, robbery, rape, and assault.

†Includes arson, larceny, malicious destruction of property, possession of a stolen motor vehicle, receiving and concealing, and retail fraud.

SOURCE: Detroit Police Department (weekly summaries).

Table 9.4 Reported Incidents (Fourth Quarter 1996 and Fourth Quarter 1997)

	FOURTH PRECINCT			NINTH PRECINCT			EIGHTH PRECINCT		
	1996	1997	Change (%)	1996	1997	Change (%)	1996	1997	Change (%)
Homicides	6	3	-50	20	20	0	11	11	0
All assaults	212	124	-42	831	284	-66	265	363	37
Robberies	140	70	-50	589	109	-81	312	274	-12
Burglaries	397	240	-40	1762	648	-63	574	689	20
Gun assaults	89	31	-65	358	99	-72	120	149	24

SOURCE: Detroit Police Department.

joir issue in the Fourth Precinct. Consequently drug offenses represented a significant proportion of the arrests of the Fourth Precinct crews.

Offenses reported to the police can serve as another measure of community disorder. They may be a more objective indicator of problems because they are citizen initiated rather than police initiated. Table 9.4 details changes in reported crime in the experimental and comparison precincts between the fourth quarter of 1996 and fourth quarter of 1997. These time periods were selected because they measure levels of crime just prior to program implementation and at the point where most of the components of the program had been fully im-

plemented. Moreover, the analysis compares two time periods that are temporally similar. This technique controls for the potential biasing effect caused by normal seasonal fluctuations in crime patterns.

The frequency of reported crime decreased remarkably in both the Fourth and Ninth Precincts during the project period. The most substantial decrease in reported crime was for gun-related assaults, an astounding 65 percent in the Fourth Precinct and 72 percent in the Ninth Precinct. Between the two precincts, the figure represents a decrease of over 300 gun assaults. Both experimental precincts also recorded a substantial decrease in all assaults and robberies. Robberies in the Ninth Precinct decreased over 80 percent, representing a decrease from 589 in the fourth quarter of 1996 to 271 in the fourth quarter of 1997. Similarly, robberies in the Fourth Precinct decreased by 50 percent, resulting in 70 fewer robbery victims. Although burglaries decreased in both target precincts, homicides decreased only in the Fourth Precinct (50 percent). Once again, these figures represent a substantial decrease in both criminal offending and victimization over the project period.

A comparison of the reported decreases in criminal offending in the target precincts to changes in crime in the control area (Eighth Precinct) reveals important differences. Since the Eighth Precinct was similar in size, demographic composition, and gang structures, it was considered a good comparison area. It was used to approximate what changes in crime would have been expected absent the identified intervention. Table 9.4 compares changes in reported crime for the target and control areas between the fourth quarter of 1996 and fourth quarter of 1997. The data indicate that the Eighth Precinct experienced substantial increases in many of the crime categories, whereas the target precincts reported large decreases. Although the number of homicides in the Eighth Precinct remained steady at 11, noteworthy increases were reported in assaults, burglaries, and gun-related assaults. Additionally, although the Eighth Precinct did experience a 12 percent decrease in robberies, this change is substantially smaller than what was observed for the Fourth and Ninth Precincts.

The information just presented suggests Detroit's Anti-Gang Initiative was successful in reducing the occurrences of gang-related problems. While the decreases between the two quarters reported in Table 9.4 are substantial, the analysis does not determine if the level of crime during the intervention period (January–December 1997) was statistically different from trends the city was otherwise experiencing. Time-series analysis is a useful strategy for determining the significance of change in a pattern over an identified period. Preintervention and postintervention periods are compared to determine if trends during the intervention were significantly different than those anticipated based on preintervention trends (McDowall et al., 1980).

Figure 9.2 presents trends in gun-related crime for the target areas (Fourth and Ninth Precincts) and the comparison area (Eighth Precinct). The two vertical lines demarcate the intervention period, January 1997 through August 1998. An initial review of the figure indicates that among the three precincts, gun-related crime was generally higher in the Ninth Precinct and lowest in the Fourth Precinct. However, considerable variation is evident especially during

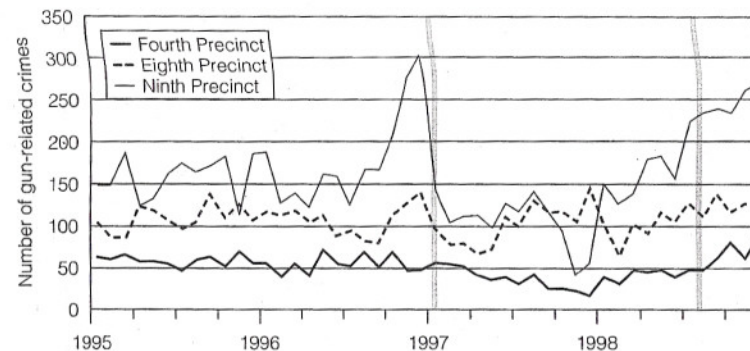


FIGURE 9.2 Comparison of Pre- and Postintervention Effects for Target and Control Precincts

the intervention period. Gun-related crime decreased precipitously in the Ninth Precinct from a high of nearly 300 in December of 1996 to nearly 100 in March of 1997. Similarly, gun-related crimes generally decreased in the Fourth Precinct during the intervention period, though increasing moderately toward the latter stages of the initiative. Finally, figures for the Eighth Precinct do not reveal similar patterns, but indicate that effects of seasonality were consistent throughout the study period.

The purpose of time-series analysis is to determine if fluctuations in the trends presented in Figure 9.2 are a function of trends that would have otherwise been manifest absent the AGI intervention, and also to control for the effects of seasonality on the likelihood of gun-related crime. For the Ninth Precinct, trends in gun-related crime were significantly lower after the initiation of the Anti-Gang Initiative than otherwise would be expected based on preintervention trends. The model, fitting the ARIMA (1,0,0) model and demonstrating an error structure without significant autocorrelation ( $Q > .05$ ) (McDowall et al., 1980), and controlling for the effects of seasonality, suggested the intensive efforts in the Ninth Precinct reduced gun-related activity by an estimated 112 crimes per month.

The impact of the AGI was not statistically significant in the Fourth Precinct (0,1,1 ARIMA model) as it was the Ninth Precinct ( $Q < .05$ ). Because gun-related crime is a rarer event in the Fourth Precinct than in both the Ninth and Eighth Precincts, it is plausible the null finding is an artifact of the smaller numbers of offenses. For example, Figure 9.2 revealed that gun-related crime barely reached 20 incidents in the Fourth Precinct in December 1997. Although not statistically significant, the findings suggested gun-related crimes were decreased by 8 per month.

Similarly, findings from the Eighth Precinct (1,0,0 ARIMA model), or control precinct, indicated that although changes in gun-related crimes during the intervention period were not significant ( $Q < .05$ ), such crimes did decrease

by 6 per month on average. It does not appear that the limited number of observations would have played the same role in the analysis of the Eighth Precinct data as it was hypothesized to play in the Fourth.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Detroit Anti-Gang Initiative largely represented an aggressive patrol and suppression strategy of enforcement in two target precincts. While Detroit may not be a typical city in terms of its size or crime patterns, it is fairly typical in its structure of gangs. Gangs in Detroit are mainly small, neighborhood-based, and not highly organized groups, some of which may be considerably involved in weapons use and/or drug sales.

Over the period of the intervention and operation of the AGI project, there was a considerable decline in gun crimes in the target precincts, whereas the number of such offenses rose in the comparison precinct. This was particularly the case in the Ninth Precinct, where a statistically significant reduction of gun crimes occurred. Perhaps more importantly, this reduction represented 112 fewer gun crimes, and thus a commensurate fewer number of victims, per month in this precinct. Given the design of this study and available data, these results cannot be directly attributed to the intervention. However, there is a strong indication that these aggressive policing tactics contributed significantly to this meaningful reduction.

Although the initiative was largely successful, several other aspects of the project were less productive. There were several administrative problems with the initiative that limited the availability of equipment and training to members of the Gang Specialist Unit. Under the original program design, officers were to be given the opportunity to attend specialized training for gang identification and enforcement strategies. Only limited training was delivered, and that was near the end of the initiative. This lack of training, particularly earlier in the project, was a continuing concern for many of the GSU officers.

Officers also reported problems with overly restrictive geographic assignments. The switch to a geographically based program resulted in concentrated efforts at reducing gang-related activity in certain hot spots. Command staff continually referred to crime trends to make minor adjustments to target locations based on week-to-week changes in crime. However, interviews with members of the GSU indicated that while many valued the idea of geographic responsibility, they also believed it artificially constrained their investigations at times. The supervisors' commitment to this model restricted the movement of officers to neighborhoods that bordered each precinct. Gang members and other offenders are seldom aware of administrative boundaries and may move in and out of various police boundaries as their social or criminal relationships change. This represents a continuing dilemma in policing between maintaining the integrity of the intervention through rules specifying geographic assignment and at the same time recognizing that the nature of the gangs may at times

call for a more flexible response. Given the nature of this issue and the history of such geographically based interventions in other jurisdictions, the police department is to be commended for maintaining the integrity of this aspect of the intervention.

Finally, the community partnerships and outreach aspects of the intervention were not fully developed components of the Detroit Anti-Gang Initiative. Although there were many examples of GSU personnel meeting with community members, these activities were more often done on an ad hoc basis and thus were not systematic and regularly recurring activities. Aggressive enforcement policies have the potential to strain police-community relationships if members of the community perceive enforcement efforts to be carried out in an unfair manner. The DPD was able to gain the cooperation of community organizers by identifying high-crime, gang-saturated areas. However, involving community members more systematically by providing briefing materials after major raids or monthly summaries of activities might have given the DPD a conduit to garner additional support.

In spite of these drawbacks in fully implementing the model, the Detroit Anti-Gang Initiative demonstrates the considerable impact that concentrated aggressive gang enforcement can have on gun crimes and arguably gang behavior.

## NOTES

1. Detroit's estimated 1993 poverty rate was 39.6, and 33.1 for 1995 (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2000).
2. Figures are based on raw data obtained from the Detroit Police Department and therefore do not necessarily correspond exactly to data reported by the Michigan State Police.
3. Named such because of its affiliation with Norman Purple and his gang.
4. In 1943 the population of Detroit was estimated to be approximately 2 million. This figure, which is nearly double the 1999 population, is even more significant when one considers that tens of thousands of residents were not counted because they were fighting in World War II (McGraw, 1999).
5. Taylor defines "scavenger" as "a person who lives off the environment; survival by means of criminal activities, loosely organized; no definite leadership" (Taylor, 1990).
6. Anecdotal evidence from interviews with Detroit gang officers in 1998 suggests the continuing impact of these gangs on the east side of Detroit.
7. Although Taylor (1990) does not give the specific name of this gang, it is presumed to be Young Boys Incorporated.
8. Mieczkowski (1986: 650) indicated that self-reported earnings during peak times of activity ranged as high as \$3,000 during the course of a 16-hour workday (650).
9. The figure is weighted for population and accounts for the number of gang members reported in each jurisdiction.
10. The figure is unweighted for population.
11. Data were taken from the DUF Gun Addendum that was administered between 1995 and 1997.
12. It is first important to note the study population was juveniles rather than adults as in the ADAM study.

13. See Taylor, 1990, page 16. The Fourth Precinct is located in the southwest section of Detroit and includes all or part of the following neighborhoods: Chadsey, Condon, Clark Park, Springwells, Delray, and Boynton. The Ninth Precinct, located in the northeast section of Detroit, includes all or parts of Airport, Conner, Kettering, Jean, and Chandler Park. Gangs in all of these areas are described as scavenger gangs.

14. Referring once again to Taylor's (1990) analysis, the Eighth Precinct comprises all or some of the Greenfield and Harmony Village neighborhoods (p. 16). There are

several other neighborhoods included in this precinct; however, they were not included in the initiative. Taylor (1990) says gangs in the Eighth Precinct were considered "corporate" gangs, or highly organized gangs whose main pursuit is the acquisition of wealth. This differs from the opinions of the GSU officers, who, at least presently, consider gangs in the Eighth to more closely resemble scavenger gangs.

15. These figures are conservative estimates because approximately four weekly reports were missing. This problem affected the totals for the Ninth Precinct most dramatically.

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## For the Sake of the Neighborhood?

### Civil Gang Injunctions as a Gang Intervention Tool in Southern California

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#### INTRODUCTION

Civil gang injunctions (CGIs) are a legal tool for addressing the hold that entrenched gangs have on urban neighborhoods. Unlike some law enforcement gang intervention strategies that focus on individuals or gangs without regard to place, CGIs are spatially based, neighborhood-level interventions intended to disrupt a gang's routine activities. As several police officers and attorneys have told us, CGIs are not simply ways to attack a gang problem, they are also for the sake of the neighborhood. The injunction targets specific individuals (and often other unnamed gang members) who affect the daily lives of residents through intimidation and public nuisances and restricts their activities within the boundaries of a defined geographic space.

The CGI asserts that as an unincorporated association, a gang has engaged in criminal and other activities that constitute a public nuisance. Specific members are liable for civil action as a consequence of their membership in the association. The use of injunctions against gangs was pioneered as early as 1980, but only since 1993 has the strategy become widespread in Los Angeles and Southern California. The accelerated use reflects the perceived successes of injunc-

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# POLICING GANGS AND YOUTH VIOLENCE



THE WADSWORTH CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN CRIME AND JUSTICE SERIES