



## Law Enforcement Youth Gang Definitional Conference

Edited by  
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National Youth Gang Suppression and Intervention Program  
School of Social Service Administration  
University of Chicago

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Officer Larry Bobrowski

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Sgt. Wesley D. McBride

### Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD)

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Dr. Irving Spergel  
Dr. G. David Curry  
Mr. Ron Chance  
Ms. Alba Alexander

FIRMAN (ICJIA): My name is John Firman, I am the Associate Director of the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. I want to welcome you all to our conference room and offices. If there is anyway we can be of assistance to you during the day, if you want to make a phone call or telefax anything, please let us know.

Our broad mandate in the Illinois government is to improve the workings of the criminal justice system through the transfer of information and provision of research and policy information. So the work that you are about to do today is something that we are extremely interested in. I would like to commend you on your efforts and wish you good luck. And with that, I will turn it over to Dr. Spergel.

SPERGEL (U of C): I just want to take about five minutes to introduce a topic that doesn't need introduction. This day is testimony to the fact that academics and law enforcement people can talk to each other. I hope it proves that law enforcement people can also talk to and agree with each other. I think almost everyone here today is an expert and very familiar with the youth gang problem. I know that several of our law enforcement experts are well published and certainly well interviewed in the media. About the only thing that some of us academics have on you these days is age. This is a very able and distinguished group and I am certainly delighted that you are all here today.

My task of introduction is to very briefly indicate what I think are the values of a common set of definitions of the terms, youth gang, gang member and gang related incident. All of you are aware that these terms are used differently across cities and jurisdictions and even within the same city. A law enforcement officer referring to a gang and gang incident in one city does not necessarily mean the same thing as a law enforcement officer in another city.

I see at least four important reasons for establishing a common meaning for these terms: knowing, accountability, community mobilization and evaluation. The first is simply being able to communicate and understand the scope and seriousness of the problem across cities. At this time we have no way of knowing with validity whether we have a gang problem of similar or different magnitude across cities; whether the problems are, in fact, different or whether the definitions are different and the problems quite similar. We don't really know. There is no way of validly comparing the number of gang-related homicides across our major cities because of different conceptual and operational definitions of the term gang-related homicide. We also have difficulty comparing the nature and scope of the problem across settings, such as schools and correctional institutions.

Second is law enforcement agency accountability. The police need to discover the best or most efficient and effective means for controlling and reducing a problem that seems to be growing

in certain cities. A variety of policies, programs, tactics and organizational arrangements have been devised. Sometimes a strategy works or does not work in a particular city. But we don't know whether it will work or fail in another city or jurisdiction, because the problem has been identified or reported differently. If common definitions of a gang or gang incident existed, it would be possible to test the same or similar strategies employed in other cities and determine their comparable or external validity.

The third reason is community mobilization. Based on our recently completed survey of youth gang problems and organized or promising approaches in 45 cities, we found that cities with agencies that shared a similar definition of a gang related incident had a better likelihood of reducing the problem or at least perceiving that the problem had been reduced. In other words, the more that police, other criminal justice agencies, youth service agencies, community groups and others agree on a definition of components of a gang incident in a particular city the more likely that city will deal effectively or at least perceive itself dealing effectively with the problem. Recognition of the existence of a gang problem, preferably in common terms, may already be a significant step in resolving the problem. Perhaps there is a major or leading role here for law enforcement in facilitating this kind of common definitional process within a city.

A fourth value is for research and evaluation. More specifically, there is no way at the present time to test whether a particular suppression, social intervention, community organization or opportunities provision strategy, or combinations thereof, works across cities. There is no way for the federal government to determine whether the same strategy of suppression or community mobilization that works in Cabrini-Green, Chicago, also works successfully in South Central Los Angeles or vice-versa. While the gang problem may seem to be similar in these two communities in terms of specific demographic, age, geographic, and population mobility factors, definitions in reporting procedures may be a key intervening variable. Evaluators need common definitions to begin to disentangle the effects of various strategies in different community circumstances. The Justice Department will need to know how effective its policy initiatives and presumably expenditures of new and large sums of money will be in regard to the problem in specific locations nationwide using a common standard.

Thus, there seem to be good reasons for the present group coming together to tackle issues of definition. The results of your discussion could set in motion model definitions for the rest of the country. If you make some progress in resolving these issues I believe it could contribute to resolution of the youth gang problem itself.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): Thank you Dr. Spergel, I will [act as moderator and] lay down some of the ground rules for today's

discussion. You all have an agenda, I hope. The first thing we want to do is present a statement of our goals and objectives for the meeting. We are going to try and keep the discussion focused because we have a lot of different views on this subject, and quite a mix of law enforcement people from L.A., New York, Chicago, as well as academics from the Midwest, West Coast and the East Coast.

Our aim is to achieve a uniformly applicable set of definitions to assist local and national assessment of the street gang problem. We want to come up with a definition that each police agency can use. Everybody seems to have his own framework. We would like for law enforcement agencies to get together with each other. The purpose of this meeting is primarily to assist law enforcement. The academics will have to struggle with the definitions that we come up with, and that's their job later.

We want to put this phenomenon of gangs under a microscope today. If I could borrow an analogy from biology, when you put an organism under a microscope you can focus it at different depths and see different things. We each come with a different lens and a different perspective on the problem and hopefully we can come together to describe this phenomenon in a uniform way that makes sense to everybody at his own particular focal point.

We have three discussion objectives: to define the gang as an object of law enforcement, i.e., what is our target when we say we are out to interdict street gang crime; secondly, what is a gang related event, and this grows out of the definition of a gang; and the last thing, is to develop a uniform method for reporting so the academics can follow on and provide feedback to the law enforcement community. We will start out with a presentation by Dr. Miller on just what it is that we are going to put under a microscope today.

MILLER (Harvard): Well I am completely sold. When I came here I was uncertain about how important it was to define street gang and so on, but after these two presentations I am a complete booster and I think it is a very important enterprise.

As I understand it, our major job is to come to some agreement on a term or the term that refers to our major subject of concern. If that sounds vague it is because I am trying to avoid using the word gang for reasons that I hope will become clear soon. The entity or phenomenon, as Officer Bobrowski said, that we are concerned with, can be more easily defined as to what it isn't than what it is. It could be described as non-transient groups of non-adults whose members engage routinely in illegal activities.

You might feel with some justification that the issue has already been settled by the very fact that Officer Bobrowski used the word "street gang" in his introduction; but the name of the project sponsoring this discussion is the "National Youth Gang Suppression and Intervention Program", its major literature review document is entitled "Youth Gangs: Problem and Response", and its major informational survey is called, "Survey of Youth



Gang Problems and Programs". It would seem pretty obvious that the major object of concern is youth gangs, and that "youth gangs" should be the term whose definition we will try to be getting some agreement on.

But if you look through the various materials produced by the project so far, it turns out that it is not quite so obvious after all. In the first draft of the literature review and also parts of the second draft, the terms "gang" and "the gang" are used far more often than the term "youth gang". Page 1 of this document states "Street gangs are the center of attention." The terms "juvenile" and "delinquent" gangs and groups are also used in the materials. Illegal behavior by some groups is sometimes called "delinquency" and sometimes called "crime" without very much consistency. The questionnaire that forms the basis of the major survey also is not too consistent in this respect. It asks the respondents, "Do you have gangs in your city?" It doesn't ask, "Do you have 'youth' gangs?" It asks what is your definition of a gang, not a "youth" gang. It asks for the age of juvenile offenders and adult offenders, but not of "youth" gang offenders.

There is considerable discussion in the materials that present day gangs are not only composed of juveniles but in fact most often involve people in their late-20s, 30s or 40s and older. If this is so, neither the term juvenile gang nor youth gang is accurate.

I did not find in any of the materials a specific discussion of the term "youth gang" -- why it is being used instead of at least a dozen other terms that have been and could be used to designate our major unit of concern. Because of this I felt that before we start to try to get some agreement on definitions we should first try to make sure that what we are trying to define should be called "youth gang" rather than something else. I wrote a memorandum that discusses a dozen other terms that have been used and are being used, and what I feel are the strengths and weaknesses of these terms for our purposes here. I won't go into the details of that discussion.

I will discuss, however, one issue that is brought up in the memorandum. One of the major criteria I use for judging the suitability of various terms has to do with an issue that has plagued the field of law violating groups for many years. This issue comes out of [a] legal distinction, made in all U.S. jurisdictions, between the age category "juvenile" and "adult". By and large under the law the criminal justice treatment of adults and juveniles follows different procedures, mandating different treatment for the two categories. This means that there is a major lack of fit between the juvenile/adult legal distinction ...and the social reality of law violating youth groups. As they exist in the community, a relatively small proportion of all such groups fit neatly into the juvenile or adult category. In many cases both juveniles and non-juveniles are members of the same group.

The legal distinction between juvenile and adult, if it is accepted, affects the problem of selecting an appropriate term in several ways. If the term juvenile is used, as in the term "juvenile gang", you are excluding from consideration all group members above the ages 17 or 18. I guess in New York it's 16. Excluding people in their late teens or early 20's who in many cases pose the most serious problems is certainly one option that in my view is not a useful one for present purposes. Similarly, if we accept the legal distinction between "delinquency" as illegal behavior by juveniles and "crime" as illegal behavior by adults. terms such as "delinquent group" or "delinquent gang" are not useful unless we decide to restrict consideration to group members below the age of 17 or 18 -- a choice I don't recommend.

The memo discusses the terms: gang, group, club, juvenile gang, teenage gang, youth gang, delinquent gang, violent gang, fighting gang, drug gang, street corner group, and street gang. What do I recommend? It probably will come as no surprise to you that my personal preference is the term "youth gang". And in the memo I try to make the case that this is the most useful term for our purposes. But it is quite possible that there are other ways of designating the major units that would be equally or more suitable. The memo ends with five recommendations as follows:

- 1) any attempt to achieve consensus on definition should be preceded by an attempt to achieve agreement on the term to be used to designate the kind of unit group that is to be defined;
- 2) the term "group" without an adjective should be used to refer to persons who may or may not be involved in illegal activity;
- 3) the term "gang" without an adjective should be used only to refer to groups whose members engage routinely in illegal activity;
- 4) the term to be defined should consist of one noun and one adjective;
- 5) of two terms that appear most useful in designating the unit of primary concern, "street gang" should be chosen as the term to be defined if there is a decision to include children and adults, and "youth gang" should be chosen if there is a decision to limit primary attention to persons roughly between the ages 10-25.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): Thank you, Dr. Miller. In Chicago, we use the term "street gang" although I don't think youth gang is objectionable -- so long as we know what we are talking about. What term does New York use?

GALEA (NYPD): ...Youth gang ... Even though we use the term youth gang I think the other terms invariably come up. This was the term since I came on board. Juvenile gang is more restrictive. Youth gang is not as restrictive as some of other terms, and that was probably the reason we used it. It wasn't restrictive and it also kept us from going into organized crime gangs, especially in a place like New York.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): In Chicago, the Detective Division classifies homicides [as gang motivated], and has peremptory authority for classifying all crime. But they have traditionally used the terms "street gang" homicide or "teen gang" homicide, and all of us in the Chicago Police Department know what this means.

Matt Casey, Deputy Chief of the Chicago Detective Division, do you want to explore the differences between using the terms "juvenile" and "youth", and what implication that has for our operation?

CASEY (CPD): I have never made the distinction between youth and juvenile violence. Maybe I did years ago when I was a young policeman, but I don't know what distinction to make between the two terms now.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): Is there a use in making any distinction at all?

CASEY (CPD): No, not any that I know of.

MILLER (Harvard): So you disagree with my argument that the juvenile is a person under 17 or 18 anywhere. That's the legal definition. Do the juvenile laws apply to people who are 19 and 20?

CASEY (CPD): In Illinois? No.

MILLER (Harvard): Are gang members 19 or 20?

CASEY (CPD): Sure.

MILLER (Harvard): Well then, presumably the distinction is important in Illinois.

CASEY (CPD): Well, not for us in the Chicago Police Department. I have never heard anyone discuss it or bring it up. It's never made any difference to us. We don't use the term "juvenile". We dropped it because it seems to have some onerous or pejorative sense. We now call them "youths". We have a Youth Division. For criminal code purposes, we call them juveniles, but they are handled by a "Youth Officer".

I still think of them as juveniles, but the new word is "youth", and I've never had any problem in talking to another policeman [such] that he didn't know what I was talking about

...whether I used the word "youth" or "juvenile". It's cutting in the baloney a little too thin for me.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): Ok, maybe the distinction between the term juvenile gang and youth gang isn't important. What about L.A.?

GENELIN (D/A,LA): By law in California, a juvenile is under the age of 18, and I don't believe we have a legal definition of "youth". I accept Dr. Miller's view that it covers a period up to the age 25. We use the term "street gang". I think it fits our needs a lot better, and we still have several different definitions.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): In Chicago we also employ the term "street gang" in reporting for statistical purposes because we like to characterize the events that we are reporting as being not something else (like organized crime). Gang stuff is happening in the street.

GENELIN (D/A,LA): Exactly.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...And that's why we use the term "street gang". It's understood to include anybody from 3 to 80, or over. Age is not particularly important.

LEROY (DEA): In Washington, D.C. we have this fellow on trial. Now that guy is 24 years old. So if you use 25 as a cut off for a youth gang, 24 is pretty old. This fellow is on trial for RICO violations. He will be on trial for homicide. Juvenile is 18 or under. I have been in the business for a long time and when you say "juvenile", that's what I usually allude to without a formal definition. "Youth" is a little too much of a spread. When you get up to 25, that's an adult.

JACKSON (LAPD): ...As far as L.A. is concerned, for years back in the early 70s we always seemed to have the juvenile gang image. It took us a number of years to actually put it in proper perspective. Yes, juveniles are involved but they are only a part of the overall gang problem.

We find now with Black gang activity and narcotics they are staying in the gangs longer. They're being more active and more obvious for a longer period of time. An arbitrary cut at 25 or 26, whatever it might be, would be inappropriate. The definition as far as "street gang", [or] whatever the term is, would have to include a wide range of age activity to be sure that we could still address the problem.

GENELIN (D/A,LA): ...I think we are making fundamental mistake. What I mean is, if you go to any state, you may have a particular state definition or city police definition in relationship to the law of the state. You may also have a newspaper definition. What we ought to do is decide that we are dealing with, a

phenomenological definition, because we are really trying to identify a social phenomenon, and forget the specific legal processes that we use in any given state or jurisdiction.

MILLER (Harvard): ...I think, as you said, we have certain purposes here in trying to get a definition. The distinction between adult and juvenile is not a trivial distinction. Juvenile processing and adult processing really makes a difference in the United States.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...Well, yeah, but for definitional purposes the argument has been made by Bob Jackson that gang phenomena are not age dependent processes.

MILLER (Harvard): ...But we cannot take on 30, 40 and 50 year olds in this project.

JACKSON (LAPD): Sure we can, why not?

MILLER (Harvard): ...Well, because then we are taking on a much large chunk than we should be. I think we have to make a restriction by age. That's my feeling.

SPERGEL (U of C): Originally the project was called "Juvenile Gang Suppression and Intervention Program". This was because of the legislation. If the group is primarily juvenile, OJJDP can deal with it. It's not a problem if you get some guys who are older. There seems to be flexibility in the OJJDP approach.

VINCENT (CPD): Of course, age is a consideration, but the reality is that the policeman is concerned with what the gang does. Kids are involved in certain things, but when they get a little older, they can become involved in other things. I think Bob Jackson already alluded to the fact that with the growth of gang involvement in narcotics the age range has expanded. Now we are very sensitive to the age factor in Chicago. We had some gangs that started off as street gangs, but based on what they tend to do now, they should no longer be regarded as street gangs. What they are about now is organized crime.

We still use the name "gang" as far as these particular groups are concerned. At the same time, we have some kind of a mid-range of types of gangs. Other people connect with the street gang to utilize their members for trafficking. We tend to look at these particular situations as being transitional. Some street gangs have already made the transition into organized crime, based on their activity. At this particular point in time, certain kinds of distinctions can be made. When it comes around to age range, we've run into kids as young as 9, all the way up to people who are of retirement age. They are still involved somehow in this particular activity, and we call it street gang activity. It has not reached the organized crime level but the gang apparently is in transition.

MILLER (Harvard): ...So, hooking into the organizational structure is more important than describing whether a particular age category applies to the gang term.

VINCENT (CPD): ...It seems to me that's the particular kind of reality that we are dealing with.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...What about the term "street". In some cases these kids aren't based in the street. They don't have turf. They focus, even as youth, on particular crimes. Sometimes they have colors, sometimes they have names, sometimes they don't. That's a problem in the southeastern part of the country. The drug gangs tend to be non-turf.

MILLER (Harvard): ...The term "street gang" was used by professionals in the 1950s but less frequently now; more so by media. Although the impression given by the term "street" may at first seem clear, on closer examination the term appears to be vague. The term is used widely in English: on the streets, street life, street smarts, but it is not precise and it is not used as a legal term. The term juvenile is a legal term, street is not.

To be useful the adjective "street" should make a difference between gangs that you call street gangs and other kinds of gangs which are presumably not "street" gangs. Now you made the distinction between street gangs and organized crime. If you are going to use the word street gangs, there are going to have to be some kind of gangs that are not street gangs. The use of the term street gang implies the distinction between activities or operations that take place outdoors rather than indoors. You could very usefully apply the term to groups that hang out regularly on a particular street or street corner. But such groups, as Irv just said, are not common in many areas. For many groups the primary arenas of operations are indoors, pool halls, crack houses, housing project apartments or basements and others. To call such groups street groups is misleading. In addition, many groups make extensive use of automobiles for purposes of congregation and transportation. To call largely motorized groups street groups conveys an inaccurate impression.

The vagueness of the term street gang however, can be an advantage if a decision is made not to include an age range in the term to be defined. A street gang can consist of persons of any age and can, of course, include or consist of adults. If this term is chosen it would be necessary to define with some precision what the term "street" means. It's very vague, we all sort of feel we know what it means, but if you are going to use it as a basis for definition, and particularly on a nationwide basis, we would have to do some careful thinking about what "street" really means in this context. We would need to specify the kinds of non-street gangs that we are not going to be considering.

SPERGEL (U of C): It seems to me that the discussion leads us in the direction of using the term that's left: "gang". But OJJDP is restricted to policy and program in regard to juvenile gangs.

MILLER (Harvard): I can't accept the term "gang" by itself. Gang means Al Capone, gang means cartel...

LEROY (DEA): When we talk about organized crime, traditional organized crime, we rarely talk about a gang per se. The media has twisted a lot of this. We've been swept away by the media. I think [we] in law enforcement know what we are talking about.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): The adjective "organized" here modifies the activity [not the participants]. The rackets are organized not the group itself. On the other hand, the nomenclature is inverted when we are talking about the street gang phenomenon.

I keep going back to the term "street gang" because that seems to be the most agreeable to the law enforcement agencies here. Does it present a problem for New York to adopt the term "street gang" instead of "youth gang"?

GALEA (NYPD): We have used them interchangeably. I mean, my unit was the street gang unit. It was also the youth gang unit. Next week if you come up with another name we will use that. We are going to lock up the same people, whatever name you use.

MULRYAN (NYPD): For policy purposes though, we can go ahead with "street gang" in New York.

VINCENT (CPD): It's no problem [in Chicago]. I don't see it as a problem.

CASEY (CPD): Okay, ...no problems with the term "street gang".

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...LA, LAPD?

KRAMER (LAPD): No problem.

GOTT (LASD): Let me add something from the [L.A. County] Sheriff Department's standpoint. There is no problem with "street gang" because it is all inclusive. Let me just add some additional information to the issue of age and the restrictions of some of the other definitions.

As some of you are probably aware, the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department runs a computerized gang information system. It's housed in our shop it's called G.R.E.A.T., Gang Reporting Evaluation and Tracking. In that Los Angeles County System, including the Los Angeles Police Department, we currently have 69,430 index identified gang members.

We just did a run at the end of August and this is very much similar to [Chicago offender age distribution data]. The peak age on gang activity is 23. If we were to talk about juvenile

gangs according to the code in California, we are talking about less than 9% of our gang index who are actual juveniles, under the age of 18 years. If we were to talk about youth gangs up to age 25, we are excluding in excess of 22,000 from our file because we have gang members that run from age 10 to age 40. So, if we are talking [about "juvenile" or "youth"] gangs, we're excluding a whole lot of gang members that are committing gang-type street crimes.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...The average age of offenders in street gang case reports in Chicago, according to Bobrowski, is 19.4 years, with a mean value of 18 years. The median for males is 17 years. The sources of data are different in the two cases. The Chicago data is based on current arrests or incidents for 1987-88, The L.A. County data is based on people in your data file, which could be people who are not active ...or were active a year ago or two years ago. Is that right?

McBRIDE (LASD): ...It is possible that they may not be active currently, they could be in state prison...

SPERGEL (U of C): ...That could account for the difference...

McBRIDE (LASD): ...These are identified gang members, identified by gang experts in the various agencies and input into the system.

MILLER (Harvard): ...Irv's point is that they are going to be getting older each year as they stay in your system...

McBRIDE (LASD): ...Sure they are, we'll be adding young ones too.

JACKSON (LAPD): ...As far as the file is concerned, I know our file for LAPD will be purged on a yearly basis. And anybody without a contact, a gang type contact for the prior five years is automatically removed from the gang file. So the information will stay as current as possible ...if they are not active in criminal activity.

GOTT (LASD): ...Another point is that we keep county-wide stats. All police departments report their statistics to us and we compile them. In the first six months of this year we arrested, (and this does not include LAPD's numbers), 9,565 adults, 18yrs. of age or over, and 4,909 juveniles, 17 or under. That's almost twice as many adults as juveniles.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...I think there is certainly good agreement here that "juvenile gang" is not a good term. It also seems to me there is a lot of agreement that "street gang" is probably the most useful term for law enforcement agencies. Is there any objection? Would any of the law enforcement people feel that a



[term] which excludes people over age 25 would not be useful for law enforcement purposes?

GOTT (LASD): Yes. It [would be] no good.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...So in other words, you would want a [term] that would make it possible to [include] people over the age of 25 ...and call them gang members.

JACKSON (LAPD): Yes.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...If that is the consensus then it seems to me "street gang" is the term that should be used.

KRAMER (LAPD): We have no control over who joins the gang.

VINCENT (CPD): I think we are resolved on that.

MILLER (Harvard): My major argument in terms of including adults is a matter of scope and it arises out of the original mandate of the project. We had to really push pretty hard to get non-juveniles included as far as this project is concerned. But if you are looking for some kind of universal definition that would be useful to law enforcement people throughout the country, and having people who are legally classified as adults included in your jurisdiction, then I think the term "street gang" should be used for those purposes.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Most of the people that you are going to be encountering in studies within one standard deviation are going to be juveniles, or youth, rather. ...Forget about the term juvenile.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...That means that we should include people over 18 or concentrate as much on them as [on] the younger ones. Is that the case in New York City?

GALEA (NYPD): ...Excuse me?

SPERGEL (U of C): Do you deal with the same age range of gang offenders as Chicago or LA? Are you arresting or classifying older people in gangs to the extent [that] you are juveniles?

GALEA (NYPD): ...We've had them as old as 43, yes. But just go back to that definition for a minute. Even though we officially term them youth gangs, most of the time I write, "New York City street gangs". I know it might make a technical difference, but I guess everybody knows what we are talking about when we use the term "youth gang" or even "juvenile gang". We are all talking about the same people. They might be a little older in one place, and they might be a little younger in another; but they are primarily talking about the same people.

MULRYAN (NYPD): ...New York does have a youth offender category. The term "youth" in New York is a legal term.

SPERGEL (U of C): Let's hear from Michael Duran.

DURAN (LA Prob): I have no quarrel or problem with either the term youth gang or street gang. It all depends on what I'm dealing with. But I think what is necessary is to have the definition of the other types of gangs too. The reason I use street gang or youth gang is that somebody else does not confuse me with prison gangs or motorcycle gangs, which is a problem that we've got in Los Angeles or the state of California.

When I am talking about youth gangs again I'm not talking about juvenile gangs, I'm talking about a particular type of individual, and youth can extend itself as far as I want it to extend. I brought along yesterday's paper from Los Angeles. We had nine murders from Friday to Sunday and in it I have underlined at least 12 times where the words mentioned were gang member, alleged member, gangs, reputed gangs and the like, but they did not use youth gang and street gang, just gang, gang, gang...

KRAMER (LAPD): ...Well, just one last comment on that. I think the media has taken some definitions and some very generic ideas and blown them way out of proportion. I think law enforcement has had to respond to that. We are really on the defensive. Particularly in our department. We are on the defensive because if we were to ever try to change the definition, that would change statistics. The media would eat us up -- particularly if [the changes] were to our advantage.

GOTT (LASD): ...If we were to say juvenile gangs we could reduce our gang problem in LA by about 80%...

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Okay so we are resolved to call this a street gang. Much ado about nothing, I guess.

MILLER (Harvard): ...I don't think it's about "nothing". It's important to decide what we are trying to define.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...So it's not going to be an age dependent thing?

JOHNSON (OJJDP): ...I would like to make one comment. It seems like Chicago and other cities are saying that a lot of gang members are definitely over 18 years of age. When we get to program development, then, OJJDP may just be out of business, because we can't fund a project for people 43 years old or even 25 years old. We begin to run into serious problems of program development.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Well I don't think you will have this problem in Chicago. I predict it. Most of the older people are considered street gang members from the point of their culpability, like the keeper of a house, or the neglectful parent or contributing to delinquency of a minor. [But] card carrying member? No, I don't think so... usually not self-admitted anyway.

GALEA (NYPD): ...Yes, I think we have to be careful even with the term street-gang because that could entail organized crime again. Sometimes I look at the L.A. definition and it seems like any two guys walking down the street having a fight could almost be characterized as a street gang...

Our New York City definition is probably too restrictive. I mean very restrictive [compared] to what's actually happening in the streets of New York today. We are not counting the things that are actually happening because we have to come up with something different altogether to account for what's happening in New York City. You have to be careful with that term "street gang", because it would mean maybe going to age 25, 26, or 27... whatever. On the other hand, if 80% of that group is under the age of 25 that would help out with the funding sources. You also have to be careful with bringing organized crime into this thing.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Law enforcement is less concerned about the [age distribution] outliers -- although we take care of that too, than we are about what's under the bulk of that age curve. I don't perceive that there is going to be any real conflict with the organized crime thing. As I stated earlier, the term "organized" in organized crime, refers to the organization of the rackets rather than the physical structure of the operation, including their age.

You don't see in the activities of gangs that organization and persistence in the rackets or the ongoing nature of one crime operation. Lastly there is the need for organized crime to support local institutions, because they work out of business communities. They don't want to see anarchy, they don't want to see a government that's totally inefficient. They're too well networked to the economy and political organization of the society. You don't see that phenomenon in street gangs. And that would be, I would say, the three major distinctions between street gangs and organized crime.

GALEA (NYPD): ...Let me just say this. I can't speak for LA or Chicago or places like that, but I know in New York City you might have three or four guys that are just robbers, right? There might even be five of them; they might even be [of] the age of 22. But all these guys do is stick up people. Now do we categorize that as a street gang or is that organized crime? What I'm saying is that... it's a stick up team or something like that. You wouldn't necessarily call it a street gang, but

through definition they might wind up being a street gang ...falling within our unit's jurisdiction...

McBRIDE (LASD): ...If they all wore the same jackets, had the same tatoos... you could.

GALEA (NYPD): ...No, I'm just saying all they do is stick up people. In New York, we just wouldn't consider them a street gang. They are just robbers and we treat them that way.

BRYANT (OJJDP): ...Larry, can I [add] to the comments made by Len [Johnson]? I don't think there is a need to be concerned from the standpoint of OJJDP, even though we are looking at street gang and gang activity as a phenomena that crosses a lot of age lines. If there is going to be any hope of prevention or intervention in street gang activity, its going to be with juveniles. Even though only 9% of our gang index are minors under the age of 18, that doesn't mean that's all that are involved, or come to our attention in the justice system. There are a lot of young kids who are developing that gang mentality and that gang mystique -- and that's where the emphasis of OJJDP needs to be -- even though we are talking about a phenomena that runs to age 40 and beyond. I don't think we should be concerned as far as OJJDP's involvement in this thing.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Also important is what Commander Vincent said earlier about older groups and organized crime. Older groups do hook into the street gangs and use them for their own purposes. This underscores the value of addressing street gang phenomena in general, regardless of age. It does affect the youth involved very directly.

Okay, we are resolved that we are going to use the term "street gang", and that we know what we are talking about when we use that term. So what I would like to do now is have each agency here make an offering as to what it defines as a street gang. In Chicago we say that it is first of all a collection of persons, in that they exist as an identifiable group. That is, they have some sort of structure -- whether it's horizontal and [they] connect with other groups in the area [or] have different factions of the same group; or they [are] dedicated to different operations in a given area; or whether [the gang has] a vertical structure. There is some kind of a structure ...whether we have wanna-bees, peewees, juniors, hard core members, and friends -- or whatever. But they recognize themselves as a group too. They know when they don't belong to it. Usually they are told in no uncertain terms to either identify or not belong.

That gets into the recruitment thing. Also, this [idea of an identifiable group] grew out an analysis of what's happening in Chicago as to territoriality. Most of the gangs in Chicago, except for some of the Asian gangs, do exhibit some sense of territoriality. Most of the time they are marking out turf using gang icons, graffiti, or some other thing. It's in a state of

flux. The boundaries aren't usually fixed here in Chicago. The gangs move back and forth. There is a great deal of turf rivalry and a sense of territoriality. Even Asian gangs in Chicago, while there isn't a strict borderline, tend to live together. They know: "Hey, this is Vietnamese neighborhood activity... this is Chinese neighborhood activity", etc.

Out of that sense of territoriality, the thing that we find about street gangs is they are based in a neighborhood environment, and the community there finds itself in conflict with the gang; and that's mainly because the gang has failed to use an acceptable means to achieve recognition and influence.

MILLER (Harvard): ...Acceptable is the tough word, acceptable to whom?

JACKSON (LAPD): ...The gang members?

MILLER (Harvard): ...The community, which community?...

GENELIN (D/A, LA): ...The community that defines the law enforcement task.

GOTT (LASD): ...Police officers...

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Geez, I feel like I'm in school again! Okay, the gang for law enforcement purposes. The gang is not particularly important to us unless they are involved in some sort of incivility or criminality and that's the reason that as policemen, we are addressing the gang problem. If the gang is out there [weaving] baskets and they call themselves the Bloody Knights or whatever, we don't really care -- so long as they just keep making baskets. But when they start shooting people, then we've got a problem. So this is the Chicago definition.

WADE (Miami): ...Larry, I think I know what it means, but could you just define for me what "structured" means?

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Yes, there are a two or three different forms of structured gangs in Chicago. There is structure by age, where we have the peewees, the wanna-bees. There is also structure by who's in the hardcore, who's in the marginal and who's in the fringe of the gang, [and] who are merely associates with the gang. Then there is the physical structure. The gang has a faction here and a faction there. An ally there, a rival here and there.

There is also horizontal and vertical [structure]. I think all gangs allow members or others to know where they stand in relationship to the group. That's the structure.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...That's a problem for the media, because when you say structure they are thinking about a president, a

vice-president, who calls the shots, etc. Structure is a difficult term to understand.

MILLER (Harvard): ...There are three levels here, one is structured, the other is organized and the third is formalized. Organized also conveys the notion of a formal organization. Structured to me is the least acceptable of those. Formalized is kind of a weasel word, it says there is some degree of organized relationship, but not enough to call it a structure or an organization. I tend to agree that the word organized is not a good term to have in there. First because [of] it's ambiguous meaning and, to the degree that it does have a meaning it implies [a] much more formal organization than in fact most gangs have.

SPERGEL (U of C): "Structured" is a little more useful to me because every gang, virtually every gang, does have some kind of a structure. There is the hardcore, the more dominant individuals in the gang. There are the associates and then the wanna-bees, whatever you want to call them. But there is a social class structure within every gang that is understood.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Well, Wes McBride, you wrote a book on the subject. What do you think?

MCBRIDE (LASD): ...Well, Bob Jackson wrote that one.

JACKSON (LAPD): ...I helped him with the big words.

MCBRIDE (LASD): ...Yeah, he helped me with the big words. We have two or three different definitions we work with. We have a new state legal definition, that I think is a tad too restrictive, and we will get to it in a moment. The word "associate" -- we have been kicking that around lately. I think that's a bad term. When I came in it meant "not quite a gang member" -- more of a friend or an associate of a gang member. In fact what it has become is [that] an associate is a gang member. He's a gang member [but] it's just his degree of activity.

KRAMER (LAPD): ...A business partner?

MCBRIDE (LASD): ...He's a gang member. He's not even a partner ...he's a gang member. It's just that he doesn't tend to be as heavily into some of the assaults or...

(He [Jackson] gave me a note here...) Provability might be a little bit lacking on the associate. We don't [encounter] "structure" that means war lord, vice president, something like that. We don't have that, never have had it. We now have a state legal definition of the criminal street gang:

It's an ongoing association or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, having as its primary activities the commission of one of the following crimes

...and the law lists seven crimes.

MILLER (Harvard): ...What are the seven? I'm curious.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...Assault with a deadly weapon, robbery, homicide or manslaughter, sale or possession for sale of narcotics, shooting into inhabited dwellings or car, arson, and witness intimidation.

I think that's a little too restrictive for me. I think a gang [can] commit other crimes.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Yeah, I ran across that definition, and one of things that I found lacking in it was recruitment, although intimidation might cover it if you stretch the word.

GENELIN (D/A,LA): ...What you can say is "criminal acts". The reason that we put that list in, (I find myself defending it since I wrote it), is because we had to get it through the legislature and that's the reason.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...Well I know that, but it's still a legal definition now. I mean it is in the state of California, which has a common name or a common identifying sign or symbol. Most gangs have that, but some don't... [those] whose members individually or collectively engage in or have engaged in a pattern of criminal gang activity. I can live with that -- taking out the one through seven [crimes] and substituting "criminal activity".

GENELIN (D/A,LA): ...How about three or more [persons]?

McBRIDE (LASD): ...Okay. I'm not big on numbers, putting numbers to anything. Can two be a gang? I don't know. They probably wouldn't come to our attention. Three? You were talking about the robbery thing in New York a while ago. Maybe if all three were wearing the same colors, dressing the same and acting in concert for a period of time, yeah, probably. We used a definition in the book we wrote that a gang was any group gathered on a continuing basis to commit antisocial behavior. But that came from generations of being taught that's what gangs were.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...I don't think we would consider those three guys that were pulling stick-ups in New York. I don't think we in Chicago would consider them a gang.

GALEA (NYPD): ...We probably wouldn't either. But if they had a name for themselves, and were putting graffiti on the wall -- and always the same three -- and that type of thing, yeah, we might.

GOTT (LASD): ...We went through an exercise similar to this in Los Angeles County last year. There is an organization in the

County called the Peace Officers Association of Los Angeles County which includes all the law enforcement agencies in that county. We have been trying to develop a system for gathering county-wide statistics so we can have a truer picture of the gang problem in L.A. County. [That is, trying to depict the problem] other than the fact that we know it's bad.

And so, we went through this exercise of trying to develop a definition of the gang, and we came up with the definition that the agencies in Los Angeles County bought, and it's the current definition we are using county-wide. Let me just share that. It gets a little long:

"A gang is a group of people who form an allegiance for a common purpose to engage in acts injurious to public health and public morals, who pervert or obstruct justice or the administration of laws, or engage in or have engaged in criminal activity either individually or collectively and create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation within the community."

That's kind of long-winded, but it encompasses basically what you've got there.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...I want to pick up on two things. First of all, we had a case in Chicago that we classified as a gang related, [although] the incident involved only one person. The young fellow was trying to start up a gang in a school, and he painted graffiti all over the school and started intimidating people. He was actually engaged in recruitment. His first three recruits flipped on him, and he [was] arrested before the gang could get off the ground. We did call it gang-related, because there was damage to property involved, and it engendered a great deal of concern on the part of the school administration. We classified that as a gang related event, even though there was only one person in the gang.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...I think that's a good call.

MAXSON (USC): ...You call that a gang member? Is he in your files as a gang member?

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...He is a gang member ...of his own gang. Yeah!

GALEA (NYPD): When you are looking at gang type, you may have unknown gangs involved in certain crimes, and it would very likely follow the same pattern. You would not always be able to identify a specific gang, [or that they] will be the same gang next week.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Right, and had this case not been cleared and closed, we would still think that there's a bunch of people out there engaged in that activity. We wouldn't attribute it to the act of just one person.



The other thing I want to pick up on in Ray Gott's definition is the common denominator of conflict by the gang with the community. Other kinds of group related activity are not identified as gang activity.

For example, nobody in the community apparently saw any group conflict in an incident that occurred not too long ago here in Chicago. A person under the influence of a loosely controlled substance grabbed a waitress, and it was considered a criminal sexual assault. He wore a group icon and a fez. Now you know what I'm getting at. He belonged to the Ancient Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine of the Temple of North America or ...whatever it is. Nobody seems to call that organization a gang, even though it had outward gang trappings.

GENELIN (D/A,LA): ...Aren't we really talking about criminality being acceptable within that group rather than individual people committing criminal acts?

...I mean, that's really what we are talking about. In every street gang you may have, for instance, people who may not commit criminal acts. But it is acceptable, within the group and its processes, that other members of that street gang commit criminal acts. The Elks or the Shriners or whatever will not accept the criminality, and I think that's the distinction.

MAXSON (USC): ...The thing about a gang is that group processes foster criminality. I agree that criminality is acceptable [within the group], in terms of the social definition. But it's the dynamics of the group that foster criminality. That's the distinction there.

GENELIN (D/A,LA): ...It may or may not be. All I know is that the acceptability of criminality is important, and it may also foster criminality.

VINCENT (CPD): ...Larry, one of the greatest copouts of all time that I have heard was presented by Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black back in the early 70's, when he was asked to define obscenity. He said, "I can't define it, but I know it when I see it." In other words, even in those gangs where criminal behavior is accepted there are certain things that might not be acceptable. To draw a straight line and say, "Yes, that's true in every case", would [present problems].

BOBROWSKI (CPD): [In line with that observation], do we have anybody here whose knowledgeable about motorcycle gangs? Because I'm not sure that all members of motor cycle clubs, as they call themselves, really condone crime.

GOTT (LASD): ...The Sheriffs make a difference between motorcycle clubs and motorcycle gangs. There is a big difference.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...Well the first thing you do is identify the bad ones. Sure there are motorcycle groups that are into it as a hobby, but when you get down into the "meth" toting characters, they are outlaws.

We have a motorcycle group in the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, of recreational motorcycle riders, who are most certainly not a motorcycle gang, at least I hope not.

GENELIN (D/A,LA): ...The real big difference is whether the group fosters crime. Certainly the Hell's Angels accept criminality as part of their group.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...The California definition may have certain advantages, particularly for law enforcement, because you are dealing with specific criminal acts and you are not so concerned with civility. Also the notion of community is a little broader than neighborhood. If some of these gangs move across jurisdictions you would not have a problem.

GENELIN (D/A,LA): ...Something else pretty common with gangs, particularly in the area of incivility and criminality, is that the action is generally in furtherance of the purpose of the gang, whatever it may be: whether they are just out raising hell, recruiting people, representing, or whether they are involved in crime ...whatever. That's usually the case with motorcycle gangs, particularly Hell's Angels who are nationally or internationally involved in sales of methamphetamines, as a group. But I see motorcycle gangs as being more on the fringe of organized crime than [are] street gangs.

MILLER (Harvard): ...Irv just brought up the turf criterion. Some cities are more turf oriented than others. Chicago happens to be one that has a very strong turf tradition. I talked to somebody in Miami who said the gangs down there never heard of turf. I don't know whether you hear that. So I think we have to be very careful about using turf as part of a nationwide definition of "gang".

And what I talk about is they claim exclusivity rights over something. It can either be a territory or some kind of an operation, say a drug operation or extortion area. There does not have to be the classic notion of one step over the line and you are on our turf, and so on.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...But Walter, the advantage of the California definition is it focuses on intimidation and violence, so you don't label a robbery or yacht stealing group as a youth gang or a street gang. Its a good definition. I would like to hear it repeated once more.

GOTT (LASD): ...Sure, I'll repeat it again.

A gang is a group of people who form an allegiance for a common purpose, and engage in acts injurious to

public health and public morals, who pervert or obstruct justice or the due administration of laws, or engage in or have engaged in criminal activity either individually or collectively, and who create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation within the community.

I might add that the definition was arrived at through a great deal of blood, sweat, and tears, and it took a number of months to hammer out the wordsmanship to make everyone happy...

SPERGEL (U of C): ...What about New York?

McBRIDE (LASD): ...Yeah, John Galea. How are we going to handle "Wilding" groups.

GALEA (NYPD): ...Ok, well, funny you should mention that. First I'm going to give our definition of a youth gang in New York City, then I'm going to read what I've written about what's going on in New York City to give you an idea of what we are dealing with. Our definition has to change, because it doesn't fit with what's going on in the street today.

A youth gang is supposed to be an organized, structured group with identifiable leadership and membership which has engaged in, is suspected of engaging in, or is considered likely to engage in unlawful or antisocial activity which may be verified by police records or other reliable sources.

Then we break it down into delinquent gang and marginal gang. Needless to say, if I utilize these as criteria, we [probably] wouldn't have any gangs in New York City, so I stretch the boundaries quite a bit because we don't have the structured groups anymore: the Vice Presidents, the Vice Lords and the Armorers and what have you. Let me just give you an idea of what's going on in New York City right now.

New York street gangs (notice, I use the words street gangs and again that's because the words are interchangeable, right?), no longer fit the stereotypical image of wearing identifiable colors, congregating in pool rooms and basements, defending neighborhood, or home turfs and largely continuing their delinquency to harassment, nuisance activity and assault upon each other.

New York street gangs are unique, sophisticated and contemporary. They can no longer be identified by traditional features and factors. Our contemporary and emerging youth tend to operate as part-time groups, as random collectives. They come together for selective and non-selective delinquent and criminal acts. A huge proportion of unaccountable youth have now established loosely knit affiliations based exclusively on their inclination and affinity to commit predetermined antisocial and criminal acts.

They no longer operate as social families in camaraderie and community kinship. Gangs have always been a reflection of familial, social and community life: substitute and surrogate families. Twenty years ago that influence was apparent in the formation of a structured gang framework. The current generation reflects the phenomena of the broken home and single parenthood. The "me" as opposed to the "we" concept. This an era of the non-community person, the temp worker, having no binding roots or loyalties. Their lifestyle is deemed individual with unconnected and impersonal social interests, often having little or no sustained contact with their on-call partners in crime. Now most of them perform as collective independents or small cadres loosely tied together in spontaneous groups, such as the emerging inter-school conglomerates that have been the scourge of the Public School system and mass transit system for the past two years.

They are alleged to number in the hundreds but function on an as needed basis. Their dress codes are popular street styles rather than identifiable colors and uniformity. Present teen crime or delinquency patterns make obsolete unlawful behavior motivated purely by intimidation or nuisance incentives. Nearly all interest is directed to what youth perceive as economic or income enhancement ...better said, getting paid. That's primarily what we have in New York.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...A radical departure from our conceptions of gangs...

GALEA (NYPD): ...Well, I think it going to get worse because the impact of crack is destroying what little family structure there is -- the women who have usually held the poor families together. But the estimates are that half the people using crack in New York are females. They are walking away from their children, walking away from their families. You have a situation now where almost all young people in some areas are being raised by their grandparents. Its not going to get better, its going to get worse.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...Is this the result of having busted up traditional gang organizations? Have you actually destroyed the Sharks and the Jets? Do you see an alternative in this "Wilding" thing?

GALEA (NYPD): ...Well in New York City gang activity has been sort of cyclical. You know, it goes and it comes, and right now it's at low ebb. As far as the "Wilding" incident was concerned, it's another example of a non-structured street gang, kids just coming together committing that one particular act. It's now the norm probably more than anything else. Our kids are just not acting out in name groups. We certainly have them, don't get me wrong, but I think the norm now is for a lot of these kids just

getting together, as I said previously, on an ad hoc basis, riding the subway systems or just being with each other.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...What about what happened in Brooklyn, the killing of the Black youth. That was turf related. A bunch of guys that knew each other that claimed territory. Wouldn't that fit in your definition in California.

GALEA (NYPD): ...Yeah, but then again that's a spontaneous reaction. That's not something that happens every day. You know what I mean, I mean Black kids walked on the block the day before.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...Then assume he wasn't even Black, he was another color...

GALEA (NYPD): ...Well, I'm just giving you an example, Black kids, white kids, green kids, they've walked in that same neighborhood before. They reacted to specific stimuli if you wish.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...A girlfriend.

GALEA (NYPD): ...They reacted to that. These were just kids that hung out together. Those same kids might belong to other groups when they went to school or other places, not necessarily with this group. I could tell you a lot more about this particular group, but they were not structured, they were not formalized. They were just a bunch of guys who, when they got off work or came from school, hung out together because they lived in the same place.

...They did one thing at one time. If they committed robberies and assaults with a deadly weapon on a nightly basis, a weekly basis, an ongoing basis then I would say, Irv, you've got your definition.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...So it's got to be a durable organization, then.

GALEA (NYPD): ...If they do it next week maybe so.

LEROY (DEA): ...What if they were a bunch of cops setting around a bar and got into a fight and killed somebody would that make them a gang.

JACKSON (LAPD): ...Damn right it would.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...John you don't have a time element in your New York City definition. It doesn't say anything about sustaining a pattern of criminal activity.

GALEA (NYPD): ...We've got too many definitions. There was a similar incident the year before in Howard Beach. There was another bunch of guys with a little bit of turf, some poor Black guy wanders into this area, they beat the hell out of him; he runs away from them across the parkway and gets hit by a car.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Well, we have to address the fact that what we are dealing with exists on a continuum then. We've got the spontaneous groups that come together to commit a crime. We've got what we call the traditional Sharks and Jets type gang, and then we get into highly structured groups too, which are a little easier for law enforcement to deal with. We were successful in Chicago in busting structured gangs. I am talking about the El Rukns. The gang became so structured that it actually started to solicit a foreign country to conduct acts of terrorism here in the United States. We were able to disrupt the gang organization, and we still have to see where that gang is going to evolve.

GALEA (NYPD): ...Okay, our gangs have never gotten that sophisticated where they were involved with other states and things of that nature. We have kids who can't get from one part of New York City to the other, let alone go out of the state. And I think that's another myth that goes out. But as far as locking them up is concerned, we have locked them up, we've traditionally locked them up, and we are going to continue to lock 'em up. Now, one of the things that has happened is that when we have the structured groups, those guys knew that we knew who they were, right?

And as we locked them up things started to change. We had a group called the Tomahawks, one of the larger groups in New York City. We knew who the #1 guy was, so they started switching things around. They changed the #10 guy to the #1 guy. They found out that mere identification was not enough. We knew who they were, and they knew anytime something in the neighborhood happened we were going to go right to the leaders. They knew that, and they started to change. They changed what they were wearing and soon they went from a formalized street gang to another group called the 5% Nation, where they changed all of their nicknames and screwed up all our records.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...Barbara Wade do you have a comment on this?

WADE (Miami): ...No, I was going to ask to respond to spontaneity, but Leroy picked it up. That's okay.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Okay we are going to try and forge ahead... with a definition. Let me put up the Chicago definition and we'll get a repeat on Ray Gott's definition.

[Displayed on overhead projector: Chicago Definition as follows...]

[A street gang is] a law violating collection of persons who are integrated into an identifiable, somewhat structured group; who recognize themselves as a group; and with few exceptions, exhibit some sense of territoriality. It is a group that has developed in the neighborhood milieu, but whose behavior is in conflict with the surrounding community due to its failure to use acceptable means of achieving recognition and influence.

First off though, Chief Casey made [the] observation that we skipped over an item in the Chicago definition that he feels is worthy of some discussion.

CASEY (CPD): ...It's not so much that we skipped over something. It's just that I thought it was treated rather lightly, and that was "incivility". Somebody didn't want that in. At every community meeting you go to [as a District/Precinct Commander] they talk about incivilities and identify those with gangs. Incivilities are people standing out late at night making noise ...probably not criminal. Incivilities are breaking glass, drinking on the streets, when your wife goes to work in the morning and she's on her way to the bus [and] they are hitting her up for dimes, nickels, quarters... that sort of thing; they block streets, they turn on fire plugs...

I think the people identify that as gang activity and we have to also look at what a citizen identifies as gang activities when they are treated uncivilly. We spent a lot of money here trying to computerize that so we could alert the cars to get out to the area to deal with incivility. So its something that I would like to not lose. Keep it in the back of your head. Its very important to the community, and its one of the things that we do to serve the community as best we can.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...One of the things that I hope will grow out of this conference is that we can ultimately settle upon some form of uniform procedure of reporting street gang crime so that not only do we have a barometer for how successful we are in our own localities, but [that] the academics will have some data they can use for cross-sectional and longitudinal studies. The thing that Chief Casey was getting at never hits the paper. We not going to end up reporting it, but [for] District Commanders and people responsible at the local level for law enforcement, the precinct level, this is the bulk of their activity. And it consumes the most time and manpower. The investigative aspect is usually what we hit on and we end up reporting only a slice of the pie. It is important from the point of view of index and non-index crime, reporting. I think as Chief Casey said, it bears underscoring and is something that we shouldn't overlook...

CASEY (CPD): ...I might add a little tag. It deals with the quality of life in the neighborhood when its an incivil place to live. Citizens see that as a gang problem and maybe we ought to look at what the citizen thinks as well as what we think.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): I think as communities become inured to these problems, we tend to pay less attention to them too. What constitutes a serious gang problem in a ghetto area are no longer the incivilities, but we have vast areas of the city here in Chicago where that is a serious problem and engenders the most public concern.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...We discussed that very thing when we designed our definition. That's when we put in injurious to public health and public morals and all of that part of the definition. That was the very thing, incivility, we were considering. Many times I think that's tied very closely to criminality. When a youth comes up and spits on the sidewalk in front of you or something like that. It's all of a sudden either interfering or an assault on a police officer; and what started out as an act of incivility becomes an act of criminality real quick.

GENELIN (D/A,LA): ...I think when that behavior becomes normative, the youth in the area become negatively influenced...

McBRIDE (LASD): ...I think incivility is a very big part of gang activity in general. One of the things that we insisted upon was the last part of the definition -- the creation of an atmosphere of fear and intimidation within the community. It's a very important part of that definition.

KRAMER (LAPD): ... I totally agree with that. I think it's something that's not discussed enough. If you look at the percentage of overall crime committed by gang members and compare that to overall Part 1 crime, it is a relatively small percentage in the scheme of things.

But either the perception of fear or the fear itself that citizens feel because the presence of gangs in their community is the real degradation of the quality of life that they have. I am familiar with many communities, not only Southern California but other areas of the country where gangs are not known groups, they have not identified themselves as gangs or are not known for a lot of violent activity. But the fact that they are involved in graffiti, are intimidating by their nature, represent, give the hard looks, etc., causes citizens to feel fear which is interfering with their quality of life.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...I feel kind of guilty since I published our stats for gang crimes. I said that street gang crimes in Chicago were only 0.8% of all comparable crime in Chicago -- which is true. But I feel that these results could be fostering a false sense of security. When you go down 18th street here in Chicago



and you look at all the gang graffiti, and the groups hanging on the corners, you've got to [ask] yourself, "Do the stats give a well-founded perception of safety?"

MAXSON (USC): ...I agree with the importance of incivility in the gang definition. I'd like to discuss a little later a broader scheme which will include John Galea's groups. My particular problem now is with the Los Angeles County definition, and the notion of the gang member's individually oriented criminal activity. If it is an individual act in furtherance of the gang, for whatever reason, I would tend to agree with it. But the fact is that many individuals, who happen to be members of gangs, are becoming involved in a lot of criminal acts. For instance, if the gang member is involved in a domestic fight with his wife, it becomes a gang matter [under the L.A. County definition]. The particular point that I am making is if an individual performs a criminal act, and we are to put it within a gang context, then it must also be in furtherance of the gang's aspiration, and to the benefit of the particular gang itself.

MCBRIDE (LASD): ...We run into some problems with the idea of "the furtherance of the gang", and what that really means. However, when our people are looking at crime, if its a domestic disturbance, including a husband/wife [or] girlfriend/boyfriend living together, that takes precedence over the fact that he or she might be a gang member. We would not count that as gang crime. But going back to the original premise of how we look at gang and define gang and gang activity, it's our belief that being a member of a gang generally fosters criminality, antisocial behavior, and that gang members are more prone to commit crimes.

All gangs are bad in our street gang definition. They are in business to commit criminal acts. The whole influence of the gang mentality is why these people go out and commit, maybe, an armed robbery...

KRAMER (LAPD): ...Right. But if a particular [person], who happened to be a gang member, went out and committed a robbery individually, for his own personal benefit, and no other member of the gang was involved in it, [and] there was no other indication of gang involvement, etc., (he was the sole beneficiary of his act)... To say that should be [classified] as "gang related" -- for something that he did singularly and individually -- seems to me to be some kind of an extension of the reality of the situation.

MCBRIDE (LASD): ...That's part of what I was going to say. What you are talking about is the score process afterwards. You are determining if it's gang related or not gang related.

The problem I have with our own definition is, as Ray Gott said, it's "an allegiance for a common purpose", -- and it doesn't have to be a "common purpose". It is an allegiance.

Loren Kramer, you are familiar with the study that we just did on one of the bigger gangs, the Rolling 60's. There would be small segments of them that would be doing things, [and] didn't even know each other. So when you say allegiance for a common purpose -- it doesn't have to be. I mean they're in what we are calling a street gang for a variety of reasons. In their allegiance to that group they recognize each other, interact with each other on the street, and will recognize other people as a common enemy. For instance, the A-Trays and the Rolling 60's know that they are common enemies and they will band together on occasion. So all I am saying is that segment of the definition, "for a common purpose" is superfluous. I think it's misleading.

GENELIN (D/A,LA): ...It may well be, but I think the intent was not the common purpose be all inclusive for all the gang members. For example, you could have four or five members of a particular gang who's common purpose is to steal cars, and another small group whose common purpose is to deal dope. I don't think that one common purpose has to spread across the entire gang. I agree that perhaps the term common purpose could be misleading.

MCBRIDE (LASD): ...I say we don't need it.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Well, we can get into that when we discuss what a gang related event is.

KRAMER (LAPD): ...The reason I brought it up is simply because we are trying to define a street gang, and I don't want to define it that way. The El Rukns may have a common purpose, but I know the L.A. street gangs don't when they band together.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...What about the symbolic notion? Is that useful to get at? I suppose you could say "purpose" could be symbolic as well as material and that would take care of it.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Well in Chicago it works both ways, you can commit a crime for the interest of the gang or you could use your gang identification for your own purposes in intimidating the potential victim.

GALEA (NYPD): ...The thing I was thinking about is seeing somewhere in the definition the idea of ongoing group activity. I think it has to be a group that is ongoing, not just involved in one particular incident. It'd be impossible for us to track down every three or four kids who got involved in something.

MAXSON (USC): ...But that's where the identifiable group comes in, that they recognize themselves with a name or something.

GALEA (NYPD): ...Yeah, but the group has to be ongoing.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...One of the things that law enforcement people have a problem with is finding a hook to the gang so that we can deal with it, and put an incident in a pigeon hole and say, "This belongs to the so-and-so target for law enforcement purposes". Whether it has a name or not is immaterial, but we want to try and identify and pigeon hole these things a little bit.

MILLER (Harvard): ...In our old definition we tried to differentiate gang from a mob or crowd...

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Let's say its a durable organization.

McCLOSKEY (CPD): ...Well that's what I was going to say. Shouldn't this group, this gang be identified as a gang? Is it a known gang, instead of just any group of people who are going down the street to commit a crime and then all of a sudden we decide it's a gang? It's got to be a criminal gang act that they've committed...

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...That's an element of the Chicago definition.

GALEA (NYPD): ...What's going to happen with us is that our gang crime rate is going to skyrocket because we don't define it as such.

McCLOSKEY (CPD): ...Not necessarily, I mean if we know that they are committing a crime as a group and we know that they are a gang and they make the gang signs at the time, we can attribute that to an actual gang. But if they are just a group of people who go out and commit a crime as a gang, that's really not a gang crime, it's just a crime committed by a number of people.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Let's hear from Dr. Miller, and that will take us to lunch.

MILLER (Harvard): ...This is something I wasn't going to talk about because its sort of academic, but, I have a feeling that John Galea is feeling left out here. This is something that I put together about 10 years ago. I was concerned very much with the whole issue of incivility of groups in local communities. They don't go around with codes or symbolic aspects, they don't have colors, use graffiti and so on, but nevertheless they form a basis for citizen complaints. They are a part of what I call collective youth crime, rather than simply gang crime. So I thought I would start with the notion of a law violating youth group.

This is the overall concept of the law violating youth group. A simple definition, although I managed to make it very complicated in the discussion. Here is the definition of a law violating youth group. It includes the idea of gang.

It is an association of three or more youths whose members engage recurrently over a long term, not just once or twice or sporadically, in illegal activities with the cooperation and/or moral support of their companion.

It's quite simple and it has elements that many people have discussed so far, the notion of recurrence or continued association, the cooperation and/or moral support -- that means, if the group itself approves of the kinds of illegal activities that other members are engaged in. I set up a typology that recognizes the fact that most groups engage in lots of different kinds of illegal activity, but there is generally one dominant pattern.

First I want to talk about "disruptive groups". Here I have six forms of activity and they really correspond to the incivility thing; 1) noisy, disorderly congregation, 2) drinking/drug use, 3) harassment, obstruction, exclusion by force or threat of force, (that's bugging local people and keeping them from going into stores and so on), 4) vandalism, property destruction, defacement, arson, 5) fighting, assault by missiles, direct assaults on persons, and 6) small scale theft, burglary, robbery and larceny.

Next come "gangs". This includes the turf gang which is larger, more formalized than those simple crime groups. Still larger and more formalized would be predatory gangs. These are gangs whose primary objective is income acquisition through predation and theft of various types. A third type of gang would be called a fighting gang. Their main focus of activity is assault, combat violence.

Another category of law violating youth groups would be "casual groups". Casual means that they come together from time to time, sometimes even only once. Casual disruptive local cliques would be temporary groups that get together and are disruptive in particular areas. Casual predatory cliques might get together on a sporadic, basis to engage in property crime. Casual assaultive cliques, also would get together infrequently or maybe only once or twice, and here I think the New York City "Wilding" group fits.

Clearly a lot of the distinctions are arguable. The typology permits some prioritization in the use of law enforcement resources.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...I see three general categories of groups. The first I'd call a law violating youth group, the second I would call a criminal gain group or moving on towards organized crime, and the last I would call the gang category variations. There is overlapping among those categories however.

McBride (LASD): ...LA would have a real problem with excluding the smaller more formalized cliques, because we have a large number of small cliques of Crips and Bloods, they are 15-20

people maximum, but are very violent ...very much involved in gang activity, and some of them are even target gangs for the Sheriff's Department because of their level of violence.

VINCENT (CPD): ...I was looking over the California definition that Ray Gott just kicked out. It's something that I could personally live with and subscribe to.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...How does New York feel about that definition?

GALEA (NYPD): ...Are you talking about the California definition? It was very difficult to visualize it because it was such a long statement. Can we xerox it and put it on the board so we can all take a look at it? Then we can have some productive discussion.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...While we are waiting for some xerox copies, let me discuss what we are going to do...this afternoon. We will look at what constitutes a street gang related event for reporting purposes. We are also going to discuss how we can share gang information or at least put it in a common pool so that individual law enforcement agencies can access it. I don't know whether any of our agencies have the resources to do that. Perhaps the Department of Justice can pick up the ball in the future if not immediately. Lastly what we want to do is have the policy people from each department participate in a little strategic discussion as to how their own individual operations are run and what they look like, how they are structured. Perhaps each policy person can learn from the other and modify his operation. That will pretty much close and accomplish everything that we set out to accomplish today.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...What about the New York reaction to the L.A. County definition?

GALEA (NYPD): ...Well, I'll tell you the truth. That definition is so broad that probably every one of our street groups involved in drugs would fall under that definition. They all have a particular block controlled by some kid 18-19 year olds who has got a group working for him. They are all armed. Anybody who would try to sell drugs on the group's block [would be blown] away. Under that definition, all those groups would be a gang. We wouldn't consider them gangs.

SPERGEL (U of C): ... You wouldn't be dealing with those groups?

GALEA (NYPD): ...Well, as far as we are concerned that's an organized crime problem. That's a drug problem. But if you look at it at the street level, it has all the things in your definition. It's controlling a particular block, their block. You don't come on their block and sell drugs. If you do, you get

blown away. Most of the them are 16, 18, 19 years old. One guy is the ringleader until he gets taken down. Others in the drug operation are 12, 14, 15 years old. As far as we are concerned that's an organized crime problem, it's not a gang problem.

We distinguish it by the fact that this organization is a business, and everybody in that business is an employee, then that's not what we consider a street gang.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...Well, can you draw the line at the point where organized crime hooks into the structure of the gang just for drug distribution.

VINCENT (CPD): ...The structure of these groups makes them amenable to exploitation by organized crime. We have found [that] as individuals some of our gang members are employed by drug organizations.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...But, in Chicago you can make a distinction between the gang organization and organized crime though, right?

VINCENT (CPD): ...We do. We maintain that people operating strictly as a drug organization are not "street gangs" or "youth gangs" or "teen gangs". They are an organized crime group.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...In adopting a common definition between the four jurisdictions here today, we are going to have to admit that there is going to be a degree of discretion when we apply the definition. And if you're willing to exercise that discretionary option, I don't see where you are going to have a problem with it.

GALEA (NYPD): ...I don't know, we're not going to include drug gangs, though,...

MULRYAN (NYPD): ...I don't really have any great problem with the definition, how we are going to use it is another story.

MILLER (Harvard): ...Can I ask a question about your drug gangs? Are they involved in incivility. Are they intimidating people on the streets?

GALEA (NYPD): ...Usually not, because they want to sell on a particular block and they want good relations. They are good neighbors. They don't want anybody that's in that area to come down on them.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...So what you are saying, in fact, is that they are different from street gangs.

GALEA (NYPD): ...Yeah, its a business. Simple as that, and if you cross them, they will uncivilly disrupt your way of life. But they in no way care about their surroundings. They don't

care who walks down the block. That doesn't bother them. But, the same characteristics of a street gang are involved in this particular business.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...The only turf concern is as far as sales area.

GALEA (NYPD): ...Exactly.

GENELIN (D/A,LA): ...I would tend to agree with what you are saying if they are not involved in street crime, street robberies, intimidation, the extortion and all that.

GALEA (NYPD): ...Our street gangs don't control drugs in New York City and that's a big distinction compared to other places.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...That is one of the things we are going to hit on this afternoon when we talk about a street gang related event. There are two types of crimes that we categorically include in the domain of street gang crime and they are the unlawful use of weapons and narcotics. I will tell you why.

We get a known street gang member who is adorned with all sorts of icons and tatoos and wears all the outward trappings of colors... and he's peacefully riding down the street with a bent license plate and a gun on his hip. We put a stop on the car, go through it, and we find the gun. It becomes a gang related event. There is no particular victim, so to speak. The people of the State of Illinois are the victim in that case. We classify that as gang related on it's face.

We feel that even though this person didn't commit a crime other than the possession of that weapon unlawfully, we're going to call it gang related because its important to law enforcement for a tactical purpose to know the extent to which street gang members arm themselves. That's an important statistic for us. And it ties in directly with drive-by shootings.

The other thing is, we consider categorically all incidents involving narcotics, their possession and sale by gang members, to be gang related, because we have no way of putting a handle on it other than that.

We want to know the extent to which gangs are involving themselves in narcotics activity. But here we plead uncertainty. We do it just to capture the statistic. We don't want to lose the information, although we are not quite sure whether a person who has one marijuana joint is, in fact, involved in a gang related narcotic activity. When he is selling on turf and he's got members of his group performing a look-out function, or we can establish that there is networking between gangs or among gang members in the distribution of narcotics, we're pretty comfortable calling that a gang related narcotic event.

But with possession we are not so sure. Is it the idea of a person being an entrepreneur, trying to sell a nickel bag to make

a little money on his own, or is he acting as a functionary of the gang?

McBRIDE (LASD): ...If he has homeboys to keep everybody else out and kill the competition...

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...It's for that reason that we don't want to lose the information and we do categorize it [as gang related].

McBRIDE (LASD): ...we do the same thing...

CASEY (CPD): ...I need a clarification going back to your first example. The guy who has the tatoos and all the trappings of a gang member whose driving down the street with a bent license plate and you stopped him. He's got the gun and that's a gang incident. Let him go five minutes farther down the road and he walks in with that gun to a 7-11 store and commits an armed robbery. I have some concern about whether that's gang related, I've got some confusion in my mind. Larry, I don't personally have any investment in this definition, because I didn't work on it.

There are a couple of words, minor changes based on some of the discussion that I heard that seem to make it more palatable to some other folks. For example, why is public health in there? Public health to me means AIDS, contagious diseases and so on.

KRAMER (LAPD): ...The term actually came out of some conspiracy law. You have much broader powers when you enter into the realm of public health. The FDA is the only agency I know that can remove all the drugs out of a store without a warrant or anything. So its much better for the police in terms of our powers.

CASEY (CPD): ...So what did you end up changing in the definition?

GOTT (LASD): ...So far it reads a gang is an identifiable group of people who form an allegiance and recurrently engage in acts injurious to public health and public morals.

CASEY (CPD): ...A group of people, and since we agreed this morning that street gangs can have people of any age up to 80 or 90, that stays. It's just people, it's not just young people or youths or that kind of a thing. The other criteria which are frequently used are identifiable leadership. Some degree of internal organization or some kind of formalization.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...The reason we don't want leadership or structure is that for most of our street gangs, you can't go to them and say this is the leader, this is the pres or vice-pres or whatever... It may change by the hour.



McBRIDE (LASD): ...It could change by the hour, but its still there and in fact could change by the circumstance. It might be one leader for drug deals, another for something else and so on. But that leadership is still there.

GALEA (NYPD): ...Those four or five guys I spoke about before who were robbers in essence. It seems like they would fall right in here.

CASEY (CPD): ...And they shouldn't. I couldn't live with this. It's too broad.

CASEY (CPD): ...I think you have to state that more clearly. I don't think this definition should suffer from the vice of vagueness. It has to be as concrete as possible because ultimately you are going to end up making your decisions of what a gang crime incident is by looking at the definition of a gang. I agree with John Galea from New York. Three guys that walk in to rob a place are not a gang, although they have a common purpose and they are hurting the public health or public morals and are engaged in criminal activity. I don't see that as a gang and that's what I want to avoid. It has to be to me clear, more concrete. It's too broad.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Chief Casey, is this definition less clear than the one that Chicago currently employs? Maybe the definition we are currently using to classify crime is not that clear either?

CASEY (CPD): ...Obviously the definition we are presently using is workable. We haven't had any problems. Nobody says we are deviating from our definition to describe gang crime as [anything else]. What I am worried about is this one is broader and it would be too vague. [Our definition] is something we are comfortable with and I'm very leery of making a change right now. I do not want to shoot from the hip. I'd have to sit down, do some real thinking on my own to determine what effect it would have in statistical terms. Are we going to skew them one way or the other, are we suddenly going to have a 2% drop in gang activity or a 2% increase? And why? It's a real sensitive area for us and it's one that I would find very hard to make a policy judgment about at this time.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...I suspect that this problem exists in the other jurisdictions too.

MULRYAN (NYPD): ...Everybody here comes from some place else, and we perceive our own individual problems a little differently. Now we all, I think, agree on what a street gang is and what a street gang isn't. But there is a degree of difference in each of our cities as to what we see out there in the street. And I think we all sort of like to defend what we do in our own

particular areas of law enforcement. And now what you are asking us to do is come together and make policy, in a way, for the rest of the country. It's kind of difficult.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...I don't know that's our objective really. First of all this is not for any funding purposes. This is just to agree on a common definition...

MULRYAN (NYPD): ...If we agree on a common definition, what is that going to mean?

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Well its going to mean that we have comparability, longitudinally, within and across jurisdictions as to the degree of success that we have or lack of it when we do our law enforcement work.

KRAMER (LAPD): ...I have an idea that is probably completely unworkable, but two sets of purposes are being served here. I don't think you are going to get, at least in this context, individual police from these four jurisdictions here today, (and another 40 or 50 in the United States who are not represented), to agree on a definition which they will then adopt as an official policy in their department. I think you have a very small chance of doing that. And I think that the definitions that have worked out well for the individual cities should be maintained by those cities. Because "If it ain't broke don't fix it".

On the other hand as far as possible there could be a second definition, recognized by the department which is used for purposes of national comparability. Now, the reason why I say it's feasible is that you'd be taking the same base data and analyzing it in two different ways. For purposes of the local law enforcement group this is what we call a gang, this is what we call a gang incident, this is what we call a gang member and this is what we will continue to use for statistics.

Given the not inconsiderable problem, suppose everyone really did adopt a common definition, you'd have radical shifts in the numbers of the gangs. They'd say, "Hey, what's going on? You're trying to cook the books!"

But if somebody, maybe a research person in the police department said, "Here is a more universal definition, for the purposes of cross-city comparability [and] for all those other purposes that you mentioned", [then] our data could be analyzed in both of these ways, [and] you might have a resolution to the problem.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...May I ask John a question.

GALEA (NYPD): ...Yeah.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...In your analogy or your use of the robbers, did they have a common identifying sign or symbol?

GALEA (NYPD): ...Yeah, guns...

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...No, what I mean is to identify themselves, to identify the group. Did they have a group identification? ... And the reason I bring that up, I'm sure is quite apparent, is that one of the criteria that separates your group, the robbers, from our group the street gang is that our group wants to be identified by a sign or symbol or common name or common identification. Your robbers don't. And so if we add that to the definition, would it satisfy your objection?

GALEA (NYPD): ...Well, it gets a little hairy. It really gets a little hairy because if it's a street gang and they go out and rob somebody, we don't care if it's one guy or a hundred guys -- it's still a street gang. I have no problem with that. If a street gang member is caught with a weapon no matter what he is doing with that weapon, robbing somebody, walking down the street with it, standing next to it, he's going to be locked up and that's going to be a gang related incident. So we have no problem with that. We do have a problem when you are talking about three guys or five guys who come together, a robbery team in effect, and go out and all they do is rob people. That is not a street gang.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...If they have a common name, or a common symbol or sign...?

GALEA (NYPD): ...We have guys that go into banks and rob banks and they wear the same clothing. Now that's identifiable, I mean we can identify those five guys.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...But it's not symbolic! That's the point. What I'm saying is if there is an identifying process in what street gangs do, that names them, then does not that distinguish it from your example...

GALEA (NYPD): ...I'll agree with that...

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Okay, and so if we add that to the definition at some level, it seems to me at that point we may have it licked.

GALEA (NYPD): ...Okay, if we can work in some way the idea of symbolic identification...

SPERGEL (U of C): ...What does that do to California? Does it reduce the number of gang incidents [you would report]...?

GOTT (LASD): ...Doesn't reduce us at all.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...That's what we count now anyway.

GENELIN (D/A,LA): ...The other possible solution to this, if there is only some minor concerns about this definition or something like it, we could, specifically list some exclusions. We could exclude specifically prison gangs...

VINCENT (CPD): ...motorcycle gangs...

LEROY (DEA): ...organized crime, terrorists gangs...

SPERGEL (U of C): ...How would you phrase that additional change?

CASEY (CPD): ...This is a rough area, this is an area of high emotional problem for the community. It's a hot press item. This is not an easy thing that we can roll off and say well we've done a great job here today and that's it. I think that we are not looking into the future to see what the ramifications are, and that's what my concern is.

If it's going to increase or decrease or skew the statistics by one iota, I want to walk away from it. I don't want to be involved. I don't want to do that, because I know the abuse that we are going to take if we do that. We have to be very careful what we are going to do here. It's not a thing that anybody should take lightly...

GALEA (NYPD): ...I have to agree with him and I tell you, some of the other police departments around the country are really counting on what's going to happen in this room, because you are the legends of having dealt with gangs. A lot of them, as you know, come to see you guys all the time, Wes. And they take what you say as law. They may not go by it right down to the point, but when they get back to their communities, the stats that come out of what they perceive [to be] your policies have all kinds of ramifications: liability, labelling, what is a gang member, who is an associate, and all of that stuff. So I think you have to be very, very clear here in terms of what you come up with.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...I think that if we come to an agreement that's consonant with what we do already [autonomously], but perhaps couched in terms that we can all live with, then we have accomplished something here today...

GALEA (NYPD): ...But you've got to do it, because they're depending on it. This is a life and blood thing to some of them out there...

DURAN (LA Prob): ...I think too, that the amount of diversity, cultural diversity, between different cities will necessitate some degree of flexibility on the part of the people who are assessing what is a gang related event.

CASEY (CPD): ...We don't want that, at least I don't. I'm saying it has to be concrete. There cannot be room for deviations. It has to be the same, because that is where you fall into the trap of later somebody coming back and saying, "Look what they did in Chicago to 'kill' crime". You know we've lived through that. I'm not interested in getting myself in a box that's not concrete. It has to be something that we can say is the definition of a gang and if a person does this it's a gang crime incident. So when you start with a definition I think you have to include within it what a gang incident is, otherwise it's just something I feel real uncomfortable with, real uncomfortable.

KRAMER (LAPD): ...Let me just say something, that is my own personal opinion. This is not the opinion of the Los Angeles Police Department and I want to make that real clear, because there are other people -- and probably even within this room -- that don't agree with me.

...One of the things I tell police agencies throughout the nation that are starting to experience an emerging gang problem is that one of the most important things they have to do is what we are doing in this room. That's to come up with a definition. Because when they come up with that definition, they're going to end up getting stuck with that definition.

I'm not sure whether our definition in Southern California isn't too broad. This is a point on which many people may not agree with me. That was a trap that we established for ourselves when we first got into the gang business. We made our definition extremely broad. Part of that was designed to justify more personnel, the existence of gang units, budgets, etc. etc. Now I know that's heresy, but I believe that to be true. And it wasn't anybody's fault by design. I think it was a trap that we established for ourselves. Consequently, both the Sheriff's Department and ourselves have an extremely broad definition. I don't know if Bob Jackson's got the stats with him, but one of the things that our chief became very concerned about was how much of the total amount of gang crime out there is gang motivated, and how much of it is rather gang related -- involving a gang member, either individually or collectively...

JACKSON (LAPD): ...44%

KRAMER (LAPD): ...That's right. What we found is well over 40% of the total gang crime in the city of Los Angeles has been gang related. You know well over 40% of it has been not gang motivated. Now that's a substantial figure over the past 10 years. If you were to take collectively 40% of our gang stats and just wipe them off, we would have a substantial decrease in our gang crimes.

But theoretically or philosophically, we made a decision a long time ago that because a gang member has more of a propensity towards violence, because he happens to be in the gang

environment he is more inclined to commit a crime, a violent crime particularly, we classify those crimes as being gang related.

Now it does give our gang investigators some discretion, that if in fact they are looking at the domestic violence incident, for instance, he may or may not tabulate that as being gang related. It gives them a little discretion at looking at the case itself, but there is no clear science. I don't think that the individuals that are involved in this robbery group are street gang members. I don't think [that] even in our definition they would be.

MAXSON (USC): ...I don't think the individual burglar who's a gang member and is stealing for himself is a gang crime thing. And I would want that to be clear. I can't agree with this gentleman more. And I am an old Californian... a Berkeley graduate. I know that researchers like to make things nice and broad.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...I would prefer a limited definition. I could take the Chicago definition.

KRAMER (LAPD): ...Where this thing gets all real fuzzy... and it has [become so over] the last few years... and the Bloods and the Crips are a classic example... [is that] we have individuals who have been long time gang members or affiliated with gangs; [but] they have percolated up to a level where they have become multi-kilo dealers of narcotics. They have become organized dope dealers, they are no longer street gang members.

When the crack phenomena hit Los Angeles and Houston and New York, one of the natural vehicles present was the gang. These individuals very quickly became major dope dealers. They ceased being street gang members, but they used the gang as a reservoir for recruiting people to deal drugs.

A gang member may not be in our files as a Blood or a Crip, but if he is an organized and sophisticated drug dealer he is "involved in the street gang environment." He employs a couple of Crypts to go out and do a paid hit for him, and they happen to get apprehended, that is a homicide. But in fact if we apprehended them for committing a murder and they are in our files as gang members, that would be a gang homicide.

I think that we have gone way beyond any ability to scientifically look at some nice little package and say this is gang related and that isn't. Things have changed dramatically over the last few years. These gang members who are going to other cities are the Bloods and Crips, [but they] are not going there representing their clique or their set. They are going there representing drug dealers that are expanding their operations in other cities. Now, what happens in these other cities? The pattern is that, since they are still gang members, whether they are traffickers, runners, whatever, they will in fact reach out and recruit younger people and bring them in.

They will take on the symbolism of their gang in many cases. It's happened in Denver, it's happened in the South, its happened all over.

I think that we get into a real fuzzy area, whether or not they are, in fact, reaching out as L.A. based street gangs or whether that's a convenient way for them to recruit younger people into their operation. And it works very well.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Okay. Let's adjourn for lunch.

AFTERNOON SESSION

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...One of things that we stated earlier in the day is that ultimately we might be able to develop some sort of a centralized reporting apparatus to which we could send our numbers. I think that some sort of central collection agency is very important. I don't know how far we are going to get with that today. I don't think any of the agencies here have the resources to volunteer that sort of service. But Dave Leroy from DEA, has some insight into that problem and some avenues that we might eventually pursue. I would ask him to make just a brief statement to summarize and perhaps give us some reason for hope in this.

LEROY (DEA): ...Thanks Larry, I will just take a moment, but I would like to leave you with these thoughts. Some time back John Lawn, administrator of the DEA, and Darryl Gates from L.A., got together at one of those IACP meetings and suggested that there be a national street gang database. Of course we are talking drugs here basically, street drug gangs.

We cooked up a system that was for varying reasons, both political and otherwise, unacceptable to the Attorney General so it went down the drain. But it's still on the agenda. John Lawn wants it and apparently, (I forget the name of the new boss of IACP), they have been talking back and forth. And what we are trying to do is get a system up again.

How are we going to do it? One of the things that's in the drug czar's, Dr. Bennett's, strategy -- and he doesn't know about this yet -- is to have an intelligence center. Call it what you want, but it's national in scope, a strategic intelligence center, national drug center, and he's got \$50 million.

They've been over to our house very, very often. The plan changes day to day. A new line here, a new box there, a new task here. It's really not ironed out, but in the strategy that he sent out he's committed to do something by February of 1990. So probably by that time, some of these plans will be worked out. And by plans I mean between DEA, FBI, and Customs there are a lot of different agencies involved.

The intelligence community and Department of Defense have a big piece in this. Everybody is into drugs now, something like 36 federal agencies, it's unbelievable. If you think it's difficult to talk about a definition of "street gang", you ought to see some of these meetings with the Generals and Admirals. It's just unbelievable. They are all going in different directions. They want to do the right thing, but they don't want to wait. The bottom line is we hope to have some sort of a system eventually, even if it evolves through this new intelligence center.

I'll keep in touch with you folks and we'll see what happens down the way. I'm sure we can come up with some type of system that we can use and take advantage of the good work that you guys have done in LA and Chicago.



We are not looking to change the world, but we are looking for some sort of national system so that we can put a few analysts on this full time. Let them track which way the wind is blowing as long as it's an issue. I just wanted to leave you with that. It's a little out of context here but I've got to catch a flight early so, if you have any comments, fire...

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...You said street drug gangs, have they done any thinking about what that means?

LEROY (DEA): ...Well, we were going to. Some of these departments may agree, others may not agree with what we have done here today. We were going to try to go through the IACP. We figured it was broader in scope. We'd cover the nation. That was one thing we were thinking about. The idea would be to start with the street drug gangs, because they seemed to be the biggest issue and then as time went on we could expand into things like motorcycle [gangs], etc.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...In other words, they would have to be street gangs for whom drug dealing is an activity, a major activity...

LEROY (DEA): ...A major activity, right. They might be involved in other things but it would be a major activity. Now, at one time I did have \$450,000 in my hand from BJA for the system, but that got swept off the table for a task force in D.C. They scooped up a lot of money for that. We were going to buy a few computers with that and start the system up. But maybe we can get OJJDP to somehow get involved in this. But right now, it's a little nebulous exactly how this is going to work out.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Are you trying to hold the possibility that you'd do the uniform crime reporting for gang crimes?

LEROY (DEA): ...No, we don't want to get involved in statistics. What we were doing was tracking where the violators are going. If a police agency for example, in the East, sees gang members, people that they have identified as gang members, or want to check names thinking that they may be from the Coast for example, they could run it through a system, something like EPIC, the El Paso Intelligence Center, on a line. Out of that would come trends and I suppose, if you are looking for statistics, yeah. But not who's doing what in each city.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...You wouldn't limit yourself to gangs that are trafficking drugs, would you not also include individuals who are trafficking?

LEROY (DEA): ...Well individuals are already plugged into the major system. There are a lot of individuals there, for example, with vehicles and aircraft. But you don't find many of these gang members with aircraft, but all that is at EPIC already.

You've got eleven different agencies there. So that's the broad idea which might or might not ever come to pass. It's got a good chance because the interest is there. It's just that the money isn't. I am telling you, the money in DC is just not around, we are broke.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...David, you do have an interest in hearing about different programs that we might have...

LEROY (DEA): ...Oh, yeah, that's why I stopped here, and I thank Dr. Spergel for the invitation. We are going to keep in touch until we know it can't happen anymore. If that's the way it's to be, but we are trying for a national system.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Okay, running behind as we are, we have got to get moving on this definitional thing, but it seems like we have reached an impasse on exactly what we are going to call a [street] gang.

We might be able to shed some light on the topic, if we put the cart in front of the horse and discuss what a gang related event is. Once we get a feel for the beast that we are dealing with ...perhaps after we have seen what it does, then we can define it a little better.

Let me tell you what we do in Chicago. We look at case reports on an individual basis and review narratives and any supplementary reports that we get as a result of the follow-up investigative process. We search reports for any information which would lead one to reasonably conclude that the incident grew out of a gang function. I suppose we could change that this afternoon to street gang function.

The gang membership of either party to the event is not particularly important. Certainly there has to be something in the event that tells us this is a gang related crime, but, for example there have been instances where an irate homeowner will come out of his house and falsely identify a group of kids as belonging to a local gang. He takes action independently and commits a crime doing so by battering one of them. It's a case of mistaken identity. There was no "gang" involved. We would look at that real closely, but its possible that we might call that a gang related event because of the conditions in the neighborhood and what motivated this man to take action on his own.

We started the process about seven years ago as an empirical process in which we took all the types of crime that were reported as gang related and classified them. In essence what we did was pigeon hole each case report and say these cases are instances of representing or symbolic behavior where people would signify their identity with a gang. Some cases ended up being retaliatory in nature, whether they were directed internally toward the gang members for the purpose of discipline, internal or external against rival gang members, or victims who wished to cooperate with prosecution.

Other cases were clear instances of street fighting, gang recruitment, turf violations, testing other gangs' resolve, defending their turf, expansion of turf... Still others were vice related incidents. A robbery could be a vice related incident. It didn't have to be possession of narcotics.

Then there were four other categories that I just sort of compressed for the purposes of presentation. They are all so numerically small: extortion of legitimate and illegitimate enterprises operating in the gang's turf, [or] an incident that emerged as a result of a personal conflict. And then prestige, personal prestige I guess you'd say, is the last category that emerged.

We didn't try to develop these categories artificially. We let the data tell us what categories existed, and on occasion we didn't have a trait that we could ascribe to a particular incident. [As happens in the case of unlawful possession of weapons.]

This emerged as an empirical exercise and what it helped us do was discover that while people may belong to a gang, it may just be one element of a general pattern of their delinquent behavior. We recognized that not always will somebody who commits a theft do so in the interest of the gang. He may steal a car because he has to get home. It's got nothing to do with his being a gang member. As a result, we were able to back up and take kind of a global look at what the gangs were doing.

We have the UCR categories. We understand that very well for reporting purposes, and it helps to discover how many homicides we have to deal with, strong arm robberies, arson, etc. It also helps to form missions based on particular crimes and people with the expertise to handle them.

However, the gang members don't know anything about UCR reporting. So, we [took] a particular crime like simple battery and saw that this happened as a result of a turf violation. We inverted the process [of UCR reporting] and took a look at all turf violations and the crimes which were committed in the interest of [turf], and we get a whole new opinion of what constitutes a street gang related event. Because any crime could be committed in the interest of a turf violation or a street fight or recruitment effort...

And lastly, the way this all broke out was that we were overwhelmed by opportunities in the area of vice enforcement, but representing and street fighting seemed to be the predominant activities here in Chicago. Of Chicago street gangs, at least during the time frame of January '87 through the end of July '88, there was not a great deal of recruitment reported. This is based on reported crimes not a crime victimization survey.

The other interesting aspect is that most of the street fighting involved index crimes. That may be artificial because people are less likely to report an injury that is not serious...

MAXSON (USC): ...Larry, what's a recruitment crime?

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...A recruitment crime is gang recruitment, compelling organizational membership, for lack of a better term.

MAXSON (USC): ...Intimidation?

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...That would include intimidation, but it could be distinct from, say, witness intimidation -- which could be retaliation. Chapter 38 of the Illinois Criminal Code...states:

A person who expressly or by implication threatens to do bodily harm, or does bodily harm to an individual's family, or uses any other criminally unlawful means to solicit or to cause any person to join any organization or association, regardless of the nature of such organization or association, is guilty of a Class III felony.

MAXSON (USC): ...You include narcotics under vice too, don't you?

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Yes, yes, but the vice category includes liquor law violations among the juveniles ...and there is prostitution, but it's not big. Gambling is not real big either. It's way under a half percent of all the reported street gang crime.

Well that gives you an idea of where we are coming from when we say that something is street gang related. But let me just summarize again. When we read a case report, what we are looking for is any information which would lead one to reasonably conclude that the incident grew out of a gang function. It's got nothing to do with whether he belongs to a gang or not. And if he does belong to a gang we would first view what he did as just one of a series of possible delinquencies that this person engages in.

MAXSON (USC): ...I noticed that you used the word delinquency rather than crime. Are we still talking about juveniles?

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...No, we are talking about the incivilities here too. We are talking about proscribed behavior. Maybe I should have used that term.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...Can you clarify the term gang function a little bit for me?

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Yeah, let's take "representing" as a good example. That's symbolic identification with a gang, an interesting phenomenon in Chicago. That represents a major category for reporting purposes. So many crimes here are classified as "representing". One of the primary purposes of the gang, or results of gang activity, is that gangs promote themselves above every other thing. One of the common things we

read in case reports is that "So and so came up to me, yelled the name of the gang or signified the name of a gang with hand signs and struck me for no apparent reason". I underscore those last three words. The only hook that we have to that gang is his "representing" activity and that is extremely common.

GENELIN (D/A,LA): ...Is there a statutory prohibition against representing?

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...No.

GENELIN (D/A,LA): ...So representing in and of itself is not a crime?

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...No, it just a characteristic of what we have found. The other thing is that the members of street gangs will often represent their gang identity prior to committing a crime, such as robbery. And we don't quite know why they're doing it except perhaps to develop a reputation for the gang's meanness in this area, or to instill some sort of a fear response in the victim, or maybe they are doing it because they do deeply identify with the gang. It's a matter of prestige with them.

GALEA (NYPD): ...I got a problem with that gang function too. If a gang had a party, would that be a gang function?

BOBROWSKI (CPD):...Well, no. These misbehaviors are in some way animated by the person's identification or membership in that gang, or that some benefit to the gang grows out of the actions they have taken. If it's clear to us that the person belongs to a gang but he's committed some offense in his own interest, we won't call that gang related.

Here's the example, and we get flooded with this. We get thousands, literally thousands of cases involving batteries where a women has been battered by her husband or her live-in mate and we consider this to be a domestic disturbance. However, she will say, "...And oh yes! He belongs to the Black Disciples", [or] the so and so gang -- perhaps to vilify the man and elicit a more energetic police response.

What do we do with that information? Well it does have investigative value. A lot of times when investigators see this information in the case report, they will call a gang crimes specialist and ask, "Do you know Bo-Bo from the so and so gang who just battered his wife. She is in the hospital and we'd like to arrest him." And the gang crimes specialist will check the files and see [what can be done] to help the investigation. Now that's a valuable tool and we don't discard the case, but we don't consider it as a gang related event. There is just nothing [about it to suggest gang motivation]. This guy's gang affiliates really don't care what his domestic problems are. [With robbery] we have to be very careful as to what we consider gang related or not.

GENELIN (D/A,LA): ...If he used a gang tool in the battery of his wife...

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Tool?

GENELIN (D/A,LA): ...Tool, a gun, knife or something that belonged to the organization, to the group?

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...No, that's just an instrument that he used.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...What if you had a group of juvenile members of the street gang, who were standing around the street corner just talking, laughing, drinking beer. Is that a gang function?

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Yeah, but you see, [under UCR] it's not going to show up in these statistics. They may get arrested. If they get arrested it would be a vice related offense, cause they are drinking beer in your example. Let's just say they were being rowdy, and they were asked to move and they wouldn't, they might be locked up for a disorderly conduct offense. That's not reportable under the index, non-index system, and it would never hit the stats.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...What about Blacks, who just hang on the corner cause they just don't have anything else to do, and are neighborhood kids who eventually kind of go into the drug stuff.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Well, if the community doesn't complain about it, the police don't really have a proper function there. An individual beat officer may take the initiative to do something like that, I don't, I couldn't speak to that.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...Let me take that a little further, for instance Blacks here like in K-town on the [West] side. You see them hanging with their colors. You know what their identification is, what their affiliation is. Do you just consider that loitering or...

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...I'll let Commander Vincent or Captain Alexander address that.

VINCENT (CPD): ...If there is a group of kids standing on the corner, and they happen to be gang members and they are not doing a damn thing, we have got a hell of a lot of better things, and more important things to do than lock them up. If we get complaints relative to them, like disturbing or intimidating people, the individual officer may go up and say, "Get the hell off the corner". If they don't move then they will get locked up. But, just because they happen to be, as you put it, Black kids who have nothing else to do, but you went further and went into drugs; now we are in a different thing all together.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...I saw an incident with your officers last night that was handled very well. They were doing area checks, and they stopped. They saw a group of young Black youths and they obviously knew them. They were very well connected to the community. They got out, spoke to them, and they both went over and started to feel them out a little bit, talking to them very kindly. And they didn't find anything, so they stood around for a few minutes and moved on. I thought that was an excellent contact, because at least they talked to them. They know who they are and the next time around, wham, if something is going down.

VINCENT (CPD): ...Yeah, they are playing a little game, though they want the rapport with these kids...

McBRIDE (LASD): ...Sure...

K.ALEXANDER (CPD): ...Where are you going to get information? None of us are geniuses. We get information by asking questions, and if you can form a rapport with them, that's all we can do.

JACKSON (LAPD): ...Captain Alexander, if you did have to take enforcement action against that group, would you consider that gang related even though it doesn't hit paper...

K.ALEXANDER (CPD): ...If they were all members of the Black Gangster Disciples and there had been incidents of people complaining, neighbors complaining of them hanging on the corner and acting in a rowdy manner, yes I would consider it a gang related incident.

JACKSON (LAPD): ...Okay,

MAXSON (USC): ...Do you count that somewhere?

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...We capture and report on all categories of crime, index and non-index, that are reportable under the Illinois Uniform Crime reporting which is like a super-set of the FBI's uniform crime reporting code.

Well, I didn't want to get into that kind of depth just yet because I'm real interested in what Dr. Maxson's work has produced. I think you will be too. I just wanted to state that perhaps we are beating this definitional issue to death, and we shouldn't belabor it that much. When we start to consider what we have for gang related events, that will sort of filter out where we are going with the definition. And when we come to the understanding that not everything that goes down has to be considered gang related, maybe we can relax on this definition issue.

Before I turn it over to Dr. Maxson, Wes [McBride], do you want to talk for a minute about the differences between the

Los Angeles definition and the Chicago definition? Are people clear on definition?

McBRIDE (LASD): ...Well, I don't see any major conflicts. The conflict really comes with a section under gang activity reporting that we have in Los Angeles County wherein suspects are identified as gang members, or in those events where a subject becomes a victim due to his gang affiliation, including burglary and drinking. We capture all those different crimes where the gang member is involved. That's really what our stats are: criminal activity of gang members. We capture and we count that.

Again we go back to our feelings that if it weren't for their gang involvement, most of these crimes probably wouldn't be committed. Certainly, a drunk gang member in a group is potentially a murderer waiting for a place to happen. We spend a significant amount of our patrol time messing with these misdemeanor type crimes. I think Los Angeles city does it a tad different, but it's basically along the same lines.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...There is a little bit of a difference here in nomenclature. I don't want anybody to be confused by it. L.A. has now moved, if I interpret the newspapers right, from gang related reporting only, to [additionally employ] something called gang motivated. We in Chicago are perfectly content with using the term "gang motivated".

JACKSON (LAPD): ...Being motivated would fit your definitions a lot more than the gang type crimes that also use...

VINCENT (CPD): ...Your use, your employment of the two terms, related and motivated, are probably better than ours, which is either related or not related.

JACKSON (LAPD): Well, O.K.

MILLER (Harvard): I don't like "motivated" at all. I think it's a terrible term and should not be considered!

MAXSON (USC): ...Okay, before we get into that discussion, Dr. Klein and I, for a period of years, have been looking mainly at the differences between gang and non-gang violent offenses, mostly homicide. We have looked at data from both the LAPD and LA Sheriff's Department. The data I am going to talk about today actually are taken from all the LASD gang designated homicides between 1978 and 1982; and in LAPD, all gang designated homicides in the three high gang stations between 1979 and 1981.

There are comparable numbers of non-gang homicides that we randomly selected in order to make a comparison of the differences and the characteristics between homicides that have been designated as gang versus those that have not. The issue that I am going to talk about is what the LA gang homicide statistics look like when you apply the Chicago definition to



them; and also what that has to say about the differences between gang and non-gang crime. In going from one jurisdiction to the other, there are issues of prevalence, how much gang crime is out there and also what the nature of that gang crime is. How different it is or how similar to non-gang crime. What we have found in comparing LAPD [and] LASD homicide and non-homicide cases, and in comparing those characteristics to five other smaller cities in California with emerging gang problems, are that the differences between gang and non-gang crime are fairly stable. I mean there are no dramatic differences. What I want to talk about is what happens when you apply the Chicago definition to LA as to what [is] the nature of the differences between gang and non-gang crime.

The first step that we took was to purify the LA gang cases according to the Chicago definition. What we used were indicators that we had collected from all the gang homicides I described to you before, using two features. One was the appearance of a gang on gang situation. At least one member on either the suspect's side or the victim's side had to be an identified gang member. The second thing we used was any clear indication of a gang related motive. What we are missing here, from what you presented today, is the whole issue of "representing". Actually we have those data but I just didn't realize that was part of your definition.

As it turns out, the correlation between gang on gang and a clear gang motive is very high, so we selected our cases if they had either a gang on gang quality or if there was a clear gang motive. But it wouldn't have made any difference if we had selected one or the other [because the correlation was so high]. You see very little differences in the cases.

When we purified the LA gang cases, we found that 44% of the LAPD gang homicides and 57% of the LASD cases met the Chicago definition. And that resulted in an overall assessment of about half of the LA reported gang homicides would actually meet the Chicago definition according to how we operationalized it.

One of the first things we did then, was to compare the gang cases that met the Chicago criteria with the gang cases that would drop out. The differences seem largely to be associated with the characteristics of the participants -- which is almost redundant. I mean, you still have gang members on both sides three-fourths of the time. On the motivation side, you see a higher rate of affiliation on the victim's side. Basically when you apply the "motive definition" you see a lot more gang on gang: an ADW [assault with a deadly weapon] on one side, a homicide on the other. Robbery of course goes way down, because you don't have a gang victim nearly as often.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): We're not talking about a great change then, in accommodating another description of what constitutes a gang related offense -- at least in the domain of homicides.

JACKSON (LAPD): ...You are dropping 50%,

McBRIDE (LASD): ...You are dropping 50%

GOTT (LASD): ...Simply in terms of volume its a major difference.

MAXSON (USC): ...Absolutely. There is a major difference in prevalence, but not so much in [terms of] character, [which addresses] the issue of this controversy. The kinds of violent offenses that come out of gang function in Chicago also come out in Los Angeles.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Dr. Maxson, you applied our Chicago definition to the cases in Los Angeles...

MAXSON (USC): ...Right.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...and you find that the cases would be reduced by 44%?

MAXSON (USC): ...44% of the cases in LAPD do fit the Chicago definition and 58% almost 60% in the Sheriff's Department.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...If you were to reverse that, take LA's definition and apply it to Chicago, you would probably double the [Chicago] homicide rate.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...We still wouldn't be close to you. That's what I can't figure. How many gang related homicides did you have last year? We had 60.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...I got 450-something, but that's in the County. Now you are talking about a 7000 square mile area. What about the city?

JACKSON (LAPD): ...We counted 255. We had 96 square miles.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Couldn't you state that in another manner, by saying that some 40% don't fit in Chicago?

MAXSON (USC): ...Yeah, in LAPD it would be 56% of what is currently called gang homicides would not be called gang homicides in Chicago, and in LASD its closer to 42% would drop out.

VINCENT (CPD): ...What would be meaningful to me is if I knew why they weren't. What would be an example of what they counted there, [that we] wouldn't count here.

MAXSON (USC): ...Robberies is a clear one. Another example is basically anytime the affiliation of the victim is not clear, unless you happen to have the information that there is a clear gang related motive.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...In Chicago, if you have a drive by, and a non-gang victim was hit you don't know the perpetrators but your witnesses state that they appear to be gang members, would you count that?

VINCENT (CPD): ...Well in many instances one of the indicators is representing. Most of guys in the drive-bys use arm and hand signals. There are words or actions indicating that a gang is representing -- which would make it a gang related event. However in [the case of] homicides the Gang Section defers the matter to the Detective Division for classification.

GALEA (NYPD): ...We are just the opposite when it comes to the gang unit. We don't investigate the case. We work with homicide. But our department, the gang unit, makes the determination whether it will be counted as gang or not. We would count that if all indicators were that gang members that did it. We may never solve that case.

JACKSON (LAPD): ...Even if there were no hand signals or hand signs.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...We wouldn't make an assumption.

JACKSON (LAPD): The bottom line is that if you make a mistake and count it [as gang motivated] and later determine it wasn't, you would adjust. We had 257 last year, and [later] determined two of them were not, and shouldn't be counted, and we subtracted them.

MAXSON (USC): ...I should mention that 1980 was a peak year in gang homicides in LA before the current crunch. We purposely picked those early years so that we could look at the rise and then the decline of gang homicides to see whether police recording practices influence the rate of reported homicide. In both the Sheriff's Department and LAPD we found absolutely no evidence that designation of cases, gang or not varied over time. They were very consistent and reliable on the application of their definition.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...Is there another way of looking at this? At one point we looked at four districts of Chicago for juvenile offenses, 14-16 yrs., in gang cases, and looked at total police records. We found that approximately 50% of all the crimes for which they had records were non-gang. This is just for juveniles, but it suggests that you have the same pattern here. In other words a gang member, based on the Chicago definition, will commit half of his crime in such a way that it's not labelled gang crime here. You are saying the same thing.

MAXSON (USC): ...that's exactly what we are saying...

SPERGEL (U of C): ...the number of crimes may be the same, except we are classifying them differently in the two cities.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...Well homicides aren't close. How many homicides do you have?

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...60.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...On gang related homicides you had 60; [but] what was the total homicide for Chicago?

BOBROWSKI (CPD): 660, last year. It was a light year, though. In Chicago, just as a rule of thumb, it runs about 10% of all homicide.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...It runs about 20-30% in LA County.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...[The 10% figure refers to] gang homicide as a percent of all homicide in the city of Chicago over a 19 month period, and its never been more than 18% of all the homicides. This is the historical experience as far back as I can find it. This year through the end of August we have tallied 38 gang related homicides. So it looks like we are going to run under the 1988 figure.

MAXSON (USC): ...So basically what you are saying is that the rate of gang homicide in Chicago is probably lower than what it is in LA given similar numbers of gang members.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...How many identified gang members do you have in LA city.

KRAMER (LAPD): ...a little over 30,000.

JACKSON (LAPD): ...30,000 identified.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...that's about a little over twice what we have.

MAXSON (USC): ...Wow.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Well, yeah, we've got about 12,000, the last figure that I saw, identified [gang members]. There are quite a few that are hanging that we haven't identified, I'm sure.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...We have 70,000 in the whole county, including LA city. The three big producers of gang homicides are LA city, total Sheriff's area, and Compton.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...How does all of this fit in with the gang related versus gang motivated issue?

MAXSON (USC): ...I should have mentioned that when we purified the gang cases we took the drop-out gang cases and sampled from them, and then put them in the non-gang pool. So now we have "gang member suspects cases" in the non-gang pool. It almost makes no difference at all in LASD when you are comparing a restrictive definition versus a broad definition [of] gang cases [and] non-gang cases. In LAPD it makes a little bit more of a difference, but basically the pattern of difference between gang and non-gang homicides is very similar.

My opinion also is that when you go for a pure definition you reduce the number of gang cases, but you don't gain much in terms of the distinctiveness between gang and non-gang crimes. Over time, when you are trying to chart gang crime which is a public concern, you lose data.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...So then we have to know what you mean by gang crime?

MAXSON (USC): ...Crimes committed by gang members, the LA definition. ...Or with a gang member victim.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...But that is tautology. In other words you could probably take a kid from LA and take a kid of Chicago, each commits twelve crimes except there you are saying that all twelve are gang related and in Chicago you are saying that six are gang related and the other six are non-gang related. The total amount of crime is the same.

MAXSON (USC): ...But when you do research, you can't look at the 80% of homicides that are non-gang and pick out of them those which would have been gang under this other definition. That's a loss of information.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...But which is gang and which is not gang, again is a matter of definition. I mean if the kids are just as criminal in each case, only we are saying that they are more gang related in LA, and in Chicago we are saying just half of them are gang related, we can create any kind of definition we want.

MAXSON (USC): ...But I think we are missing something here because I'm not arguing the research. But you can report twelve ADW's in some city, but if you report them as twelve gang related in the media you create a whole fallout in your community, as opposed to a definition that distinguishes what is and is not gang related. What you publish is immensely important as a matter of social policy in that community.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...I agree with you completely. That's why I am for a more restrictive definition. Because you can scare people, and you label people excessively. In other words, you are defining a gang based on the fact that you have established

this kid as a gang member regardless of what crime he commits. And this may interfere with the process of rehabilitation, or with assigning him a particular status in the community.

WADE (Miami): ...racial equality.

VINCENT (CPD): ...If you are inferring that we are not reporting properly that's not correct, because we're just requiring hard facts, that's all. If a car drives by, a car full of kids, and they shoot and they kill somebody, we're not going to say it's gang related unless there's more facts to tell us that it is.

MAXSON (USC): ...I'm certainly not saying Chicago is not reporting properly. I mean you report reliably. As far as I am concerned its proper. My concern is mostly with the degree to which you have the information available to you that you reliably apply your criteria. And to that degree your criteria are based on motive. I mean it is a lot easier to assign a designation on the basis of a gang file that comes from hours and hours of an investigation that's involved in gathering the information about the motive for the crime. In homicide cases you have a much better shot at it. We could have used the criteria of motivation only with homicides in LA.

BLOCK (ICJIA): ...We did do just that in 75% of all cases, and we ended up knowing what the facts were.

MAXSON (USC): ...Yeah, in homicides you have a much better shot at it, but when you look at ADW's or robberies you don't have it...

BLOCK (ICJIA): ...Speaking of reliable data, I just have a couple of questions. One is I don't know if it is true that relying on a listing in a gang membership file would be easier to code and more reliable than gang motivation based on our work with 17 years worth of Chicago Police Department data. We are now adding 6 more years to the homicide data file. There are strict definitions that CPD uses in the investigation of gang motivation. You have just heard some of them. Its not enough that it's a drive by shooting but somebody has to represent, or there has to be clear evidence.

On the other hand in Chicago, it's not real clear whether the victim or the offenders or people standing around are members or not members from the data available on investigation. It seems to me it might be hard to get that data unless you have a list as they do in Los Angeles.

But looking at the LA list, it's kind of interesting that this list has relatively older people. There must be some criteria for getting on this list. It's not people who have been in a gang for just a couple of weeks. What are the criteria? Now if you have a certain criteria for getting on that list, you know that's going to color the definition too.

And getting back to reliability, I couldn't quite figure out how you were assigning the Chicago definition.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): You were confused too, oh good!

MAXSON (USC): ...What we used ... we got [from] some of Spergel's work, as well as some of your [Block's] work, and it might be dated. And I think it could be expanded by some of the things that Larry was pointing out. As I mentioned there is a problem with the analysis that we did. I mean, we will have to go back and look at the data on representation, which is the only thing we left out.

BLOCK (ICJIA): ...But on the other hand, two gang members that kill each other over a girl?...

MAXSON (USC): ...Yes, a gang crime in Los Angeles but not in Chicago.

MCBRIDE (LASD): ...I would like to clear up some of this confusion, if in fact there is some confusion. Years ago in LA, mainly because of the same problem we see here, nobody [could] agree on what the hell "gang related" is. It's different. Nobody here can actually agree, I don't agree with my partner, Jackson.

What we did at that time, when we wrote the book, was to say that because of the inherent violence that follows gang activity, and the violent crimes that gangs members are involved in, we ended up measuring nothing more than violent crimes committed by gang members, period. Now I think in retrospect we ended up doing the city and overall the county somewhat of a disservice by counting the number of crimes that violent gang members were involved in. Because now we have 5000 violent crimes yearly for the last few years, and everybody [views L.A. as the gang capital of the world].

JACKSON (LAPD): ...Now that doesn't bother the police department. but in reality, its the violence that we are concerned with. It's identifying the gang members, not to put them in a file on their own, or for the press. It's to identify cases. It's to arrest suspects. Take a gang crime -- it's going to occur anyway. We are saying because a gang member did it, let's move it over here so we can solve the case and put them away.

KRAMER (LAPD): ...But the difference lies now, unfortunately with our 5000 violent crimes committed by gang members, not gang related. A year or so ago we were asked to try and determine how many of the crimes that we have traditionally monitored were gang motivated. All of the violent crimes committed by gang members are in fact motivated to one degree or another by the membership of the suspect or of the victim.

So what we have done is glean out of the crimes that we have always monitored and reported, those crimes where there are additional factors that would indicate that the membership of the individual had something to do with the incident. They drive by and yell out their gang name; they ask where are you from; what set are you with before they shoot somebody. We look for some overt activity by the suspects or even by the victims on some occasion that might have caused the incident. We were going to count it anyway, because a gang member is involved. But now we are saying that out of the X-number of crimes, a certain number are in fact motivated to the best of our ability by the membership in the gang, which seems to be more in line with what you gentlemen are already reporting.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Yes.

KRAMER (LAPD): ...But we are reporting both.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...This suggests there is an area of common definition here, I mean, my perspective is, if LA wants to talk about gang member related crime, fine let em do it, I hope Chicago doesn't do it. But we can still agree on the fact that we are talking about gang motivated crime and compare statistics that way.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Okay, where does New York stand, apparently Chicago and LA are in agreement.

GALEA (NYPD): ...Oh, you guys are so far out in front of us that you know... You know our definition is very restrictive, so, let me just read to you what we have in terms of what we consider a gang incident. It's fights between members of opposing youth gangs or between members of the same gang or any other person; arrest of three gang members or preparation of three juvenile reports for unlawful activity; confrontation between youth gangs where weapons are seized; gang related crimes or violations committed by or upon gang members whether or not arrests are made; gang demonstrations such as protest marches; roving gangs causing disturbances; attempts to fire-bomb or otherwise damage or property; and confiscation of weapons belonging to youth gangs.

Now we would count as gang related [the incident where] two members [were] fighting over a girl; also taking a gun away from a gang member who probably used it somewhere else would be included.

MILLER (Harvard): ...What if its just a fist fight, garden variety, they were just duking it out...

GALEA (NYPD): ...Well it says right here, fights between members of opposing youth gangs or between members of the same gang. That would be gang related. If we had numbers like you had then



maybe we would have to reconsider what we are doing, (which is what we are doing anyway). We are reconsidering the whole definition of a youth gang. But right now our numbers are very, very small and I don't even want to tell you what the homicide rates are.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...Tell us.

GALEA (NYPD): ...No.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...Come on, we'll call the New York Times.

GALEA (NYPD): ...If I told you 30 for the last 10 years, would you go along with that?

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Each year or sum total?

GALEA (NYPD): We have about 1400 homicides in the city of New York.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...30 in 10 years.

GALEA (NYPD): ...And you got to remember even if our figures are wrong and you double that, which you probably won't be able to do, don't you think that the media would be on our case? Don't you think that you would be reading about it in the papers? And if the media can't find anything, its just not there.

MILLER (Harvard): ...The media gets all of its information from law enforcement, doesn't it?

GALEA (NYPD): ...No they don't -- given that if they are, they are getting misinformation. I am just saying that fortunately for us we just don't have this particular problem. Now I don't know what's going to happen next year or the year after. We just picked up some Asian gangs that we were not counting in our stats, and picked up 5 homicides from July. I don't know how many we picked up in August yet, because we are starting to count the Vietnamese groups that don't have any affiliation with organized crime. So we are starting to pick up those groups now. Now once we pick up those groups our homicide rates will probably go up. We have eight already this year.

KRAMER (LAPD): Would drug related homicides be included?

GALEA (NYPD): We had one gang drug related homicide which was in the Bronx.

MAXSON (USC): ...What about nongang related ... for the same category?

GALEA (NYPD): ...When crack first hit the city it was completely disorganized. Any guy with a frying pan, a little cocaine, a little baking soda, became a crack merchant. What has happened is that people are attempting to seize control over these operations. Some people are hitting the sidewalks, but it has nothing to do with youth gangs. Its just organized crime activity where people are attempting to ...

SPERGEL (U of C): What about a gang or a non-gang?

GALEA (NYPD): If you were to take the business oriented drug organizations you are going to find a higher homicide rate, no question about that. And some of them have names such as the Wild Bunch; and we got a lot of posses' running around, a lot of that. But they are not street gangs and they don't fall within our definition of what a street gang is.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...Suppose a gang member shoots and kills a non-gang member or vis-a-versa. Is that a gang incident?

GALEA (NYPD): ...If we find a gang member standing next to the gun, that's a gang related incident. Okay? If we lock him up for that gun, that's a gang related incident.

We just haven't done much about the gang motivation or gang related distinction, because we don't have that kind of problem where it is necessary. We lock up everybody, we don't care if its gang related or non gang related. You commit a crime you get locked up. Some of the things that you are talking about now are fine and great because you are trying to filter out certain things. You got so much in the barrel now you are trying to filter them out. We don't have that much in the barrel yet. So it doesn't matter to us that much.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Well John, have you guys done a gang survey of any kind in terms of counting noses? How many gang members do you have?

GALEA (NYPD): ...Right now, we're about 2000. We've got a 1000 that we know of, whose names we have in our office. We have about another 1000 that are under investigation.

MCBRIDE (LASD): ...You know, considering all the graffiti that you guys got.

GALEA (NYPD): Somebody puts something on the wall in LA, it's called gang graffiti, vandalism. We don't have that.

MCBRIDE (LASD): My experience in Los Angeles is that invariably it is a process of staking turf out. Once you stake turf out, it becomes an area of contention between rival groups. I can see Austin shaking his head. Apparently he is saying that is not the case in New York city. Is that right?

GALEA (NYPD): ...Okay here, there is emerging in Queens a number of groups that have been engaging in graffiti especially along the Long Island Expressway, if you know where that is. Most of these groups have confined their activity to vandalism which is graffiti, and are not in conflict with other groups. However there are some active gangs engaging in vandalism graffiti notably the TMR which is The Master Race. Although this group has engaged in altercations with other groups there is no indication that graffiti was the reason. Graffiti has not been reported yet as the cause for any group retaliation. I wrote that before you asked the question.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...I accept that ... You wouldn't say it otherwise.

GOTT (LASD): ...We ought to ship some of our gangs there.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...Can you take about 10-15,000 of our guys?

MILLER (Harvard): ...Now we are talking about different areas of the country and different things happen in different areas. You remember in late 1960's and early 70's the big gang wars were in New York and Philadelphia. Those were the big two cities. In the 1980's and 90's the big two are Chicago and Los Angeles. And you have very radical differences.

CURRY (UWVa): ...What New York is telling us is the same thing I read in reports on Cleveland and Boston recently. They report small groups -- disorganized by LA and Chicago standards. It's something that we ought to start referring to as the East Coast model.

MILLER (Harvard): ...Well Boston has gangs.

CURRY (UWVa): ...Boston has gangs, but they are describing them as New York is. They are very small, sometimes with or without names, associations, crews, posses...

MILLER (Harvard): ...Boston does have named gangs, 30-40 members apiece. They had about 10-15 gang related homicides last year. Using a very conservative figure they are running about the same level this year. They are highly identified. There are real gangs in the Boston area. They are not amorphous. They have leadership. They have names. They are involved in inter-gang robbery and so on.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...I think we have age related data problems in Philadelphia. As in New York, I am not sure they are collecting much gang data on young adults. It is also difficult for them to separate out gang related and non-gang related. What about Miami. You've been going up and down.

WADE (Miami): ...I don't know, it's really strange in Miami. Miami is having difficulty separating gang associates from gang members.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...And the number of gangs, gang members and homicides is going down this year, compared to last year.

WADE (Miami): ...Oh, yeah. We're having trouble distinguishing between gang related and non-gang related incidents. They are having the same problem. When one person goes out and does something for his own interests, is that a gang related incident? Miami classifies it as gang related and I think that's going to come back to haunt them. Miami, like all the other cities, is kind of wavering. Their units are just trying to find out what they should do and what path they should follow.

The associate gang member thing really bothers me because I see a lot of kids being labelled, like you said Dr. Spergel. I see kids' futures really in a lot of jeopardy. There are kids who tell me all the time, "I was riding with so-in-so, I was walking in the grove, and here I am getting my picture taken, and now my picture is in the files and I'm considered a gang member", and, "I was involved in a gang related incident because they started fighting and I was trying to get my friend out of it." That's crazy!

McBRIDE (LASD): ...Actually, Barbara, from what we have seen as far as the problem of associates, I agree with you in part. It would be a terribly relevant issue if once in file, always in file. As long as it is only a one time event. Even if it just happened to be with a relative, he should be purged as soon as the statutes permit. Ours is unfortunately longer than I like [five years], but as soon as that time comes up the person is purged if he never shows up in the file.

The other aspect is that whenever we put a juvenile in file, we notify the parents. If the parents can convince us or show a great deal of concern over the fact that little Johnnie is now going to be in our gang file, we will take a good close look at it. And if in fact he was merely an associate or just happened by [at] the wrong time, we won't put him in the file. And I think that's the way it's got to be. We don't need garbage in any of our files.

WADE (Miami): ...Bob, I witnessed an incident. They were former gang members, like in '84. They were just talking and pretty soon they were on the wall having their pictures taken. They were also saying, "Look, I am no longer a gang member. I am not involved in that. I am doing some other things; I was just here." But their pictures are still in the file.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...Yeah, but that's assuming that they are telling you the truth.

WADE (Miami): ...I'm just saying that could cause problems. If the smart parent decides to file suit and it comes out true ...and then you got class action suits coming up... I don't want to get into that kind of stuff.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Bob, can I ask one question? When you say you purge the files what do you mean, you purge the files, do you mean that those files no longer exist or do they go from an active file to an inactive file.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...Purge means exactly, purge. It's gone. We do that with our juvenile records. But I keep my inactive file. I have an active file and an inactive file.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Basically you haven't done anything.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...Well, in a way we haven't, but we know whose active and who is inactive. I know if you or this guy from Chicago were to call me and [inquire about] a guy who is 30-35 years old, and he calls himself Chuck-o-stick, I could go back and look, [and say] he was in such-and-such a gang. I could go back and look and see if that existed or not.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...That's true. Under an investigative file, it is an outstanding tool. I couldn't agree with you more. But weighing the benefits of an investigative tool against a certain amount of protection of individuals who no longer should be put in the file, we had to make a trade off. And the trade off was once a individual was no longer active in a gang we would then sacrifice the information on him and remove it from our files. I think we are all detectives enough that if we find we needed the information on one of our previous gang members, it wouldn't be that difficult to get.

MILLER (Harvard): ...Do you expunge criminal records in Los Angeles?

McBRIDE (LASD): ...Court order, it's always by a court order. That's seldom done. With an adult that's locked up for battery and found not guilty and he comes back and gets an order to give everything back to him, his fingerprints... that seldom happens. Maybe a half a dozen times in 20 years in law enforcement.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...How about in New York?

GALEA (NYPD): ...It would virtually have to be shown to be an illegal arrest. For juveniles, we do that obviously.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...We do it here, even if we have probable cause. But if the guy beats it, we then get a court order.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...But if during that period of time you have identified this guy as a gang member, he is found not guilty of the crime, a battery, and gets his record expunged do you also have to pull him out of the gang file?

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...No. You'd have to expunge the part that says he was locked up for battery.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...You've got a gang member killed in a drive by, but you don't know who did the drive by. You wouldn't count that?

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...No, we would have to have some facts.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...Now we would count that.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...At the same time, in those particular incidents where you weren't able to clear it up and find who the perpetrator was, there is an investigation of the circumstances. If it indicated that there was "representing" or some other gang-style characteristic involved, then normally it would be classified a gang motivated incident. And as a result, it would be classified as an open, uncleared gang motivated case.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...Your investigation in other words, indicated that it was in fact gangs that did it, you just couldn't prove it. You would count it.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Sure.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...Do we have to go back to looking at the revised definition of a gang? Could it be we are fairly close on that, and that we are fairly close on [a] "gang incident" as based on a "motivated" definition? Is that right?

MAXSON (USC): ...Los Angeles City has moved to making a distinction between two types; gang related, which is [essentially] membership based; and gang motivated, where lots of circumstances or other things are involved. So there are two parallel sets of statistics. One group is much smaller than the other. But Chicago on the other hand, collects gang motivated, but not [incidents solely on the basis of] gang membership.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...Right, but is the gang motivated definition of Chicago similar enough to that of the gang motivated definition of LA?

McBRIDE (LASD): ...Keep in mind that there is a difference here in LA County. We don't have the motivated.

JACKSON (LAPD): ...We only report the gang related in the city. They carry two different sets of standards. The sheriffs do it wrong.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...We put it to the committee that we formed, and originally the city had the related one, then the city came up with too many gang crimes and said, "Ouch! Gang motivated now. Let's get motivated". But then we go back to the committee and say the city wants to change this, and everybody pooh-poohed it. So nobody else adopted that.

I have to say I'm not totally against adding that second thing. I think the boss is, I think the sheriff said at that meeting that he wasn't going to do that.

GOTT (LASD): ...I rarely speak for the sheriff, nor do I make policy decisions for him. I'm not sure where he would stand on this.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...As Dr. Curry, just observed on the side here, in Chicago we do have the capacity to recover information as to gang membership even though the case has been classified as not gang motivated -- a fact which Dr. Block will no doubt discover as she goes through the file. So I don't think we are in big trouble as far as the research is concerned on that issue.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...Do you want to go back to your modified definition of gang?

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...Yeah, at the lunch, Bob Jackson said we may be stroking ourselves a little here by not analyzing what our purpose was when we set about to develop a definition of a gang. We have to keep in focus the reason that gang units exist in police departments. Do you want to expand on that a little bit?

JACKSON (LAPD): ...Well basically, the only reason we care if somebody is a gang member is to be able to monitor his activity, and to stop his activity and to keep everybody in society safe. If they were not a violent entity, whether we define it narrowly or expand to include the Boy Scouts, if it weren't violent, and if it weren't committing crimes and problems in society, we would just pat them on the head and say its mildly interesting and let it go. None of us has the resources to monitor non-violent groups. I don't think we have that luxury. So basically as far as the definition goes, I am not concerned that it really matters.

The bottom line is we have a group of criminals involved in violent crimes and we want to be able to identify them to gather enough information to have our detectives take them off the street, to be able to rehabilitate those that can be rehabilitated and lock up the rest.

BOBROWSKI (CPD): ...I think there are really two practical reasons to really define the terms aside from the sheer statistical pleasure of keeping numbers or for sociological purposes. One is to develop a law enforcement modality which is geared to suppressing that particular problem which is reflected in the statistics.

And I think there is another reason that is outside of law enforcement. We are the only ones who are keeping the statistics, right? One of the things that I am convinced of, is that we also have to deal with the stuff in a non-law enforcement modality. By the statistics we illustrate the problem -- which may result in a civil solution rather than a law enforcement solution.

We are running out of time rapidly here and I'm not convinced that we can come up with a clearly framed definition of a street gang that we can all sign on to as "formal". However, I think that we have come to an understanding of each other's positions. It's certainly cleared the air in a number of instances and I think it gives a greater appreciation for the difficulty that New York is facing, especially since they are dealing with the phenomena that can't quite be defined as a gang. I'm still not sure whether Wilding thing is evolving from a formal gang or into a formal gang situation. But it certainly is a different animal that we may have to face in the future.

VINCENT (CPD): ...This is in reference to Bob Jackson's statement. I appreciate where he is coming from, being [in] law enforcement too. But I had an experience where certain legislators were attempting to enact legislation in [a] particular mob action case related to street gang members. In the legislation they had to define "gang member". When I looked at how they had written the proposal, how they had defined the term street gang member, and street gang, the language was such that the state's attorney [would have great difficulty proving] that a particular individual was in fact a member of a street gang. So in the light of the secondary usages of the definitions, to the best of our ability, we should tend to narrowly and accurately define certain kinds of terms.

JACKSON (LAPD): ...I don't disagree with that at all. I think what I mean to convey is that we know what a gang member is. We all do. And I think the definitions are pretty much consistent across the United States as to when law enforcement agencies are going to identify an individual as a gang member. You know we want him to admit to it; tatoos; associates; and this whole variety of information that we gather to make the determination. But as far as trying to verbalize to N-th degree what a gang is, I am not sure how much benefit each agency would gain trying to reinvent the wheel.

MCBRIDE (LASD): ...I agree. One of the things that I think we are all facing, speaking for LA Sheriff's Department, we have 11



years of statistical data related to street gangs and Chicago has a whole series of years of statistics that you have gathered, and I think regardless what the definitions are the one thing that we have, and Cheryl [Maxson] pointed it out, is we have consistency. We have been reporting the same way for a number of years; you have been reporting the same way for a number of years; LAPD has, I think, regardless how we manipulate that definition, we have a measure of gang activity over time, and we can see whether it is going up or whatever.

As the chief pointed out earlier, for us to make some change mid-stream, to some common definition that is going to change our statistical reporting significantly, may create more problems than it is worth. It's certainly going to create problems for us from the standpoint of the media, with the public, with the politicians and so on. If all of a sudden our numbers go down, then we have got to start to build a new base of consistent statistics to see what's going on.

CASEY (CPD): ...Yeah, it makes little sense to me in retrospect to say that we've got 38 bodies laying in the morgue today in Chicago and by LA's definition it could be some other number. The 38 bodies aren't going to go away.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...In our recent survey the differences in definition, at least gang incident definition, were not so great between Chicago, LA, and even New York. The major differences were between the large cities and some of the emerging problem cities where often the definition was simply a bunch of guys hanging together or a bunch of car thieves. The definition was much simpler, less clear or consistent in the emerging problem cities. As Cheryl Maxson demonstrated that it may not be all that hard from a research point of view to compare the cities. So I'm not discouraged. I think there are areas of common definition based on experience. I don't think the kids differ that much in each city, even New York. New York may be more of a problem, however.

In our study we obtained different definitions [from] different types of personnel, from probation officers, prosecutors, the police... on what's a gang, and that's also a problem. I would have liked to have had some reaction to the notion of gang from Mike Duran in these discussions.

DURAN (LA Prob): ...We don't classify one group as a gang that you guys wouldn't, and you don't count a group that we wouldn't. No matter what the wording is, we're still talking about the same thing.

McBRIDE (LASD): ...The same bunch, you are absolutely right.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...Well, does that mean that the LA definition is the same as the Chicago definition?

McBRIDE (LASD): ...The semantics may be different.

JACKSON (LAPD): ...Listen, like he said, bring it in front of me and I will tell you what the hell it is.

SPERGEL (U of C): ...So maybe there is a way of reconciling these things, not so much for your purposes but for purposes of the federal government's research and development initiative and what other cities are going through and planning to do.

We seem to be close in our definitions. Maybe when OJJDP is ready to distribute funds for demonstration projects, we can get some of you guys together again to work out the remaining differences. We may not be that far apart. Anyway I think this has been extremely valuable. We have recorded this and we will get the results back to you for comments, corrections, and whatever. I think the conference has been a contribution. It's a major first step. Thank you very much for coming to our city, and I hope you have both enjoyed the city and profited from the conference.



## SUMMARY

Present at the "definitional" conference were police department representatives with extensive experience in street gang related law enforcement. They included senior operational and policy officials from the police departments of Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration. Supporting this group were advisory board members of the National Youth Gang Suppression and Intervention Program, representatives of the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, and senior gang researchers from Harvard Law School, the University of Southern California, and the University of Chicago. The hosts of the conference were the University of Chicago and the Chicago Police Department, supported by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Justice Department.

The aim of the conference was to move toward a uniform set of definitions applicable to street gang phenomena across the various jurisdictions represented. A successful outcome of this process was seen as crucial in facilitating local and national assessments of the street gang problem by law enforcement practitioners, criminologists, and ultimately, in the development of effective social policy.

The immediate purpose of the meeting was to achieve an understanding and clarification of local applications of terms as they were developed within, or were influenced by the operational experiences of the participating agencies. The academic contingent present was utilized to aid in this process, especially to assimilate background information useful in future research.

Three discussion objectives were identified: to define the gang as an object of law enforcement; to determine what a gang related event is, as it grows out of the definition of a gang; and to develop a uniform method of reporting which would be meaningful to the community, useful to academia, and functional for law enforcement.

The session started with recognition that the terms youth gang, gang member and gang related incident vary in meaning across different law enforcement jurisdictions. Different conceptual and operational definitions also exist across settings, such as schools, youth agencies, and correctional institutions even within the same jurisdiction.

Our major premise is that a common definition of a gang or gang incident, if it existed, would enable a test of the same or similar strategy across jurisdictions or institutional settings; and at worst would do no harm. There is some evidence, based on the results of the project's recent national survey of youth gang programs, that recognition of the existence of a gang problem in common terms may be a significant step toward resolving the problem. The essential policy or research consideration is that

a particular strategy cannot be validated until a standard definition of the problem is established.

Dr. Miller, the first presenter, noted that several terms were being used to identify the "subject of concern": youth gang, teen age gang, juvenile gang, delinquent gang, violent gang, and street gang. Dr. Miller noted that the criminal justice system distinguishes the categories of "juvenile" and "adult." However, in many cases juveniles and adults are members of the same group. He suggested that the two terms most useful were "street gang" and "youth gang" -- the latter term being preferable in consideration of the interests of both the project and OJJDP.

However, the term "street gang" was preferred by representatives from the Chicago and Los Angeles Police Departments and the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department. The two terms were considered essentially equivalent by the New York City representatives.

One value of the term "street gang" was its distinction from the term organized crime. Another is that it captures a wide age range of offenders. There was also recognition of the gang members' potential for transition to, or association with, organized criminal enterprises. It was generally accepted by law enforcement that the structure, purpose, and location of the gang seemed to be more important as labelling criteria than is age. The issue of whether non street-based groups (i.e. motorcycle groups, racial hate groups, satanic cults, etc.) would be included as a "subject of concern" was not resolved. Nevertheless, the term "street gang" was finally acceptable to all law enforcement officers from the four cities or jurisdictions present.

One of the conference participants pointed out that the media seemed to prefer the use of the term "gang" -- unmodified. There was considerable objection to the term "juvenile" gang as used to some extent by New York City, particularly from Los Angeles County since that could reduce the problem by as much as 80 percent and such a sudden reduction would be questioned by the media. The issue was raised as to what extent the practice of expunging names from gang lists at five year intervals artificially aged gang members, whether active or inactive, on these lists. The New York City definition, however, reflects a problem that is mainly confined to teenagers. There is a strong effort to avoid overlap with the idea of organized crime.

Officer Bobrowski argued for a distinction between "organized crime" and the street gang on practical grounds. Although street gangs may be organizationally structured, the criminal activities in which they engage do not appear to be. By comparison, "traditional" organized criminal enterprises develop with the intent to commit substantive crimes over extended periods of time, seek a high degree of economic or political security as primary motivations, and tend to support the preservation of societal institutions in their present form. Nevertheless, there can be a transition from street gangs to organized crime or some intersection of activity. Therefore it

is also important to deal with street or gang phenomena from the perspective of concern with organized crime.

Officer Bobrowski offered what the Chicago Police Department regards as the key characteristics of the street gang. It is a collection of persons that exists as an identifiable group with some sort of structure: either horizontally (hard core, fringe, associate, etc.), and connected to groups in other areas (factions and close allies); or vertically organized with different age groups in the same area (seniors, juniors, pee-wees, "wanna-be's"), and the appearance of some type of internal power echelon.

Most of the gangs in Chicago, except perhaps Asian groups, exhibit some sense of territoriality, usually marking and defending boundaries by graffiti or "icons". However, turf boundaries are recognized even among Asian gangs by virtue of residential settlement patterns.

In the Chicago definition, the gang finds itself in conflict with the surrounding community due to its failure to use acceptable means of achieving recognition and influence -- a situation which captures the interests of the police by manifest incivilities and criminal behavior.

California legally defines a gang as "an ongoing association or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal," having as its primary activities the commission of one of the following seven crimes: assault with a deadly weapon, robbery, homicide or manslaughter, sale or possession for sale of narcotics, shooting into inhabited dwellings or a car, arson, or witness intimidation. McBride thought the list was too restrictive.

In response to a question about gang structure, Sergeant McBride of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department also observed that the state of California has recently established a definition that appears to be somewhat unsatisfactory. The term "associate" which originally suggested someone who is "not quite a gang member" (more of a friend or associate) now signifies "a gang member" but to a lesser degree.

There was some discussion and then agreement among representatives from New York (NYPD), Chicago (CPD), and Los Angeles County (LASD) and City (LAPD) that a group of three or more engaged in stick-ups would not be classified as a gang except, if they were all wearing the same colors, i.e., dressed the same and acted in concert for a period of time. Bobrowski, however, favored the exclusion of group size as a criterion for identifying activity as "gang related". In a Chicago incident, one youth, acting alone, tried to form a new gang by painting graffiti all over his school in an attempt to represent his new gang as an established organization.

Captain Gott of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department presented a current definition developed by the Peace Officers Association of Los Angeles County and in use in the County:

A gang is a group of people who form an allegiance for a common purpose to engage in acts injurious to public health and public morals, who pervert or obstruct justice or the administration of laws, or engage in or have engaged in criminal activity either individually or collectively and create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation within the community.

Bobrowski pointed out that a critical component of Gott's definition was essential to any definition of the concept gang -- conflict of the group's norms with those of the community. Thus criminal activity must be accepted as a group norm in addition to the group's use of signs or symbols to identify the group as a gang. Dr. Maxson added that it is not simply the acceptability of criminal activity by the group that defines it as a gang but the dynamics of the group or its group process (i.e., the structure of gang membership and the influence of members on each other) that defines the activity as gang activity. Further discussion questioned whether criminal behavior might necessarily be acceptable to all members of a gang. The degree of acceptance of criminal behavior in a group might be a critical element in a definition of it as a gang.

Sergeant Galea offered his view of the New York City Police Department definition of a youth gang (not a street gang):

A youth gang is supposed to be an organized structured group with identifiable leadership and membership which has engaged in, is suspected of engaging in, or is considered likely to engage in unlawful or anti-social activity which may be verified by police records or other reliable sources.

Sergeant Galea added that this definition may no longer be relevant since delinquent youth groups in New York City tend to operate "part-time," are "random collectives," come together for "selective and non-selective delinquent and criminal acts." They no longer operate as local families in camaraderie and community kinship. The current generation reflects the phenomena of the broken home and single parenthood. Nearly all interest is directed to what youth perceive as economic or income enhancement [activity]. Nevertheless, traditional gangs do exist in New York City, but they are not the norm.

Officer Bobrowski suggested that gangs could be classified along a continuum, from spontaneous groups that come together to commit a crime to traditional "family" or communal type gangs to highly structured and sophisticated criminal gangs. Sergeant Galea suggested that these structures can change in different directions, e.g., from structured to less structured or vice versa.

The notion of incivility as part of gang behavior was discussed. Gangs create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation that should be a part of a definition of what a gang is or does

in a community. It is not that gangs are responsible for a great deal of Part 1 crime in a community -- in fact they are usually responsible for a small percentage. Rather gangs create fear in the citizens of a community and contribute to the degradation of the quality of community life. Commander Kramer of the Los Angeles Police Department indicated that it was the graffiti, the intimidation, the hard looks that cause citizens to feel fear.

Dr. Maxson raised the issue of Los Angeles County's broad definition of a gang incident in which a gang member involved in criminal acts not "in furtherance of the gang" would be charged with a gang incident. Sergeant McBride responded that domestic disturbance is not classified as a gang incident even if it involves a gang member. However, more important is the basic proposition or belief of the Los Angeles Sheriff's department that "being a member of a gang generally fosters criminality, anti-social behavior, and that gang members are more prone to commit crimes." Commander Kramer of the Los Angeles Police Department did not agree and considered such an approach to be "an extension of the reality of the situation." McBride and Genelin of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's office emphasized the notion of "allegiance" of the member to the gang as determining general crime purpose.

Bobrowski noted the complexity of determining whether a crime was gang-related (although not necessarily gang motivated or in the interests of the gang per se). A crime could be committed in the interest of the gang or "[one] could use ...gang identification for [one's] own purposes in intimidating the potential victim." Sergeant Galea expressed concern that New York City's gang crime rate would "sky rocket" if a broader definition of "gang" was used.

Dr. Miller recalled his distinction between a gang and a law violating youth group which is a durable association of three or more youths whose members engage in illegal activities. Gangs or types of gangs are categories of law violating youth groups. Spergel suggested a three fold classification of delinquent youth groups: law violating youth group, criminal gain group, moving on to organized crime, and finally various gang categories. McBride indicated that it was important to include smaller formalized criminal groups that are heavily engaged in violence as part of the gang definition.

Sergeant Galea observed that the L.A. County definition of street group was so broad that it would include "every one of our street groups involved in drugs. They all have a particular block controlled by an 18-19 year old who has got a group working for him. They are all armed. Anybody who would try to sell drugs on the group's block [would be blown] away." Galea said those groups would be considered "an organized crime" and not a "street gang" problem. In Chicago there is an effort to distinguish between a gang organization and organized crime, excluding "people operating strictly as a drug organization." But there is overlap, and a degree of discretion would be



required in application of a general definition adapted from Los Angeles.

Genelin indicated that he would agree that a street group engaged strictly in drug operations, but not in "street crime, street robberies, intimidation and extortion," probably should not be identified as a street gang.

Bobrowski identified two types of crimes which are categorically included in the domain of street gang crime by the Chicago Police Department: unlawful use of a weapon and involvement with narcotics, including possession by a street gang member. No particular victim need be involved. The unlawful use (or possession) of a weapon can be tied to drive-by shootings. Narcotics activity by gang members is regarded as a way of capturing "a statistic," especially when it is on gang turf and gang members are involved in distribution of narcotics.

The notion of public health in the Los Angeles definition was used because it provided a broader base of power to the police. An amended Los Angeles definition was proposed: "A gang is an identifiable group of people who form an allegiance and recurrently engage in acts injurious to public health and public morals". But this was objected to by representatives of Chicago and New York as being too broad to facilitate a keen focus on street gangs alone.

Commander Kramer suggested that police departments are not likely to accept a change in definitions that have worked well in particular jurisdictions, however, a second definition for purposes of national comparability could be acceptable, if it meant simply taking the same data base and analyzing it in two different ways.

Some further discussion between Sergeant Galea and Officer Bobrowski lead to agreement on the importance of symbolic identification of members with each other as a component of a gang definition. Suggestions for a common definition were made with specific exclusions of prison gangs, motorcycle gangs, organized crime and terrorist gangs. Several of the police administrators present, however, were concerned about the implications of a change in definition, especially as it might affect change in statistics and public reaction to pattern change.

Commander Kramer emphasized the importance of police departments, particularly in emerging gang crime cities, carefully considering or planning the elements of a definition of a gang, because a definition has consequences down the line. A "trap" established in southern California was to initially make the definition "too broad." Commander Kramer speculated that a broad definition originally was "designed to justify more personnel, the existence of gang units, budgets." Over 40 percent of gang-related crime in the city is in fact not strictly gang-motivated based on current Los Angeles Police Department estimates.

Commander Kramer noted that in recent years Bloods and Crips who had been long time gang members or affiliated with gangs

became multi-kilo dealers of narcotics, but they were no longer street gang members. When the crack phenomena hit Los Angeles, Houston and New York, the gang became a natural vehicle for drug distribution. Those individuals who became major "dope" dealers "ceased being street gang members." At the same time the gang was used as a reservoir for recruiting people to deal drugs.

When these drug dealers who were gang members go to other cities to set up drug operations, they do not represent their particular gangs. They represent drug dealers expanding their operations. But they still reach out to younger people and bring them in. The gang symbolism is useful apparently in such recruitment for drug dealing. The distinction between a drug dealing organization [or organized crime] and a gang becomes blurred.

There was an expression of interest in the development of a centralized reporting apparatus at the national level. While the Drug Enforcement Administration has some interest in the development of a national data base on street gangs, it is mainly interested in street drug gangs and possible motorcycle gangs. The major activity of the gang would have to be narcotics selling. According to David Leroy of DEA, the key objective of the system would not be uniform crime reporting or collection of statistics, but tracking where the violators are going. National trends and movements would be tracked, but not what's occurring in a particular city.

The discussion turned to criteria for identifying a gang-related event. In Chicago, reports are examined in the course of an investigatory process to determine whether the incident grows out of gang function. Gang membership of either party may not be "particularly important." Events are gang-related, if they fall empirically into the following categories: representing or symbolic behavior; retaliation, whether directed internally to the gang's own members or externally to rival gangs, or to victims for cooperating with prosecution; street fighting; gang recruitment; turf violations; vice-related incidents, including mainly robbery, narcotics, but also liquor law violations among juveniles, prostitution, and gambling; extortion; and prestige.

In the analysis of gang-related events in Chicago, representing and street fighting seemed to be the predominant activities. Most of the street fighting involved index crime. Representing refers to symbolic identification with a gang; gang members often promote their gang name. Gang representing per se is not a crime. It is a gang characteristic; thus, an offense must be committed in association with such representing.

Dr. Maxson then presented the results of research by Dr. Klein and herself on reported gang homicide events in Los Angeles County and City and their use of classifications based on both Chicago and Los Angeles definitional criteria. Using the Chicago criteria of a gang-related homicide -- apparently not all of the criteria were used - she and Klein conclude that 44% of LAPD and 57% of LASD gang homicides met the narrower definition used

by Chicago. The two definitions resulted in a major difference in prevalence but not in character of gang offenses. The kinds of violent offenses that come out of gang function in Chicago also came out in Los Angeles. Officer Bobrowski observed that regardless of what criteria are used, the rates of gang homicide in Chicago would still be lower than in Los Angeles. Dr. Maxson added also that regardless of whether Chicago's narrower criteria or Los Angeles' broader criteria were used, the distinctiveness between gang and non-gang homicides clearly remained.

The values of a restrictive versus a broader definition for purposes of research and social policy were briefly discussed. While there is some likelihood of a loss of data in a restrictive definition, there is a likelihood of excessive labelling and the generation of community alarm by using a broader definition. The process of rehabilitation of gang youth might also be impeded. The representatives from Los Angeles, however, emphasized their interest in all violent crimes committed by gang members and their concern about impeding such activity. This was at the heart of their effort to develop lists of gang members.

Sergeant Galea suggested criteria for identifying a gang-related event that essentially were dependent on a very narrow definition of a gang. Criteria included fights between opposing youth gang or members of the same gang, weapons possession, protest marches, and damage to property. However, the numbers of such events are very small in New York City at the present time. Sergeant Galea stated that a total of 50 gang homicides were recorded in New York City in the past ten years. This of course is considerably lower than the 60 cases recorded in Chicago and 255 cases in Los Angeles City for the year 1988 alone.

Galea insisted that while a great deal of homicide was related to drug operations in New York City, this could not be classified as youth gang activity. It was "just organized crime activity." He stated that while some of the "business oriented drug organizations" were associated with high rates of homicides and had names such as "The Wild Bunch" and "Posses," they "didn't fall within our definition of...street gang."

There was again a reference to issues of labelling. A youth who is not a gang member may be labeled a gang member if he is associating with a relative who is a gang member, for example. If it is a one time event, his name is removed according to Los Angeles representatives although that may take a long time -- five years. However, if a juvenile is involved and the parents can convince the police that the youth is not a gang member -- that he was merely an associate, his name would not be placed in the Los Angeles gang file.

In response to a question, Sergeant McBride noted that two files are kept on juvenile records, active and inactive. Thus, the individual is purged from the active but not the inactive file. This practice is not followed in Chicago where file purges are complete.

A further distinction on data collection was noted between Los Angeles City and Los Angeles County. Gang-motivated and

gang-related data are maintained in the city. Only gang-related data are maintained in the county at the present time. Officer Bobrowski also noted that the Chicago data system, despite its focus on gang-motivated incidents, has the capacity to "recover information as to gang membership even though the case has been classified as non-gang motivated." Thus research on gang motivated and gang-related crime can be conducted in Los Angeles City and Chicago, and probably Los Angeles County as well.

Finally, there was reference to basic rationales for determining whether a group should be regarded as a gang and an incident gang-related. Sergeant Jackson, LAPD, stated it was important to identify a group of criminals involved in violent crimes and to gather enough information so that "our detectives could take them off the street, rehabilitate those that can be rehabilitated and lock up the rest."

Officer Bobrowski observed there were two practical reasons for good definitions of gang crime. One is for purposes of effective suppression of a particular (valid) problem. The other is to describe a serious social problem accurately so that a civil solution could be found.



## Discussion of Conference Findings

The conference produced a great deal of open and fruitful discussion. The deliberations suggested important conclusions and implications for research and evaluation, criminological theory, and public policy. It was clear that different definitions of the term gang and gang incident existed in the four local law enforcement jurisdictions represented at the meetings. The definitions represented to some extent differences in the nature and prevalence of youth street gang phenomena in each locality as well as in the perceived meaning of these phenomena. The perception of the phenomena was obviously influenced by certain political, policy, bureaucratic, and philosophical considerations.

### Research.

At the level of potential research across sites, the differences in definition seemed to be readily resolvable, at least across three of the four jurisdictions. Local definitions would be retained and a secondary definition could be developed. Data systems existed in the three jurisdictions, Los Angeles County, Los Angeles City, and Chicago whereby information could be provided based on both a gang-related and a gang-motivated definition of a criminal incident. A common definition of street gang was also probably achievable in those three cities.

There seemed to be considerable reluctance on the part of the New York City law enforcement representatives to consider a cross-site common definition of the concept gang or gang-related/motivated incident. This could have been due as suggested above to differences in the nature and prevalence of youth gang or street gang phenomena as well as to local policy and political considerations.

Theory. The different definitions, emphases, or preferences could represent accurate perceptions of a significantly different reality of the development of street gangs, particularly in relation to organized crime in each jurisdiction. The differences conceivably were sharpest in a comparison of the gang reality in New York versus the other two or three jurisdictions.

There is little doubt that, however defined, the very same type of youth gang or street gang could be found in each of the four jurisdictions, but prevalence differed. There could be in fact more generically or consensually defined youth/street gangs in Los Angeles compared to Chicago compared to New York City. This is suggested by the sharply different gang homicide rates in Chicago and Los Angeles which cannot be reconciled by definitional adjustment. Although each law enforcement group was very concerned with organized crime, the reference to, or distinctive concern with, organized crime was greatest in New York City and seemed of less distinctive concern, moving east to

west. Organized crime involving youth was regarded as most distinctive or separate from the gang phenomena in New York City and most closely connected to the notion of gang in Los Angeles.

It is possible to argue that in the older, more established cities, with relatively fewer transient low income populations, for example, New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Detroit, better routes to organized crime had developed in part through the narcotics trade. There may be less need for the development of long term youth/street gang socialization structures in these cities. Youth gangs may serve as a fertile recruiting ground in these particular cities, but may be less viable or meaningful since better opportunities are available directly through organized criminal or racket-oriented groups. This may represent a New York City or eastern city model at this time, with some exceptions.

The Los Angeles or west coast model may represent a situation where organized criminal opportunity systems are in an earlier stage of development. Youth gangs may be just now transitioning to this stage. Youth gangs could be the base on which some limited forms of criminal organization are being constructed, mainly through distribution of crack cocaine. Again, in all cities we refer to a mainly minority male, low income population in the process of adolescent development who must learn how to survive socially and economically, particularly as they get a little older, in an increasingly complex, competitive, urban society. These youth do not have sufficient conventional means or legitimate opportunities to achieve culturally desirable status in our society.

Chicago may represent an in-between case. Gangs have evolved better routes to organized crime than on the west coast. The youth/street gangs have had a longer period to develop certain stable crime patterns. Youth gangs may be better integrated into low income communities than in Los Angeles, but not as well as in New York City where a multitude of crews or organized youth crime groups exist. Such groups tend to be integrated and much better accepted in low income communities than traditional gangs fighting over turf or social status.

Furthermore, while it is clear that youth/street gangs contribute to a high level of violence and homicide in a city, it is not at all clear that the cities with the more prevalent youth/street gangs necessarily have higher general violence rates than those without such gangs. Other factors may contribute to generally increasing rates of urban violence, including escalating unemployment rates and highly competitive and uncontrolled narcotics markets.

Implications for Policy. If youth/street gangs and organized crime are part of the same long term social and economic process affecting low income youth, we may expect a growth and spread of both the gang and the organized crime problem in the years ahead, unless drastic shifts occur in the economy and national social

and economic policy. But such shifts are not likely to occur in the short term.

If this analysis proves correct, our society should pay considerably more attention to issues of youth or street gang prevention, social intervention, and suppression to minimize a long term threat to social order in the country. The youth/street gang may not only be an important source of recruits for organized crime, but may also be a structure in critical transition to organized crime.