

United States' Male Prison Gangs: Effective In-Custody Strategies That Curve the Problem

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United States' Male Prison Gangs: Effective In-Custody Strategies That Curve the Problem

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Abstract

Purpose and Significance of the Study

This study will attempt to identify and link the dynamics of major male prison gangs (PGs), and correctional responses. Most available research on the subject reveals that most PGs are male-dominated, whose gang involvement increases the risk for institutional violence, victimization, and their likelihood for reoffending. Empirical research will show statistical data and findings that can help examine the socioeconomic, demographic, and dogmatic factors that contribute to the problem, prevalence, and costs associated with gangs in prison. Traditional in-custody gang crime prevention and intervention models will be discussed, and alternative gang crime fighting strategies will be explored. The purpose of this review is to utilize prison gang population as a unique research topic and update classic studies with concepts relevant for the current correctional landscape. While there are numerous studies on gangs in general, research specifically on managing and rehabilitating male PGs is limited. Therefore, the significance of this study is to take the empirically proven best practices and incorporate them in a comprehensive guide that will educate the criminal justice policy-makers and practitioners on the essential safety efforts and evidence-based components of in-custody programs and that curb the problem. This research will have an impact on reducing the cycle of gang violence, fear, and victimization in communities. Overall, this research can contribute to increased awareness and improved managerial practices of correctional professionals, as well as upgraded offender rehabilitation opportunities, that result in reduced incarceration, and recidivism rates.

Limitation of the Study

One significant limitation to this research is the difficulty presented with studying PGs, which are discreet in nature, and complex to study. It is also difficult to participate in such research considering the complex system of American correctional agencies. To develop the concepts and draw results on the topic, secondary research sources from previous and most recent years was used. More specifically, this study relies on findings from programs employed in different correctional institutions throughout America. The gang-involved inmate population characteristic and response to correctional programs and staff can differ from state to state; therefore, it is crucial that correctional institutions conduct their own regular studies of their gang populations and anti-gang programs, as well as utilize lessons learned from other studies for a more generalizable approach to combat the problem.

Methodology

This study utilizes secondary research and statistics with empirical results and findings. Data resources include research reports from reference books, academic and government publications, and peer reviewed journals retrieved mostly from EBSCOhost and various private and government agency sites. The selected academic literature was reviewed and the final chosen reports include literature that focuses closely on the cause and consequences of prison gang crimes, as well as effective and ineffective correctional programs and outcomes.

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Section I: Introduction and Statement of the Problem

Modern PGs, crimes, and interventions are areas of primary focus for local, state, and federal correctional agencies across the United States (US). PGs have evolved from small criminal groups to powerful criminal societies with the ability to terrorize communities inside and outside the prison walls. Annual national estimates reflect an average 31,000 gangs and about 850,000 GMs (GMs) committing criminal acts like murder, assault, extortion, weapons, and illegal drugs (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention [OJJDP], 2012; National Gang Intelligence Center [NGIC], 2016). Of 2.2 million adults incarcerated in 2013, 19% were GMs, with 12% validated members, and the rest affiliated or peripherally involved with gangs (Pyrooz, Gartner, & Smith, 2017). These gang-involved organizations pose four main problems: 1) PGs are highly linked to institutional violence and disorder; 2) they can orchestrate criminal activity inside and outside the prison community; 3) they cause many programming and housing challenges; 4) they have higher recidivism rates than non-gang counterparts; and 5) they have overall negative economic and collateral consequences (Pyrooz et al, 2017; Griffin, 2007; Gaes, Wallace, Gilman, & Suppa, 2002).

First, GM has a strong link to institutional violence. A one-year study of over 82,000 federal inmates in the US discovered that gang-involved inmates were more likely to display violent misconduct than those who were affiliated in gangs; those who were affiliated exhibited more violent behavior and misconduct than those who were unaffiliated (Gaes, et. al., 2002). Secondly, prison GMs are more likely than non-gang involved inmates to participate in severe criminal activity inside and outside the prison. This level of criminal activity is typically related to the control of illegal economic markets. A two-year FBI investigation of nine Georgia state prisons, revealed the gang-involved inmates in cooperation with security guards, were

responsible for serious crimes like drug trafficking, illegal contraband, kidnapping, and murder, causing fear in the community and huge crime-fighting costs to society (MacDonald, 2016).

Additional numbers of high-profile cases indicate that inmates' ability to manipulate staff can be part of the problem of the violence and criminal activity in correctional facilities.

A third problem is related to the challenges in programming and housing of the gang-involved inmates. Prisons have implemented gang suppression programs that identify, validate, and isolate the most violent and seasoned GMs, which have helped with reduction in violence and criminal activity in prison (Griffin, 2007). However, these strategies cannot control all prison gang-related crime and have the potential to hamper prison GMs' reentry and integration into the society. Heightened suppression strategies coupled with an incarceration experience, serves as a way of reaffirming gang member identity. As a consequence, maintaining gang identity leads to loss of correctional programming, education, and other treatment services. This process impedes the inmates' capability to form a pro-social identity and reintegrate successfully post-release, increasing the likelihood to recidivate, and make more victims.

Considering that about 94% of inmates return to the community, it is important to look at the PGs problem and its link to recidivism. Recidivism is defined as the tendency of a criminal to return to incarceration within three years of release into society. Offenses that lead to recidivism can be due to a new arrest, felony, probation and parole violation and revocation (Idaho Department of Correction, 2013). A good body of research has shown that GM is a high-risk factor for recidivism (Dooley, Seals, & Skarbek, 2014). Dooley et al. (2014) explain that risk for recidivism can be attributed to lengthy and history of incarceration and membership in criminal groups. These two mechanisms lead to an increased knowledge of conducting criminal activities, and expanding the gang's social network for more criminal opportunities.

Several studies have found that male gang-involved offenders, regardless of their age, are more likely to engage in certain types of crimes that result in recidivism, when compared to non-gang involved offenders. However, youthful offenders recidivate more frequently and sooner than their non-gang involved youth. About 85% of them are re-arrested within five years, and 45% within two years. These offenders' risk of recidivism is closely linked to absence of supportive means like transportation, employment, and housing, and presence of substance abuse issues, stigmatization, and strained relationships (Saunders, Sweeten, & Katz, 2009; Spooner, Pyrooz, Webb, & Foxx, 2017). More studies of probationers and parolees affiliated with a PG while in prison, reflect that they had statistically higher parole and probation failure rates than the general offender population (McShane, Williams, & Dolny, 2003; Saunders et al., 2009). Saunders et al. (2009) found that 75% of the GM parolees and 67% of the probationers had been arrested within two years of release, compared to 63% of the non-gang parolees and 30% non-gang probationers. These studies concluded that that PG involvement increases the likelihood of recidivism by a factor of 1.76 to 4.74. This means that gang involved inmates were less likely to safely transition to the community, and more likely to return to prison due to a technical violation or new offense.

Further studies have focused on the link between gang-involved recidivism and the timing of reconviction (Huebner, Varano, & Bynum, 2007). Variables like gender, race, gang membership, drug dependence, and institutional behavior are critical factors in predicting the timing of reconviction. Male minority youth are more than twice as likely to be serious, violent, and chronic offenders, and this predictability is higher in the first year of adjudication and re-entry. Unpredictably, gun use is not significantly related to post-release involvement in the criminal justice system. Additional predictors that strengthen the link between reconviction

timing and odds for recidivism include disciplinary infractions while incarcerated, serving lengthy sentences, drug-related convictions, and strong ties to the street gangs (Huebner et al., 2007; Pizarro, Zgoba, & Haugebrook, 2014). Understanding the correlation between recidivism and the seriousness of the PG problem is an important element in determining effective interventions. Since GM has strong correlation with reoffending and reconviction rates, it is important to pay attention to this phenomenon and the consequences it presents to public safety.

Finally, the cost the PGs pose to society is concerning. General crimes cost Americans an estimated \$655 billion each year in prevention, incarceration, and rehabilitation efforts (Ritter, Simon, & Mahendra, 2019). Over the course of a lifetime, a career criminal can cost society about six million dollars. Increasingly violent crimes committed by GMs, and the use of longer sentences to control them, suggest more GMs will fill prisons' cells in the future. GMs are sometimes sentenced to longer prison terms due to their GM and affiliation. The longer incarceration and severe punishments may only exacerbate the problem. Inevitably, the correctional spending and the PG problem will only continue to grow when the prisons remain overcrowded, understaffed, and disorderly.

Section II: Literature Review

PGs are complex and responsible for most of the serious crimes and violence eruption in correctional facilities, with members producing disproportionate rates of involvement in homicides and assaults. In an effort to reduce institutional violence, and recidivism rates, and enhance the chances for successful offender re-entry into society, the research focus on PGs concepts and consequences has increased especially in the last decades. This literature review will provide information on the definition and concepts of gangs, with the main focus placed on

PGs. Also, an overview of the history, origins, and rise of male PGs will be explored. This section will conclude with a description of the factors that contribute to the likelihood of males joining gangs in prison.

Definitions and Concepts of Male Gangs and Prison Gangs

There is no universal definition of a gang. Nor is there any agreement on the typology and when a group of delinquents becomes a gang. In fact, there are significant disagreements among researchers on the appropriate conceptual and operational definition of gangs. Many researchers assert that the measurement of gang concepts is flawed. Others believe that the interest in gangs and gang crimes research is strong enough to make gangs a distinctive group to study and the measurement of its concepts valid and reliable (Decker, Melde, & Pyrooz, 2013). The correct definition of gangs and GM is important when it comes to studying and understanding what gangs and their consequences are, and creating efficient programs and policies to curbe the problem.

The term “gang” is widely and interchangeably used in mainstream research and practice. According to the 2015 National Gang Report (NGR), a gang consists of the following characteristics: 1) has three or more members, generally aged 12-24; 2) members share an identity linked to names, colors, tattoos, and symbols; 3) members identify themselves as belonging to a gang and are recognized by others as GMs; and 4) members exhibit permanence and engage in an elevated level of criminal activity (NGIC, 2016). Before the recruits can “earn” their membership, they must go through a process of initiation, which demonstrates their ability to endure certain rites. This process is also referred to as being jumped in, where the prospect is beaten up by all of the gang’s members. Other missions following initiation may require participating in criminal acts like beating up another rival gang member, stealing cars, and

selling drugs and guns. Some gangs don't accept a new member until they have committed a serious criminal act like shooting, killing, or raping someone.

Gangs set themselves apart from others by their shared identity. They have distinguished trademarks like tattoos, symbols, colors, and monikers, to define their identity, among other physical, cultural, and psychological mannerisms. They can display body brandings, and markings, hand signals, hairstyles, color of clothing, and graffiti to demonstrate gang allegiance, mark their territories, and challenge other rival gangs. Gangs have a defined internal organization and leadership that controls a territory and directs the illegal and violent criminal activities. In order to remain in business, they have strong leadership and levels of loyalty to maintain permanency and reputation. According to a report by National Gang Intelligence Center (NGIC), there are nearly 1.4 criminally active GMs in the US today, which are responsible for 85% of serious gang crimes in metropolitan areas, and 16% of all homicides (NGIC, 2015).

Another common element shared among PGs is a strong system of beliefs, referred to as the code of convict. The code of convict closely emphasizes the code of the streets, and both supports an image of tough masculinity and opposition to authority (Mitchell et al., 2016). For many male PG members, promoting the image of male toughness and maintaining respect through violence, power, and control is also viewed as a way to prevent being victimized by rivals, and demonstrating commitment to gang solidarity. More, male minorities are more likely to obey to the street and convict code, and participate in PGs, with Blacks and Hispanics being disproportionately involved in gangs and loyally obeying the inmate code. It is believed, that of the 90% prison gang population, the male Black and Hispanic GMs consist anywhere between 40% to 70% of male PGs.

Gangs continue to exist on the streets, within schools, and in prisons. As the gang problem has fully grown and spread in America's streets, and schools, there has been an equivalent growth and spread of gangs in America's prisons. Prison administrators have identified more than 100 known PGs with nearly 150,000 members throughout the United States' prison system (DOJ, 2017). PGs are criminal groups, commonly but not exclusively, researched separately from other groups like street gangs, motorcycle gangs, terrorist organizations, or other security threat groups. PGs are defined as criminal organizations that originate and continue to operate within, as well as outside the confines of the penal system, and that threaten public safety and the orderly management of the prison. Prison officials also refer to them as Security Threat Groups (STGs) or "disruptive groups" due to their ability scheme to use and perpetuate violence. Correctional administrators refer to them as STGs in order to take away the power of the term "gang" intimations. For the purposes of this paper, the terms PGs and STGs are the same and the discussion regarding their concepts will refer to them all as PGs.

Compared to street gangs, PGs generally have fewer members, but street gangs become larger and stronger when some of their leaders are incarcerated (PBS, 2013; NGIC, 2016). Despite being behind bars, prison criminal groups are known to have a notable hierarchy with an established structure, code of conduct, and a system of ranks (Skarbek, 2011; NGIC, 2015). These gangs have strong leaders, who use their role to influence other inmates and strengthen their gang's reputation. Some of these roles may involve defining and securing property rights, offering protection due to limited security staff and resources, and making transactions with street suppliers. The illegal nature of this type of business can cause distrust among the different groups. To maintain a strong collective reputation, PGs members ensure they respect their code of rules and practices when handling business (Fleisher and Decker, 2001). The said reputation is

transferable to new recruits, members, and even future generations. If the codified rules and trust are broken, the gang restores balance through sanctions, which are typically violent. Still today, PGs exploit the weaknesses characteristic of overcrowded and understaffed facilities and account for not only a wide range of criminal activity, but also for most prison violence.

History and Rise of Prison Gangs

PGs were established at various prisons during different decades, and continue to exist among all types of the US penal system today. Most of the PGs began as street gangs that formed in the community, and are known to have existed since the 1920s (Levan & Chambliss, 2011; DOJ, 2017). When street GMs were involved in illegal criminal acts, they were arrested, prosecuted, found guilty, and convicted to serve a sentence of confinement. To control the level of violence and crimes created by the street gangs, legislators authorized the increase of use and severity of prison, especially for drug and violent crimes. In 1950s, prisons were flooded that was ethnically and racially mixed with a population of first time male and young offenders. They banded together for self-protection, and later on, for control over the economic markets, and profits. Furthermore, the enactment of tough-on-crime laws of 1970 led to an influx of young, diverse, and large population of incarcerated street GMs. The increase of violent and drug offenders confined in the same prisons, contributed to the rise of an overcrowded, understaffed, and dangerous prison environment with many levels of PGs (Travis, Western, & Redburn, 2014; Skarbek, 2014). The increase of inmate-to-staff ratio and scarce prison management resources gave PGs the ability to gain control over prison functions. As a result, PGs emerged as self-governed institutions seeking social order and protection out of failed official governance mechanisms (Skarbek, 2014).

Many inmates joined their gang for the first time while incarcerated, and remained in one long after release. Studies estimate that 12% of the male inmates joined a gang for the first time after being incarcerated. These prison groups were more powerful within the state prisons, and were ethnically and racially structured (DOJ, 2017; Decker et al., 2013). The nature of racially segregated facilities, and the need for protection from a growing inmate population, created a race-based inmate society. These inmate groups were competing for power and control through criminal activities, predominantly through violence and drug sales. Kreager & Kruttschnitt (2018) explain that the prison racial heterogeneity, especially the disproportionate representation of Black and Hispanic prisoners, resulted in an increased racial segregation and antagonism. In some of California's and Texas' largest prison systems, race-based gangs were first created in prison with no counterpart on the street. Examples of these PGs include the Texas Syndicate, Mexican Mafia (also referred to as EME, for the letter M in Spanish), Aryan Brotherhood (AB), Black Guerrilla Family (BGF), and La Nuestra Familia (NF) (DOJ, 2017).

California saw the emergence of African American gangs in the 1920s. By 1965, these gangs developed their reputation as the most feared and violent gangs in the Los Angeles area with about 15,000 members that committed crimes like armed robberies, murders, and narcotics trafficking. The BGF is one of the largest gangs that operates in California since 1960 and has spread its roots to the Maryland prison system, as well. The BGF has a sophisticated organization with a supreme leader and a central committee. The gang has a paramilitary organization that consists of low-level associates and higher rank generals responsible for different territories. The gang promotes a strong political ideology of the black revolution and the overthrow of the government. With about 1,000 members, this gang grew adapt bribing

correctional officers and coordinating drug trafficking and money laundering operations (Fleisher & Decker, 2001; DOJ 2017).

Additionally, California saw its first development of Hispanic PGs in the 1940s, such as the EME and LNF. LNF was formed in Soledad prison in CA to protect younger rural-Mexican inmates from another rival gang, the EME. The NF is believed to have strong ties with the outside GMs who have been released from prison, and who contribute to smuggling drugs and contraband into the prisons system. NF is responsible for criminal activities like homicides, auto-thefts, and prostitution. Within the last 30-year period they are known to have committed at least 600 murders. The NF is also an ally of the BGF and the Norteno members, formed to increase profits through drug sales and money laundering operations (DOJ, 2017; National Gang Report [NGR], 3013).

The EME, on the other hand, was formed in 1957 by youth male Mexican American and Hispanic members at a youth center for high-risk youth in Tracy, CA. Their members were males aged 14-25 who were committing crimes like burglary, vandalism, narcotics trafficking, and robbery. Through its street subordinates, Surenos, the EME sustain credibility ordering tax collections, assaults, and murders in the streets. If those orders are not executed, any street subordinates face prosecution whether in the streets or while incarcerated (NGR, 2013). The EME committed its first murder outside the prison confines, in 1970. The EME is believed to be the most powerful and active gang in Californian prisons, with up to 400 dedicated members and around 990 associates who are involved with its criminal operations and aspire to become official members (Schmallegger, 2017; NGIC, 2015). Hispanic PGs continue to be overly represented in America's prisons with thousands of members and associates combined, operating in numerous prisons across the country (Schmallegger, 2017; NGIC, 2015).

Another gang and organized crime group that was founded in late 1960s in San Quentin maximum security prison of CA is the AB. This gang was founded by white supremacist males as a response to the racial desegregation of American prisons. There are about 20,000 AB members inside and outside the confines of the US penal system, mostly concentrated in the Western US. Although the AB gang consists of only one percent of the US prison population, its GMs are responsible for 20% of all prison murders and other crimes like homicides, extortion, and drugs-trafficking (Schmallegger, 2017; NGR, 2013). The gang has chapters in nearly every major federal and state prison in the country. Because of their reputation for ruthless crimes, AB are heavily targeted by the state and federal authorities and are usually housed in supermax federal and state correctional facilities. Many top leaders of the gang are serving life or multiple life sentences without the possibility of parole. There are other white supremacist gangs, like the Nazi Low Riders, and the Public Enemy Number One (PEN1), that the AB has formed alliance with, in order to strengthen its powers. The group also has an alliance with the EME since both are mutual enemies of BGF.

While California and other states' large prisons' criminal heterogeneity was formally increasing, the American criminal justice system was finding tougher ways to punish organized crime. To dismantle the mob and organized crime in the US, Congress enacted the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act of 1970 (RICO) as part of the Organized Crime Control Act (OCCA) (RICO, 1970). The crimes that lead to a RICO charge are called predicate crimes. RICO law authorizes the federal government to specifically target and dismantle criminal entities or individuals involved in extensive long-term illegal activities such as money laundering, embezzlement, bribery, human trafficking, and fraud. The OCCA aimed to eliminate organized crime of the mob and criminal organizations by strengthening the legal and penal tools

and enhancing sanctions. the US government expanded the RICO act to include gangs in order to target their crimes within any jurisdiction of the US. The goal of RICO was to link all of organized crimes together in one case, allowing for prosecution and convictions of the top leadership behind the crimes.

In 1972, 33 states including Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands, adopted state RICO laws to cover additional state offenses under a similar regulation. RICO allowed prosecutors to include gang's history and crimes severity into admissible evidence. RICO prosecutions resulted in sweeping up large numbers of street GMs, which as a consequence led to increase of incarcerated GMs. The resulting punishment under RICO can be more severe and harsh than stand-alone criminal cases. Sentences for the most serious convictions can be especially harsh and can even result in mandatory life sentences. For this reason, RICO cases are prosecutors' preferred method of gangs and organized crimes prosecutions. In 1980s many gangsters were convicted under RICO for various racketeering offenses, and many were convicted for lengthy prison sentences, without the possibility for parole. Many gangsters who testified in RICO proceedings received shorter prison sentences compared to those who did not cooperate.

To supplement RICO, congress enacted the Violent Crimes in Aid of Racketeering Act (VICAR) of 1984 (18 USC 1959). Under VICAR, it is required that only one violent criminal act be proven, that shows commitment to gain entrance to, or maintain and promote offender's position to a gang (Woods, 2012). VICAR authorizes a federal offense for violent crimes committed by a RICO criminal group, including murder, assault, kidnapping, and racketeering. Some researchers argue that RICO and VICAR acts led to racially and ethnically biased convictions because they involved gangs that were affiliated with at least one racial minority groups. Woods (2012) found that 86% of the prosecutions involved mixed-race gangs (mostly

Blacks, Latinos, and Asians), whereas 14% involved predominantly white-affiliated gangs.

Woods' findings support other research data that reveal the chronic racial and ethnic disparity in imprisonment that has been a known feature of the prison system for many decades.

The US prisons saw a higher number of gang population between 1980s and 1990s. By the 1980s, these gangs were operating from inside and outside the prison system and were terrorizing their neighborhoods violent felonious crimes (Valasik, Reid, Barton, & Tita, 2017). Citing Camp and Camp (1985), Valasik et al. (2017) underscore that American prisons housed about 113 gangs with 13,000 active members. The incarcerated GMs consisted of about 3% of the prison population, but caused 50 % or more of the prison violence (Fleisher & Decker, 2001). By 1992, PG membership doubled from 12,624 in 1985 to 46,190, with the majority of them placed in medium- and maximum-security facilities. By 2002, in contrast, there were nearly 3,000 inmate criminal groups with more than 300,000 members, 13.4% of which believed to be in the prison system, and 15.6% in the jails (Wells, Minor, Carter, Angel, & Cox, 2002; Winterdyk & Ruddell, 2010). The prevalence rate of gang activity saw a significant increase between 2001 and 2005. Compared to 1980, 2005 saw a 350% increase of GMs, with 11.6% of incarcerated members had joined a gang for the first time while in prison (Winterdyk & Ruddell, 2010). The youthful GMs consisted of 18% of all inmates, who on an average had joined a gang at age 14. Overall, prison inmates consisted of about 18% associate members and 51% confirmed members. Les then ten years later, GM spiked at 68%, and according to the 2015 National Gang Report (NGR), the increase was related to rival gangs allying with rivals with the main reason of protection and maximizing profits from drug activities (NGIC, 2015). At the end of 2016, there were more than 33,000 confirmed members incarcerated nationwide (DOJ, 2017).

In conclusion, this section explored the definitions and characteristics of gangs, with the main focus on male gangs in the American carceral system, their history, and how they emerged and developed. One long known fact is that PGs in America have existed for a long time and will continue to exist in the future. It is long known that GMs are overrepresented in correctional institutions, and scholars have placed PGs at the top of their research frontier as an important topic of exploration for criminal justice administrators and policymakers. The costly and taxpayer-supported penal institutions in America will continue to see diverse PGs with diverse demographics, and structures, unique rehabilitation and re-entry needs.

Section III: Overview of Current Prison Anti-Gang Programs and Practices

Correctional facilities have developed and implemented numerous security-focused measures to ensure the safety and protection of staff, inmates, and the public. In addition, they employ many treatment and rehabilitative programs to prepare those inmates returning to their communities for a smooth and successful re-entry to society (DiPlacido, Simon, Witte, Gu, & Wong, 2006; Winterdyk & Ruddell, 2010). The following section will first begin to describe what the prison life and management look like by describing an inmate's typical day in low/minimum, and medium/high security facilities where most GMs are housed. The second part of this section will provide an overview of the traditional anti-gang tactics used to control violence. The third portion of this section will discuss the in-custody treatment options and rehabilitative programs currently being used in correctional institutions of states like North Carolina, Washington, and Nebraska. The overall effectiveness of these programs in managing, rehabilitating, and reducing recidivism rates of the gang population will also be discussed.

A Male Prison Gang Member's Typical Day

Prison administrators report that gangs and their members exist everywhere in prisons, from the minimum – and medium-security prisons to MAX and SUPERMAX facilities (Skarbek, 2011). A typical prison day is primarily determined by the prisoner's classification level.

Prisoners whose previous crimes and current behavior qualify them for low or medium security classification, have more freedom and more opportunities than those in high security. In a low-minimum security prisons, there are few GMs and their influence is minimal. A typical day for someone in an all-males low or medium security prison begins with a 5:00 am wake-up time, and breakfast around 5:30am. Lunch and dinner are served at about 1200 and 1600. The inmates cannot bring any food back to their living units, except a fruit from lunch, that must be consumed before the next meal. Sharing food or any type of commissary can be allowed in some facilities, and some others is strictly prohibited. The inmates must be in their cells or bunk and ready for counts which take place several times during the day: at or about 1140, 1640, 2100, 0200, depending on the schedule of the facility they're housed in. The prisoners may report to their work assignments during the day. If they have no work assignment, they may have a class to attend or spend time in their bunks reading, writing letters, or listening to music (Idaho Department of Corrections, 2019; North Carolina Department of Public Safety, 2012).

During designated times they are allowed to use the day room, where they can watch television, read, and hang out. On weekends, prisoners may be allowed to attend chapel programs and/or worship services. During visitation hours, they may a visit with a friend or family member who has been gone through the approval process. All of these activities depend on prisoners having good behavior and the visitors obtaining necessary permissions and clearances (North Idaho Correctional Institution, 2019). The inmates are expected to follow an

offender living guide. Any violation to the rules can lead to disciplinary actions from informal to formal corrective actions like warnings, infractions, or disciplinary actions of different classes (A, B, or C) depending on the severity of the violation. When their behaviors are violent, and threaten the overall security and management of the facility, they are moved from the minimum to higher-security level institutions (Skarbek, 2011).

In high security facilities, the prisoners have much fewer choices and many more restrictions. In SH complexes, inmates' moves and contact with others are strictly controlled. The inmates live in pods, also called cell blocks, with six to eight cells, centralized in a control room monitored by security guards. Cells are about 80 square feet, have solid outer doors with an inner grill, and narrow window that provides some natural light. They're furnished with a desk, sink, toilet, shelf, and chair. Each floor has a shower room, and a secure system of corridors monitored by control rooms. Each pod also has its own exercise yard which is monitored by closed circuit television. Only inmates from the same pod can exercise together. All inmates are otherwise kept separate from one another throughout the prison. An inmate at the time can move within the pod. The inmates are escorted outside the pod by one or two correctional guards, while placed on restraints. Before and after their escorts, the inmates are searched for contraband or messages from other inmates. Their moves are restricted to health and counseling services, legal research, attending classification, or parole and disciplinary hearings, and non-contact visitation with approved family or friends. The staff deliver the inmates meals, medication, and approved material and supplies, such as legal papers and reference books. Phone calls are limited to one or two a month, and so are commissary privileges (Wagner, 2001). To be removed from SH, requires going through the process of a clearance for placement, or appealing and grieving the placement. This process is long and not much can be done to speed up the process.

Suppression Methods

To tackle the prison gang problem, many correctional facilities utilize security measures that act as the leading force in dealing with safety and protection of the prison community. These security measures are based upon the prison organizational factors and prevalence, and characteristics of the prisons STGs (Winterdyk, & Ruddell, 2010). The prisons' organizational factors defining the anti-gang tactics involve the departmental policies and procedures, security resources, and the prison officials' willingness to partner with external stakeholders. Similarly, STGs' characteristics, like their level of risk, sophistications, and commitment, play a role in development and implementation of security strategies. Suppression is a traditional correctional anti-gang practice that involves identifying and classifying, transferring, housing/segregating gang-involved inmates, and intelligence sharing (Levan & Chambliss, 2011).

The first step of suppression is the identification and classification of gangs and their members. Trained in identifying GMs, classification specialists screen the inmates at intake, and determine their housing level, and facility of placement (such as MAX or SUPERMAX) (Levan & Chambliss, 2011). The inmates' classification also evaluates their risks based on their criminal history, mental health level, chemical dependence, and other security requirements. The purpose of classification is to reduce the interaction between GMs and the potential for violence in prisons' general population. Once identified, or even suspected of possible involvement with a gang, a note is placed in inmate's file (Fleisher & Decker, 2001). This attempt to reduce GM is also referred to as "jacketing". Any additional information on marks, scars, and tattoos, as well as photos are recorded in the database. The inmates are not allowed to present evidence or written statements to rebut the validation process. Some critics oppose this approach because of its method of labeling those suspected – but unconfirmed – GMs. Griffin (2007) argues that ways

the validation packets are created, and evidence is collected raise questions regarding the accuracy of this process, as a result leading to misclassifications, needless threats of segregations and transfers, and disrupting the so needed treatment and programming of non-gang involved inmates.

Transferring is another suppression strategy that aims at breaking up the gang and isolating its leaders and hard-core members who present a danger to the smooth operation of the institution. Identified high-profile GMs are transferred to other interstate facilities where their criminal activities, structural power, and cohesion can be stopped or neutralized (Levan & Chambliss, 2011; Lessing, 2014). A 2005 study conducted by the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) found that 46 out of 48 surveyed DOC agencies engaged in long-term transfers of their inmates in other state, federal, or privately operated prisons (NIC, 2006). Of 4,900 inmates transferred to other jurisdictions, 4,275 were men, 499 were women, and 126 were inmates for whom data were unavailable by gender. For 12 state DOC agencies, inmate protection was the main reason of transfers of men, and the largest number of transfers were done because of overcrowding. Four of the participating DOC states reported transferring men inmates for reasons of preserving security and safety of sending state's prison. Opponents of this tactic argue that separating the gang leaders by sending them to an out-of-state facility does not necessarily reduce violence (Levan & Chambliss, 2011). Critics also argue that the gang leaders can easily spread to receiving agencies mounting new social networks, recruiting new members, forming new chapters in the new facility, and spreading their anti-social beliefs and criminogenic activities. Some corrections administrators have recognized that transfers may relieve the institutions from the most problematic cases, however they have little impacts to the overall gang situation.

Additionally, and most importantly, critics stress that transfers negatively affect the inmates' social ties outside of prison, resulting in diminished post-release outcomes and increased recidivism. Cochran (2019) studied the impact of social networks on prisoners' health and well-being. Cochran's (2019) study found that transfers unnecessarily separate the inmates from their family members, making it harder and more stressful for them to visit and navigate an out-of-state facility with complex rules and procedures. As many studies have indicated, lack of family support, combined with disruption of rehabilitative services and programming, increases the inmates' in-prison adverse experiences (Harding, Morenoff, Nguyen, Bushway & Binswanger, 2019, p. 671). The disruption from the supportive network can introduce impediments to securing housing, employment, health care, and transportation post-release. These barriers added on to the strains that come with the social and legal exclusions from an extensive criminal history, will encourage them to find refuge in their pro-criminal social networks. Then, it is only a matter of time when they will re-offend and return to prison.

The opposing argument holds that interstate transfers don't necessarily separate the inmates from their families or bring them closer either. Offenders often travel out of area to expand their criminal enterprise, consequently violating the laws of their non-resident states leading to their arrest, prosecution, and conviction in said states. Secondly, the data of spatial effects of transfers reflect varying results: inmates' transfer placements range from 655 miles closer to home to 608 miles away, with an average of 33 miles closer to home by the end of prison term. Of those inmates who began their prison term at a lower security facility (minimum or medium), 18% were transferred to a higher-level facility (maximum or supermax prison), were mostly Latinos, and classified as gang-involved inmates. Conversely, 54% of those who began their sentence at a higher-level prison, were transferred to a lower security prison. These

inmates were more likely to be young white males 90% of the time, with repeat felony convictions, longer prison sentences, and about 1.4 transfers per year for an average prison length of 23 months. Transfers related to violent misconduct resulted in placements 33 miles farther away from home, while those related to non-violent misconduct resulted in placements that were 22 miles farther away from home (Useem and Piehl, 2006).

Segregated housing (SH) is the correctional officials preferred, although controversial, method of dealing with serious gang-related violence and protect institutional and public safety. It is estimated that there were about 66,000 inmates in SH units of 34 state prison facilities in 2014 (Frost & Monteiro, 2006). These inmates occupied SH units like administrative, disciplinary, and protective custody. Administrative segregation removes gang-involved inmates who pose as a threat to security and safety for an indeterminate amount of time. Disciplinary SH is another punitive form of segregating for a specified period of time those inmates who have violated serious facility rules. Unlike the administrative and disciplinary segregations, protective custody segregates the inmates who are at risk of harm from others (or harming themselves). Any of these SH types may involve some form of solitary (or near solitary) confinement. Correctional administration can place offenders in SH units such as MAX or SUPERMAX security prisons, with imposed restrictions on their behavior, personal items, visitors, and other privileges (Vera Institute of Justice [IOJ], 2015). In segregation, the inmates live in single cells, with little or no contact with other inmates. Strict security measures control contraband, and every inmate's movement. Periodic reviews conducted by the institution's classification committee determines whether the inmates in SH continues to pose a threat and require continued segregation or can be released from SH. Typically, the only ways the inmate can be released from SH, are if he dies, fulfills his sentence, or debriefs. Debriefing is a rare choice by a

GM, because it means giving up the gang, providing information to prison officials about the gang, and can result in his murder.

A study by Winterdyk and Ruddell (2010) discovered that 94% of 37 interviewed prison personnel strongly supported the use of restricted housing for GMs and affiliates. They reported that restrictive housing was a very effective (75%) or somewhat effective (19%) method to control gangs and violence. When compared to their non-gang involved counterparts, the gang-involved inmates were six to 71 times more likely to be placed in restrictive housing, as well as spend longer placement in restrictive housing (Beck, 2015). Longer placements were a result of timing variations and inconsistencies in review hearings, producing disproportionate sanctions among offenders for similar offenses. While in restrictive housing, gang-involved violence and rule-violating behaviors were significantly decreased; however, these incidents significantly increased when the inmates were placed back to general population. Another study by Useem and Piehl (2006) examined and analyzed the extent to which the order increased or decreased in institutions with riots, homicides, assaults, administrative segregation placements, and escapes. They found that while segregation measures are important in securing safety and saving lives, they are not exclusively the only or best measures of order.

On the other hand, there seems to be a widespread agreement that confinement methods under such isolation and restriction conditions deteriorate the inmates' mental and physical health (Frost & Monteiro, 2006). While isolated in solitary confinement, inmates do not have access to rehabilitative services, and have no opportunities to address the underlying issues that separated them from the general population. Confined under such conditions, with no meaningful social interactions for a long period of time, exacerbates the inmates' ability to integrate into community when returned to the general population. As a result, the inmates can

develop chronic and acute physical and mental health disorders. In fact, studies have further shown that SH units are not only costly to build, staff, and operate, but there is nominal evidence showing their effectiveness in meeting their intended goals. For this reason, and to reduce the number of cases of juveniles and adults placed in segregated, ten states announced or implemented policy changes in 2014. Notably, New York City's DOC made the distinctive decision to ban the use of segregated housing for all incarcerated persons age 21 and younger.

Finally, investigation sharing is another security method that allows correctional investigators to partner with other law enforcement agencies to identify, monitor, and investigate GMs' activities, and interactions with others. Intelligence sharing involves crime mapping, data mining, and network analysis using sophisticated computer programs. Databases allow for data accuracy and effective communication between correctional and other law enforcement agencies. Studies of correctional staff surveyed on intelligence sharing found that staff rated this method to be very effective in identifying gangs and their direct involvement of crimes committed in the community (Winterdyk & Ruddell, 2010; Fleisher & Decker, 2001). Other critics argue that current methods of GMs' identification and information sharing can be improper and counterproductive. Griffin (2007) contends that such process can increase a gang's profile and status. These crackdown tactics can reaffirm an inmate's identification with a gang and contribute to his possibility of joining a prison gang group. Likewise, Lessing (2014) highlights that the GMs' targeted suppressions inside, as well as outside of prison, only strengthen their projection of power inside the prison. Prison becomes a normal part of life with PG initiation and insurance as the common norm. Lessing (2014) further argues that while such security actions may seem as viable compromises, they also delegate state's authority to establish order to illegal enterprises. Such actions undermine the state's legitimacy and generate costly consequences,

such as increased convictions and lengthy sentences for targeted GMs, more overcrowding, and violence inside the prison and in the communities.

Scholars have raised questions, as well as moral and ethical concerns related to aggressive suppression methods. Research has found that while suppression approaches may reduce violence, they are not proven to eliminate gangs or their influence (Griffin, 2007; Specter 2006, Vera IOJ, 2015). More significantly, these methods raise questions on the quality of prisons' management and daily operations, and the extent to which inmates are treated humanely, or being compliant with rules. It appears that the frustrations of attempting and failing to deter PGs and their violence, propels correctional staff to easier ways of crime-fighting, like aggressive crackdowns of anti-gang tactics, and crime precipitation and provocation. When not coupled with meaningful interventions, these tactics underestimate the problem of gangs and may well facilitate the growth of PGs and negatively impact prisoner reentry efforts.

Correctional Rehabilitative and Treatment Programs

Rehabilitation has become an essential shift of focus of the US correctional philosophy and prison policies. Correctional rehabilitation programs are designed to meet the needs of increasing inmate population by improving the offenders' physical and mental health, and providing them with necessary life skills while incarcerated (Gains & Miller, 2016). Today, every state and federal prison has some form of rehabilitative and academic programs (Gaines & Miller, 2016; Duwe, 2017). Rehabilitative programs offered to gang-involved populations include: 1) Cognitive Behaviors Interventions (CBI) for - Substance Abuse (SA), Sex Offender (SO), and Aggression Replacement Training (ART); 2) Mental Health Treatment; and 3) General Education Diploma (GED). These programs are beneficial to gang-involved inmates who are struggling with drug and sex addiction, low academic skills, anger, traumas, and mental health

issues. Evaluations of treatment programs that incorporate CBI provided by trained professionals in a safe structured environment, with high intensity, and appropriate dosage, have shown substantial benefits in reducing violent crime and recidivism rates (Landenberger, & Lipsey, 2005; Duwe 2017). The research by Boston Consulting Group (2016) on Bureau of Prison programs, found that when standardized and supported by dedicated resources, these prison programs improve life skills and reduce recidivism by 43%.

CBI programs are designed to address the underlying factors as precursors to crimes, as well as the coping strategies that can be utilized to solve issues without reverting to self-destructive and victim-creating behaviors. Specifically, these programs provide various forms of treatment, such as drug dependency, criminal thinking, sex offending, and anger management. CBI programs educate offenders on the main concept that thinking is a choice and that if left unaddressed, can have negative outcomes to self and others. By being exposed to CBI treatment while incarcerated and with ongoing community support after release, offenders are less likely to reoffend when placed in the community. The CBI treatment is rated promising and effective for general, chronic, and violent juvenile and adult offenders. Individuals who participated in the CBI programs showed a reduced risk for general, sexual, and violent recidivism (NIJ, 2019).

It is worth noting that to determine the level of risk, and programming needs and placement, correctional institutions utilize the tool of Risk and Needs assessment. At prisons with reception centers, inmates are evaluated to determine which prison would be most appropriate for serving their sentence. Additionally, the inmates are assessed on the criminal risk factors that predict their likelihood to recidivate, as well as the specific rehabilitative needs necessary to address those risk factors (Stojkovic, Kalinich, & Klofas, 2015). The risk and needs assessment help determine which inmates receive priority when assigning to rehabilitation

programs. When administering assessments, reception centers staff collect inmates' basic demographic data via interviews and questionnaires on inmates' criminal histories, and family relationships, perceptions of peers and social environment, education and work history (The US department of Justice Archives, 2019). Issues have been raised with risk and needs assessments. Stojkovic et al. (2015) explain that recidivism cannot be predicted through statistical methods, because scores on the risk and needs assessments can be manipulated by offenders, and by evaluators to modify workloads. There is a common agreement, however, that they may be better suited for determining resource allocation than for predicting recidivism.

In addition to rehabilitation, another in-custody program offered to inmates is the GED. It is a required and structured program for inmates who do not have a GED when entering prison. A study on inmates' educational needs found that more than half of offenders lack basic educational and vocational skills, and more than 68 % of them are high school drop-outs who lack basic life skills (Lizama, Matthews, & Reyes., 2014). These educational programs can serve as an effective method of safely managing the inmate population, keeping them occupied and focused with positive activities, and providing them with enhanced work skills. Without those programs the inmates will think of imprisonment as unfair and then they will become more difficult to control and more likely to engage in violence (Gains & Miller, 2016). Multiple studies have found a positive link between in-custody educational programs, employment attainment, and recidivism rates. Brown, Lent, and Knoll's (2013) research revealed that employment is one of the strongest predictors of offender success after release from prison. Produced reports showed that inmates who participate in any type of educational program while in prison are 43 % less likely to return to prison. When offenders have promising chances for success, and likelihood for re-offending is minimized. As a result, prison will experience less

violence, communities will experience less crime and save thousands of dollars for each person kept out of the prison system.

Along with rehabilitative and educational programs, correctional agencies utilize mental health programs to treat America's sickest, often violent, confined individuals who have psychotic disorders or personality disorders. These programs are often run by clinical staff, and focused on individual or group therapy covering a diverse area of issues such as emotional regulation, interpersonal conflict, family relations, and communication skills, to name a few. The goal of these programs is to address antisocial thinking and behavior patterns, and teach inmates to avoid behaviors that may lead to reincarceration after they are released. These programs also help the inmates learn how to manage their mental illnesses and identify issues that put them at risk of continued victimization and reoffending. In general, research suggests that select short-term, intensive treatment programs can be useful and effective in reducing recidivism rates among the mentally ill offenders (Lizama et al., 2014). More, the Boston Consulting Group (2016) found gaps and limitations in correctional mental health programs as the following: 1) insufficient moderate mental health treatment for all inmates, 2) limited access to programs for non-English speakers and the cognitively disabled; and 3) insufficient resources, like funds, staff, and space, to ensure full access to treatment programs. It is important for prisons to invest on mental health programs to ensure better care and safe oversight of the inmates with mental health needs are adequately provided. When mental ill inmates are left untreated, they are at risk of not only contributing to prison violence, but also of being victimized.

Some correctional facilities have developed programs that combine their security measures with intense treatment and educational programs that meet their security and performance needs. North Carolina is one of the states that has implemented CBI concepts in its

in-custody programs and has seen positive impacts in offender rehabilitation, and recidivism rates. As a result of increased STGs and their negative impact in prisons in 1993, NC proposed and sought funding of a STG Management Unit (STGMU) in 2003 (Vera IOJ, 2015). The STGMU has been fully operational since 2005. The nine-month long STGMU program has offered tools that address the criminal thinking and skill deficits of STG members placed in close and medium custody. STGMU encourages gang desistance through supervised housing environment combined with educational, vocational, and life skills programming. As their behaviors improve, the inmates are then placed to a post-monitoring facility, where they are monitored for six to 12 months. During their participation in STGMU, the program graduates saw the following results: 1) 32% decrease in overall infractions; 2) 68% fewer gang infractions; 3) decreased STG levels; and 4) overall improved behavior resulting in a safer environment for the prison community. Because of its success, STGMU was named NC's Gang Investigators Association program of the year in 2003 (Vera IOJ, n.d.).

For hyper-violent and STG members, the Washington Department of Corrections has developed and implemented congregate classroom programming and activities for their Intensive Management Unit (IMU) (Vera IOJ, n.d.). IMU handles severe protective custody and mental illness cases with 60% of them belonging to STGs. Its mission is to transition these populations from MAX to lower custody levels (like close and medium custodies). With a six to eight programming chairs, this program focuses on addressing the academic needs, aggressive behavior, and mental illness through a variety of evidence-based classroom activities. The inmates participate in classes like Aggression Replacement Training, Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Chemical Dependency, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, and GED. The classes run 60-90 minutes and two or three times a week, for a period of eight to 13 weeks, depending

on the program. These activities allow the inmates to interact with other incarcerated inmates and staff in a secure environment. More specifically, the classes teach the inmates coping strategies and topics of health and wellness allowing them to recognize socially-acceptable behaviors, and evaluate the consequences of their actions. The IMU program decreased the MAX custody population from over 600 in 2011 to under 300 in 2015, which is a 58% decrease in recidivism.

In closing, this session explored the various anti-gang management and rehabilitative programs in the American prison system. The argument supported that the studies indicate no effectiveness in single use of conventional suppression strategies. In fact, there is more evidence of harm from these tactics, especially in those mentally ill inmates. Rather, in-custody security measures combined with treatment programs have shown more effective in securing safety, improving GMs' behavior and decreasing their likelihood for re-offending. Programs that incorporate CBI principles, maintain the integrity of original design, delivered at the right dosage, and have shown positive results in improving gang-involved inmates' criminogenic thinking and safe integration into society (Duwe, 2017). Programs that have shown effectiveness in addressing the root causes of problems with PGs are CBI-SA/SO, ART, GED, combined with mental health and therapeutic treatment. When these methods are used with the right objectives and intentions, and delivered in humane secure learning environment, they can promote offender responsibility, humanizing of criminal justice process, and restoration of justice.

Section IV: Theoretical Framework

This section of the paper seeks to examine the anomie and strain theories, the two most common and influential criminological theories that explain crime and deviant behavior. The anomie and strain concepts will be explored and applied to discuss the reasons that the individual and groups join PGs, and the conditions requiring a response from the criminal justice system.

This section will further explain the relevance of these theories in understanding the differences in individual criminological characteristics and conditioning factors that structure the inmates' responses to anomie and strain.

Anomie and Strain Theories

Originating from 1900's, anomie and strain theories of crime are the most influential theoretical perspectives in criminological literature today explaining crime and delinquent behavior (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2019). The anomie theory postulates how wide-ranging social conditions have an impact on deviant behavior and crime. The strain theory complements the anomie theory by proposing that social structures within society pressure individuals to commit crime. Influenced by the French sociologist of Emile Durkheim, Merton (1938) developed his theoretical framework of anomie and strain during a time when the US were experiencing difficult times with high unemployment, poverty, and crime rates (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2019). Durkheim looked at anomie as an analytical tool that examined the extensive lack of commitment to societal structural perspectives, like values, rules, and norms. Durkheim claimed that the societal expectations and standards guide the individual and groups' goals in a rapidly changing society. Social conditions of traditional institutions can be weakened and their authority reduced, impacting individual distress and deviant behavior.

Inspired by Durkheim's sociological views, Merton re- framed the anomie theory, looking more closely at what constitutes the causes of anomie at a micro- and macro-level. Merton believed in the American Dream and that if people work hard towards their goals (e.g. education, career) they will reach success and prosperity in the end. The American Dream was an equal success opportunity to all, regardless of gender, class, or race. However, Merton underscored that these goals were not equally attainable by all, because due to the complex societal structure, the

means were not equally distributable to all. Anomie develops when there is a gap and imbalance between the goals people want and those they can actually achieve. The anomic conditions are produced as a result of limited legitimate opportunities and institutional means to achieve success goals.

Merton further observed that the American Dream caused the most strain and frustration in society, because it over emphasized the goals for monetary success far more than the conventional means. When there is a lack of balance between the goals and means and a negative state of society, strain occurs. This phenomenon is experienced more frequently by individuals in disadvantaged social positions, who don't find equal opportunities, and are more likely to follow a deviant path. He further argued that frustration or strain is more evident when people are in their late teens to mid-20s, a period when offending behavior peaks. Because some individuals feel frustrated and strained from the societal norms and values, they resort to criminal behavior to achieve material success rather than rely on conventional means of getting it. People begin to deviate from and violate the societal norms and laws, when the society fails to provide legitimate means that support people to achieve the culturally valued goals (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2019).

Two more strain theories that focused on gang formation were those of Cohen (in 1955) and Cloward and Ohlin (in 1960) (Tibbetts, & Hemmens, 2019). Their theories became popular during a time of high crimes rates that were believably caused by lower-class and inner-city youth involved in gangs. Cohen believed that delinquent boys came from a disadvantaged underclass, and lacked proper parental supervision and socialization. Cohen further believed that delinquent boys feel strained and are more likely to fail school because they can't meet the middle-class values like accountability, respect for authority, and emotional regulations. Cohen's delinquent boy resembles the description of the rebel, in Merton's model of adaptation: the rebel

rejects the cultural system imposed on him, and joins a gang where he can instead earn his gang peers' respect.

Cloward and Ohlin's theory differs from other strain theories in its model of three types of different gangs formed as a result of lack or availability of legal or illegal conventional opportunities in the social structure. These theorists laid the argument that there are three types of gangs: the adult, the conflict, and the retreatist gangs. The adult criminal gangs are formed in lower-class neighborhoods, where gang behavior is known and accepted. This gang type is well-structured, with adults mentoring youth selected for their ability to plan and exercise high self-control. The second type of gang, the conflict gang, developed in neighborhoods with weak or no stability, where people were constantly moving in and out. This gang lacked the skills to make a profit through criminal activity, therefore resorted to violence to gain power and control in the neighborhood. With no adult gangster mentors, its members lacked self-control and organizational skills. This gang emphasizes violence, as a way of dealing with blocked opportunities of conventional society. Finally, the retreatist gang is a group of gangsters who aren't good at making a profit or using a violence to achieve status, and therefore they rely on drug use to escape reality (Tibbets & Hemmens, 2019).

Theory Application

The anomie and strain theories reason that society plays a role in influencing deviant behavior and creating criminals. Those individuals come from disadvantaged backgrounds and deprived neighborhoods, looking for acceptance and belonging. The more economically deprived and socially disadvantaged the communities are (i.e. female-headed household, black unemployed males, housing assistance), the more disconnected they feel from their traditional communities, and the higher their risk is to join gangs. Feeling disconnected, youth begin

turning to illegitimate ways, and banding with other criminal individuals experiencing similar strains. After engaging in law-breaking behavior and committing crimes on the streets, society sends them to prison as a way of punishment, only introducing them to the same defective social structure. Being exposed to the same forms of strain and anomie, they feel the need to be involved in a new culture that will accept and welcome them, and band together forming criminal organization while incarcerated. The institution's social structure becomes threatening and causes strain to his current way of life, and may strengthen his loyalty to the gang, in a way that he can transcend it to life in the streets after release. (Decker et. al, 2013). Cohen would point out that the PGs use the prison experience as a status-gaining tool instead of realizing and altering their inability to achieve their individual and socially desired goals (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2019).

For many incarcerated men, the general prison experience can be strain-inducing and stressful. It can be argued that, while incarcerated, offenders are denied of societal valued goods and means. In prison, offenders are housed with many other inmates, deprived of personal possessions, relationships, sleep, meal choices, work assignments, and other achievements. The material goods that are easily accessible in the outside community are markedly unattainable in prison. Imprisonment also disrupts family life and social relationships, thereby interfering with inmates' roles as spouse/partner, father, brother, son, co-worker, etcetera. They have to follow strict rules imposed by a unified authority or face consequences for non-compliance, such as strict sanctions, segregation, restricted housing, and so on (Levan & Chambliss, 2011). The anomie and strain theories would agree that criminal behavior inside a prison (such as misconduct, and violence) may be a result of a flawed prison environment that lacks the opportunities for the inmate to be able to succeed.

More, the incarceration environment leaves the inmates with a great sense of denial of valued societal goods (employment, family, freedom), which in turn creates more resentment, and frustration over the helplessness to attain these valued goals in the near future. Finding themselves among other inmates who share the same strain, the inmate forms a collective reaction, as Merton would call it, and becomes part of a larger group, the prison gang. These negative interactions influence the nature of social and cultural organization of the gang inside the prison. To adapt to the strain and negative interactions, the GMs resort to negative emotions like aggression, isolation, rebellion, and violence. (Skarbek, 2011). Intense emotions can lead to many behavioral problems with negative consequences when not regulated properly.

Evidence from numerous studies on the PGs has found that criminal groups within the prison setting share similar geographical, ethno-racial, and socioeconomic characteristics with criminal groups in the streets. These groups consisted of members who came mostly from cities with higher racial and ethnic diversity, which also had higher homicide rates (Decker et al., 2013). GMs are largely impoverished young male minorities who come from urban areas, and commit the most violent crimes. A large number of empirical studies conducted in US prisons on prisoner and staff perceptions of gang activity suggests that it is a frequent manifestation in male prisons, and present among younger inmates with a higher risk for recidivism (Kreager & Kruttschnitt, 2018). While street GMs are mostly adolescents age 18-24, prison GMs' age typically varies from 20 to 40, and about 60% of them are between ages 18 to 40 (Mitchell, Fahmy, Pyrooz, & Decker, 2016). The National Youth Gang Center estimated that although GMs represent only a fraction of 1% of the U.S. population, a total of 2,363 gang-related homicides occurred in 2012, representing approximately 16% of all homicides in the country (Egley Jr., Howel, & Harris, 2014).

There are also noteworthy similarities that PGs share with their non-gang member inmates like their criminal records, and socio-economic, educational, and marital status. Unlike the non-gang involved inmates however, PG members are more likely to have a criminal record as a juvenile, have never been employed, and have used a weapon during the commission of their crime (Fleisher & Decker, 2001). Additionally, they are more likely to engage in prison violence, misconduct, and less likely to participate in treatment programs while incarcerated. Furthermore, GMs have high levels of substance dependency, as well as have peers who abuse drugs and are involved in gangs and criminal activities. They are also more likely than non-gang inmates to have experienced adverse childhood experiences, violent victimization, and have a history of mental illness (Barrientez, 2011; Decker et. al, 2013).

A broad number of data sources have looked at the link between GM, crime, and behavioral disorders. These studies found a strong relationship between male GMs with behavioral disorders and criminal-offending in street GMs and incarcerated criminal groups similarly (DeLisi, Drury, & Elbert, 2018). One key finding highlights that early evidence of Conduct Disorder (CD) was a strong predictive of joining gangs. Boys displaying Conduct Disorder behavioral rating were a 30% more likely to join a gang. More, a study of 7615 youth in Harris County, Texas found that GMs were 305% more likely than non-gang member offenders to have been diagnosed with CD, 158% more likely to have a SU disorder, 77% more likely to have Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and 24% more likely to have Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD).

Compared to non-gang member inmates, the GMs had higher anger and aggression, violent and anti-social attitudes and beliefs, and lower emotional intelligence. When compared to other violent men, the GMs were 549% more likely to have been diagnosed with Antisocial

Personality Disorder (APD); but they were 5639% more likely than non-violent man to receive an APD diagnosis. Other GMs' individual characteristics like anger, lack of empathy, childhood traumas, and Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder were present, but did not have a statistical significance when compared to non-gang involved delinquent youth (Alleyne, Wood, Mozova, & James, 2016). DeLisi et al. (2018) proposed that behavioral disorders can be helpful in better understanding gang leadership. Gang leaders tend to be more aggressive towards other GMs to maintain their dominance. Youth who exhibit more anti-social attitudes are more likely to gravitate toward these types of leadership roles; however, GMs with fewer behavioral disorders are more likely to walk away from the gang life.

In ending, the anomie and strain theories offer significant insights for crime research at a micro- and macro-level by examining the reasons that people join gangs and their produced crime rates and effects. More importantly, these perspectives underscore that the strain and deprivations the inmates experience have significant impacts both during and after incarceration. Understanding the concepts, why and how these group of inmates are impacted by strain before and after prison terms, helps researchers uncover the criminogenic effects of strain. Research efforts and theories help decision and policy makers create humane prison conditions, as well as develop programs specific to the reduction of barriers the offenders face pre – and post-release and consequently of recidivism. Studying the link between institutional factors and the individual strain and law-breaking behavior in a rapidly changing and complex society like the US, can lead to beneficial multi-level research of criminogenic processes and implementation of effective criminal justice policies and practices.

Section V: Recommendations

While compelling government and private interests have evolved in the problem of PGs, the degree of concern is still pressing. Correctional leaders and staff are required to maintain security and control of their facilities while adhering to the provisions and legal mandates of the federal and state constitutions. As discussed in the previous sections of this paper, historical and scholastic evidence shows that aggressive anti-gang crackdowns and suppression methods, enhanced and lengthy sentences, mass incarceration, and rough prison conditions have not proven to displace the gangs' authority; in fact, these methods have helped the gangs spread their criminal authority and violence beyond prison walls (Lessing, 2017). Adopting aggressively combative anti-gang strategies will not help the problem, but also reversing public safety laws, policing, and ignoring the problem will not eliminate PGs either. This paper recommends a multi-disciplinary approach that supports a balanced landscape between strategic suppression and effective rehabilitation and treatment programs, similar to those that have proven effective in the states of Washington, North Carolina, and Nebraska. Based on concepts of anomie and strain theories, the recommendations will call for positive change on a macro- and micro-level criminogenic processes. This wholistic approach will require the economic and social improvement of societal institutions like schools, community outreach groups, justice systems, to reduce the strain, and anomie, and foster a healthy citizen-government relationship. Managing and treating the challenging, yet distinct, behaviors of PGs should encourage corrections' officials to progressively implement the following recommendations in an incremental processes:

- 1) improve identification, classification, and placement procedures;
- 2) enhance the prison environment;
- 3) implement effective program curricula;
- 4) partner with local and regional educational and vocational agencies and employers;
- 5) update agency policies and procedures

with program evaluation and research findings; and 6) collaborate with legislators to improve the corrections' system.

The first recommendation suggests that improvements of anti-gang tactics begin with the right intake and assessment process where the inmate identification and classification take place. In addition to considering the overall facility and community safety, the process of classification assignments should take into consideration the health and well-being of the inmate. Most importantly, prison administrators should consider classification as an integral part of inmate rehabilitation efforts. Before making decisions on the inmate's facility and programming placement, and level of supervision, classification specialist should have a clear and objective picture of the inmate's risk and needs. It is important to also consider the inmate's viewpoints on the classification scheme. This process should not depend on the facility resources, such as facility/housing and staffing needs. Proper classification and placement of inmates will eventually lead to the proper distribution and management of facility resources, since this process should reduce violent misconduct by inmates, and ease officials' ability to manage them.

To provide effective and humane conditions of sanctions, correctional officials should establish clear guidelines on placements and the amount of time the inmates can be held in investigative units. Setting rigorous time limits and parameters for disciplinary review hearings, and placements into and out of segregation will result in minimization of disproportionate sanctions, and longer wait times in segregation. To reduce the overall state correctional facilities' numbers of placements in SH, agencies should consider lessons learned from those state initiatives that had positive results. These facilities considerably reduced the number of offenders held in isolation by placing only high-risk and most violent offenders and had improved outcomes on assault and violence rates. Before employing lessons learned, each agency must

conduct a study of the long-term impact their anti-gang efforts have on inmates, staff, institutional security, and the public. Although many agencies are already involved in research, many still rely on traditional ways of managing their facilities. Once the deficiencies are identified and analyzed, improvements can be developed, funded, implemented, and then evaluated for successful results.

To address the negative effects of restricted housing on the seriously mentally ill and violent offenders, prison managers should ensure and invest in the appropriate mental health treatment programs. Restricted housing boards should complete a careful review of all inmates assigned to high security units to identify those eligible to participate in secure mental health programs similar to the ones being developed and implemented by the prisons in North Carolina, Washington, and Nebraska (Vera IOJ, 2015). This process will ensure no inmate is left misdiagnosed or underdiagnosed, or at higher chance for continued risk of disruptive and violent behavior due to unmet mental health needs. Each institution should have a strong behavioral health unit that is supported by clear policies and operated by well-trained and well-equipped officers and clinical staff. The goal should be to ensure that inmates can function at the level necessary to be successfully reintegrated into general population and eventually into their community when released. Corrections should develop a plan that supports placing them in alternative therapeutic housing communities. As resources will allow, this modified therapeutic placement will offer the programming options that meet their individual needs, and decrease the number of incidents that result in isolation, transfers, and other serious safety concerns.

The second recommendation involves the improvement of the prison environment. It is well documented that the prison is a harsh, secluded, and controlled environment where security and cost are a priority. The corrections community will want to meet its goals for improved

prison conditions by first recognizing the perpetual inadequacy of facilities, personnel, and resources. These inadequacies and limited resources will continue in the future, knowing that governmental entities continue to struggle from shrinking budgets and reduced funding. The inadequacies of the structural prison setting can be transformed with innovative and transparent ways that foster inmate self-governance and inmate-staff collaboration. When these inadequacies are made transparent, and formally recognized, they present a better chance of normalizing and overcoming the prison experience. Reforming the prison environment to address the insufficiencies and accommodate inmates' basic needs, along with treatment, education, and vocational needs, particularly for inmates with longer sentences, will significantly improve prison safety, programming, and outcomes.

The proposed context of the prison experience that supports inmate self-sufficiency and inmate-staff collaboration cannot be achieved without an improved prison design and facilities that employ professional and diverse staff. Without dismissing the goals for security, the future prisons should be built with the objective of a restorative, not retributive, design in mind. The institutional atmosphere should be one that meets inmates' needs for privacy, nourishment, safety, dignity, and individualism. When these fundamental human needs are met, the focus can then be placed on meeting objectives for positive change. The inmate population can be better managed when a prison is designed to house a smaller population, that can be easily supervised by the appropriate amount of staff. It is important that staff force is diverse and culturally and racially representative of the population is supervising. Studies have shown that facilities with a more racially diverse staff have had lower levels of misconduct, and higher order in housing and programming assignments (Camp, Gaes, Langan, & Saylor, 2003).

Institutional hiring and retention efforts maybe relevant under this perspective. Achieving a diversified personnel force is possible when a facility is practicing hiring and retention processes that encourage diversity and professional development among its personnel. Well-qualified and trained staff with diverse backgrounds, who have in mind the inmates' best interest for rehabilitation, can enable supportive relationships, and positive environments (Decker & Fleisher, 2001). Such environment can create a feeling of "normal" that can reduce the inmates' perception of being deprived and restricted (i.e. more strain) and model pro-social alternatives for success. These positive inmate-staff interactions can provide the inmates with a sense of significance, worth, and dignity, limiting opportunities for vulnerable inmates to become involved in organized criminal groups.

The third recommendation suggests the implementation of evidence-based program curricula promoting offender rehabilitation. Considering that about 94% of inmates return to society, it is important that they return equipped with life skills that discourage re-offending and enhance their chances for successful reintegration into society. Incorporating programs with CBI concepts, have shown effective in addressing anti-social thinking, treating the criminogenic effects of strain from incarceration, and preparing inmates for successful release and reentry into community (Allen & Sawhney, 2015). In this aspect, it is important to determine length and type treatment program, based on array and longevity of the treatment needs, and not criminal history. It is more important to know in which way the offenders' criminal histories vary, as each offender differs with respect to propensity for violence, motivation and readiness for change, intellectual capacity, responsivity and amenability to treatment (Prisgrove, 1993).

More, developing and implementing offender rehabilitation opportunities that are evidence-based and gender-focused, will lead to a better understanding of gang crime causation

and effect, and better-informed gang management. Gender-specific training incorporating the strain and anomie theories and literature findings on men's issues in treatment will help counselors working with men, focus on anger management and interpersonal violence. This will help staff better understand and explore key issues related to male development, substance abuse, gender roles, familial and relational conflict, aggression, abuse and trauma, and educational and vocational issues. In addition, staff should explore the dynamics of the prison culture specific to race and gang issues, "the convict code," prison slang, and masculinity. Knowledge and understanding about these issues provide staff with deeper awareness into incarcerated men's barriers, risks, and protective factors to enhance the chance for long-term recovery.

Another element that the educational programs seem to lack and can benefit to add to its curricula, is the instructions on matters of ethnicity, and race. Considering that these factors supersede gang involvement and institutional violence, it would make sense to include race- and cultural-based programming that educates gangs about their ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The objective should be to help prison groups focus on their particular strengths, and uniqueness of their backgrounds, and find characteristics they can appreciate, while respecting what makes them different. This approach should help them understand the hostility towards different groups, and appreciate the diversity of their cultural origins.

More, correctional literature suggests that certain kinds of proactive prison programs can be effective in targeting the stressful effect of the prison environment and reversing the otherwise criminogenic effects of incarceration (Allen & Sawhney, 2015). CBI programs like CBI-SA/SO, ART, GED, that combine life skills, aggression replacement, and substance abuse education have shown positive results in violent offender rehabilitation (Esperian, 2010; Duwe, 2017; McCollister, French, Stack, Prendergast, & Hall, 2004). Specifically, they have shown a

significant negative relationship with prison misconduct, rule violations, insubordination, and overall institutional violence. Focused on criminal thinking patterns and behaviors, CBI can help inmates actively engage in their own rehabilitation, allowing them more time to interact with others in meaningful activities, develop pro-social ways of dealing with adversities, and successfully transition into the community (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010; Cochran 2019). It makes sense for correctional policy-makers, lawmakers, and stakeholders to support policy that funds prisons to administer programs that place higher emphasis in inmate treatment and reintegration into society, and less emphasis on punitive efforts. These efforts will reduce the violence in prison and in the community, leading to increased public safety.

The fourth recommendation points out the importance of partnering with local and regional educational and vocational agencies and employers. Combined community efforts enhance offenders' chance for a successful reentry (Decker & Fleisher, 2001). Reentry to the community and navigation to continued services and resources can be stressful, as any process of change can be stressful. It is crucial to continue providing after care support to the inmates exiting the prison system, helping them remove substantial barriers faced in securing suitable employment and housing, and obtaining sufficient health care and transportation. Their supportive network can include their family members, employers, educators, and other positive societal members and mentors who can hold them accountable and encourage their success.

The fifth recommendation emphasizes the need for continued research and improved correctional programs and practices. It is strongly recommended that each correctional facility develop and implement measurements for effective policy research. It is well known that many correctional facilities lack program assessments and this maybe a key to identifying serious issues and effective solutions. Some examples of topics that deserve attention are the perceptions

of inmates and staff on facility rules, and the importance and legitimacy of their enforcement. The link between perceptions and legitimacy of processes and procedures followed to maintain institutional order can use more empirical attention. Understanding the perceptions-legitimacy link can help correctional officials the differences in levels of misconduct and influences of misconduct on managerial practices to gain inmate compliance and maintain order. Next, prison environments can be different, and so can be individual inmate characteristics. How these characteristics interact with the different prison environments can be another focus of research that can shed light to institutional violence and control responses across correctional facilities.

On an important final note, the above recommendations will not be feasible unless criminal justice decision-makers improve policies and invest in preventing services for high-risk offenders before they enter the penal system. As supported by scholarly evidence on a macro-level spectrum, unjust and tough-on-crime laws result in disproportionately severe punishments for lengthy and costly mandatory sentences (Woods, 2012; Kreager, & Kruttschnitt; 2018). These laws should be amended to reduce the effect of justice inequalities and include more humane provisions that authorize just prosecutions, and alternative sentencing with lesser penalties. Making this change will decrease the number or type of inmates being confined, such as the younger minority offender, the drug offender, and the mentally ill offender. As a result, correctional facilities will be less crowded, less susceptible to violence, and more able to control a more manageable inmate population.

This section set out a series of attainable suggestions for how criminal justice and legislators could begin to effect key changes for just sentencing, housing, and rehabilitation of gang-involved offenders. Drawing from research findings of the most effective approaches, this section suggested that not one single approach, but a set of multifaceted strategies, have the

better success in reducing PG formation and proliferation, limiting their violence and influence within and outside the prison, and improving offender post-release outcomes. The suggestions discussed that anti-gang measures require not only correctional officials' attention, but also the partnership with other justice-involved professionals. This section supported the notion that correctional anti-gang approaches should include methods that deter gang criminal activity, and improve the opportunities that encourage gang disengagement and empower inmates to become law-abiding citizens. In-custody programs that address anti-social tendencies, emphasize and develop the offenders' life skills, aggression replacement, mental health, and substance abuse education have shown positive results in violent offender rehabilitation (Esperian, 2010; Duwe, 2017; Useem & Piehl, 2006; McCollister et al., 2004). It is beneficial for correctional policy-makers, politicians, and lawmakers to support policy that funds prisons to administer and evaluate rehabilitation programs that reduce recidivism, and improve offenders' quality of life and that of their families and communities they return to.

Section VI: Summary and Conclusions

This paper has examined the problems experienced with gang presence in the adult male prison system in America. The research has revealed that inmate characteristics, tough-on-crime legislation, features of prison environments, management practices, and anticipated post-release barriers provide a clear explanation of gang-involved deviance and consequences. The strain and anomie theories were conceptualized to provide a better understanding of how and why PGs are formed, and what are the macro- and micro-level factors contributing to the problem. Studying the PG dynamics and effects of inmates' individual attributes and the characteristics of the carceral system, is important for improving inmate and staff safety and formulating programs that will reduce the crime rates and enhance public safety. PGs are complex and dynamic

predatory organizations that have existed for many decades and will continue to exist in the future. In order to properly address and combat PGs, agencies have designed security-focused methods to identify and determine involvement of numerous street and prison criminal groups operating inside and outside of prisons. Narrative information from previous studies highlighted that aggressive suppression methods like inmate classification, SH, and transfers can have negative impacts related to institutional order, inmates' programming, and post-release outcomes. More, the majority of literature review revealed a strong relationship between improved GM behaviors and treatment programs incorporating CBI principles with SA/SO/ART and educational programs.

More specifically, research of correctional facilities utilizing a combined approach of security and rehabilitation programs showed positive results in treating those GMs with history of institutional violence and severe mental health. Then, the paper proceeded to providing a set of attainable and practical recommendations that sought out to best curve the challenges presented by the PG problem. Based on academic findings, the recommendations strongly advocate for investing in improved CJ initiatives and community outreach programs that support offenders' successful community reintegration. As all gang-member inmates are released into their home communities, it is beneficial for the receiving communities to provide the returning inmates with opportunities for housing, transportation, and employment to facilitate their successful re-entry into society. Solving the PG problem is not the sole responsibility of corrections, but it is the shared responsibility of all involved stakeholders to contribute to the solution. Because corrections have one of the largest agency budgets, there is a tangible benefit for all sides of the political and social institutions to come together and work for better outcomes for taxpayers, offenders, and our society as a whole.

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